



CO-OPERATOR

To serve all our members of the Cook County Farm Bureau® with meaningful and beneficial programs that reflect our agricultural heritage.

Mark Your Calendar

MARCH

7, 8, & 10	Food Checkout Days	1
9	Earth Day Workshop	6
12	Shred Day	12
22	Celebrate National Ag Day	
23 & 24	Live Local Conference	12

APRIL

5	Workshop on Preparing Wills and Trusts	12
7	Ag Day	6

MAY

11	Butterfly Planter Workshop	12
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For participation details on these programs and activities, check out the related information in this publication, go to www.cookcfb.org, or contact the office at 708-354-3276. You can register for most programs by using the member service center at www.cookcfb.org.

Question of the Month

True or False

There is a shortage of food and agriculture teachers in Illinois schools?

Call the Farm Bureau at 708-354-3276, fax your answer to 708-579-6056, or email to fbcooperator@gmail.com to enter the drawing for a \$25 gas card.

(Please include name, FB#, and phone number)

February Winner is Simon Waligo.

Q. What are Brussels Sprouts named after?

Answer: "Brussels, Belgium"

SAVE THE DATE

July 22, 2022
Evening for Ag Education
Gala in Lemont
Featuring Libido Funk Circus
A Fun'Raiser for the CCFB Foundation



March 22 is National Ag Day. We encourage all to observe this day by enjoying products from your local farms. Cook County Farmers provide nutritious, healthy food and products."

Area Food Pantries Need Member Support!

Cook County Farm Bureau® to Support Cook County Families and Food Pantries as Part of Food Checkout Day 2022

In celebration of the healthy and nutritious food grown and raised by local farmers, Cook County Farm Bureau® members and partners are supporting local families and food pantries.

The year 2022 marks the 22nd anniversary of Food Checkout Day and Cook County Farm Bureau's largest effort to date to support local families in need. Rather than support a single charity or even a handful, **Cook CFB will match member donations to any Cook County food pantry.**

Farm Bureau members who wish to donate to a local food pantry in celebration of Food Checkout Day are asked to complete the form below and to designate the food pantry that their donation and Cook CFB's match is for. The food pantry selected must be a registered 501(c)3 located in Cook County. Farm Bureau will match the first \$1,000 donated. All donations will be considered part of Food Checkout Day.

In addition, Cook County Farm Bureau is partnering with six food pantries for Food Checkout Day. The food pantries were selected by our partners at COUNTRY Financial.

Partners food pantries include:

Church of the Holy Spirit in Schaumburg has been providing food for families in need since 2004. As a non-denominational food pantry, the food pantry provides food for families within the pantry's service area. Church of the Holy Spirit Food Pantry was selected by Chicago Northwest COUNTRY Financial

representatives.

Elk Grove Township Food Pantry in Elk Grove Village is a "client choice" food pantry that allows individuals to select items for themselves and their families. During 2020, the pantry served over 325 families per month compared to 230 families respectively in 2019, a 40% increase. Elk Grove Township Food Pantry was selected by Chicago Northeast COUNTRY Financial representatives.

Elsie's Food Pantry in Palos Hills is open to families in Palos Township, Bridgeview, and a portion of Lemont. Elsie's Food Pantry is a joint ministry of Savior Divine Lutheran Church and Living Faith Community Church. Eligible families receive a prepackaged box of food. Additional services are also available for families in need. Elsie's Food Pantry was selected by Orland Park COUNTRY Financial representatives.

Lakeview Pantry in Chicago is Chicago's largest and longest-operating food pantry. Lakeview Pantry's mission is to eliminate hunger and poverty in their communities by providing food to fill the basic need of hungry people, empowering clients to achieve independence through social service programming, and raising awareness of hunger and poverty. Lakeview Pantry experienced a 400% increase in demand when COVID-19 hit Chicago and anticipates another surge in the coming winter months. The Pantry is on track to provide five million meals in Chicago this year. Lakeview Pantry was selected by Chicago North COUNTRY Financial representatives.

Continued on Page 2

Agriculture in the Classroom Contract Presenter Opportunity

Our school outreach program is looking to add a Contract Presenter to our AITC Program. The educator will provide both virtual (Zoom and Google Meets) and in-person programming to students in fourth grade classes.

Our contracted presenters typically have classroom experience, as well as excellent presentation and communication skills. Due to the demand for virtual programming, individual should be experienced using Google slides via remote learning platforms. Knowledge of agriculture/horticulture has proven to be helpful.

This is an independent contractor position. Presentations and timeframes vary each week, between the months of September-May and offer great flexibility. For more information, email Diane Merrion, Ag Literacy Coordinator, aitc@cookcfb.org.

Past issues of the
 Co-Operator
 are available online at
cookcfb.org/stay updated

Who We Are...

Cook County Farm Bureau is made up of many members including farmers, landowners, foodies, greenhouse operators, specialty growers, food consumers and customers of the Farm Bureau's affiliated companies (Country Financial, Conserv FS, IAA Credit Union, etc.). We bring together many members with diverse backgrounds and food interests to support the success of local farmers and to keep agriculture present and strong in Cook County.

This *Co-Operator* publication is designed for members to share more about how Cook County Farm Bureau is working for local farmers and agriculture and to help our members know more about farming, food, fiber and bio-fuels. As an added value, we provide great membership deals, savings, discounts, benefits, programming and activities that reflect our agricultural heritage and members' modern expectations.

Please enjoy reading and thank you for your support of area agriculture and your membership!

Continued from Page 1

Support Cook County Families and Food Pantries

Share Food Share Love in Brookfield provides food assistance to residents of 15 villages in western Cook County. Like many other pantries, Share Food Share Love experienced exponential growth in need during the COVID-19 pandemic and that need continues to linger, especially as the pantry's service area continues to expand. Share Food Share Love was selected by Chicago South COUNTRY Financial representatives.

VKMI Hattie B. Williams Food Pantry in Oak Forest serves south suburban Cook County.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and its lasting effects on food insecurity, the pantry served between 50 and 60 families per week; in 2020 that number grew to over 90 families. Hattie B. Williams Food Pantry was selected by South Holland COUNTRY Financial representatives.

Additional pantries are in the process of being secured.

Donations can be made by credit card by calling the Farm Bureau office at 708-354-3276 or by mailing in the form below with a check. Donations will be accepted until March 16, 2022.

Food Checkout Day 2022 Food Pantry Match Donations

Food Pantry for Match: _____

Your Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

State: _____ Zip Code: _____ Phone: _____

Email Address: _____

Please make checks payable to: Cook County Farm Bureau. Checks should be mailed to: Cook County Farm Bureau, 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525

All proceeds will be donated to Cook County food pantries. Donations will be accepted until March 7, 2022.

Cook County Farm Bureau Staff Transitions

Recent Cook County Farm Bureau Staffing transitions have occurred within the office staff of the organization. Katie Smith, Director of Membership/Administration has accepted another position and has relocated after 17 years of service. We will miss Katie and the skills that she brought to the office staff. We wish her the very best.

Debbie Voltz will be taking over the Director of Membership position for the Member Service Center while retaining her support of the Commodity/Marketing Team activities and programs.

Kelli Villarreal will begin providing support to the Member Relations Team and the Board of Directors Administrative Support while retaining

her responsibilities in the Membership Service Center and coordination of the Co-Operator and graphic arts/videography.

Diane Merrion and the Ag Literacy Department will be providing CCFB Foundation support.

Bona Heinsohn will provide assistance to the Young Leaders Team.

We are pleased to welcome back to the office Linda Tobias, former Cook County Farm Bureau Membership Assistant. Linda is returning as an employee to work in the Member Service Center while providing administrative support in the areas of Governmental Affairs, Public Relations, and CCFB Foundation.

Family Adventures Basket Winners



Congratulations to Farm Bureau members Ross and Roberta Vondrak of Countryside for completing all 12 months of Ag Adventure crossword puzzles featured in the Co-Operator in 2021. A total of 21 CCFB members also completed all 12 months of the puzzle and the Vondrak's name was drawn as the winner of a local agriculture gift basket. Bob Rohrer, Cook County Farm Bureau Manager, and Diane Merrion, Director of Ag Literacy presented the basket which included a soy candle, corn holders, local honey, popcorn, a variety of our favorite Ag in the classroom books, gift cards, locally produced products such as oatmeal and tootsie rolls, and much more. The Vondraks have been members since 2013 and love supporting area food pantries, gardening, and their grandchildren.



Gratitude Journal

Each month, there are people that go out of their way to lend a hand to help with our cause in many ways, both big and small. We appreciate it greatly!

The Cook County Farm Bureau thanks...

Members Ross and Roberta, winner of our Ag Adventures basket, and the 21 other members that submitted the 12 months of the Ag Adventures page word search in 2021.

Dan Stumpf, Orland Park Country Financial Rep, for his 42 years of service to members and the Farm Bureau organization. Congratulations on your March 31st retirement!

Jon Kuester and Kendra Strubhart from Glenview Wagner Farm for meeting with us to discuss ways to strengthen our agriculture education partnership.

Pat Horcher, Jim Gutzmer, and Ruth Zeldenrust for volunteering to serve as ACTIVATOR trustees for the Illinois Farm Bureau Political Action Committee.

The COUNTRY Financial Agents and staff that serve the financial needs of Cook County Farm Bureau members.

Amy Hansmann, Jim Gutzmer, and Bona Heinsohn for representing the CCFB at the Legislative Reception on February 15th in Springfield

Co-Operator

published monthly

Cook County Farm Bureau

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Downwind

by Bob Rohrer, CCFB Manager

“A Swig of Grape-Nuts®”

About one year ago, the headline read, “The Grape-Nuts® Shortage is Over”!

Back in 2020 and early 2021, when the pandemic was in full blown panic, I could no longer find Grape-Nuts in my local grocery stores. I joked with my wife that there has been a “run” on Grape-Nuts. It turns out, shockingly, that I was correct!

Eventually, I learned that there was a “Great Grape-Nuts shortage” which Post Consumer Brands announced came to an end on March 24, 2021. In addition, the company announced it would reimburse consumers who paid inflated prices for the cereal which reached up to \$110 a box on the black market during the pandemic related shortage. The shortage was caused by the top-secret way the cereal, a blend of wheat and barley (and not grapes or nuts), is made. However, the exact issue was not made clear because of the proprietary process.

In last month’s Co-Operator, Diane Merrion, Cook County Farm Bureau’s Director of Ag Literacy, wrote a great column on the topic of her go-to snack, “nuts”. Cook County Farm Bureau’s local botany expert and Cook County Farm Bureau volunteer, Mr. Greg Stack, provided fun content and expertise on the topic as a part of her column.

Diane wrapped up her nutty column by saying, “My thanks to Mr. Greg Stack for sharing his botany knowledge. **On a side note, I know I am not alone in my fondness of nuts for a snack. A certain FB Manager who you may know enjoys a regular snack of Grape-Nuts, another non-nut nut snack (Grape-Nuts contains neither grapes nor nuts. It’s made from wheat and barley.) Maybe he can provide a column about them someday.**” (Diane’s full Ag Lit Bit column can be found at www.cookcfb.org.)

Well, Diane should know by now to watch out for what you ask for...

My usual “on-my-way to work breakfast” formula is a combination of coffee, fresh fruit, and Grape-Nuts. As I head out the door, I grab a cluster of grapes, a banana, or an apple to go with my 32-ounce jug of coffee. I keep an old thermos in the car that I fill with dry Grape-Nuts cereal. During the commute to the Cook County Farm Bureau office, I take a swig of coffee, pop a seedless grape in my mouth, and follow with a direct dump of Grape-Nuts from the thermos (seedless grapes eaten with Grape Nuts makes me smile with the irony). “Chew-chew-chew-chew-chew...swallow”. I repeat the process.

It is important to have the proper ratio of coffee, fruit, and Grape-Nuts. The coffee and fruit allow enough moisture and flavor to manage a swallow of the breakfast combo. For those of you who have tried to eat Grape-Nuts dry, it can be equated as eating granulated tree bark or crunchable rocks.

This farm-product-based breakfast combination...

- Offers me great sustenance
- Carries me through to lunchtime, effectively squashing hunger urges
- Provides wonderful exercise for my jaw, burning a ton of calories, allowing me to shed pounds!

I was first introduced to Grape-Nuts by my grandpa back in the 1970s. I remember using a pint of milk, a cup of sugar, and a plate of fruit to choke my first bowl down. Appropriately, he made fun of me. Times and tastes change.

A year ago, during the Great Grape-Nuts Shortage, there were reports of people paying \$110 a box for their “fix”. I can assure you that this money pinching Farm Bureau manager did not go on the black market back alleys for a buy. Instead, I went hunting and gathering for nutritious twigs and bark to tide my cravings...I joke.

Post Consumer Brands marketing for Grape-Nuts reveals that the cereal was developed by CW Post in 1897 and has been a part of the expedition of Antarctica, the first trek to the summit of Mount Everest, and is considered a fuel for adventurers and people who live their lives on their own terms.

Yep, I believe that is true!

What...Now there is a Rice Krispies® shortage?

Recipe of the Month:

Sage / Raspberry Smash

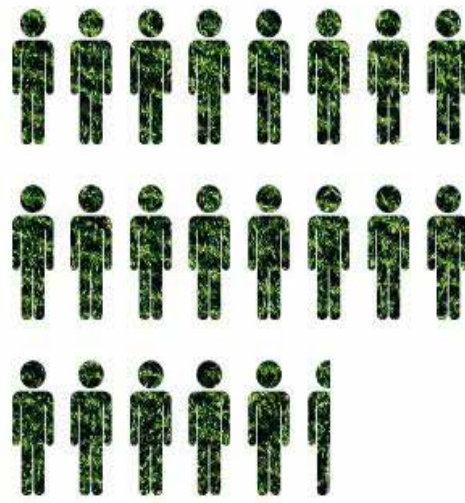
Donna Nykaza-Jones Ray’s Quality Greenhouse

- 5 fresh raspberries
- 2 t granulated sugar
- 1 shot vodka
- 3 fresh sage leaves
- ¼ of a lime, juiced
- soda water & ice



Combine sage and sugar in bottom of a glass and muddle. Add raspberries (can also use strawberries) and vodka to glass and muddle it. Strain to remove sage. Add ice, lime, and fill with soda water; stir and garnish!

The U.S. DEPENDS on Farming



Farming and related industries employ

21.6

million people

making up 11% of total U.S. employment

WWW.AGDAY.ORG

Recipes wanted for our 2022 Cookfresh® Recipe Collection!

The 2022 Cookfresh Recipe Collection is in need of your favorite recipes, prepared using the freshest locally grown ingredients.

Send your recipe, along with your contact information to: membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org or Cook County Farm Bureau, Attn: Recipes, 6438 Joliet Rd, Countryside IL 60525



Your Orland Park Agency



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Agency Manager
Orland Park, IL



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Our Shop Local Directory Provides Simple Yet Powerful Search Tools to Connect Growers



Growing Our Community Together

Our Shop Local directory provides simple yet powerful search tools to connect growers, buyers, sellers, and consumers. Join and register your business today. Whether you are a farmer looking to reach new customers or a consumer looking for fresh produce, local dairy, or a brewery in your area – our Shop Local directory is a MUST-HAVE resource!

Member Ag businesses that are already a part of our Farm Products Locator have a profile on Shop Local! Just login using your contact email to access and update your profile today or as often as needed! The more information you place on your profile, the more searchable you become to the consumer and across a joint network of affiliations. You can also add an e-commerce store or link to an existing store. And more!

Visit us at <https://cookcfb.org/discover->

local/shop-local or contact Debbie at membershipdebbie@cookcfb.org for additional details.

Not a part of the directory? Register your local food or farm business today at <https://foodmarketmaker.com/registration>.

Because of our partnerships, updating your MarketMaker profile enables automatic updates across multiple platforms, including Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois Specialty Growers Association, Illinois Farmers Market Association, Farmer Veteran Coalition of Illinois, and the newly added Buy Fresh Buy Local Illinois. All these affiliations are important ways to increase sales and access.

Shop Local is brought to you through a partnership with Illinois Farm Bureau, in cooperation with the Illinois Specialty Growers Association and Illinois MarketMaker.

Lanphier to Assume Chair of the Young Leaders Team



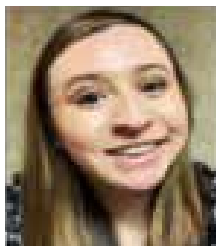
Thomas Poole, a Professional Member from Chicago, recently announced that he is relocating out of the Cook County area due to a job change which will require a change in the leadership for the

Young Leaders Team. At the conclusion of the February meeting of the Young Leaders Team, the following leadership transition took place as a result.



Blake Lanphier, who has served as Vice-Chair of the group for the past year, will assume the chairmanship responsibilities. Blake serves as the farm manager of Wagner Farm in Glenview. He

has a bachelor of science degree in animal sciences from Iowa State University. Blake is a 2020 graduate of the two-year agricultural educational leadership experience through the Illinois Ag Leadership Program. He provides support and program assistance for the Glenview 4-H club which is one of the largest in Cook County. Blake is a Professional Member of the CCFB.



Karina Barrios, who has served as the Recorder of the group for the past year, will step up to the Vice-Chair responsibilities. Karina is employed as a corporate food safety specialist for Ferrara Company in

Chicago. She is a past Ag literacy intern through the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation. Karina has a bachelor of science degree in Agricultural and Biological Engineering from the

University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. Karina is a professional member of the CCFB.



Young leader Doug Yunker volunteered to step up as the new Recorder for the group. Doug is a part of Yunker Farms, a 4th generation family farm in Northeastern Illinois. Yunker Farms grows

conventional and organic corn, soybeans, wheat, and hay. Doug also works for an area agricultural company serving area farmers. Doug previously served as Chairman of the Young Leaders Group and has worked with YL members to place videos on the CCFB Facebook page to explain YL ag connections in the Chicagoland area.

Poole was elected in February 2021 to the chairmanship of the Cook County Farm Bureau Young Leaders Team for a two-year term and was very active in seeking membership acquisition and retainment in Young Leaders, networking with related organizations, and leading community service programming with the group. The Cook County Farm Bureau expresses appreciation to Tom who effectively served as the chair of the Young Leaders Group for the past year. We appreciate his leadership and ongoing enthusiasm!

Cook County Farm Bureau Members aged 18-35 who may be interested in participating in the Young Leaders Team or activities are encouraged to contact:

Blake Lanphier, CCFB Young Leaders Team
Blake.Lanphier@glenviewparks.org

Bona Heinsohn, CCFB Director of Governmental Affairs/Public Relations
bona@cookcfb.org

Bob Rohrer, CCFB Manager
brohrer@cookcfb.org

IAA Foundation Offers Scholarships To Drive Agriculture Forward

Truck drivers are critical for transporting farm commodities, inputs and food throughout Illinois and the nation. The IAA Foundation is pleased to administer the Driving Agriculture Forward Scholarship to help offset the cost of needed commercial truck driver training and ensure more well-trained, safe drivers are available.

"We are pleased to diversify the types of scholarships available through our program," said Jennifer Smith, Development Manager, IAA Foundation. "We are encouraged by the insightfulness of donors who choose to support all facets of agriculture."

In late 2021, the Illinois Farm Bureau committed to funding the Driving Agriculture Forward Scholarship. This donor agreement will continue for the next five years.

Applicants enrolled, or planning to enroll, in a commercial driver training program at an Illinois Community College are encouraged to

apply. Five \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded every three months and are based on the Illinois Farm Bureau region where the applicant resides.

All applicants must be Illinois residents and must provide proof of enrollment in during the corresponding award cycle. Additionally, an endorsement is required from a farmer, County Farm Bureau leader, agribusiness, or food processing business.

Full eligibility guidelines and the link to apply is available on the Foundation website, www.iaafoundation.org.

For more information, contact your County Farm Bureau, the IAA Foundation at 309-557-2232, or e-mail Jennifer Smith at jsmith@ilfb.org

The mission of the IAA Foundation, Illinois Farm Bureau's charitable arm, is to fund education, research, and charitable activities that benefit Illinois farm families and agriculture.

Farm Bureau Recognizes Area COUNTRY Financial Managers/Financial Reps

On an annual basis, the Cook County Farm Bureau® pays special tribute to the COUNTRY Financial Managers and Financial Representatives that earn All American honors and those that are named in the Top 10 Recruiters of Membership. The following COUNTRY Financial Managers and Financial Reps were recognized by Cook County Farm Bureau for serving members in 2021:

Chicago North COUNTRY Financial Agency, Victoria Nygren, Manager

All American: Ilir Numani

Top 10 Recruiters of the Year: Margaret Jura (#1 recruiter), Ilir Numani, Robert Barron

Chicago South COUNTRY Financial Agency, Jeff Maxson, Manager

All Americans: Jeff Maxson, Nick Zegar, Ed Beavers, Kirk Gregory, Jr.

Top 10 Recruiters of the Year – Kirk Gregory, Jr., Ed Beavers, Gwen Shaw, Martha Dominguez,

Silver Castillo

#1 Recruiting Agency: Chicago South – Jeff Maxson

Chicago Northeast COUNTRY Financial Agency, Sharon Stemke, Manager

All Americans: Matt Powell, Joe Munch

Chicago Northwest COUNTRY Financial Agency, Kevin Gomes, Manager

All American: John Doherty, Brett Riekema, Erin Coon, Zach Youngblood

Orland Park COUNTRY Financial Agency, Cary Tate, Manager

All Americans: Cary Tate, Jim Andresen, Nora Beverly, Nick Burke, Tom Geraghty, Mike Saponi, Nadia Abueid, Kyle Huppe

Top 10 Recruiter of the Year: Troy Vidovic, Kurt Husien

South Holland/Oak Forest Agency, Jeff Orman, Manager

Its never to early to start thinking about spring.

EQ Biosolids are a product of wastewater treatment that supplies organic matter and improves the structure and porosity of soils. Benefits of biosolids include:

- ◆ Increased infiltration and water holding capacity
- ◆ Longer retention of nutrients
- ◆ Improve topsoil structure and porosity for better root development

Biosolids can be used as a soil amendment or conditioner when establishing turf grass, athletics fields, parks and other recreational areas and for restoration of brownfields and other disturbed lands. Biosolids can also be used on agricultural and hay fields.

EQ Biosolids meet the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's requirements for exception quality, which are based on comprehensive risk assessment concerning human health and the environment.



Ordering- biosolids@mwrdd.org

Delivery is available for 10 cubic yards or more.

Limited topdress spreading is available for 4 acres of turfgrass or more.

Past issues of the Co-Operator are available online at cookcfb.org/stay updated

Five Questions for Diane Merrion, Director of Ag Literacy

What is a memory stamped into your mind from your work with Cook County Farm Bureau?

One of the unforgettable moments over the years was the “soybean” incident at Ag Day North at Wagner Farm. We had a sensory table filled with soybeans as part of the learning station. One of the students stuck his whole head in the bin and subsequently ended up with a soybean stuck in his ear. Just when you think you’ve considered every scenario before an educational event this was not one that came to mind. Wagner Farm helped follow protocol and later that evening we were informed that all was fine. I do not believe we had an unattended or quite so accessible sensory table in subsequent years.

What is the funniest thing you’ve ever heard come out of a student’s mouth?

Over the years we have had many, many comments from students. While they ask funny questions, it’s their sincerity and honesty that cannot be beat. So many fun quotes like a child who said his mom is making oils, but kids cannot have them. Another we recently received (that Jill loved) evaluated our school presentation by stating, “It was very detailed but not

too much so we could remember it, plus, I think it was kid friendly.” Our all-time favorite must be, “So what happened to the pig?” after learning where bacon came from.

When you are not working on CCFB business, what is something you like to spend time doing?

I enjoy traveling with my husband Dave and we were fortunate to still travel last year within the U.S. and intend to have more adventures this year. (Photo from our last overseas visit.)

My other main hobby is gardening, and I am optimistic of having more time, more child helpers, and greater success with that this summer.

What is your favorite Ag book?

My favorite Ag book has to be *The Gardener* by Sarah Stewart.

What did you want to be growing up?

I always wanted to be a teacher. I used to “teach” to my pretend class from an early age in my bedroom and knew that was my calling. Ironically, my favorite grade while student teaching was 4th grade and to go full circle to today when I would be able to lead a program that is targeted to 4th grade, is remarkable.



Foreign Farm Land Ownership Accounts for Only 2.7% of US According to USDA

USDA reports foreign persons and entities held an interest in 35.2 million acres of U.S. agricultural land in 2019, accounting for 2.7% of all privately owned agricultural land. USDA reports that foreign holdings of U.S. agricultural land have increased by an average of 2.3 million acres per year since 2015. Most acreage increases were in forestland, cropland, and pasture.

These data cover both foreign-owned and U.S. subsidiary-owned land. Forestland accounted for 49% of all foreign-owned private land in 2019, cropland accounted for 25%, and pasture and other agricultural land for 24%. Nonagricultural land, such as homesteads and roads, accounted for 2%. Individuals and entities in five countries accounted for more than 62% of all foreign-owned agricultural land in 2019.

As a share of all foreign-owned acres, these were Canada (29%, mostly forestland), the Netherlands (14%), Italy (7%), the United Kingdom (6%), and Germany (6%). Other countries with foreign investments of more than 500,000 acres were Portugal, Denmark,

Luxembourg, Mexico, the Cayman Islands, Switzerland, and Japan. Notably absent in the report was the country of China.

All 50 states report foreign investment/ownership in U.S. private agricultural land. In 2019, states with the highest number of foreign-owned acres were Texas (4.4 million acres), Maine (3.3 million acres), Alabama (1.8 million acres), and Washington and Colorado (1.5 million acres each). Other states with more than 1 million foreign owned acres were Arkansas, California, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Michigan, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Oregon.

Current law imposes no restrictions on foreign persons or entities with respect to eligibility for crop and livestock insurance premium subsidies. Other programs, such as the Dairy Margin Coverage program, make no distinction about a producer’s or owner’s citizenship. Similarly, no citizenship requirement exists for a sugar processor, or a cane or beet producer, operating under the U.S. sugar program.

However, foreign persons or entities are not eligible for permanent disaster assistance programs, such as the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish Program; Livestock Forage Disaster Program; Livestock Indemnity Program; and Tree Assistance Program. The Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program also explicitly prohibits payments to foreign entities other than resident aliens.

There have been efforts recently in the US Congress to pass legislation that would effectively “prohibit the purchase” of agricultural land by “companies owned, in full or in part, by China, Russia, Iran, or North Korea”. Other related legislation seeks to limit the eligibility of foreign persons and entities for USDA farm program benefits.

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS), Renée Johnson, Specialist in Agriculture Policy

We welcome New Voting Members!

The Cook County Farm Bureau Board of Directors welcomes the following Cook County Farm Bureau members who joined the organization or reclassified their membership recently to Regular* or Professional Status**:

- Garfield Produce Company**
- John Edwards**
- Herban Produce**
- Paul Nourbash**
- Patrick Pollard**
- Marjorie Schilling**
- Erika Nunez**

Regular and Professional member status is important in the support of the Cook County Farm Bureau’s efforts at advocacy, education, and public relations.

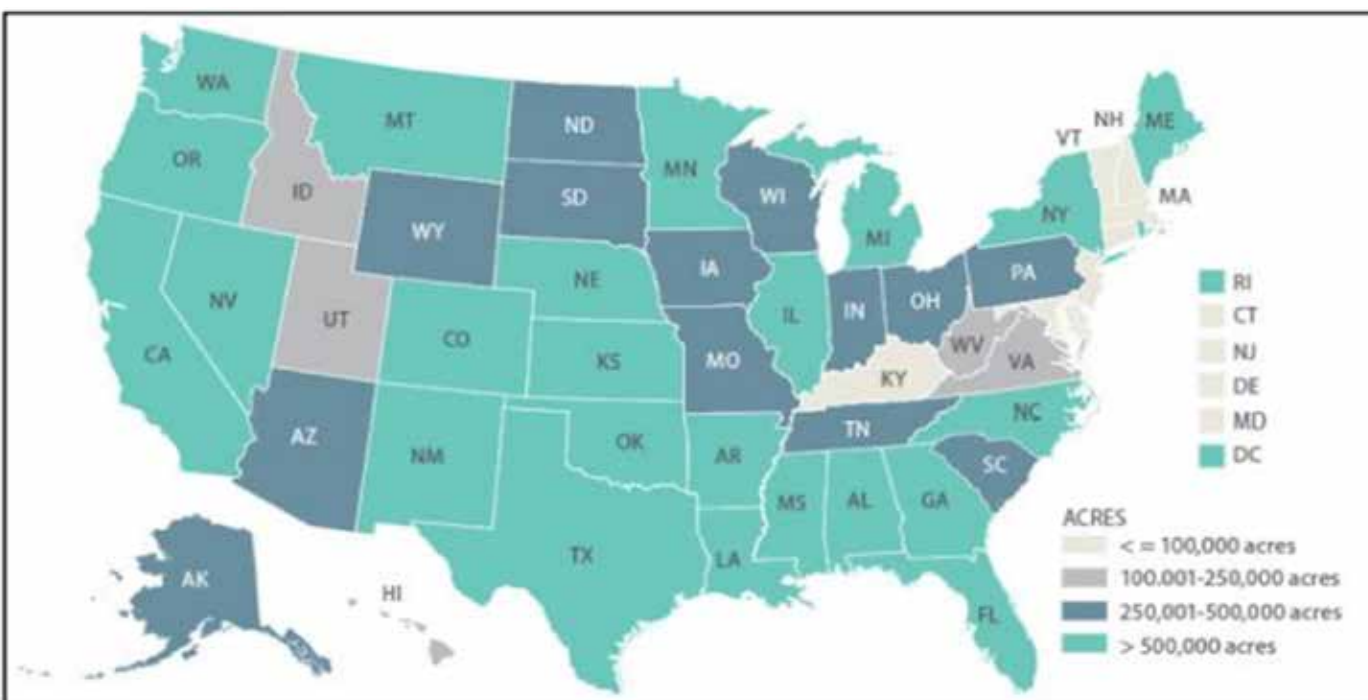
FarmWeek, the largest weekly agricultural newspaper in the state of Illinois, will provide great up-to-date information about agriculture issues, production, and news.

Voting rights and leadership opportunities come as a part of the membership.

We also thank the many new Associate members that joined the organization to access our membership benefits and services over the past few months. We look forward to serving you as well!

*A Cook County Farm Bureau regular voting membership is required of all who join our association that have a vested interest in and receive income from the production of farm products as an owner or operator of a farm business.

**Professional voting membership status is available to all those employed in agriculture related occupations, even with no farm income. If you are interested in this Level membership and the benefits it carries, please contact see CFB at 708-354-3276 or go to www.cookcfb.org



Source: CRS from USDA data available at USDA, *Foreign Holdings of U.S. Agricultural Land Through December 31, 2019.*

For your comprehensive access to membership discounts & offers,

Go to
www.cookcfb.org/membership



Diane Merrion, CCFB Director of Ag Literacy

Ag Lit Bit

As I left the cold behind for a short vacation, I've followed with intrigue the heart transplant of Mr. David Bennett this past month. How amazing it's been to learn yet another

unique fact about the importance of pigs and not just to our food system. When we teach students about the many uses of agriculture, they enjoy learning some of the newer uses of corn, soybeans, and livestock. They are most surprised about pigs as they think of them only for their meat uses such as ribs, bacon, and pork chops. When we push them beyond those well-known by-products and discuss bone china, paint brushes, and gelatin, they become more intrigued. They are really surprised to learn about heart valves and the fact that human valve replacements have included pigs for a long time. It's amazing to think that the story continues now that Mr. Bennett has received a heart transplant from a genetically modified pig.

As vacation continued and I was thinking less about livestock and more about the sand, sun, and surf, the topic of livestock crept right back into the picture as I stumbled upon this.

While walking along a stretch of beach, there suddenly appeared an amazing sand sculpture of a dairy cow! I came to find out that Charlie Green, a former dairy farmer from Michigan, creates these bovine beach sculptures for everyone's enjoyment.

What do farmers do in the winter, you might ask? Well, Mr. Green, the sculptor, is said to start visualizing his creations during the winter



months and return to begin creating them on the beach. The designs include using sand, shells and beach grass and are titled with the theme of cow(s).

I was lucky enough to talk with Mr. Green when I noticed several more sculptures on my walk the next day. I found him creating his next cow in the sand using just his hands and a bucket of water. He said he gets so much enjoyment making his cows for the beach goers. We talked ag for a bit and his parting comments to me were how important our job is at farm bureau to educate the next generation about the importance of agriculture. Oh, the pressure, oh the pride in knowing our mission here is so on target.

Here's to a short, successful vacation including some genuine agriculture inspiration.

Diane can be reached at aipc@cookcfb.org.

Ongoing Teacher Shortage Affecting Food & Agriculture

Recent news of teacher shortages is old news to Luke Allen, Northeast Illinois AFNR Program Advisor.

"In 16 years assisting schools, Illinois has never been able to recruit as many teachers as we have needed. Although we have increased our supply by recruiting more teachers, our demand grows every year; we just can't keep up," said Allen.

The Illinois Agri-Food Alliance reports that the agri-food sector is the top economic generator in our state. Illinois jobs directly related to food and agriculture, including farming and ranching, manufacturing, and wholesale and retail functions, total over 900,000, representing nearly 15 percent of all Illinois employment. These jobs represent \$34 billion in wages and generate an economic output of \$147 billion dollars. When you add in the many industry-related indirect jobs, there are over 1.4 million jobs representing 23% of Illinois' workforce and contributing \$267 billion to the economy.

Illinois has experienced significant growth in Food & Agriculture instruction in the last 19 years:

- 21% increase in the number of schools offering AFNR courses.
- 29% increase in the number of AFNR teachers.

Source: Illinois Ag Education/FCAE (www.ILAgEd.org)

recruitment of AFNR teachers and growing the number of schools which teach AFNR to provide the much-needed talent pipeline for our state's largest industry."

The private sector is also working to increase recruitment and retention of AFNR teachers. The IAA Foundation, the charitable foundation of the Illinois Farm Bureau, provides cash awards to new teachers who enter the profession which grow each year they stay in the classroom. Some county farm bureaus have even specified annual scholarship awards just for those who wish to become AFNR teachers.

The State of Illinois allows those with relevant industry experience to use their experience as a credential to teach in career skill fields like healthcare, automotive, business, and AFNR. Your school district or local Regional Office of Education can help you complete that paperwork.

"Teaching is a very rewarding career. Not only do you get to share your passion with your students, but the pay and benefits are typically higher for AFNR teachers than other teachers because of the year-round nature of what we teach. The average starting salary for a new teacher this year is \$46,770, which does not include benefits."

If you or someone you know is interested in becoming a Food & Agriculture teacher, or if you would like assistance in getting these courses offered at your middle or high school, contact Northeast Illinois AFNR Program Advisor Luke Allen at LAllen@ILAgEd.org.

Learn more about the Agri-Food workforce needs at ilagrifood.org/workforce/.

"Because employment opportunities in AFNR (Agriculture, Food, & Natural Resources) careers are so abundant, we struggle to recruit enough people to teach. Illinois is investing in the



UPCOMING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES 2022



March 9 Earth Day Workshop featuring lessons on pollinators, soil, seeds. <https://bit.ly/3-9workshop>

June 20-22 Summer Ag Institute: Hop on the bus to visit farms and ag professionals as part of this 3-day traveling workshop. <http://bit.ly/ccfbSAI2022>



June 28-July 1 National Ag in the Classroom Conference* Head to New York to experience even more ways to include ag in your curriculum.

<https://www.agclassroom.org/conference/>
 *Scholarships can be found at <https://bit.ly/grants2022> or <https://www.agclassroom.org/teacher/grants/>

Learn How Maple Syrup is Made



Scan code to see how maple syrup is made

Book Donation



Our congratulations and thanks to retiring teacher, Michele Govea, who donated many teaching resources and books to our Ag Literacy library. We appreciate your dedication to using agriculture in your classroom throughout the years including attending our workshops and Summer Ag Institutes, along with your support of the Cook County Farm Bureau Foundation. Good luck on your next chapter.

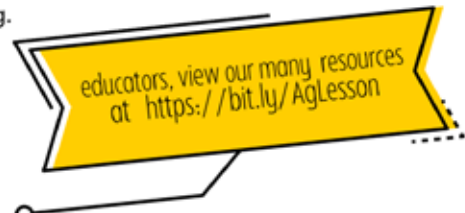
Growing A Climate for Tomorrow MARCH 22, 2022



This month we celebrate National Ag Day on March 22. The National Ag Day program encourages everyone to:

- Understand how food and fiber products are produced
- Appreciate the role agriculture plays in providing safe, abundant and affordable products
- Value the essential role of agriculture in maintaining a strong domestic and international economy
- Acknowledge and consider career opportunities in the agriculture, food and fiber industry including engineering, food science, farm production and much more.

Our Ag in the Classroom Program provides free ag literacy programming and resources for K-12 teachers in Cook County. Agriculture provides almost everything we eat, use and wear on a daily basis, but few people truly understand this contribution. Let us know how we can help you increase ag awareness in your schools or community by contacting Diane at aipc@cookcfb.org.



Agriculture Adventures for Families



The term "March Madness" was first used in 1939 when Illinois high school official Henry V. Porter referred to the original eight-team tournament by that name. However, the term didn't become associated with the NCAA Tournament until 1982, when CBS broadcaster Brent Musburger used it during his coverage of the tournament. Musburger claims that he got the term from car dealership commercials he saw while broadcasting the Illinois state high school basketball tournament. He started using it during those games and eventually brought it over to CBS. {<https://www.sportingnews.com>}

So what does agriculture have to do with basketball? Let's take a look.



Basketball and Agriculture



Uniforms—Many uniforms are made from **cotton**.

Basketball—Most basketballs used today are covered with a leather outer shell made from **cow hide**. One average cow hide can be used to make 12 regulation basketballs.

Shoes—Most basketball shoes are made from leather.

Basket—James Naismith invented the game of basketball in 1891 by nailing **peach** baskets to the wall.

Tickets, Programs, and Schedules—These are printed on paper from **trees** and possibly use soy ink made from **soybeans**.

Tape and Bandages—**Corn** dextrines and **cattle** gelatins are used as adhesives and binding agents.



Game Day Snacks and Agriculture

Pop—Sweetened with **corn** syrup.

Hot Dogs—**Pork** and **beef** in a **wheat** bun with relish made from cucumbers.

Peanuts and Popcorn—Both grown by farmers. Popcorn is the Illinois State Snack Food!

Nachos and Cheese—**Corn** flour with cheese made from **dairy cows**.

Soft Pretzels—**Wheat** flour and **vegetable oil**. (**Soybeans**)



Source: <https://beyondthebarndoor.files.wordpress.com/2021/03/basketball-charm.pdf>

The 2022 March Madness men's and women's tournaments start with Selection Sunday on March 13, 2022.

Basketball Math

$$\text{Basketball Hoop} + \text{Basketball} + \text{Basketball} = 9$$

$$\text{Basketball Jersey} - 3 + \text{Basketball Jersey} = 13$$

$$\text{Basketball Shoe} + \text{Basketball Jersey} = 14$$

$$\text{Basketball} + 4 = \text{Basketball Shoe}$$

$$\text{Basketball Hoop} = ?$$

Answer: 5

Choose your prize:

Choices include a \$25 Beggar's Pizza Gift Card, a \$25 Home Run Inn Gift Card, OR *3 AMC Movie Tickets *AMC Yellow tickets not valid in California, New York & New Jersey.

Complete the Word Search puzzle for your chance to win! Winners will be contacted by mail.

Mail to: Cook Co. Farm Bureau

Ag Adventures Word Search

6438 Joliet Rd

Countryside, IL 60525

Fax to: 708-579-6056

Email to: FBcooperator@gmail.com

Complete and submit an entry every month all in 2022 and your name is automatically entered into an "End of Year" drawing for a gift basket full of ag themed goodies. Good luck!

Last Month's Word Search Winner Is..

Richard Blume

March Word Search

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| Basketball | Popcorn |
| Corn | Shoes |
| Cotton | Snacks |
| Farmer | Soybean |
| Flour | Team |
| Game | Tickets |
| Hot dog | Tournament |
| Nachos | Uniform |

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

Membership #: _____

(Membership # is located on front of paper)

If you were to win, check your preference:

___ Beggar's Pizza GC ___ HRI GC ___ 3 Movie Tix
(If a choice is not made, movie tickets will be sent)

Deadline is the 20th of each month.

Z C P O N E Q U N Q Z F F R S
P N O C T F P X G L E M A G O
O S G T L T Q N L N T Y R T H
D R N O T W R A C O R N M N C
S K U A D O B P I T E T E E A
R R C X C T N S H O E S R M N
K R B P E K O S I A Y O F A C
A W O K G Z S H M C M Y N N C
V P S T E K C I T R T B R R Z
F A T Z G L T M O D O E N U U
B K H Y A Z I F C H F A F O T
W Z M P D P I B Y Z F N A T I
K A K T Q N V C D J S M E U I
J Z J Q U Z M U N Z R J Z I O
A O T M T O R N I D U R X T U

Ag Day Celebrates Impact of Family-Dominated Industry



local employees who feel like family. We seek guidance from a variety of industry professionals – including my husband’s precision farming expertise – to improve the farm’s economic and environmental viability. We shop local for fertilizer, seed, pesticides, insurances, tractors, trucks and fuel, adding to the collective efforts to support the local community and provide a financial livelihood for multiple households within it.

By nature, farmers problem-solve on and off the farm with the passionate intent to make a difference. In rural towns across Illinois, farmers serve as Sunday School teachers, 4-H leaders, sports coaches, school volunteers and FFA supporters. Farm shops host community gatherings, and farmers pool their unique resources to meet needs. A few years ago, farm families in our community provided the equipment and skilled labor necessary to erect a park playground, a volunteer effort that even the governor recognized and awarded.

The value and impact of Illinois agriculture extends beyond the state and even nation’s borders. Blessed with a navigable river system, Illinois ranks third nationally in the export of agricultural commodities, providing feed, food and fuel around the globe from farms owned and operated by families – families like ours who work together and gather around the table for Easter dinner, too.

About the author: Joanie Stiers farms with her family in West-Central Illinois, where they grow corn, soybeans, wheat, hay and cover crops and raise beef cattle, backyard chickens and a crop of farm kids.

Some families gather only for the major holidays. I work every day with the people who raised me.

Dad and I pair as a combine-and-cart duo for 14-hour days during harvest. In the off-season, Mom and I work from facing desks, handling bills and agency reporting requirements as a team. I communicate with my brother daily, together managing the details of running our crop and livestock farm, one of 71,000 such farms in Illinois.

An overwhelming 96% of Illinois farms are family owned and operated, a statistic worth recognizing in this season that honors National Ag Day on March 22 of 2022. That means families, not corporations, make most decisions about how food, feed and fuel are grown. Those farming partners represent any combination of spouses, siblings, cousins, fathers, mothers, sons, daughters and even in-laws and grandparents. My grandpa helped with harvest until he was 85. I soaked in those after-school moments when four generations of our family worked together in the same field.

We plant fields, harvest crops and manage books as a family with critical support from

Family Farm and Food Bytes

WALMART MAKES AN INVESTMENT IN VERTICAL FARMING START-UP – Walmart said Tuesday that it is investing in vertical farming company Plenty and plans to carry the start-up’s leafy greens in all California stores later this year. With the move, the country’s largest grocer is diving into a trendy area of food tech that brings farm produce closer to customers’ kitchen tables. (CNBC)

PRITZKER BUDGET OFFERS TEMPORARY TAX RELIEF - During a combined budget and state of the state message inside the State Capital in February, the governor reported on state finances, credit, overdue bills while presenting a budget for the State of Illinois for the FY 22-23 fiscal year. Proposals include temporary one-year freeze on grocery taxes, a temporary one-year freeze on gas taxes and a one-time property tax rebate.

Pritzker’s budget also includes a substantial increase for the Illinois Department of Agriculture cannabis regulatory oversight and licensing as well as funding for regulating industrial hemp. FarmWeek

FLIES FOR BREAKFAST? INSECTS ARE ABOUT TO BE PET FOOD, AND THE EFFORT WILL AIM FOR HUMAN PLATES AS WELL – Black soldier flies for breakfast, lunch or dinner? Archer-Daniels-Midland Co. is partnering with Paris-based biotech company InnovaFeed to invest in a future where this could be an everyday possibility. (MarketWatch)

ILLINOIS SNAP RECIPIENTS CAN BUY MORE GROCERIES ONLINE – Governor JB Pritzker and the Illinois Department of Human Services (IDHS) announced recently that the U.S. Department of Agriculture has approved Sam’s Club and Meijer Grocery for SNAP online purchasing. (WEHT)

A LOVE AFFAIR? HOW AMERICA’S INSATIABLE APPETITE IS INSPIRING INNOVATION IN THE CHOCOLATE SECTOR – Both start ups and multi-billion dollar food giants are looking at novel trading and technological techniques to find more socially just and environmentally sustainable ways to enjoy our nation’s favorite treat. (Forbes)

ILLINOIS REPRESENTED ON NEW URBAN ADVISORY COUNCIL - A longtime advocate for urban agriculture in Illinois has been appointed to serve on an inaugural USDA federal advisory committee. Angela Mason, associate VP for community engagement and senior director of Windy City Harvest at the Chicago Botanic Garden, is one of 12 members selected by USDA Sec. Tom Vilsack to work on the Advisory Committee for Urban Agriculture. FarmWeek

STRATTON LAUNCHES AG INITIATIVE OF FOOD INSECURITY, AG CAREER DIVERSITY - Seeking to expand access to fresh fruits and diversify Illinois agriculture sector, Lieut. Gov. Juliana Stratton launched a new initiative. Known as “Ag Connects Us All” or #AgConnectsUsAll on social media, the initiative stems from Stratton’s work chairing the Governor’s Rural Affairs Council and her efforts to raise awareness of and support for the state’s diverse agriculture industry. FarmWeek

About Family Farm and Food Bytes: This is a collection of articles gathered from both mainstream and agriculture media and is designed to keep you informed as a member and leader within the Cook County Farm Bureau® organization. The articles summarized above are not intended to represent Cook County Farm Bureau policy or positions, but rather to provide members an idea of what is being reported regionally, nationally, and globally.

Members...Your Spring Partners Magazine is on the Way!

Forget the snow by digging deep into your spring edition of Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) Partners. Here is what you can expect in the print edition and on the Partners website:



Features

Urban farm feeds mind, body and spirit
Pig farmer advocates for the family farm
How farmers manage soil health
Beeswax food wraps create a buzz
Prairie State Perspective

How farmers adapt to weather variability
Ask A Farmer

“What’s your biggest challenge during planting?”



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Growing To Serve You Better**



RURAL NURSE PRACTITIONER

Scholarship PROGRAM

Helping to meet the needs of primary care in rural Illinois. **RIMSAP.com**

DEADLINE IS MAY 1



Rural Nurse Practitioner Scholarship Program
Are you a registered nurse in Illinois enrolled in a University Nurse Practitioner Program? If so, you may be eligible for a \$4,000 scholarship towards educational expenses, in return for an agreement to practice primary care as a nurse practitioner in an approved rural community in Illinois for two years. For more information and an application, go to RIMSAP.com

Manifolds, Manolos, and Manure



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

Spring in Springfield is an exciting time. Birds return. Grass and trees awaken from a long winter nap usually punctuated by an ice storm. And legislators, staff, and lobbyists spring (pun intended) into action. In several quick months members of the third branch research. Draft. Introduce. Present at committee. Move to Third Reading. And pass legislation. All in the hopes of improving the State of Illinois in some manner or another.

As a young legislative staff person, it was an exciting time. Early mornings mixed with late nights. The rush of session. Excitement of debate. And the thrill of the legislative process.

This spring is no different, Senator Crowe and Representative Mason are excitedly promoting legislation to create the Agritourism Liability Act. Under this Act, agritourism operators would have liability protections from injuries resulting from inherent risks associated with participating in an agritourism activity. The Act would not provide liability protection if a participant's injury was the result of willful or wanton negligence on behalf of the operator. Farm Bureau supports Senate Bill 3107 and House Bill 5487. This legislation is of special interest to Cook County agritourism operators.

Speaking of agritourism operators, Senator Holmes has introduced Senate Bill 3008 to prohibit the use of certain animals at carnivals or at county fairs. The concern is that this could extend to the use of certain animals at agritourism venues. Farm Bureau is opposed to

Senate Bill 3008.

Farm Bureau is also working on updates to the Local Food, Farm, and Jobs Act to incentivize purchasing products from Illinois farms. House Bill 3089 also allows socially disadvantaged farmers in the state the opportunity to have a preference in the bid process where they might not be able to financially otherwise. The bill gives a suggested purchasing goal for the state along with a tracking program. Furthermore, this allows for state procurement to give a bid to a socially disadvantaged bid over traditional bids even if the cost is higher.

Cook County Farm Bureau leaders in February engaged in conversations regarding the creation of policy to address food deserts. Senate Bill 629 sponsored by Senator Fowler also addresses food deserts. Senate Bill 629 calls for the Illinois Department of Agriculture to create a nutritious food program to operate projects and strategies that focus on the distribution of fresh and nutritious food as well as education in food preparation and nutrition in food deserts. Early Farm Bureau policy drafts also address supporting programs to encourage healthy eating, food preparation, and proper food storage. The draft policy also supports incentivizing grocery stores in underserved areas.

Legislative session is scheduled to end early this time around. Legislators are expected to be back in their districts and campaigning by mid-April. Despite the shorten scheduled, Farm Bureau will continue to advocate for members.

Bona can be reached at Bona@cookcfb.org

Shore Outlines EPA priorities Affecting Ag

Addressing climate change, upgrading infrastructure, revising the definition of the "waters of the United States" (WOTUS), and expanding the use of biofuels are all top priorities for the leader of the Midwest headquarters of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Debra Shore, who President Joe Biden and EPA Administrator Michael Regan appointed last fall to head EPA Region 5, outlined those issues during the Illinois Farm Bureau's Agriculture Legislative Roundtable. Shore is a former Metropolitan Water Reclamation District Commissioner with whom Cook County Farm Bureau has developed a strong and ongoing relationship.

She also explained her commitment to keep open the lines of communication with Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) and farmers throughout the state.

"I look forward to working with you, to learning from you, to visiting farms and facilities, and assisting you with your priorities and challenges in the coming years," Shore said.

Climate change, Shore said, is already affecting the health, safety, and economic well-being of communities across the U.S., with the Midwest experiencing "unstable weather patterns," including periods of more intense and less predictable rain events alongside longer periods of drought.

Those storms and floods overwhelm municipal infrastructure, cause property damage, and diminish agricultural productivity and impact food supply chains, Shore said.

"The fact is there's no small town, big city, suburban or rural community that's not affected by climate change; our rural, underserved and poor communities feel the effects that much more," Shore said. "We must act with as much urgency as we can muster to mitigate climate change, while simultaneously preparing for its impacts across rural, urban, and tribal areas."

Part of that solution includes rehabilitating the nation's aging infrastructure, Shore said, pointing to the Infrastructure, Investment and Jobs Act. It includes \$43.5 billion over the next five years for EPA's State Revolving Fund, which funds water quality and nutrient reduction projects.

"But as important as funding is, we need partners to help execute conservation projects," Shore said. "Conservation practices employed by farmers are especially important in managing nutrient loads."

Shore further explained that Regan is "committed to developing a durable definition of (WOTUS) that prioritizes implementation, protects our vital water resources, and ultimately withstands the test of time."

The agency in fall 2021 formally proposed to repeal the 2020 Navigable Waters Protection Rule, re-establish the definition of WOTUS to what was in place from 1986 to 2015, and broaden the federal government's authority under the Clean Waters Act.

Shore said comments from IFB and others in the ag sector are "crucial" to developing the new definition, reiterating that the proposed rule retains agricultural exemptions like prior converted cropland.

On biofuels, Shore said EPA's Renewable Fuel Standards proposal "reflects the Biden administration's commitment to reset and strengthen the RFS program following years of mismanagement by the last administration, and to address challenges in the fuels market stemming from the COVID-19 pandemic."

The administration proposes to reduce the number of biofuels refiners must blend into conventional fuels in 2021, retroactively cut 2020's totals, and boost 2022 targets.

The proposal also features changes to the small refinery exemptions, including a proposal to deny all 65 pending applications for the exemptions, which Shore said represents "steps to solidify the foundation of the program for future growth."

Shore also touched on changes around federal pesticide policies, explaining EPA will develop "more flexible ways to mitigate pesticide impacts to threatened and endangered species."

The agency plans to develop a pilot project with grower groups to demonstrate the changes, Shore said.

"We will work closely with you on these and any other developments to ensure that we understand the impacts of any changes to the farming community," Shore said.

Members and the Environment Benefit from MWRD's Program

Farm Bureau members and Cook County residents have the opportunity to utilize EQ biosolids and EQ compost available during the growing season at the Metropolitan Water Reclamation District (MWRD).

EQ biosolids are a product of wastewater treatment that supplies organic matter and improves the structure and porosity of soils. Biosolids can be used as a soil amendment or conditioner when establishing turf grass, athletics fields, parks, and other recreational areas and for restoration of brownfields and other disturbed lands. Biosolids can also be used on agricultural and hay fields.

EQ compost can be blended with topsoil and potting soil for establishing plants or used as mulch around plants. EQ compost supplies organic matter and improves the structure and porosity of soils.

Both EQ biosolids and compost meet the highest U.S. Environmental Protection Agency standards for exceptional quality.

For addition information or to order contact the MWRD at biosolids@mwr.org. Please note these materials are limited and are only available during the growing season. To learn more about the products visit <https://bit.ly/3o3W8A5>.

Farm Bureau Looking to Address Food Access

Cook County Farm Bureau® leaders are actively researching and developing a policy proposal to address food access. Nearly 39.5 million people in the United States are living in low-income and low food access areas, more commonly known as 'food deserts.'

Food deserts are disproportionately found in high-poverty areas typically characterized with higher rates of abandoned or vacant homes, residents with lower levels of education, and higher rates of unemployment. Food deserts are also a disproportionate reality for Black communities. Lack of access to fresh, healthy foods may contribute to poor diet, obesity, and other diet-related illness.

The draft policy language provides that Farm Bureau supports:

- Incentivizing grocery stores in underserved areas.
- Programs to encourage healthy eating, food preparation, and proper food storage.
- Healthy food preparation programs.
- The development of policies to support

grocery stores and neighborhood-based farmers' markets.

- Streamlining the process for permitting and launching grocery stores.
- Partnering with the community when selecting food desert measurements, policies, and interventions.
- Expanding pilot efforts allowing customers to use Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) benefits to purchase groceries online not including service fees and delivery charges.
- Food insecurity networks like food banks, non-profit grocers, and produce carts.
- Streamlining food pantry expansions as a stopgap measure.

Leaders recognize that any approach to address food access should include short- and long-term solutions as well as the underlying causes of unequal food access.

Members interested in sharing their thoughts, comments, and feedback are encouraged to contact Bona Heinsohn at bona@cookcfb.org.



Representative Sonya Harper, pictured center, met with Cook County Farm Bureau® leaders during the Statewide Legislative Reception in Springfield. Representative Harper is the House Agriculture and Conservation Committee Chair and is a participant in the Adopt-a-Legislator® program. Pictured with Representative Harper left to right is Governmental Affairs Committee leader Amy Hansmann and Board Member Jim Gutzmer.



Senate President Don Harman met with Cook County Farm Bureau leader Amy Hansmann during a recent conference/reception in Springfield. The Statewide Legislative Reception is held in conjunction with the Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference. The reception and conference returned to an in-person event after taking 2021 due to the pandemic.

John Deere Member Benefit

Illinois Farm Bureau members can sign up to receive an automatic John Deere Rewards membership upgrade to Platinum 1, unlocking BIG SAVINGS on select agriculture and turf equipment. Platinum 1 members will also receive monthly offers for Rewards-exclusive discounts on parts, merchandise, and much more!

Check out the savings on the following equipment categories:

- Commercial Mowing -- \$200 to \$1,700 off
- Residential Mowing -- \$50 to \$150 off
- Utility Vehicles -- \$100 to \$300 off
- Tractors -- \$200 to \$300 off
- Compact Construction -- \$550 to \$1,400 off

Don't wait – visit JohnDeere.com/FarmBureau today to register!



Details and Restrictions

- Must be a valid member of Farm Bureau for 30 days
- A valid member email address is required for eligibility.
- Discounts are subject to change without notice

Pollinator Garden Resources Available

A third of the food and drink individuals consume depends on pollination. As a keystone group, the survival of many other plant and animal species depends on pollinators for their survival. Pollinators include bees, butterflies, moths, beetles, flies, birds, and bats.

However, pollinator numbers have declined steadily due to habitat loss, degradation, and fragmentation as well as insecticide, pesticide, disease, parasite, and invasive plant pressure.

To offset the loss of habitat, consider creating a pollinator garden, a stopping point for monarchs as each fall hundreds of millions of monarch butterflies migrate from the United

States and Canada to the mountains in central Mexico for the winter. They return in spring, specifically in May.

A pollinator garden is a garden that is planted predominately with plants that provide nectar or pollen for a range of pollinating insects.

To learn more about the importance of pollinators and pollinator landscapes visit <https://youtu.be/ETFzCzbh5k4>.

Additional pollinator resources are available at <https://cookcfb.org/discover-local/for-the-love-of-gardening/Profile/party-for-the-pollinators>.

Cook County Financial Representatives of the Month

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



Margaret Jura

Chicago North Agency, Victoria Nygren, Agency Manager

*Margaret Jura has been named Career Financial Representative of the month for January 2022. Her office is located at 6136 N. Milwaukee Ave., Ste F, in Chicago, IL. Her phone number is 773-631-9107. Margaret has been a Financial Representative since January 2008.



Leonardo Rojas

Chicago North Agency, Victoria Nygren, Agency Manager

Leonardo Rojas has been named Employee Financial Representative of the month for January 2022. His office is located at 1426 W. Fullerton Ave., in Chicago, IL. His phone number is 773-687-0443. Leonardo has been a Financial Representative since December 2019.



Brett Gerber

Chicago Northeast, Sharon Stemke, Agency Manager

Brett Gerber has been named Career Financial Representative of the month for January 2022. His office is located at 401 S. Milwaukee Ave., Ste 270., in Wheeling, IL. His phone number is 847-419-1281. Brett has been a Financial Representative since February 2016.



Joe Sepsey

Chicago Northwest, Kevin Gomes, Agency Manager

Joe Sepsey has been named Career Financial Representative of the month for January 2022. His office is located at 3205 N Wilke Rd., Ste. 114, Prairie IL. His phone number is 847-640-7745. Joe has been a Financial Representative since January 1991.



Faustino Ramirez

Chicago Northwest, Kevin Gomes, Agency Manager

*Faustino Ramirez has been named Employee Financial Representative of the month for January 2022. His office is located at 1515 E. Woodfield Rd., Ste.930, Schaumburg, IL. His phone number is 847-891-3937. Faustino has been a Financial Representative since October 2017.



Steve Phillips

Chicago South Agency, Jeff Maxson, Agency Manager

*Steve Phillips has been named Career Financial Representative of the month for January 2022. His office is located at 1401 S. State St., #150 in Chicago, IL. His phone number is 312-583-1416. Steve has been a Financial Representative since November 2014.



Kirk Gregory Jr.

Chicago South Agency, Jeff Maxson, Agency Manager

Kirk Gregory Jr. has been named Employee Financial Representative of the month for January 2022. His office is located at 1401 S. State St., #150 in Chicago, IL. His phone number is 773-619-0649. Kirk has been a Financial Representative since February 2018.



Erica Storrs-Gray

Orland Park Agency, Cary Tate, Agency Manager

Erica Storrs-Gray has been named Career Financial Representative of the Month for January 2022. Her office is located at 12130 S. Harlem Ave., Unit A, in Palos Heights, IL. Her phone number is 708-671-1465. Erica has been a Financial Representative since February 2006.



Nadia Abueid

Orland Park Agency, Cary Tate, Agency Manager

*Nadia Abueid has been named Employee Financial Representative of the Month for January 2022. Her office is located at 12130 S. Harlem Ave., Unit. A, in Palos Heights, IL. His phone is 708-995-0233. Nadia has been a Financial Representative since December 2019.



Bob Smith

South Holland Agency, Jeff Orman, Agency Manager

*Bob Smith has been named Career Financial Representative of the Month for January 2022. His office is located at 18159 Dixie Hwy., in Homewood, IL. His phone number is 708-798-4844. Bob has been a Financial Representative since March 1980.



Darryl Hevry

South Holland Agency, Jeff Orman, Agency Manager

Darryl Hevry has been named Employee Financial Representative of the Month for January 2022. His office is located at 10607 S. Harlem Ave., Unit. 101, in Worth, IL. His phone is 708-480-5091. Darryl has been a Financial Representative since June 2019.

*Indicates that this Financial Representative is a CCFB Financial Certified Representative. The Cook County Farm Bureau Certified Financial Representative Program is designed to strengthen the partnership and relationship shared by Financial Representatives from Country Financial with the Cook County Farm Bureau organization.

Mayflower

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 Visit: www.mayflowercruisesandtours.com

For your comprehensive access to membership discounts & offers,
Go to www.cookcfb.org/membership

<h2>ABC'S OF FOOD</h2> <p>At Cook County Farm Bureau, we love food... All types of foods in all types of shapes and all types of flavors. In this feature, we will be highlighting different types of food, primarily fruits and vegetables, from A to Z (we are not sure what to do with X yet!).</p>	
<p>This month "C"</p>	<h1>CELERY</h1> 
<p>Celery is a low-calorie and potassium-rich vegetable which also provides fiber and folate in every serving.</p>	<p>Celery is low in protein, with less than 1 gram per cup.</p>
 <p>Celery was used as ancient "bouquet of flowers", to reward winners of athletic games in the Ancient Greece.</p>	<p>Despite its low calorie content, celery provides several micronutrients. It contains potassium, folate, choline, vitamin A, and vitamin K. Celery also offers some natural sodium and fluoride.</p>
<p>1623 The first recorded mention of celery in France was in 1623.</p>	<p>Celery is naturally fat-free, with very minimal amounts of fatty acids.</p>
<p>BONUS "C" FOOD...CASSAVA</p>	
	<p>Root vegetable (nutty flavored, starch) native to South America and widely consumed in many countries around the globe. It is a very drought tolerant crop.</p>
<p>It can be consumed whole, graded or ground into flour. Used to make tapioca.</p>	<p>Provides many important nutrients including resistant starch.</p> 
<p>Next month...Dragon Fruit</p>	

Source: mobile-cuisine.com and verywellfit.com

This Month in Cook County Agriculture...

2022 Live Local: Food & Farmers Market Conference on March 23 & 24 at the Embassy Suites in East Peoria. The upcoming conference is hosted by Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) and Illinois Farmers Market Association (IFMA). The two-day conference will bring local farmers, local organizations, and local businesses together to highlight Illinois' food systems, from farms to consumers. The event is hosted through Live Local, Shop Local, an IFB program connecting local food and farm businesses with Illinois communities. IFB and ILFMA members may register now through March 9 for \$45; non-members may register now through March 9 for \$70. After March 9, members may register onsite for \$60; non-members may register onsite for \$90. Registration is open online at www.ilfb.org/livelocal. For additional information, contact Raghela Scavuzzo, rscavuzzo@ilfb.org or Sharon Dodd, sdodd@ilfb.org.

The Will – South Cook Soil and Water Conservation District is currently taking orders for the spring tree and fish sale. Plants, shrubs, and trees are available this spring in various starter sizes. Tree order pickup is on April 28-30, 8am-12pm.

Fish varieties include channel catfish, largemouth bass, triploid grass carp, rainbow trout, black crappie, bluegill, and minnows. Fish orders must be placed by Wednesday, April 5. All orders are prepaid only. Fish pickup is Saturday, April 30 from 8am-12pm.

All pickups will be at the Will – South Cook SWCD building located at 1201 S. Gouger Rd. in New Lenox. Order forms are available on the District Facebook page, website, or from the office. Contact 815-462-3106 x3, info@willscookswcd.org | www.facebook.com/willsouthcookSoilandWater/ | www.will-scook

Classifieds

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

Email your ad (and photo if you have one) to fbcooperator@gmail.com. Please be sure to include your full name, Farm Bureau number, and phone number. Deadline for Classified ads is the 17th of each month. Any ads submitted after the 17th will appear in the following months. Co-Operator. Members may run up to four non-commercial classified ads annually for free. Any ads submitted after the fourth, will be charged.

If mailing your ad, please mail to: Cook County Farm Bureau, Attention: Classified Ads, 6438 Joliet Rd, Countryside, IL 60525. You can also fax your ad to 708-579-6056.

For Sale

New Window Pella- One piece (2 double hangs) 74"x 35 \$175. One piece Fanlight (Half Circle) 33"x69" \$150. One Triangle 71" x 28" ht. \$100. One solid Oak French door 32" \$150. One solid pine door 32" w/window \$75. Call Louie 847-361-9292.

Fantastic opportunity- Solo brick commercial building, with full basement, zone b2, 2350sq. ft, 1 mile from expressway, very near Arlington Park Metra and future Chicago Bears Stadium. Call 847-259-9339.

Sears 12ft Aluminum fishing boat, includes oars, 2 anchors and a Stearns life vest, good condition \$250. Call Ron 773-229-9123.

For sale 2- Automobiles BMW 2001 4-door model 740. BMW 2001 model 740-IL 4-door. Call Mary for details 847-297-6807.

Jeep Wrangler Deluxe heavy duty hardtop storage cart. Indoor/Outdoor carpeting to protect your Jeep hardtop. Fits perfect & secure saves space in garage. Locking casting wheels & rear liftgate retainer bar. Paid over \$200 never been used. Asking \$100. Call 708-654-2010.

2002 Jaguar XKR 100 limited edition, supercharged convertible, every available option, with 16k on it. For details call Jim 773-581-4400.

Courvoisier Erte collection Limited Edition, un-opened and other collectible items. Call for pricing 773-581-4400.

For Rent

Vacation Villas at Fantasy world II Resort in Kissimmee, Florida. Seven (7) nights in one bedroom suite, full kitchen, outdoor swimming pool, sleeps four (4). \$650 for seven (7) nights. No presentation is required. Call Ms. Day at 708-347-9369 for availability.

5 Star Resort 3br/2br Condo 2 miles from Disney World Orlando. Rental rates from \$119/night. Call 630-853-7669 or go to www.vrbo.com/218673.

Wanted

Wanted to buy broken or good gold jewelry, honest prices paid, turn broken chains, bracelets, earrings, dental gold into cash. Call Bob 708-602-3350.

Northwest suburban member, one thing to buy, gold, silver coins before 1964, civil war currency, silver, and gold certificates before 1934, large denomination bills. Call 630-667-4032.

Wanted to buy vintage and old toys, planes, trains, automobiles, and boats etc. Old balloon tire bicycles, 20' high rise handlebar bikes, motor bikes, and motorcycles. Also looking to purchase a home safe. Call 708-361-8230.

Wanting to buy your HO scale on N scale electric train engines, cars, buildings, or anything train related. Do you have electric trains in your closet, basement, crawl space, attic or garage that you're not using? I buy train items from just a few pieces to hundreds of pieces at a time. Why sell them bit by bit, I'll offer you a price on all you have! I'm retired and just enjoy trains. I realize that some may need work from sitting for a long time, but I have the time to fix them! TURN THOSE UNWANTED TRAIN ITEMS INTO CASH and give me a call! I also buy sort cars. Call 630-272-4433 ask for Ron. Thanks!

Wanted: Part Time worker to provide periodic maintenance for 20,000 sq. feet, office building and grounds. Diverse skills in areas in HVAC systems, carpentry, plants and grounds, basic electrical and comfortable with hands-on labor. Hourly 8-12 hours per week. Send cover letter and resume to Cook County Farm Bureau, 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525.

FREE CLASSIFIED ADS

For Cook County Farm Bureau members
All Cook County Farm Bureau members may run four non-commercial classified ads annually for free in the Co-Operator. Only items of personal property will be accepted. Ads must be in the office by the 17th of each month.

Category:

- For Sale
- For Rent
- Wanted

To place an ad, call the CCFB office at 708-354-3276 or mail details to Cook County Farm Bureau, 6438 Joliet Road, Countryside, IL 60525. You can also fax your ad to 708-579-6056 or email to juanita@cookcfb.org. Non-member ad rate: \$.75 per word; \$15.00 minimum

Congratulations on the Recent Appointment

Congratulations on the recent appointment of Cook County Farm Bureau member, Sherryanne Porter, to Treasurer for the Illinois State Beekeepers Association (ISBA). The ISBA is a statewide association of affiliated beekeeping

associations in Illinois, promoting interest in honeybees and beekeeping by encouraging good beekeeping in Illinois. Best wishes to Sherryanne in her new leadership role with ISBA!



Farm Bureau leader Amy Hansmann and staff Bona Heinsohn pose for a photo with Senator Mattie Hunter (pictured centered) during a recent Statewide Legislative Reception in Springfield.



Programs, Workshops, and Webinars

For Members, Farmers, Teachers, Landowners, Foodies, Business owners, and those that want new experiences and to have a great time!

Register today for the following great programs by calling the office at 708-354-3276 or at www.cookcfb.org. Scan our QR for our Events Calendar.



Shred Day

Bring any old documents (up to 3 bankers' boxes) that you would like to have shredded.
Date: Saturday, March 12
Time: 10am-12pm
Location: 4845 167th St #101, Oak Forest, IL 60452
Price: No Charge
Registration/Description: Call the CCFB at 708-354-3276 to make a reservation



Live Local: Local Food & Farmers Market Conference

The two-day conference will bring local farmers, local organizations, and local businesses together to highlight Illinois' food systems, from farms to consumers. The event is hosted through Live Local, Shop Local, an IFB program connecting local food and farm businesses with Illinois communities.
Date: March 23rd & March 24, 2022
Time: All Day
Location: Embassy Suites, Peoria IL

Price: March 9 for \$45; non-members may register now through March 9 for \$70. After March 9,

members may register onsite for \$60; non-members may register onsite for \$90.
Registration: Open through March 9 for \$45; non-members for \$70. After March 9, members may register onsite for \$60; non-members may register onsite for \$90. Conference cost includes two light breakfasts, two lunches, appetizers at networking hour, and snacks and beverages throughout each day. Meals will include locally sourced food from Peoria and additional central Illinois areas; participants can learn more about the farms and communities providing fresh food through sustainable food systems.



CCFB DIY Virtual Crocheting Class - CANCELLED

Was Scheduled for Thursday, March 24



Workshop on Preparing Wills and Trusts and Transferring Non-Titled Property Estate Planning and Trust Administration Presented by Thomas J. Olofsson, J.D., Estate Planning Attorney

Do you need to update your will? Do you know what to do in preparing a will and a trust? Do you understand what probate court is? This program will provide the advantages and disadvantages of preparing a will and trust. The program will inform you what types of information you will need to gather and decisions you will need make before meeting with a lawyer to prepare a will or trust. Also,

tips will be shared on what to look for in choosing a lawyer and where to locate a lawyer for this task.

Date: Tuesday, April 5

Time: 6:30-8:00pm

Location: Zoom (the zoom link will be emailed to all participants the evening before the class)

Price: No charge for Cook County Farm Bureau Members. \$10 for non-members

Registration: Call the CCFB at 708-354-3276.



Butterfly Planter Workshop

Goebbert's garden center staff will lead us in creating our own 15" butterfly pollinator planter filled with flowering annuals that will attract butterflies and create beautiful visual interest! Join us for this must attend spring event by registering today-class size is limited to 15.

Date: Wednesday, May 11, 2020

Time: 10:30-11:30 p.m.

Location: Goebbert's Farm & Garden Center | 40 W Higgins Road, South Barrington, IL

Price: \$50.00 for members and guest, includes 15" pot and materials

In-Person: Limited to 15 registrations

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

Coming Soon!!

COOK COUNTY FARM BUREAU
MEMBER
APPRECIATION
WEEK

April 18 - April 22

Watch the April edition of the Co-Operator for more details. As a teaser, each day, we will offer a grand prize gift basket for a lucky member with other opportunities for prizes and gifts throughout the week.

Farm Bureau Opportunities Abound in March

Cook County Farm Bureau® is a diverse and robust association filled with a myriad of diverse volunteer opportunities. Join us the second week of March for Food Checkout Day when in conjunction with our partners we'll support local, Cook County food pantries and families in need. Volunteers are needed to assist with food delivery on March 7, 8, and 10. Contact Bona Heinsohn at bona@cookcfb.org for additional information.

Volunteers are also needed to assist with preparations for the Lincoln Park Zoo Pollinator Program. On April 30, Cook County and Illinois Farm Bureau will join the Zoo for the "City Nature Challenge" and connect zoo-goers with the amazing benefits of pollinators. Pollinators are responsible for one in four bites of food we eat. Volunteers are needed for pollinator seed packet and make-and-take activity prep. Contact Bona Heinsohn at bona@cookcfb.org for additional information.

Please contact the Farm Bureau office at 708-354-3276 for additional and diverse volunteer opportunities.



Spring is a Great Time to Test Your Soil!

Soil Testing Kits Available

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

Complete kit guidelines and instructions, as well as mailing information, included in the test kit. Members will receive test results and basic recommendations within two weeks.

Farm Bureau Soil Test Kit discounted member pricing:

1 sample Soil Test Kit: \$27 | 2 sample kit: \$35 | 3 sample kit: \$53 | 1 sample Soil & Lead Test Kit: \$53 | 1 sample Lead Only Test Kit: \$45

Non-member pricing also available. Costs are subject to change.

Soil Kits are available at the Cook County Farm Bureau. To order, call 708-354-3276, using a Visa, MasterCard, or Discover at no additional charge.



Soil Testing Program



Access your great membership benefit package of discounts, deals, and services at www.cookcfb.org/membership/member-benefits