**2016 WHAT A GREAT IDEA!**

**Project Ideas for County Farm Bureaus**

County Farm Bureau annual reports submitted in the Illinois Farm Bureau PEARS (Program Evaluation and Awards Reporting System) Program provide several kinds of feedback to assist county Farm Bureaus in future program development.

This booklet features over 250 Project Ideas for county use. Each project was nominated by county Farm Bureaus for "MOST OUTSTANDING PROJECT AWARD" consideration and was placed by the evaluators in the "top 3-5" for each membership group in each program area, as well as the Young Leaders Committees.

PEARS Evaluators selected the "Most Outstanding Project" in each of the five membership groups for each of the eight program areas and Young Leader/Young Farmers. These projects, completed by 33 counties, are recognized at the 2016 IFB Annual Meeting and are indicated with a \* in this booklet.

To get best county use of this resource, share appropriate project ideas with county committee chairs. Or better yet, duplicate the entire book or parts of it for each chair. Contact the county that did the project to get additional details.

The booklet is also available on ilfb.org. Select “Get Involved,” select “Grow Committee & Teams” and select “Ideas for Your County Farm Bureau Committee”.

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Disclaimer:  This booklet was prepared by Illinois Farm Bureau Member Services & Public Relations (MSPR) Division exactly as submitted by the county Farm Bureaus. MSPR disclaims all typographical, grammatical, or punctuation errors.

**2016 MOST OUTSTANDING PROJECTS**

**Program Evaluation Awards Reporting System**

PEARS evaluators selected these 48 county Farm Bureau projects as 2016 MOST OUTSTANDING PROJECTS. Each project received an award certificate at the 2016 IFB Annual Meeting.

**MEMBERSHIP GROUPS**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Program****Areas** | **I** | **II** | **III** | **IV** | **V** |
| Ag Literacy | Ag JeopardyLawrence County | Agriculture Is CoolClark County | Imagination AcresMarshall-Putnam | Flick On The FarmLivingston County | Teen TeachersChampaign County |
| Commodities &Marketing | Barging Ahead For Stronger EconomiesStark County | CFB Hosts Anhydrous Safety And Training SeminarClay County | Illinois River TourMarshall-Putnam | Hamburger Cook-OffCass-Morgan | Farm Stroll & MarketMcHenry County |
| Health & Safety | Farm Safety Grant-Farm Safety DayBrown County | Auxiliary Lighting For Farm EquipmentWashington County | Safety Is No Accident 4-H CampaignKnox CountyFarm & Community Safety DaySaline County | Traffic Safety DaysWilliamson County | Farm And Labor MedicineChampaign County |
| Legislative / Political Process | Keeping Ag In The Green With AtrazineStark County | Farm Tour With Congresswoman’s District DirectorMercer County | Legislative Listening SessionWayne County | Congresswoman And CFB Host Women In Ag DiscussionKankakee County | Harvest “Leadership Picnic”Kane County |
| Local Affairs | Welcome To The World Of RefugesPulaski-Alexander | Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy VideosMercer County | SET ProgramMarshall-Putnam | Lock & Dam TourCass-MorganAdopt County Board MembersMontgomery County | Two-Day Staff Exchange ProgramCook County |
| Communication & Promotion | Farm Frenzy…The Farm Comes To TownMassac County | Farm-To-Fork ExpoUnion County | Farm To Fork GalaKnox County | Family Night On The FarmHenry County | Ag Night At The SymphonyChampaign County |
| Member Relations | #WIA2016Stark County | FB ACT Appreciation DinnerFranklin County | Young Leader ExchangeLee CountyAg Service AwardWarren-Henderson | Post-Harvest CelebrationCass-Morgan | Leadership AcademyChampaign County |
| Policy Development | Policy Development Breakfast ScramblesDouglas County | Annual Meeting SurveyWashington County | Policy Development MeetingsFulton County | Noise OrdinanceRandolph County | What Is Your OpinionWill County |
| Young Leaders/Young Farmers | County Fair Children’s Ag ExpoBrown County | Driving Safely Around Farm EquipmentJersey County | Seminar On GMOs And OrganicsMarshall-Putnam | Food Conversations With Consumers SeminarBureau County | CFB Complimentary Trial MembershipKane County |

**AG LITERACY**

**\*Lawrence, "Ag Jeopardy" -** As a review for of this year's Ag in the Classroom programs third grade students played "Ag Jeopardy". With our coordinator serving as "Alex Trebek" and the classroom teachers serving as judges for who buzzed in first. Teams of 4-5 went head-to-head to determine which team remembered the most from their monthly visits with our Agriculture Literacy Coordinator during Ag in the Classroom. Students tested their knowledge in areas including popcorn, pumpkins, pigs, cheese, soybeans, and trees. This presentation took 3-5 hours of preparation and planning and utilized an online customized Jeopardy game program. This is also a helpful way for our coordinator to gauge how much information students were retaining and which topics needed more information in years to come.

**Massac, "Farming at the Library" -** In an effort to keep agriculture in the minds of our community, the CFB and the Public Library joined forces to create a "Farm Frenzy" for a fun-filled day of agriculture activities. Volunteers read AITC books and provided numerous hands-on activities where kids and families gained knowledge about soybeans, corn, dairy cows, horses, and many other facets of the industry. The kids had the opportunity to wear "moo masks", compete in a honey bee challenge, and interact with a horse activity. Giveaways were done throughout the day to all attendees to further remind them the importance of agriculture. A grand prize was drawn for at the end of the day that included a Basket full of Ag Literacy books and activities donated by the CFB. The Women's Committee and the Young Farmers group had to put in lots of planning and organization to make sure that there was plenty of help, supplies, and activities to ensure the kids had a fun, action-packed, educational experience. Overall, the kids and families enjoyed the opportunity and were able to experience agriculture from a new, fun perspective.

**Schuyler, "Ag in the Classroom" -** Each month through the school year over 500 Pre-K through 4th graders and teachers participated in our Ag in the Classroom monthly lessons that focused on a different Ag topic each month from September - May. Lessons consisted of a book, activity and snack that all reinforced the Ag theme of the month. The first theme of the school year was Farmers--We read the books, A Day in the Life of a Farmer to PreK - 2nd grade and the book, Heartland, was read to 3rd & 4th graders. Activities included explaining the different kind of farms and then decorating a farmer hat. For the older students charts were used to show the different growing seasons--students were given fruits and vegetables and they had to show which season they would grow in Illinois. The project ended with a string cheese snack. In October we did a Plant Lesson where we read the books, Growing Vegetable Soup for the PreK - 1st grades and Seed Soil & Sun to the 2nd - 4th grades. The lower grades had to match vegetables with definitions and then put the vegetable in our soup pot to make soup. Older students had to decide if the fruits & vegetables were monocots or dicots. We also showed the students monocot & dicot plants that we had grown. The Plant lesson ended with a snack of Carrots with ranch dip for the lower grades and a monocot banana for the older grades. For November we did a lesson on the Tootsie Roll. The students were told the story of how the Tootsie Roll was invented and its simple ingredients that derive from agriculture. Each student participated in making Tootsie Rolls and eating them. In December we had a lesson on Cookies an agriculture. The book Christmas Cookies was read to the students and then they helped see where each ingredient comes from that was in a Chocolate Chip Cookie Recipe. The lesson ended with each child decorating his own sugar cookie. In January we did a Wheat lesson with the students. The books Celebrate Wheat and Wheat to Pasta were read. The students were shown how wheat is planted and harvested and then each student had a chance to grind their own wheat into flour. Each child received wheat thin crackers for their snack. In February are lesson was on Illinois. The books Little Illinois and L is for Lincoln were read to the students, PreK - 2nd played an I spy game to represent all of the symbols for Illinois from the state fish to the state snack. Third & 4th grades went over the different crops that come from Illinois. Each child received popcorn for their snack. In March we had the Maple Syrup Lesson. We had a local person show how they tap trees and then turned the liquid from the tree into Maple syrup and what time of year this can be done. Students were shown how Maple tree leaves look so they can spot a Maple tree. Each student ended the lesson with a taste of the Maple syrup on a waffle. In April we did a lesson on Potatoes. The books One Potato, Two Potato and the Great Depression were read to the students. PreK through 2nd grade played the game Hot Potato with Potato facts and 3rd & 4th used Potatoes to paint a picture and learn all of the different colors, kinds and nutritional value. We ended the school year with a lesson on Pizza an agriculture. The book the Little Red Hen was read to the Prek-2nd grades and used to talk about wheat, that is used for pizza crust. Students made puppets with the characters from the story and also learned how the wheat is then turned into the flour that makes pizza crust. Third & 4th grades decorated their own pizza slice with our Pizza Model. All grades were shown how the Little Red Hen was a lot like a farmer, who has to have teamwork and work with other businesses so they can plant their grain, harvest it and get it to the elevators so it can then be processed and moved on to the grocery store where we can buy it to make our pizza. Lesson ended with students using Ritz crackers, pizza sauce, pepperoni and shredded cheese to make their own pizza for their snack. Each lesson was 30 minutes and the teachers appreciated being able to include the lessons in with their Science, Language, Math and/or reading curriculum.

**Brown, "Amazing Agriculture in our Schools" -** Ag Literacy and Women's Committee present different program throughout the school year to our local public and private schools. This year we were fortunate enough to be able to present several different topics. This is done once a month and we are able to cover many different agricultural topics. We started out with a pumpkin program. The program covered topics such as the life cycle of a pumpkin and the many different varieties, we cut open a pumpkin and explored the insides by looking and touching, made the "3-D pumpkin" and tasted pumpkins seeds. Also, each child received a Pumpkin Ag Mag and discussed it. Urban versus Rural was our next topic. The book "Thomas Jefferson Grows a Nation" was read, we completed a Ven diagram comparing the differences and similarities of rural and urban areas. Each child received an Urban Ag Mag to take home and enjoyed a snack of bell peppers with dip. To celebrate the upcoming holiday season, our December program was "Santa is Coming to Illinois". We read the book and broke up into small groups, using Illinois maps and highlighters to navigate to the areas discussed in the book. We made "table-top evergreens" and enjoyed a snack. To ring in the new year and help out with healthy New Year's resolutions, our January program focused on Nutrition. We discussed guidelines,

**AG LITERACY (continued)**

different foods and their role in nutrition, and healthy habits. We played a food pyramid game and each child received a Nutrition Ag Mag and enjoyed a healthy snack of carrots, celery and ranch dressing. February's program focused on Renewable Energy. We discussed the different types of energy, where it comes from and how it works. We also learned about ways we can help conserve energy and made a "solar oven" from a pizza box. Each child received a Renewable Energy Ag mag. With planting season around the corner in March, we talked about planting and machinery. We discussed the different crops in our area, as well as the machinery that farmers utilize to get their crops planted. The beanie baby was made by all and we distributed and discussed the Soybean Ag Mag. After planting, we learned about a not-so-typical type of agriculture in April. Aquaculture was the topic and the children seemed especially eager to learn about fish farming. We discussed the different types of fish farms and how they operate, as well as viewing a poster the had pictures of different types of aquapods and fisheries. The children also colored pictures of different types of fish that may be seen at these farms. Our last lesson was gardening, in which we read "The Surprise Garden", observed different stages of growth in tomatoes, cucumbers, carrots, lettuce, and radishes. Each child got to make their very own "Garden In A Glove" to take home and watch as the seeds sprouted and grew. A Horticulture Ag Mag was also handed out and discussed. This was a small, consistent group of children with a varying range of agricultural knowledge. They were always ready and excited to learn and feel they took a lot of information with them. We hope to be able to do this program in years to come. These programs are a great way to bring agriculture into our local classrooms and the children really seem to enjoy them.

**Moultrie, "Adopt a Classroom Presentations" -** Our CFB this year had a great relationship with our Adopt a Classroom school. Throughout the year, our CFB farm writers and the school exchanged letters 6 times. The CFB farm writer and students would both write individual letters to each other which allowed for a great way to get to know the students much better and answer their individual questions. Our CFB also visited the school 3 different times and gave multiple presentations to not only the students, but the school administration as well. The first visit was included a PowerPoint presentation titled "Life on a Farm". This presentation opened the eyes of the classroom to actually see equipment and livestock from a working farm from the county. The students were also given ears of corn at the end of the day to have something tangible to take home. The second presentation was on UAV's and how they are impacting agriculture. The students really took to this and were amazed how this technology is being integrated into agriculture. The third trip involved our CFB participating in the schools career day by going to different classrooms throughout the day and explaining agriculture to not only our regular classroom, but 6 other classes in the school. We look to continue this relationship with the school and class going into this year and hope to expand on projects or topics into the future.

**Stark, "Ag in the Classroom" -** Each month, every Kindergarten, First and Second grade classroom in the county is visited and receives an AITC lesson. Nearly 250 students were educated throughout each month of the school year about how important and awesome agriculture is. Students gained better understanding of commodities grown in our state, and in turn, took the information home to their families. Topics covered are on a seasonal basis and were synced to work seamlessly into the curriculum so that the students can better grasp content across the curriculum. For instance in January the pig lessons focus heavily on nutrition which is also being discussed at that time in their classroom. Lessons cover commodities including: - Apples - Pumpkins - Turkeys - Pigs - Beef cattle - Plant germination - Agricultural safety - Dairy. Activities are specialized to be age appropriate, engaging and educational. To better support and build awareness with Ag in the Classroom, pictures are run monthly in the local county paper, it is discussed on the CFB's radio segment, it is included in CFB social media and in CFB publications. Additionally because our AITC coordinator is our manager and therefore is a substantial component of our CFB's operations, the manager had pictures submitted to FarmWeek - of which 7 were printed. Moving forward, we are in discussions of adding a small private school into our program.

**\*Clark, "Agriculture is Cool" -** Both counties have active Ag in the Classroom programs to help educate students and teachers on the importance of agriculture in their daily lives. More and more children are losing touch with agriculture. Both counties have paid staff to provide lessons to students throughout the school year reaching approximately 20,000 students during the school year with over 2000 projects. These programs are designed to bring agriculture back into their lives. The multiple goals of this project were: 1) Schools, Teachers, and Children – To help fund both counties Ag in the Classroom (AITC) programs to educate students about agriculture through a variety of learning styles and to provide free classroom resources to teachers to expand and enhance their existing curriculum with agriculture. 2) Consumers – To provide a cool treat at a low cost to consumers at events. 3) Community – To bring awareness to the counties AITC program and to promote awareness of agriculture, ag safety, and animal care. 4) Volunteer involvement - Allow volunteers an opportunity to talk to consumers in the community and gain publicity. The idea for the ‘Agriculture is Cool’ project originated with one county but soon became a two county project due to the scope and size of the project. The counties met and developed a plan of action, and together located and purchased the necessary trailer and equipment. A used ice cream unit was located in a neighboring state and a volunteer drove to pick it up. The milkshake unit was located in a local high school. A work week to assemble everything was set up between the two counties. Also, each county developed a list of events they wanted to participate in and coordinated them into a master calendar. Before the work week, the local health department was contacted and brought in to inspect the purchased trailer and make sure that health, food, and safety requirements were to be met. Also, electrical, plumbing, and carpentry needs to handle the load from the soft serve ice cream and milkshake units were laid out. During the work week, volunteers from both counties worked to carry out their plans and transform the trailer into the ‘Agriculture is Cool’ concession trailer. As part of the transformation, the old graphics and flooring were removed from the trailer. Once the trailer was rebuilt, both county boards came together to do a test run which proved successful. The trailer was then taken to a farm bureau member who volunteered to design and apply the graphics to the trailer. The two Farm Service Co-ops who service the counties were contacted by volunteers about donating a truck to pull the trailer to events. Both agreed to work together and generously donated a truck for the project. Volunteers researched events

**AG LITERACY (continued)**

that could possibly be attended to sell ice cream and milkshakes. All events had to be coordinated onto a master calendar so no events conflicted each other. Once the two counties events were placed on the calendar, other County Farm Bureau®’s were notified of the trailer and its availability to be rented out at a reduced cost. The trailer was also made available to the community for special events such as weddings, reunions, and sporting events. Progress of its construction was posted on multiple websites and on Facebook. Volunteers signed up to man the trailer at events. While at events, the graphics on the trailer along with websites on it and who the money was benefitting struck up questions about the program allowing the volunteers to talk to consumers about agriculture and the ag in the classroom program. Since the two counties built the ‘Agriculture is Cool’ ice cream and milkshake trailer, the trailer has been seen by over 80,000 people throughout the events. Traveling around the State and meeting a wide variety of people, many of whom are non-farming and urban, has served as an excellent public relations and ag education tool (for the program). The trailer has utilized over 140 volunteers and has generated over $20,000.00 in the past year for the two counties’ Ag in the Classroom programs and will help to sustain the program well into the future. The counties have allowed the local FFA chapters to use it for free for fund raising events at their local football games, and both counties do special events for schools, providing free ice cream to approximately 1200+ students. The trailer has been rented out for weddings, community events, concerts, church events, and county wide picnics. The communities and surrounding county Farm Bureaus® know the trailer is available to them as long as it doesn’t conflict with a county fund raising event. It helps to fund the Counties’ Ag in the Classroom programs which reaches 20,000 students and 1286 teachers. Also, with the trailer being used by other County Farm Bureau’s, there are countless other students and teachers who are being reached. This trailer provides benefits for not only the farm community, but also the urban non-farm community as well by helping to fund a program that benefits thousands of children every year. This program also provides training to teachers and supplements their classrooms and stretched budgets with free materials and ag education. Whenever it is set up, there are always people asking what our program is about, and many teachers and children’s parents come by and thanks us for doing the program in schools. Through these two counties working together to build and run this trailer, thousands of children, teachers, and community members have been reached with an accurate, clear, and honest agriculture message, engaging a large number of volunteers and allowing them to share with others how agriculture affects their everyday lives and the importance of the counties AITC programs.

**Mason, "Ag-Ceptionally Creative Shirt Contest" -** Each 4th grader in the county has the chance to showcase their creativity in this annual event. The 2015-2016 theme was "Celebrating 100 Years." Students were asked to design a t-shirt that represents 100 years of agriculture and Farm Bureau in the county. A winner is picked at each school. Each 4th grader receives a shirt with the winning design from their school, and the winner is presented with their framed artwork. Because we were celebrating 100 years, each winner and their family were invited to attend our 100th Anniversary Banquet. The winners wore their shirts to the banquet, were recognized on stage, and paraded through the guests. 198 students submitted designs this year and the teachers look forward to this event each year!

**Franklin, "Innovation Grant through IAA Foundation" -** This grant provided 3 of the county FFA Chapters with soil and gardening equipment. The grant was written for seeds, but a local feed store donated all seed to this project. The FFA Chapters and their advisors worked with Elementary and junior high teachers and students to plant several different vegetables and fruits. More than 250 plants were raised and passed out to community members at the local food pantry. The AITC Coordinator provided a garden to finish out the rest of the plants and so far more than 50 pounds of produce has been distributed to the food pantry. The purpose of the Innovation Grant was to utilize FFA students to mentor younger students, teach them how to grow their own food, provide food for their community and educate the community on how to grow their own food. This project required 3-6 months of planning and implementation. The process began by meeting with FFA Advisors and teachers in 3 different schools in 3 school systems. The travel between the schools was time consuming do to the FFA Chapters not being located on the same campuses. Volunteers included 57 FFA members and 148 students.

**Edgar, "A Taste of the County" -** The Farm Bureau sought a need for a new fundraising avenue that would involve entity members in the community. The Taste of the County is now an annual Farm Bureau event that takes place in Spring of each year with this program being the first. The Taste of the County made personal visits to local businesses and food vendors and offered the opportunity to market their products and services. Many of those vendors offered a portion of their sales to the Foundation & Ag in the Classroom Program. The event was made possible by an entity member paying for the cost of space which was an old high school gym and recreation area. Registration costs and entrance fees help raise over $2000 dollars in one evening event with little to no expenses. An Ag Education & Fun Center was held during the event so that kids could be entertained while parents shopped. Volunteers were essential to help set up tables, the ag ed fun center, welcome booths, foundation booths, chaperoning kids in the fun center, and cleaning up at the conclusion of the event. Because of the generous support of the community and a few entity members, the expenses for the event were only a few hours of one paid staff member and printing signs for the event. The Farm Bureau and foundation were successfully able to provide a boost to local vendors and businesses, raise funds for foundation, and promote the Ag in the Classroom program.

**Perry, "Shooting for Agriculture Education" -** Our CFB partnered with a neighboring FB for a multi-faceted shooting event that raised funds for both AITC programs. Approximately thirty (30) total volunteers were utilized to plan, recruit sponsors and prize donors, develop and administer event registration and scoring, advertise for shooters, and negotiate contracts with the IDNR to pull off one of the best 1-day shooting events in the Midwest. Numerous shooting games also provided different opportunities for the avid outdoorsmen to compete and have fun. In total, the event drew 93 shooters (91 last year), 13 four-person teams, 3 husband/wife teams, and 2 three-person youth teams Shooters were divided into numerous classes for each event and over $4,000 in cash and prizes were distributed during the event. Two optional games and a revamped gun raffle were also available

**AG LITERACY (continued)**

to all participants. A final feature of our event included a $500 adult shootout and a $350 Youth Shootout, Overall we raised over $6,500 for our local AITC programs --- down about $1,800 from last year's record profit!

**Union, "Sharing the Ag Word" -** During 3 nights of the county fair, commodities information, AITC information and consumer communication information was shared with fair goers. The CFB has a premium exhibit location in front of the fair's exhibit hall and a high traffic area entering the main fair area. Education activities were conducted for fair goers at the CFB tent. First night featured a focus on local & regional food and specialty crops. Member/ orchard owner donated 1 bu. apples to give away at CFB tent, and another member/specialty grower donated apple butter and applesauce for sampling. Apple AgMags were distributed. Second night, 2 local high school ag programs were present with displays of their FFA SAE - ag communications and horticulture. Apples was donated to hand out again, also AITC calenders were given away. For kids, AgBAGS were available - this included a collection of 4 AgMags, farming coloring book, soy crayons, veggie seeds to plant, all in a IL AITC bag. On the third evening, the focus was on corn and pigs. Local FFA members were present to talk about the many uses of corn, differences between sweet corn and field corn, and discussing pigs, feed and food and non-food uses of pigs. The exhibit space included banners from IL Farm Families and a large safety banner. 2 members donated large pumpkins and hard squash to decorate and start conversations about the counties diverse agriculture and consumer related questions regarding growing safe food. A Young Leader donated field corn to display,too. Volunteers from the local FS Plant helped too drive posts, hang banners. Other members volunteers to haul the tent and set up tables. Three nights of programming were staffed by FFA student volunteers, Ag teachers and a Young Leader. 125 AgMags were distributed at the fair, 30 AITC calendars, Farm-to-Fork cookbooks, and 100 IL Farm Families "Fact" brochures.

**\*Marshall-Putnam, "Imagination Acres" -** In its fourth year of providing activities for children, ImAGination Acres continues to delight both the young and the old with agriculture themed stations. This year the Barnyard Challenge was a new addition to the fun. Children completed the obstacle course made up of hoops, straw bales, a bridge and a culvert. Parents encouraged their children and timed their progress. Near the excavating sand box was a popular new water table where children could measure, pour, and watch water travel through funnels and pipes, only to spill out into their waiting buckets. Wiley the Worm didn't show his face too often at the Worm Condominium, but children could see how he made tunnels through the soil and mixed up the layers. Photo ops were fun to take when little ones posed behind the baby chick, caterpillar and Monarch butterfly cutouts. The Farmer's Market, Pagano's Pizzeria, Dr. Spager's Vet Clinic and Farmer Nenne's Barnyard Theatre continue to be popular spots to play. Sir Charles the Chicken, whose body is made of straw bales, was back this year for children to climb. Ag Fun Things to Do took place on Thursday, Friday and Sunday. Children decorated piggy banks and made candy tractors. Friday night was busy with the visit of two baby goats and twenty-seven newly hatched chicks. A egg hunt for ages 1 to 10 drew quite a few participants to find the 1,000 eggs that were scattered over the ground. Three lucky participants found a coupon for $5.00 in one of their eggs. Additional activities were scheduled throughout fair time. Making moon sand and creating new colors with colored water drew many participants.

**Jo Daviess, "Farm Fun Day" -** Worked with two local owners association recreation coordinators to hold two "Farm Fun Days" that would educate this group of predominately urban people from Chicago who own land in the count about the presence and importance of agriculture. 22 volunteers operated seven rotating stations: Circle of Earth bracelets, petting zoo, milk a cow, a lesson on machinery, animals and making ice cream and butter. More than 1000 kids and parents were reached through this event. The recreation coordinators were very impressed with our volunteers and activities and are looking forward to doing more events with us in the future. This was the fifteenth year at one location and the tenth at the second location.

**Hancock, "Farm to Table Dinner" -** Our Ag Literacy Advisory Committee wanted to come up with a unique fundraiser for our AITC program, so the idea of hosting a Farm to Table Dinner was suggested. The committee also felt that this would be a great community event to feature and support our local growers. A planning committee of 15 volunteers met 7 times prior to the event, which was held on August 13, 2016. We sought permission to close the south side of our historic courthouse square and set up for the dinner in the actual street to give it a nostalgic feeling. Tickets were sold for $50 each. The meal consisted of a Kansas City strip filet, grilled pork loin, country style green beans, sliced garden tomatoes, farm fresh cole slaw, made from scratch corn muffin, roasted baby potatoes, homemade peach crisp and frozen yogurt from a locally owned yogurt shop. Meats were purchased from our locally owned market and were grilled by our county beef association and pork producers. Cabbage, carrots, tomatoes, garlic, potatoes, green beans, eggs, peaches, honey, strawberry jam were purchased from local farmer's market vendors. The corn meal for the corn muffins was also fresh ground, and the butter was homemade by committee members. The two wineries in our county also provided cash bars, featuring local wines. They opened an hour prior to the meal, which served as a social hour. Contact information for all growers was listed on each placemat so attendees knew exactly where their meal came from. Committee members, WC members, YLs and community volunteers worked for two days prior to the event to help prepare the food for the dinner. The meal was served by 14 local FFA members, all wearing official dress, which made quite an impression in itself. A locally owned home decor store designed a logo for the dinner, produced t-shirts for committee members, and provided table decorations for the event. This store, and one additional retail business on the square, extended their hours to be open during the event and were very pleased with the amount of business conducted during the dinner. In addition to the meal, a Farm Art Auction was held as another way to raise funds for our Foundation. Six local artists donated pieces to be auctioned. Items ranged from a photo canvas, to paintings, to a custom made barn quilt. The auction brought in nearly $2,000 for Foundation. Overall, our first annual Farm to Table Dinner was an overwhelming success! We were able to raise over $4,000 for our CFB Foundation. Planning has already begun for next year, and we have had 2 new people volunteer to be on the planning committee. It has quickly become an event that people in our community don't want to miss!

**AG LITERACY (continued)**

**Knox, "Ag Day for Kids" -** The CFB in cooperation with the CFB Foundation hosts an annual Ag Day for Kids at a local college campus. All fourth grade classrooms in the county are invited to participate. The full-day event allows participants to rotate through eight, 10-minute sessions and are provided lunch. The following sessions were taught by 21 local farmers: Livestock, Soil & Water, Agricultural Technology, Pork, Soybeans, Dairy, Corn, & Cattle. In order to offer a well-rounded and successful event, collaboration with local organizations was key. Of the 36 FFA Volunteers, four provided animals and discussed the responsibilities associated with raising livestock, and the other 32 volunteers were each assigned a classroom to help chaperone and answer any questions participants and teachers may have. An additional 14 volunteers helped set up for the event, monitor the hallways, and assemble and deliver participant and teacher resources. The event was a success as 18 classrooms and 456 fourth-grade students were able to learn about local agriculture and leave with materials to continue the conversations. Each teacher received a box of materials that included Ag Mags on each of the topics covered in the eight sessions, hands-on activities, and a promotional flyer for www.agintheclassroom.org & www.watchusgrow.org. A live radio report was provided on a local radio station and coverage of the event was in the local newpaper.

**Fayette, "Farm to Family Ag Tours" -** For the first time, 4 CFBs partnered with the multi-county U of I Extension unit to begin hosting tours of local ag businesses and farms for home-schooled children. While our Ag in the Classroom program is successful in reaching hundreds of students in our country, it is limited to only those who are enrolled in the school system. We are trying to reach even more students who may not have the opportunities to learn about agriculture through AITC or school field trips. Parents are included on these trips and educated about agriculture as well. We held one tour each month, with a small break for summer, and each one focused on a different type of agriculture. We tried to include tour stops in each county that is in involved in the program. A lunch is provided that ties the meal back into the lessons learned on the tour, and ag education activities are presented during lunch. At the end of each tour, we give a survey to the students and parents to try to gauge their reaction to the tour and help improve future tours. January: Home school students and parents went on a tour of a maple syrup business where they learned how the maple is extracted from trees then processed to become the maple syrup they eat. They were served a pancake and sausage lunch, followed by a tour a greenhouse that grows mainly herbs and vegetable plants. February: The students and parents took a tour of meat processing plant, where they could see an real cow be harvested.They also toured a local cattle farm, where they learned what it takes to raise cattle. Hamburgers were served for lunch. After lunch they toured the local FS facility and learned about precision ag and drones. March: Students took a tour of a hog facility and learned about raising hogs. They were served pork burgers for lunch, then took a tour of a robotic dairy farm. April: Students toured a mill that makes different pre-packaged mixes for cakes, cookies, etc., pasta, and specialty mixes that are allergen free. Students were served pizza for lunch, then took a tour of a grain mill where there were able to see how wheat is turned into flour. August: Students visited with a beekeeper and learned about bees and how they make honey. They were served pizza for lunch, then visited a local apple orchard. We encourage the parents to continue discussing the lessons ag home and several families have said they do. The trips have been successful and well-received by students and parents, and we are continuing the tours this year.

**\*Livingston, "Flick on the Farm" -** What could be better than dinner and a movie? Dinner cooked by a local celebrity, free activities for all ages and a classic movie shown on the side of a gorgeous white barn on a perfect summer night! Flick on the Farm was a free event for all Farm Bureau members to enjoy a night of fun, community and a little education. The evening started with dinner sponsored by Illinois Pork Producers and Corn Growers. We raised $345 from the meal proceeds for our Foundation. Families could then enjoy free kid’s activities focused on different aspects of agriculture. The stations were as follows: 1. "Grow a Web". The kids traced a web (to go along with the movie) with glue on paper and then sprinkled garden seeds on them. They then got them wet and took them home to watch them germinate. We talked with them about the different seeds and how a plant grows. 2. Farm animal temporary tattoos were a fun way to have discussions with kids about animal byproducts and encouraged discussions on animal care and livestock in general with parents. Pork Producers had donated promotional items as well as brochures and recipe cards. 3. The next activity was all about different Ag Careers. On one side of the activity were 7 signs highlighting Ag Careers: mechanics, educator, scientist, meteorologist, food scientist, animal nutritionist and vet. On the other side were items that represented each area. They had to match up items, such as a stethoscope or hammer, with the career they thought it fit with. This really encouraged conversations on the many careers ag has to offer. 4. A game of corn hole/bags was a popular stop. Since the boards had a dairy theme, we had a poster with dairy facts with the game. 5. Ag Inspired props were the focus of our Photo Booth. We had signs with Flick on the Farm and 2016 as well. "Felfies", farmer selfies, have become quite popular so families could have a photo to remember the night. The local hospital also had a table with activities to get kids moving and learn about a healthy diet. The movie began about 8:15. Just before start time, we passed out ice cream and popcorn. It was the perfect evening! We plan to continue this event annually and hope for a larger crowd next summer!

**Kendall, "Farming for the Community" -** We had the opportunity to rent a farm from a local school district.. 14.4 acres. We had the IAA Attorney draw up a legal lease that was agreed upon and signed by both parties. The wonderful thing about this program the school district charged us no rent. Our goal was to get all inputs donated by local seed and fertilizer companies with all the farming supplied by the Young leader Committe members, and we have succeeded with this goal. This total program is being run through our local FB foundation. This school has no ag program and we felt this was a great way to introduce some type of agricultural program to this high school. Our end result was a very positive one, we were able to get public interest thru articles in the local paper and FARMWEEK. Initially we were trying to assist them in securing a summer enrichment program in turf and not enough students signed up. The crop was sold directly out of the field through 2 of our agri -businesses who also donated fertilizer and herbicides. Our total profit for the corn crop was $8942.57.....$3000 was donated to our AITC program, $1500 to the Catholic Charities Mobile food Pantry, $2000 was donated back to the Communities Rockin Xmas event where presents are purchased for the children in the community that will not receive much at Xmas and the remainder $2442,57 was given back to the Science club of the high school to purchase a drone. For the planting year of 2016 we again contacted our suppliers from the

**AG LITERACY (continued)**

previous year to see if they would be able to help support our bean crop this year. We again had great support from our local agri-businesses and an additional one came on board last fall to supply the fall fertilizer. This fall when the bean crop is harvested we will again sell the crop through our local FS company and CHS. Wonderful support from the agricultural community and we are helping the local community fill some of its needs. A large sign is planted at the corner of the field thanking all our agricultural donors, the school district and young leaders who have done the work.

**Kankakee, "16th Annual Kids Day at the Farm Program" -** A committee consisting of our Ag Literacy Coalition donors and sponsors along with our AITC volunteers organizes and coordinates the 2-day event teaching about agriculture. Every 4th grade class including parochial schools and several home school groups in the county are invited. Taking place at the County Fairgrounds, the event includes 8-minute presentations on 30 different topics from volunteer presenters (including farmers, ag business professionals, and FFA chapters) using roughly 45 other volunteers (including Women’s Committee and Young Leaders) to ensure that the coordination of the event goes smoothly. State learning standards are consulted and matched with the presentations. Classes each receive 3.5 hours of ag education from the 30 different presentations which include such topics as soil and water conservation, renewable fuels, biotechnology, specialty agriculture, sod farming, chick embryology, beneficial insects, GPS and precision agriculture, and other commodity specific lessons. There were also 5 live animal exhibits including dairy cow and calf, pigs, sheep, goats, and horses. Young Leaders assisted with 3 presentations and helped set up for the event. A new presentation this year was from a 1st year volunteer who is a local historian. He gave an interactive presentation in 1800's farmer attire on Farm Chores - Then and Now with a quiz at the end. With 1,200 students from 48 classrooms attending, the project requires an immense amount of planning and coordinating. Teachers and presenters receive a survey asking for ways the event could be improved. “VIP Invitations” were sent to school principals and superintendents, school boards, the county gov’t board, legislators, mayors, and other community leaders to observe this program to increase their knowledge of agriculture. One school principal spent the entire day with us and he was very impressed with the program. Radio and print media did an excellent job covering and explaining the educational program.

**Whiteside, "Farm Camp for Kids" -** Our county organized six, week-long (Monday-Friday) Farm Camps for kids to learn about agriculture. Our Ag in the Classroom (AITC) school programs consists of providing free materials and classroom presentations. In addition to AITC programs/activities, Farm Camp also provided the unique opportunity of daily farm field trips. Farm field trips were done Monday-Thursday with Friday being a wrap-up day for the entire week. This on-the-farm exposure was the first time on a farm for most of our campers. The ability to see, smell, and touch animals and other things on the farm proved to be a tremendous learning experience for most campers. We met with staff from a local arts academy and four local library districts in February 2016 to discuss plans a schedule weeks for the camps. Each entity was very excited for the opportunity to participate. Two reasons for partnering with these entities: 1) they were geographically spread throughout the county and could provide a "hub" for each camp to work out of, and 2) they have an existing patron-base that already targeted kids through their summer programs. This allowed us to promote the camps to their patrons. Promotional materials were provided to partner site to share with their patrons. The camps were promoted on the CFB website and Facebook page, in the CFB newspaper, and in local newspapers. Registration forms were also sent to our partners and an online registration form was also developed. Once a parent enrolled their child(ren), an email was sent confirming the registration and also gather any missing information. Each camp started at 8am with parents checking in their kids. Once all campers had arrived, we briefly went over the day's activities and then boarded a school bus for that day's farm field trip. Transportation was contracted through the local school districts. Farm field trips consisted of: June 13-17: dairy, pigs, farm equipment, alpacas, honey bees June 20-24 (2 camps): dairy, farm equipment, pigs, flowers (Thurs & Fri) July 11-15: horses, sheep, goats, alpacas, chickens July 18-22: sheep, horses, Christmas trees, farm equipment July 25-29: chickens, alpacas, goats, farm equipment, honey bees Some examples of what the farm visits included: Horse Farm: Moved between stations learning how they care for the horses, fed the horses, tried roping, and were able to ride a horse. Dairy Farm: Got to feed calves, watch a cow being milked and learn about what cows eat. Chicken Farm: Got to hold and feed chickens and learn about egg production. Sheep Farm: Got the feed the sheep and took turns shearing a sheep. Alpaca Farm: Learned about their fiber and got to feed and pet the alpacas. Farm Equipment: Learned about farm machinery and were able to operate a back hoe and drive a tractor. On Fridays, we had a local honey producer that raises honey bees sells her own bottled honey, come talk with campers about caring for her bees and honey production. After each day's farm field trip/presentation, campers participated in hands-on AITC activities that corresponded with that day's field trip/presentation. Some examples include making their own cow hand puppets, cotton ball sheep, paper plate chickens, designed their own tractor, and building their own garden in bag. There was plenty of time for games and reading, too! Farm Bureau benefited from the opportunity to partner with four local libraries and an Arts Academy. Their participation broadened Farm Bureau's reach to a population base that had little to no connection to agriculture. Our local partners were very accommodating and shared their own enthusiasm for the program with their patrons. That is evident by the number of kids that participated. Local media coverage also helped promote the camps and bring others audiences to Farm Bureau. 170 campers attended.

**Bureau, "A Year on the Farm" -** Because we live in a rural area, most students are surrounded by farm fields but don't really understand what happens during the farming season. Knowing the students would love to learn about farming first hand, a farm family volunteered to host students on their farm in both the spring and fall. In the spring, 2nd graders were invited to a grain and livestock farm. Here they were broken up into three groups. One group headed out to the field to watch the planting process, one group checked out the animals and the final group learned with a hands on "garden in a glove" activity with the county Ag Literacy Coordinator and other volunteers. In the fall, the same students, now 3rd graders, came back to that same farm to witness harvest of that same field, take a scavenger hunt around the farm and again learn from another hands on activity with the Ag Literacy Coordinator, this time completing the "You can't go a day without ag" lesson. These 2nd and then 3rd graders

**AG LITERACY (continued)**

were treated to lunch and sent home with goodie bags filled with agriculture information. Because the students were able to experience the farm first hand, these lessons will stay with them for quite some time.

**Randolph, "Flat Randy" -** The Farm Bureau Public Relations Committee wanted to have a platform to reach out to students that might not have an opportunity to learn about agriculture. The Flat Randy project was launched this year in an effort to reach those students. The Flat Randy project is fashioned from Flat Stanley. The committee's goal this year was to take him on trips and to events that the Farm Bureau hosted. Those 'experiences' were then put on social media through Facebook and Twitter. The committee has been looking into partnering with a teacher in the metro east to carry on the project, sending Randy to them to share his experience in agriculture. This year, interactions on social media were over 2000 people.

**Williamson, "Baseball & Agriculture" -** 17 CFB's worked to educate kids about the importance of Agriculture at a minor league baseball game. Over 5383 people attended the event. Baseball Farm Charms were made with attendees and their children to help them understand the relationship between everyone's favorite sport "Baseball and Agriculture". 9 volunteers set up a Baseball Farm Station at the ballpark, which collectively made over 200 baseball charms. The station had supplies to accommodate the crowd and to make the charms. Adults were given a flyer on the relationship between baseball and agriculture while the kids made their Baseball charms. A donation was made to the Ag in the Classroom program for over $1400 for the ticket sales made locally. The event was a success not only for the AITC program but for those that attended that learned more about agriculture through their favorite sport, "Baseball".

**\*Champaign, "Teen Teachers" -** A common view among agricultural groups is that today’s consumer is at least three generations removed from the farm. However, there is growing interest among consumers to know where their food originates. 4-H Youth Development Educators in Illinois partnered with Ag in the Classroom (AITC) coordinators to start the 4-H Agriculture Teen Teacher program. The goal of the program was to teach 8-11 year olds about farm-to-table agriculture concepts while providing teens experiential leadership experience through planning and teaching the lessons. The local AITC Coordinator and 4-H Youth Development Educator reached out to two high school agriculture teachers to set up informational meetings for students to get experience with one of the lessons and gauge their interest in the project. Students then attended training co-taught by the 4-H Youth Development Educator and AITC coordinator. The 4-H Educator led training on topics such as What is 4-H?, Ages and Stages, Team building, Group Management, positive youth development, Preparing to Teach and Experiential Learning. AITC coordinators identified curricula for teens to choose from, served as guides-on-the-side as teens prepared and taught lessons to their peers in the form of teach-backs, supported teens with timely and frequent feedback, and guided career exploration as teens deepened their own learning in agriculture. 4-H Agriculture Teen Teachers created and taught 12 lessons (six during the Fall semester and six during the Spring semester) developed from AITC resources to inform today's’ youth where their food comes from in a club environment. Topics included, but weren't limited to: soil, honey/pollinators, horses, dairy, water, pumpkins, vegetables, soybeans, and corn. Each lesson included an activity, craft, and snack related to the topic. Locally, 16 4-H Agriculture Teen Teachers from the county participated in the program in the inaugural year. They reached 148 youth at 4 delivery sites. One 4-H Teen Teacher remarked “I am now sure that I want to be a teacher. This experience helped me pick my future career path and that’s awesome.” Youth participants said the Ag in the Classroom activities: 88% know more about where their food comes from 85% helped them learn about the importance of agriculture 66% helped them learn about a future career in agriculture Teens completed surveys at the end of their teaching sessions. Data processing is currently ongoing. Final 4-H Agriculture Teen Teacher evaluation data will be available late Fall 2016. As a result of the success of the 4-H Agriculture Teen Teachers program, our county has added an additional school district for the 2016-2017 school year. The Teen Teachers will be located at three high schools and teaching lessons at four different After-School sites. Also new this year is the addition of a Junior High After-School site that will receive lessons and complete activities all about dairy cattle and dairy products.

**DuPage, "Problem Based Learning project - GMO's, are they good or bad?" -** This past year we were asked to participate in a problem based learning (PBL) project. The projects topic was: GMO's, are they good or bad? The PBL coach called us to ask us if we would speak on the pro GMO side. After several communications, it was decided that we would present to 526 7th graders on the benefits of GMO's. A few days after our presentation, an anti GMO activist spoke on the "bad science" of GMO's. After both presentations, students were tasked to come up with a public service announcement (PSA's) that they would put out in local papers. They had to design it around their beliefs of are they good or bad. After they had completed their PSA's, we were asked to come back in and listen to each groups presentation and respond. The Executive Director and one other volunteer sat on a panel with the anti GMO activist, a Trader Joe representative, a Whole Foods representative and a marketing executive. There was several anti GMO PSA's presented. After each presentation the Executive Director asked if the groups members had started eliminating GMO's from their diet. When every single groups members said no, she then explained that you can not advocate for something if you don't strictly follow it. The PSA's were never published.

**Winnebago-Boone, "Ag All Around Us" -** The CFB Outreach Team and AITC worked together to sponsor a National Ag Week kick off event for the public at a local children's museum. This community event was attended by 1500 people during a 3 hour period. The majority of the attendees were families with small children who live in an urban/suburban area. The expo included booths with a calf, piglets, tractors, skid loaders, and a UTV. Other displays included a crop display with a Beanie Baby activity, a soil display, a modern hog facility model, an "Ask a Farmer" booth, children's games and crafts. One activity included a scavenger hunt through out the expo where families could learn more about different ag commodities. The activities were manned by 30 FB board members, Young Leaders, FFA students, 4-Hers, Prime Timers, and FB staff. A local TV station covered the event along

**AG LITERACY (continued)**

with a local newspaper. Our goal was to reach urban consumers, give a positive image of agriculture, and offer them the opportunity to ask questions about agriculture.

**McHenry, "Corn and The GMO Debate in the Classroom" -** Ag in the Classroom staff reached over 100 4th grade students and their teachers with a Corn Presentation featuring GMO topics and issues. The program was designed to expand the student’s basic knowledge of plant development and the products produced from corn. Show boards featuring information about btCorn and other GMOs were discussed. Students were encouraged to participate in debating the pros and cons of GMOs in general. Students also competed to make foil barges that held the most corn kernels.

**Sangamon, "Ag-Stravaganza" -** This year our Member & PR and our Young Leader committee's decided to combine three past events into one. We created an event called, Ag-Stravaganza. This event was designed to be a hands-on learning experience for the public to learn about agriculture. We invited over 40 day-cares and summer camps in the county and pursued numerous media outlets to promote our event. With a crowd of 450 people we held our event from 9a.m.-7p.m. The event was at a local church. Our stations included: dairy, beef, sheep, swine, gardening, corn, poultry, honey bees and equipment. Each station provided a lesson and gave event goers the opportunity to interact with the livestock and learn about the commodity. Prairie Farms donated chocolate milk and ice cream to go along with the dairy portion of our event. A local COUNTRY Financial Representative donated water and passed it out to event goers. The Illinois Pork Producers Council & Illinois Beef Association provided food samples for event goers to try. We provided the public with a Passport to Learn at the beginning with farm facts and the stations available to attend. Popcorn was passed out to attendees as they rode a hayrack to some of the stations. A local equipment dealer and farmer donated machinery for the day including: combine, sprayer, planter, semi, etc. so children had the opportunity to climb in and see what a farmer would see when harvesting his corn or planting his crop. We received excellent feedback from day cares and attendees and we plan to have a two day event next year.

**COMMODITIES AND MARKETING**

**\*Stark, "Barging Ahead for Stronger Economies" -** The program (described below) falls into the Commodities and Marketing category because: it is check-off program funded, it involves a value-added product, it included a tour of an ethanol plant. This program has also been submitted for AFBF's County Award of Excellence. Months of planning and some adjustments came together June 25th for a tour of Illinois River infrastructure. Together with the 2 other County Farm Bureaus, our County Farm Bureau was awarded a grant from the Illinois Corn Marketing Board last fall for its proposal to showcase how the Illinois River impacts our local and regional economies. One of the CFBs and ours have jointly been involved in developing a regional economic development plan with guidance from the USDA. Late last summer, a community forum was held at a local High School to let community members brainstorm and give input to guide discussions. Bewildering to those involved in agriculture was the lack of emphasis given to the Illinois River as a resource. One attendee even declared that there was a need to "de-Agify" the 3 county region. While such comments may get blood boiling to some, it was apparent that there was significant lack of appreciation for the interconnected role that the river and agriculture play in our economies. Following that forum, and in light of the acceptance of grant applications, it was decided to pursue a program to help community stakeholders have a better, more tangible grasp of the river's importance. A grant program offered to county Farm Bureaus from the Illinois Corn Marketing Board was realized as a natural fit for addressing this need. The two county Farm Bureaus also welcomed a neighboring County Farm Bureau in to further the reach and impact of the program. Participants were picked up at either an equipment dealer or at a junior college. The first stop was at the lock and dam. There a Congressperson and regional TV crews joined the tour. Staff with the US Army Corps of Engineers explained the operations of the lock and attendees saw that there are threats to river transportation as the locks become more and more decrepit in their old age (already well past their engineered life expectancy). On the trip from the lock to ADM, Jim Tarmann with IL Corn, spoke about efforts underway to get congress to cut red tape and allow a partnership of the federal government and the barge industry to invest in replacing the system. At ADM, the terminal superintendent demonstrated not only how trucks unload grain into the elevator portion of the terminal but how barges are loaded and what that ability means to a farmer's bottom line. Without the use of the river, it would take several hundred semi-trucks driving all the way, nearly 900 miles, to New Orleans just to haul the cargo of one, 15 barge tow. A candidate for state representative joined in for the remainder of the day. Departing from ADM, the group enjoyed lunch at a nearby church catered by a new restaurant, which also is a member benefit provider. On the trip up to the ethanol plant, Illinois Farm Bureau's Director of National Legislation, Adam Nielsen, discussed the economic impact of the river ways, the impact of ethanol as well as the issues surrounding GMO labeling bills. Arriving for the final stop of the day, Jeremy Frerichs and Dana Gustafson with Marquis Energy explained the current state of affairs for ethanol. Jeremy, the plant's operations manager, guided the busload through the plant, noting that even though other plants are struggling, Marquis recently doubled their capacity. It is not purely consequence that Illinois' least expansive county is home to the world's largest dry mill ethanol plant. While the Marquis family is from the region, the County's access to the river along with available workers right in the midst of prime corn growing areas made the community ideal. While some ethanol leaves on truck and more leaves on train, a significant amount is loaded onto barges and exported abroad. Byproducts include distillers grain for livestock feed and some corn oil which is sent over to a biodiesel plant in a nearby town. After the trip was complete, a survey indicated that participants felt more aware of how the river and agriculture impact the regional economy and held more favorable views on ethanol than before the tour. The program attracted media attention with stories in FarmWeek as well as coverage on regional TV stations featuring the Congressperson, a corn farmer/CFB member and our CFB manager. The Regional Public Radio and Illinois AgriNews also requested information to run stories.

**COMMODITIES & MARKETING (continued)**

**Brown, "Ethanol Promotion" -** Our Marketing Committee, including Young Leaders, Board of Directors, and Women's Committee, partnered with the local FS, to do a Fuel Promotion Day promoting "Ethanol". We discounted Ethanol. Illinois Corn Growers Association provided a board display that stated facts and benefits to using Ethanol. Also, we handed out literature on Ethanol. Board members were available to help pump fuel and answer any questions customers might have. Each customer enjoyed free food and beverages from Pepsi, the local FS, and county farm bureau while attending this event. Coloring books, soy crayons and suckers were donated by Illinois Corn Growers Association and handed out along with Corn Ag Mags. All adults attending were able to register for: Stihl weed eater, leaf blower, fuel gift cards and children: personal pizza certificates. Everyone enjoyed attending and learning new facts about Ethanol. We reached approximately 400 customers in a short period of time. Our local media was present to take pictures and publish in our local newspaper and pictures were also posted on Prairieland FS Facebook page and ours.

**Lawrence, "Corn for the Holidays" -** Through funds provided by the Illinois Farm Bureau Corn Grant our county determined to serve our community while promoting the commodity corn. With an estimated 14.5% or 2,430 members in our community being food insecure. It decided a corn themed donation to our local food pantry would best serve our community. Six volunteers decided that we donate "Holiday Corn Bags". These bags were delivered the week before Christmas by Farm Bureau volunteers and our Corn Marketing Board Director. Reusable insulated Farm Bureau bags were stuffed with a ham, cornbread, butter, cookies, canned corn, and a roasting pan. Additionally, information about corn and its nutritional value was added to the bags. A total of 10 bags were donated, these donations directly affected 40-70 people (4-7 people per bag). Indirectly, through press releases, an additional 11,000 people were reached.

**Calhoun, "Farmers Feed the Hungry" -** The purpose of this program is to provide meat to feed the hungry in our county. We tell them of how the grain farmer grows the corn that feed the animals of the livestock farmer. We gave over 200 pounds of pork steak, hamburger and hot dogs to our local food pantry. It is appreciated by the food pantry and those in need as they have very meat donations.

**Cumberland, "Ice Cream for June Dairy Month" -** The CFB along with the Women's Committee promoted June Dairy Month at the 3 libraries in the county. Adults and children of all ages who attended the program were informed about dairy farms and dairy products. They then made ice cream in a bag. Attendees received informational items about dairy farms, products, and nutritional facts about dairy. Over 150 people attended the program.

**Johnson, "Equine Extravaganza" -** Over 50 youth and adults attended a free Equine Workshop. The event was held at a local fairground and the attendees were from all across our district. Participants attended 4 different learning sessions to increase their equine knowledge. Four speakers were secured to present information on Equine Massage, Barefoot Trim & Nutrition, Equine Veterinary Science, and Equine Anatomy. All presenters used hands-on activities to teach about caring for horses and also about various careers in the equine industry. We provided this opportunity to educate the community about the importance of the equine industry and all attendees left the program with a better overall understanding of horses.

**\*Clay, "CFB hosts Anhydrous Safety and Training Seminar" -** Lately, there had been increased interest in an Anhydrous Safety and Training program. We spoke with our local FS and decided to join efforts to host a seminar. Farmers, fire departments, police departments, and EMTs from the county were invited to attend the program. The seminar was held at the local FS, where some of the FS employees cooked dinner for everyone. The CFB and FS decided to split costs on the meal. Due to the size of the group, the farmers went outside first to look at tractors with implements and anhydrous tanks attached to them. They learned about the size of tanks, various road safety tips, what safety emblems needed to be displayed, and other important regulations. Inside, the first responders' watched a video on 'What to Do' if there's an anhydrous spill and a video on a real life event of 'What Not to Do' if there's an accident involving an anhydrous tank and spill. Many questions were asked by both groups. Afterwards, the two groups switched so they got to hear both presentations. Once done with presentations, everyone enjoyed a dinner together and they were able to ask more questions if need be. All attendees received Anhydrous Safety Gloves, Anhydrous Safety Goggles, and a card containing the numbers to call if a spill was to happen. We hope this training seminar will help keep our farmers and first responders safe this spring!

**Washington, “Bureau Bucks for Farmers' Markets" -** Our YL Committee wanted to help promote locally grown produce and the Farmer’s Markets that sell them. To accomplish this, they partnered with vendors at both the community Farmer’s Markets in our county to help bring more customers to their stands, while also promoting this segment of local agriculture. The YL's ran advertisements in our CFB publication to help publicize the markets to our members and offered a “Bureau Bucks” coupon in our monthly publication that provided $2.00 off produce at either of the two community Farmer’s Markets. To take advantage of this offer, members could simply cut the coupon out of the paper and used it like cash at either Farmer’s Market. The “Bureau Bucks” coupons were printed in our publication for the months of July through October, and vendors could redeem the “Bureau Bucks” used at their stands for cash by simply presenting them to the Farm Bureau office. At the conclusion of the program on October 31, ninety-six (96) coupons ($192 worth) of "Bureau Bucks" coupons were redeemed (33 coupons for $66 last year). This year's "Bureau Bucks" campaign will wrap up in October of 2016, but to-date very few have been returned to the CFB office. This was typical of last year's success, as most of the coupons were redeemed following the close of the program in October.

**COMMODITIES & MARKETING (continued)**

**McDonough, "Drone Meeting" -** In an effort to educate our local producers on what has become a growing trend in technology in agriculture, five CFB’s joined together to bring in a world renown expert in the UAV field. Forty people from our area gathered at the 4-H Fairgrounds to learn about UAV’s from one of the leading experts, Chad Colby. Colby led a 2-hour discussion on drone regulations and uses, and gave a forecast of what the future holds for this ever-changing technology. Attendees were invited to bring their own drones to the meeting for a more “hands-on” learning experience. In addition to CFB’s, our local Growmark Affiliates provided lunch for those who attended the meeting.

**Franklin, "Corn Grant-What Does Your Meat Eat" -** Grant dates: June 6-17, 2016 A poster was made describing "What Does Your Meat Eat" and the reasons that just because it says non-GMO does not mean anything.These posters were placed at 5 grocery stores who have their own butcher shops. Radio ads were run on a regional station with these facts as well focusing on the afternoon drive time. The impact was to inform people that farmers are always concerned about what their animals eat and that it is healthy to eat these products. Volunteers included office staff, FB manager, AITC Coordinator and one Young Leader Volunteer. Our main focus was to reach the consumers who were purchasing the meat for themselves and their families and people who have questions concerning the GMO/Non-GMO issue. Approximately 3,000 people were reached who were in the grocery meat departments. Publicity associated with your efforts for this project included 4 newspaper media with a total circulation of 26,000- along with regional radio ads - these included :30 second promotions ads, :30 second taped ads and live mentions in the afternoon drive. Estimated number of persons for the radio media were 50,000 people. All media included "In Cooperation with the Illinois Corn Marketing Board?"

**Piatt, "Ethanol Promotion" -** We wanted to build a stronger relationship with our affiliated companies while at the same time, promoting the ethanol industry in our local community. To make this happen, our Farm Bureau along with affiliated companies FS and Country Financial sponsored our 3rd annual ethanol promotion and customer appreciation event. We had a booth set up where we handed out promotional materials and myths versus fact flyers, from the IL Corn Growers, about ethanol. During the three hour event, we had FB board members and FS employees pumping discounted fuel for patrons and turned the Fast Stop Express into a full service gas station. We discounted E-85 to $1.63 per gallon and regular fuel was discounted $0.30 to $2.14 a gallon while diesel was $2.00 a gallon. We had 184 total customers customers that used 2,258 gallons of regular fuel and 426 gallons of E-85. It was a huge success and we plan to do it again next year.

**\*Marshall-Putnam, "Illinois River Tour" -** Months of planning and some adjustments came together for a tour of Illinois River infrastructure. Together with two other CFB's our CFB was awarded a grant from the Illinois Corn Marketing Board last fall for its proposal to showcase how the Illinois River impacts our local and regional economies. One of the CFB's and ours have jointly been involved in developing a regional economic development plan with guidance from the USDA. Late last summer, a community forum was held at a local high school to let community members brainstorm and give input to guide discussions. Bewildering to those involved in agriculture was the lack of emphasis given to the Illinois River as a resource. Following that forum, and in light of the acceptance of grant applications, it was decided to pursue a program to help community stakeholders have a better, more tangible grasp of the river's importance. A grant offered to county Farm Bureaus from the Illinois Corn Marketing Board was realized as a natural fit for addressing this need. The two CFB's also welcomed a neighboring CFB in to further the reach and impact of the program. Participants were picked up at either an equipment dealer or at a junior college. the first stop was at the lock and dam where a Congresswoman and regional TV crews joined the tour. Staff with the US Army Corps of Engineers explained the operations of the lock, and attendees saw that there are threats to river transportation as the locks become more and more decrepit in their old age (already well past their engineered life expectancy). On the trip from the lock to a local ADM facility, Jim Tarmann with Illinois Corn spoke about efforts underway to get congress to cut red tape and allow a partnership of the federal government and the barge industry to invest in replacing the system. At ADM, the terminal superintendent demonstrated not only how trucks unload grain in the elevator portion of the terminal but how barges are loaded and what that ability means to the farmer's bottom line. With out the use of the river, it would take several hundred semi-trucks driving all the way, nearly 900 miles, to New Orleans just to haul the cargo of one 15 barge tow. A candidate for state representative, joined in for the remainder of the day. Departing from ADM, the group enjoyed a catered lunch at a nearby church. On the trip to the ethanol plant, IFB's Director of National Legislation, Adam Nielsen, discussed the economic impact of the river, the impact of ethanol as well as the issues surrounding GMO labeling bills. Arriving for the final stop of the day, at a local ethanol plant some of the plant's personnel explained the current state of affairs for ethanol. Their plant operations manager, guided the busload through the plant, nothing that even though other plants are struggling, theirs recently doubled their capacity. It is not coincidental that this county is home to the world's largest dry mill ethanol plant. While the family is from the region, the county's access to the river along with available workers, and located in the midst of prime corn growing areas made the community ideal. While some ethanol leaves on trucks and more on train, a significant amount is loaded onto barges and exported abroad. Byproducts include distillers grain for livestock feed and some corn oil, which is sent over to a biodiesel plant in a nearby town. After the trip was complete, a survey indicated that the participants were more aware of how the river and agriculture impact the regional economy and held more favorable views on ethanol than before the tour. The program attracted media attention with stories in FarmWeek as well as coverage on regional TV stations.

**Warren-Henderson, "Flag the Technology" -** We heard of several occasions where crops were killed because they were sprayed with the wrong thing. We felt that there needed to be some way to ensure that this didn't continue to happen, or at least give farmers a tool to use to prevent mistakes from occurring. We heard about a program that was being done in Arkansas where farmers could use different colored flags to identify herbicide traits in field crops, so we decided to try it here. We talked with area fertilizer companies and seed dealers about the program and they thought it sounded like a simple and effective system for identifying herbicides traits in fields. The objective of the program is to reduce herbicide application errors and to foster good

**COMMODITIES & MARKETING (continued)**

community relations. The flag technology is a quick and inexpensive method of preventing the misapplication of pesticides and warn of crops that are sensitive to potential off-target drift. Color-coded, pennant shaped flags that represent a particular herbicide trait/technology are placed at the field entrance or in a conspicuous location in the field. The red flag denotes a conventional crop; white denotes round-up ready, glyphosate tolerant crop; bright green denotes Liberty Link; black & white checker board denotes RR Xtend dicamba resistant trait soybeans; Teal denotes Enlist 2,4-D and FOP tolerant soybeans. We gave flags out to farmers free of charge as well as to seed dealers, and custom applicators who requested them. We had charts made up showing the different colored flags with an explanation beside it telling what that color represented. We put it on heavy card stock with a nice finish so that it would hold up. We made sure that all the custom applicators, fertilizer companies and aerial application companies had the charts we had made showing the different color of flags and what they represent. We have had several farmers come in and get the free flags and have been told by custom applicators that those flags are very helpful.

**Saline, "Youth Equine Extravaganza" -** Over 50 youth and adults attended a FREE Equine Workshop. The event was held at a local fairgrounds and the attendees were from all across District 18. Youth attended 4 different learning sessions to increase their equine knowledge. 4 speakers were secured to present the information. the 4 topics included: Equine Massage, Barefoot Trim and Nutrition, Equine Veterinary Science, and Equine Anatomy. All of the presenters used hands-on activities for the youth to learn more. During the event youth learned about caring for horses, while also exploring careers in the equine industry. The attendees develop a better overall understanding of horses. The opportunity to learn more about the equine industry is important for youth and adults. A meal was provided to everyone that attended compliments of the District Equine Committee. Our equine committee hosted an new seminar for horse enthusiast in our area. We were able to have a newly trained Equine Dentist come and show her technique and answer questions about how to float teeth. We also had the chance to witness and Massage Therapist work on a horse with an injury for over an hour. She was able to put his outplace ligaments and vertebrates back into place with just her hands.

**Fulton, "Annie's Project" -** Our Women's Committee co-sponsored “Annie’s Project – Education for Farm Women” with our Extension Unit starting in February. Annie’s Project is designed to help farm women develop their management and decision making skills in the dynamic, complex world of agriculture. Dates of the six session series were February 16, 18, 23, 25, March 1 & 3 with each session running from 6 to 9 p.m. at our County Farm Bureau Building. Using several agriculture industry professionals as speakers, Annie’s Project covered topics that included goal setting, business planning, family communications, keeping track of financial records, interpreting financial information, understanding insurance options (liability, health, life, long-term care, crop, etc.), land values and leases, retirement and estate planning, risk management, and FSA & USDA programs. We provided a light meal each night of the program, arranged for a speaker from Country Financial for the insurance portion, our FSA director, and a farm financial planner; all women. On the final night, we had arranged for a discussion panel. Two of the three ladies were our WC members. We had 25 participants.

**Logan, " Crop Tour" -** We conducted their 2nd annual crop tour on the 18th of August. The main goal of the crop tour is to obtain an estimated corn yield for our County. Daniel Eeten, Jared Brown, Kyle Atteberry, Kyle Klockenga, Eli Klokkenga and Matt Wrage spear headed the crop tour with consistency and accuracy in mind. There have been high hopes this year for a very large crop. Last year the excess moisture left many holes in the crop that shaved of the top end of yields. This year it seems every field has a complete stand of corn or beans with no holes. All samples were taken with the same strategy. Enter a field from multiple locations, go well beyond the end rows to a point that was representative of the field, take a harvestable ear count and select every 10th ear for a sample. Kernel counts were taken from all the ear samples and multiplied by their respected stand counts. The counts were divided by 85,000 kernels per bushel. The 85,000 kernels count was selected based on the evaluation of all the ears that were pulled. This strategy was performed in four locations of every field sampled. The specific fields sampled were randomly chosen however they were in strategic locations to provide the best possible coverage for the county. Samples were taken from each township in the county. To analyze the data, the county was divided into 4 quadrants (NW,SW,SE,NE). The Numbers are in… Northwest Quadrant 222.9 BPA Southwest Quadrant 210.0 BPA Southeast Quadrant 217.4 BPA Northeast Quadrant 231.0 BPA Estimated County Average 218.4 BPA Trying to evaluate the crop’s yield potential across the entire county based on a relatively small sample is a difficult task. Although the samples were random, there are many factors to consider when placing value on each sample such as farming practices, soil types, whether the field is corn on corn and also the hybrid. The average harvestable ear stand count came in at 32,430 per acre. Within that stand count the team all commented on variable ear size with a few more “runts” than expected. The majority of the ears pulled had some extent of “tip back”. Despite good growing conditions, the heat during the week of July 20th is likely to blame. In addition to the yield estimate, notes were also taken on the progress and the agronomic state of the crop. The northern half of the county had many plants that were “goose necked” likely from the wind events that occurred towards the end of June. Overall stalk integrity was decent. Some ear molds were present in a few of the sampled fields. This included diplodia, aspergillus as well as gibberella. None of the samples taken had reached black layer (physiological maturity). Many of the fields still have a lot of green left in them and appear to have had enough nitrogen to finish. Almost every field showed some pressure from the disease grey leaf spot. The group did not attempt to estimate yield on soybeans. Soybeans are extremely difficult to predict. Their yield levels can fluctuate all the way to the end of the plants life due to seed size. Overall Soybeans are very tall this year which is not always ideal for high yields. The recent rains have caused many fields to lay over which created ideal conditions for molds and disease within the canopy. One does not have to search hard to find disease such as Sudden Death, Brown Stem Rot or even White Mold. All of these can have a substantial impact on final yield. However, pod counts have been high and with the recent rains it would suggest that soybean yields will be slightly higher than average.

**COMMODITIES & MARKETING (continued)**

**\*Cass-Morgan, "Hamburger Cook-Off (Corn Grant)" -** During a community celebration event, the committee put together a hamburger cook-off. The idea was to blend the beef producer and corn grower relationship and be present in front of a large non-farming audience. The big display table, banners, and posters included beef and meat information, nutritional value information, fact sheets on animal treatment, pictures of cuts of meat, and AITC materials. The meat used for competitors was from a local meat locker and donated by the local beef producers group. The local beef producers were also available to help and answer questions from the general public. We had 7 teams with 400 spectators. Spectators participated by voting in the "People's Choice" category. There, they were able to donated money in team jars and whoever had the most money collected by the end of the night won that category. Winners of "People's Choice", "Best Burger" & "Best Side Dish" all won a trophy and cash prize. Next year we anticipate an even larger turnout. Entry fees for the competition and "People's Choice" money was collected ($1,000) and donated to the food pantry to buy meat.

**Clinton, "Nutrient Stewardship Grant Project-Cover Crops and Manure Management" -** CFB Board appointed a Nutrient Loss Committee that worked with other Organization, Govt Agencies, Extension and individuals to plan, coordinate and carryout a series of special activities as part of a Nutrient Stewardship Project. The primary purpose of the projects was to study: 1) the impacts of cover crops and manure management programs on controlling nutrient loss from the soil 2) the impacts on soil health, 3) encourage farmers to adopt best mgt practices to reduce nutrient loss, and 4) develop education programs in conjunction with local community college. The committee selected 4 farms with farming practices ranging from no manure/no cover crops to cover crops/manure. The committee worked with a local soil consultant to take initial soil test in March and again at various intervals through the growing season on these 4 farms. We also tested manure that was being applied to fields and developed a video showing how to calculated manure applied to the field and the potential impacts of applying manure to frozen ground. We also conducted an N-Watch project on one of the corn plots. We conducted field day in March, primarily focusing on cover crops and showing how they limited nutrient movement and helped to improve general soil health. Also, showed how cover crops could be utilized in animal feeding. A rain simulator was also utilized to show how cover crops impacted impacts of rainfall and soil erosion. 65 people attended the March Field Day. In July, we hosted a second field day primarily focusing on manure management, cover crops and chemicals, and nitrogen loss during growing season. 55 people participated in the July Field Day. The committee also partnered with the local community college ag program to provide assistance with the project while helping to provide an educational program for the students. The county donated $1,000 to the ag program for their assistance with this project. The success of the project was measured on the attendance at the field days, educational material generated and improved awareness of the need to self regulate nutrient loss. We were also able to bring together many collaborators into this project for a common goal. The project was covered by IFB News, RFD news, local newspapers, local radio, and in Farm Bureau publications.

**Woodford, "Follow a Field" -** Have you had members ever wonder what other farmers are doing on their fields? Everyone has their own personal style of farming, and farmers can learn quite a bit from each other. This is why we started the Follow a Field Program. This program utilized social media, our county website, and monthly newsletter to give a monthly update on one of our farmer's local field. We started the day the beans were planted in the ground and finished the day they were harvested. Each month we would post a picture to each of the media outlets listed, with a detailed description of the steps that had been taken on the field that month. We recorded steps such as land preparation, date of planting, what mode of actions were used, amount of rain the field had received, and how the crop was progressing. Our hope was that other local producers would watch our crop to compare how his/her crops were progressing, and to gather ideas for their fields next year. They were able to see how well a fellow neighbor's field management worked or didn't work for the crop that year. As an added bonus, if we had any non-agriculture related followers on our FB page or website, they were able to watch what exactly all goes into the crop that they will eventually find on their dinner table.

**Bureau, "Fact Vs Fiction - A Conversation about GMO’s and Organic" -** There is a lot of misinformation and confusion about GMO’s and organic food production. The Young Leader Committee wanted to learn the facts about how these practices affect modern agriculture and their food supply. Because the committee isn't real large, they teamed up with the neighboring county Farm Bureau in order to host a larger event. To begin planning, a local Ag instructor from the community college was invited to present. A location and date were then chosen. Flyers were sent to the committee and members were asked to register in advance. The evening began with a pizza dinner. The program lasted just over an hour and included information about make informed decisions about what is “safe” or “not”, and how marketing and misinformation have shaped views of these production practices. Those in attendance felt the meeting was informational and would be helpful when encountering those who do not have a general understanding of agriculture. Now that they are more informed about the subject, the next step is to plan a communications seminar to learn how to speak to consumers about these issues and more.

**Randolph, "Farm Fresh Food" -** Every year, a specialty grower in the county provides produce for a Farmer's Market at the Grand American, which is a world-wide shooting competition the Farm Bureau sells ice cream at. Each day the produce would sell out because of the high quality and great taste. This year, tomatoes, cucumbers, cherry tomatoes, peaches, jams, jellies, relish, and pickled beets were on display for the over 1000 campers at the event. All the money raised goes toward the specialty grower and they donate a portion back to the Farm Bureau Foundation.

**\*McHenry, "Farm Stroll & Market" -** Farm Stroll was a one day self-guided tour of our County's diversified family farms. The event was free of charge, but participants were encouraged to bring some "cash" for products and produce. The inaugural event featured 11 unique agricultural related stops. It was co-sponsored by our CFB and U of I Extension. A local bank sponsored the

**COMMODITIES & MARKETING (continued)**

colorful brochures and a portion of the advertising cost. We had professional photos taken of each farm and press releases were developed. The event was featured on local radio stations, on Facebook, and in the newspapers. Volunteers set out road signs, helped park cars, and greeted guest as they arrived at each destination. The participants of the stroll were able to pick up maps or print them off prior to the stroll, they could also pick one up at any of the farm stops. Farm visitors had the opportunity to see organic, conventional, and hydroponic production of vegetables. Other stops featured livestock, horses, and alpacas. On average, each farm had 328 visitors. The event received great reviews from the public and the media and 10 of the farms agreed to participate in a second annual event.

**Cook, "Urban Garden Grant Initiative" -** PLANNING: Our Commodities/Marketing Team of 12 volunteers and staff developed an action plan, budget, assignments and promotion for the project. INTENT: Our Team wanted to connect gardeners with area greenhouse farmers for increased plant/material sales. With huge increased interest in urban community gardens, opportunities for local farmers abound to supply plants and other farm services. Team members established guidelines/standards/needs for this grant program with the grant dollars designed to "drive" the purchasers of the urban gardens plants and materials to our local farmers with farmstands/products. The Team promoted the grant program availability through several area listservs and other social media.The program effectively broadened public awareness of local member farmstands which created a new awareness of agriculture, helping to strengthen the local farm economy. We paired each urban garden with a local Master Gardener or area farmer to provide technical advise/support during the growing season. IMPACT/NEEDS MET: 25 garden projects submitted grant applications. 3 member volunteer review committee reviewed each and five $300 grants were selected/provided to urban garden to make farm stand garden center purchases. Farm Bureau "sponsored" garden signs were placed by volunteers at each of the 5 urban gardens making all associated with it aware of the Farm Bureau's role. One garden and our partnership was highlighted in the the local TV news. This initiative drove new Consumers to area farmers and led to farm stands partnering directly with urban gardens and their members/supporters for plant sales, materials and growing advice. These gardens were in inner city areas which connected a new and diverse audience to our organization.

**Winnebago-Boone, "Farm Breakfast" -** 13 members of the Farm Breakfast Committee planned the menu for the day, which consisted of pancakes, whole hog sausage, applesauce, milk and ice cream; contacted crafters; organized over 125 additional volunteers; and contacted local businesses for additional contributions. The committee also lined up the farm location- a local dairy operation which also produces their own line of cheeses. Goat cheese samples, horse drawn wagon rides, an antique tractor display, Model T car display, children’s games, a craft show, petting zoo, and a cow mascot were also included. Activity booths includes a local children's museum, AITC, and live music provided by local talent. Several media outlets were informed of the event and ads were placed promoting the event. Brochures and posters were printed and passed out to the local businesses. The committee placed signs on strategic roads and at major intersections. The committee worked with different dairy businesses to get the milk and ice cream donated. Our volunteers stepped up to the plate to feed over 900 people breakfast. This event helps the FB reach a large number of consumers and provides an opportunity for consumers to see, smell, touch, and taste agriculture, primarily the dairy industry. The proceeds are donated to the CFB Foundation. This event raised over $2,500.

**Champaign, "Riding from the Ground Up" -** To assist equine enthusiasts of any age to better "communicate" with their horse and enhance their riding experience, a committee of 8 decided to continue with their summer venture. A local horse trainer joined the volunteer committee and a county Farm Bureau member provided her pristine centennial farm that was fully equipped with an outdoor and indoor arena. Invitations were met with a group of 12 riders and their horses that were both novice and experienced. Participants were divided into two working groups for a dual morning session where the instructor taught participants how to use gestures and body movements to help the horse understand what was expected of it. This was followed by a pork chop bar-b-que before everyone entered the enclosed ring for an afternoon session on how to properly saddle, mount and ride for the utmost enjoyment. A local vendor brought ice cream to the scene to top off the day. The event was well attended and liked by many. Local 4-H equine spin clubs were present at the event to gauge interest and learn more about showmanship. 4-H'ers continue to demonstrate interest in the equine industry, creating a hands-on classroom environment.

**Macon, "Lady Landowners" -** Our local Lady Landowners group hosted a couple of the past County Farm Bureau Presidents and County Farm Bureau manager to talk about the history of our County Farm Bureau since we celebrated our 100th Anniversary this year. The past presidents were able to share some stories of their time with Farm Bureau and answered quite a few questions from the ladies as well. There were quite a few stories, memories, and experiences that were shared among the group.

**HEALTH AND SAFETY**

**\*Brown, "Farm Safety Grant-Farm Safety Day" -** The Women's and Health & Safety Committee held our Annual Farm Safety Day with our local public and private schools, Pre-K thru 4th grades. We had several health/safety stations set up which included: Hand washing and Food Safety, Storm Preparedness, FFA Chores, LOCAL Implement Dealership/tractor safety, Fire Department, Ambulance Department, Fishing Safety, Dog Safety and Chemical Look A Likes. All the presenters had a safety message for the students to take with them along with hands on activities and handouts. Ag Mags were also distributed to the teachers to share with their classes for further discussion. We had approximately 450-500 students, teachers, aides, parents that served as helpers for their child's grade, grandparents, siblings and local media. Some of our local volunteers/sponsors included FFA Chapter, Soil & Water Conservation District, Health Department, Ambulance Director, University of Illinois Extension, Implement Dealership, Fire Department personnel, Natural Resources Conservation Services, Midwest Youth Services and Prairieland FS. Our event had publicity in our local newspaper along with being published in FarmWeek, also, reaching 3,400 households. To go along with our

**HEALTH & SAFETY (continued)**

day, students had a contest to be able to design a tee shirt with a farm safety message. The winners drawings were then placed on the front of the shirt and each student received a tee shirt to wear for Farm Safety Day. Not only were the shirt utilized for that day, teachers incorporated them to be worn on "Field Day".

**Douglas, "Farm Safety Day for Kids" -** 2015 Safety Day for Kids: The Ag Literacy Committee, Safety Committee, Ag Literacy Coordinator, Board of Directors, 100 volunteers and Manager continued its service to educating 400 area youth about common safety hazards. We invited all of the 5th grade classes within two counties to participate as well as a home schooled children. The program was broken into eleven different safety stations. Each station was presented and taught by area organizations or companies. The 2015 stations included: • “Live Line” Presentation: An electric cooperative has a demonstration they use throughout our area to educate kids on the dangers of power lines. The 45 minute programs shows the dangers of different scenarios kids may be involved in, such as flying a kite, letting go of balloons, and climbing trees. The 7,200 watt demonstration concludes with a loud “bang”, as the presenter overloads and blows a controller. • Lawn Mower Safety: A local implement dealer presented how to be safe around lawn mowers. • Chemical Look Alike: Extension performed a skit on chemical look alike. • Disability Awareness: FSA and a local FFA chapter sponsored this station. Students were asked to simulate different types of disabilities by completing a task. Missing an arm – make a peanut butter sandwich, blind – pin the tail on the donkey and so on. • Sun Safety: A Center for Rural Health presented how to protect yourself against ultra-violet rays. • Grain Safety: A local elevator taught kids how to be safe while around grain bins. • JULIE: Before you dig call to ensure your safety! • Animal Safety: A local DVM presented the dangers that could occur around unknown animals. • Firearm Safety: A local firearm instructor explained to the kids the importance of firearm safety at all times and that firearms are not a video game or toy. • Meth Prevention: A local State Trooper showed the kids what trash found along a roadway could be equipment used to make meth. He stressed that they should never touch any of it but call the police instead. • ATV Safety: A local FFA group presented the brain mold presentation to all the students. We were featured on the front page of a local newspaper reaching over 10,000 people and a three county newspaper reaching over 36,000.

**Moultrie, "Farm Safety Day for Kids" -** 2015 Safety Day for Kids: The Ag Literacy Committee, Safety Committee, Ag Literacy Coordinator, Board of Directors, 100 volunteers and Manager continued its service to educating 400 area youth about common safety hazards. We invited all of the 5th grade classes within two counties to participate as well as a home schooled children. The program was broken into eleven different safety stations. Each station was presented and taught by area organizations or companies. The 2015 stations included: • “Live Line” Presentation: An electric cooperative has a demonstration they use throughout our area to educate kids on the dangers of power lines. The 45 minute programs shows the dangers of different scenarios kids may be involved in, such as flying a kite, letting go of balloons, and climbing trees. The 7,200 watt demonstration concludes with a loud “bang”, as the presenter overloads and blows a controller. • Lawn Mower Safety: A local implement dealer presented how to be safe around lawn mowers. • Chemical Look Alike: Extension performed a skit on chemical look alike. • Disability Awareness: FSA and a local FFA chapter sponsored this station. Students were asked to simulate different types of disabilities by completing a task. Missing an arm – make a peanut butter sandwich, blind – pin the tail on the donkey and so on. • Sun Safety: A Center for Rural Health presented how to protect yourself against ultra-violet rays. • Grain Safety: A local elevator taught kids how to be safe while around grain bins. • JULIE: Before you dig call to ensure your safety! • Animal Safety: A local DVM presented the dangers that could occur around unknown animals. • Firearm Safety: A local firearm instructor explained to the kids the importance of firearm safety at all times and that firearms are not a video game or toy. • Meth Prevention: A local State Trooper showed the kids what trash found along a roadway could be equipment used to make meth. He stressed that they should never touch any of it but call the police instead. • ATV Safety: A local FFA group presented the brain mold presentation to all the students. We were featured on the front page of a local newspaper reaching over 10,000 people and a three county newspaper reaching over 36,000.

**Johnson, "Large Animal Rescue Awareness" -** In coordination with the Illinois Fire Service Institute, the local fire department and our equine committee, we hosted a training that would educate and prepare first responders, EMTs, and other individuals on how to react during large animal emergency situations. The course covered topics including the purpose of large animal rescue, incident prevention, evacuation planning, and understanding animal behavior during stress and non-stress settings. Attendees also learned about humane handling of animals, large animal restraint and scene management, and several other topics of importance were covered. The Illinois Fire Service Institute was contacted about helping with the presentations for the program. Also, local individuals with first hand experience in dealing with animal rescue situations were available to help answer questions and offer real life advice. To adequately relate the importance of large animal rescue, examples, videos, and demonstrations were given along with various scenarios being played out. Very few first responders have first hand experience with all types of large animals, we hoped this training was able to give the confidence to handle these emergencies to not only help the animals but also protect bystanders as well.

**Massac, "Large Animal Rescue Awareness" -** In coordination with the Illinois Fire Service Institute, the local fire department and equine committee hosted a training that would educate and prepare first responders and other individuals on how to react in large animal rescue situations. The course covered topics including the purpose of large animal rescue, incident prevention, evacuation planning, understanding animal behavior in normal settings and under stress, humane handling of large animals, understanding large animal restraint, large animal scene management, water and unstable ground rescues, containment and the capture of large animals, trailer and transport incidents,and barn and wild land fires. To prepare for the training the Illinois Fire Service Institute was contacted to help with presentations on the matter. Also, local individuals who had first-hand experience in dealing with animal rescue situations told stories and gave advice. To adequately relate the importance of large animal rescue,

**HEALTH & SAFETY (continued)**

examples, videos, and demonstrations were given and shown scenarios. With fewer and fewer first responders having an ag background, the training was influential as many felt more confident if a large animal accident was to occur in the future.

**\*Washington, "Auxiliary Lighting for Farm Equipment" -** With the challenges of ever-changing farming seasons and conditions, farmers are sometime forced to transport their equipment in early morning hours or after dark. In addition, the size of equipment and number of distracted drivers on rural roads have both increased over the years, increasing the likelihood of dangerous situations when sharing the road with each other. Our involved committees wanted to help these implements stand out better during these periods of decreased visibility by offering free auxiliary lighting. The battery-powered magnetic strobe and caution lights can be placed where most needed on farm implements to help grab the attention of motorists as they share the road. Hopefully the additional lighting will alert motorists and help curb a troubling statistic of an increasing number of deadly accidents with farm equipment in our area. Directly, 39 farmers in our county benefited by receiving a free set of important auxiliary lighting equipment for their implements. Aside from the 39 lights distributed directly to farmers in our county, our members, the public, and others were all made aware of this program and driving safely with farm equipment during our campaign to deliver the free lighting throughout the county. Project publicity included an article and picture in our CFB publication, which reaches approximately 2,000 member households. Our CFB Facebook page (over 280 "likes") was also utilized to share the message and encourage farmers to call the office for the free safety lights.

**Mason, "Packing Backpack Meals" -** Packing Backpack Meals: One of the communities in our county has put together a program that provides weekend meals for underprivileged elementary school kids. Sadly many students are not receiving meals at home, when away from school. Each qualifying student receives a bag of nonperishable, easy to prepare, food items to eat over the weekend. Before our monthly meetings, our Young Leader Committee helps prepare the bags and distribute them to the students lockers. This has been a great way for the Young Leaders to help the community. The program distributes roughly 80 meals per week to students in need.

**White, "Progressive Ag Safety Day" -** In conjunction with an adjacent county Farm Bureau, our county Farm Bureau held a safety day with a grant from Progressive Agricultural Foundation, and donations from Farm Credit Services and Crop Production Services. The goal of the project was to make children aware of the hazards on the farm and at home, and how to prevent accidents. Over 50 volunteers helped present the day of the event. The program was offered to the fourth grade classrooms in all grade schools in our county and the adjacent two counties. 230 students and 12 teachers attended the camp. Our county FB has been organizing this event for many years, this was the third year to present this program with the adjacent county. It was deemed a huge success. Response from the teachers involved was overwhelmingly positive and they are looking forward to next year's Safety Day. Photos taken throughout the day were published in our county publication, on social media, in local media, and on our website. \* Sun Safety- Four volunteers taught the students about sun safety. The students learned how important it is to protect their skin from the harmful rays of the sun. The students also made a UV bead bracelet. \* Internet Safety- We had an individual from the Attorney General's office come and discuss the dangers of the internet. \* Animal Safety- An Ag Literacy Coordinator spoke to the students about safe practices around animals, such as dogs and cats, and other peoples pets. \* Gun Safety- A local 4-H leader and Gun Club Leader very active in gun safety and awareness presented this station. She talked about the ways guns are dangerous and explained to the students how they can use guns safely. They also talked about the proper way to handle guns. \* Grain Bin Safety- Two volunteers from Consolidated Grain and Barge talked to the kids about grain bin safety. They also demonstrated the dangers of grain bins with a grain bin model. \* Small Equipment Safety- The local junior college agricultural instructor led this station, which gave students a chance to learn how to drill a hole, cut a board, and screw a screw. He led them in proper safety techniques while doing so. \* Poison Look-a Like- The U of IL Extension office taught kids about the dangers of poisons, and how many household items look very similar to poisons. \*Disabilities - A group from the surrounding Farm Service Agencies conducted a disabilities awareness station. The kids were designated a disability and then tried to accomplish simple tasks with their handicap. They learned what it is like to deal with disability. They discussed ways to prevent accidents. \* JULIE Underground Digging in IL - A representative from JULIE presented on the dangers of digging near underground wiring locations. They played a participatory game related to this safety issue.

**Clay, "Young Leader's teach Farm Safety to Driver's Education Classes" -** The County Farm Bureau Young Leaders continually strive to positively promote agriculture throughout our County. In an effort to promote agriculture safety, the Young Leaders spoke with the driver’s education classes at all 3 high schools in the county. The YLs provided a PowerPoint presentation hoping to educate students on different scenarios and situations involving agriculture equipment on the roadway. They handed out literature from IFB regarding rules of the country road, tips for motorists, SHARE THE ROAD bumper stickers, and CFB notepads and pens. Each of the classes were also able to learn about agriculture safety through a hands-on experience. Depending on the school, students were permitted to get in the tractor or equipment to try and see what was actually visible, or not visible, from the driver’s seat of each vehicle. Passing, safe following distance, obstacles for farm equipment, and anhydrous tanks were all topics discussed during each presentation. Students were also shown pictures of real life accidents of what happens or could happen when vehicles and farm equipment collide. We borrowed equipment for the presentations from FS and a local family farm. Our local COUNTRY Financial agents donated gift cards to be given away during each program. Since driver's ed is just a half-year course we do this project in both the spring and fall so every student in the county can experience it.

**Mercer, "Agricultural Trauma Training" -** Our County Farm Bureau along with our local hospital sponsored an Agricultural Trauma Training at a local fire station. Over fifty first responders attended the program, and they received continuing education credits to support their roles. The Director for the National Education Center for Agricultural Safety presented a two hour

**HEALTH & SAFETY (continued)**

training class on how to effectively respond to rural emergencies. The training covered how to respond to various agricultural accidents including anhydrous ammonia, tractor rollovers, chemical spills and burns, grain bin entrapment, compartment syndrome, and manure pit rescue. The training was very well attended, and we heard several positive comments saying they learned a lot and feel more capable responding to these incidents. As a result, plans are in the works to provide another training next year for emergency personnel.

**Union, "Large Animal Rescue Awareness" -** In coordination with the Illinois Fire Service Institute, the local fire department and equine committee hosted a training that would educate and prepare first responders and other individuals on how to react in large animal rescue situations. The course covered topics including the purpose of large animal rescue, incident prevention, evacuation planning, understanding animal behavior in normal settings and under stress, humane handling of large animals, understanding large animal restraint, large animal scene management, water and unstable ground rescues, containment and the capture of large animals, trailer and transport incidents, and barn and wild land fires. To prepare for the training, the Illinois Fire Service Institute was contacted to help with presentations on the matter. Also, local individuals who had first-hand experience in dealing with animal rescue situations told stories and gave advice. To adequately relate the important of large animal rescue, examples, videos, and demonstrations were given and various scenarios were shown. The workshop was promoted in on the District Equine committee's Facebook page, on the participating CFBs' Facebook pages, shared with area first responders via mail, email, and promoted in local Farm Bureau and community publications. 9 CFBs/11%

**\*Knox, "Safety is No Accident 4-H Campaign" -** The Women's Committee challenged local 4-H clubs to help promote the importance of safety by creating a safety campaign. Based on the themes from National Ag Safety Awareness Week, the clubs were able to select one theme from this list: ATV Safety, Youth Safety on the Farm, Tractor Safety, Roadway Safety, and Grain Bin Safety. Once the club selected a theme, it was their responsibility to create a safety campaign based around the topic. All three submissions were 45-second videos with different themes! The Women's Committee judged the videos using a rubric that was created by the cfb. To engage individuals outside of the 4-H clubs and the Women's Committee, a "People's Choice Award" was created based on "likes" that the videos received on the cfb Facebook page. The First place received $100, second place received $75, third place received $50, and the People's Choice Award received $25. Overall, the three submitted videos helped promote National Ag Safety Awareness week to the 4-H Clubs and the surrounding community reaching 11,054 people, receiving 133 "likes", and the videos were shared 66 times.

**\*Saline, "Farm & Community Safety Day" -** Living in a rural community, we decided to host a Farm & Community Safety Day for all of the 4th grade students in our county and the neighboring county. Working with the local University of Illinois Extension, we were able to bring over 500 students, teachers, and parent chaperones out to a local park for the program. We were also able to work with a few local FFA chapters to help assist in setting up and tearing down the event. On the day of the event, the FFA members helped set up, direct groups, pack lunches, and run errands to help keep the event running smoothly. The classes started the day by getting their picture taken in their matching t-shirts (each school had a different 'safety color'). Then each class went to their designated station, every 20 minutes they would switch and continue to their next scheduled station. There was a total of 18 stations including large and small animal safety, sun safety, personal safety, healthy eating, and many more. Each class was assigned to nine different stations. Everyone enjoyed a lunch funded by COUNTRY Financial. At the end of the day, each class worked together to write what they had learned that day on a poster with their class picture on it. They were able to take this back to the classroom to remind them each day of the safety tips they learned. We received excellent feedback from this program and plan to continue it.

**Fulton, "Safety Sam Scarecrows" -** The week before Farm Safety Week, our Women’s Committee met to put together “Safety Sam” scarecrows to put up at area elevators, farm supply facilities, and along grain hauling state highway routes. One member asked facility managers and landowners if we could put scarecrows on their property. Members gathered at our office on Sept. 14, 2015,to make 4 scarecrows. Members supplied old clothes, straw, gloves, and boots. We also put a Farm Bureau hat on several and cowboy hats on the others. Each Safety Sam held a 1 foot by 3 foot sized white “Farm Safely. A message from the XX County Farm Bureau” sign with bright red letters. Four members delivered the Safety Sams the following week. The safety scarecrows stayed up until the end of harvest during the first part of November. This was an awesome attention-getter, and we had many favorable comments from members, farmers, business owners, and the general public. The displays made non-farmers aware of farm traffic and at the same time reminded our farmers to be safe!

**Monroe, "Rural Driving Safety" -** Our rural county continues to have more urban and non-farm residents each year. Most of them are unfamiliar with farm equipment and how to drive on rural roads. The Young Leader Committee, board members, Women's Committee members, U of I Extension and a high school Ag Science Association teamed up to provide a Rural Safety Driving presentation at the High School Agriculture Day. 320 freshman and sophomore students participated in a unique learning session on April 20 at the High School. Learning stations the students attended were: Agriculture Careers – information was provided about the importance and variety of agriculture careers; presented by our Agriculture Literacy Coordinator and our District Facilitating Coordination in Agricultural Education Program Advisor. Team Building – Students worked together in groups to design and build small boats out of everyday materials while enhancing their team-building skills; presented by U of I Extension 4-H Program Coordinators. Slow Moving Vehicle(SMV) emblems and Driving on Rural Roads – provided information about closure and reaction time, the SMV, the lighting/turning signals on the farm equipment, the blind spot and how it is much larger with farm equipment than regular passenger vehicles, passing safely; presented by two Women’s Committee members and a Young Leader Committee member. Sitting in a Tractor and a Semi – students had the opportunity to sit in a tractor hooked to an auger wagon

**HEALTH & SAFETY (continued)**

with a vehicle behind it or a semi and trailer with a vehicle behind it to demonstrate the tractor driver can’t see you if you are too close; presented by two Farm Bureau members and AgriScience Association members. This program was a huge success with students talking about it with their parents and friends for days to come.

**Carroll, "Reading Labels Nutrition Program" -** Our Women's Committee wanted to host a meeting on reading food labels, nutrition, and misconceptions. We brought in a speaker who spoke on what the labels mean. She clarified what some of the wording on the labels mean such as all-natural, organic, GMO Free, etc. We wanted people to educate the ladies on what all the "extra" words on the labels they are reading mean. The goal was for those in attendance to make their own informed decisions with education on what they are reading instead of being misdirected by marketing. We got great feedback from the program and were asked to hold another class. A meal was provided as well by the committee.

**\*Williamson, "Traffic Safety Days" -** This event was held at a local County Pavilion April 19 thru 22. This event is designed to supplement and reinforce classroom and behind-the-wheel instruction for Driver's Education Students by using presentations and active participation to deliver important safe-driving information. Each day was structured like a regular school day with a new group of students each day. The students were divided into six groups and rotated through the presentations. The stations that students went through were: Agricultural Equipment - Several County Managers, a county Board President and Board members were on hand for the event. We allowed students to see just how large a piece of farm equipment is up-close. They were allowed to get inside of a tractor with an auger cart attached- a car was parked one car length behind it and one was parked six car lengths behind it. The students were very surprised to see that they could not see either car in the mirrors. Work Zone Safety - a presentation given by Illinois Deportment of Transportation covered the hazards and risks of driving through road construction and work zones. Motorcycle Awareness - The Illinois State Police Motorcycle Enforcement Bureau presented information from a motorcyclist's perspective on what driver's should be aware of while driving near motorcycles. Operation Lifesaver - A railroad- crossing safety presentation delivered by Union Pacific Railroad. Distracted Driving - This presentation was sponsored by AT&T and covered the dangers of cell phone use while driving. No-Zone Semi Display - It combined a presentation on the hazards of vehicle blind spots with active participation of the students who had the opportunity to sit in the driver's seat of semi-trucks and passenger cars that had cars and motorcycles parked in blind spots. They experienced first-hand what drivers can and cannot see while driving. Seat Belt Convincer and Roll-Over Simulator - This presentation by the Illinois State Police and the County Sheriff's Office combined these two pieces of equipment to demonstrate the importance of seat belts. Driving Simulations - The County Sheriff's Office, Illinois State Police and Illinois Department of Transportation use this session to demonstrate two safe-driving topics. Student drove golf carts and adult sized tricycles while wearing Fatal Vision Goggles which simulate the effects of alcohol impairment. They also drove a golf cart through traffic cones while texting. Street Smart - This presentation was given by members of S.A.F.E., a group of firefighters/paramedics from Miami-Dade County, Florida. They travel the country teaching people of the hazards of alcohol and drugs, impaired and distracted driving, excessive speed and the importance of seat belt use.

**Livingston, "#FreshFridays" -** A healthy diet is important to all of our members. As a way to not only encourage healthy eating, but also eating local produce, our Health and Safety sub-committee came up with #freshfridays. Each Friday, we feature a different produce item. We run an ad on our Farm Bureau Facebook page as well as Twitter featuring a locally grown product. We would list facts about it such as how it is grown or other products made from it along with a healthy recipe to try. We also had a list of all the local Farmer's Markets to encourage people to buy local. Through this effort, we were able to reach 3,300 people over the summer. We used the #freshfriday so people would be able to search it and find the information.

**Whiteside, "Grain Bin Rescue Demonstration" -** During our county fair, we sponsored a grain bin rescue demonstration. The demonstration was done by Stateline Farm Rescue. They conduct numerous farm safety trainings for first responders. Stateline brought their mobile grain bin simulator. They asked volunteers to participate as "victims" trapped in a grain bin. They proceeded to go step-by-step through the rescue process; explaining the process and what they were doing to the crowd. They conducted one simulation an hour for six hours. The demonstrations were well received by viewers and they asked a lot of safety-related questions. As the sponsor, we were able to post signs around the demonstration and our sponsorship was announced several times during the fair. This was a cost-effective safety and public relations event for our county.

**Adams, "SMV banners" -** The Illinois State Police safety officer contacted our Farm Bureau about developing a safety campaign similar to the start seeing motorcycles campaign which uses banners to get a simple message out to motorist to be alert. 5 county Farm Bureaus that make up the State Troopers District came together and developed a slogan through a brainstorming session which was “Caution, Slow Down and Share the Road” an image of a tractor in front of the orange SMV emblem was also added to the slogan. The ISP worked with IDOT to get a vendor to produce these banners which are 3 foot by 20 foot at a reasonable price of $90 per banner. Our district ordered 15 banners which each participating County Farm Bureau paid for out of their own funds. The marketing committee thought this was a great idea and encouraged our board of directors to purchase 5 banners. This Spring we held a press conference at a local FS plant along with FFA students, the Sheriff’s Department, State Police and Farm Bureau and Country Financial Reps. Two television stations, one radio station and 4 newspapers covered the event. At the conclusion of this press conference we went around the county and put up 5 of these banners on well traveled roads to highlight the start of harvest season. We plan leave these banners up until the end of harvest then take them down to keep the message fresh. The State Action Teams have adopted this effort and moved it into a statewide campaign. Over 60 counties now have these banners in them. Growmark and Country have agreed to help sponsor these banners. If one accident can be prevented from this message then we have been successful – one accident is one too many!!!

**HEALTH & SAFETY (continued)**

**Kankakee, "Rural Roadway Safety to FFA Chapters" -** All three FFA chapters in our county participated in a bus trip sponsored by the Co FB Young Leaders for their annual Acquaintance Program. During the bus ride, two videos were shown to the 36 FFA students about rural road safety: In the Blink of an Eye, and the Killer Corners Mission: Making a Difference. The students seemed to pay attention to the important messages imparted in the two videos and this will hopefully save some lives.

**Montgomery, "AED Unit in Building" -** Our board decided that it was important to protect the safety and health of our members. Since we hold several meetings in our building and many of our members are of the older nature, what we would do if someone had a heart attack? Could the ambulance get here on time to save them? The FB invested in an "AED" unit. AED stands for Automated Electronic Defibrillator. Everyone that works in our building took a one hour training course on how to use and apply the unit in a medical emergency. We also placed a decal on the door window in the front of the building to alert passers by that an AED unit is close at hand if the need arises. We felt it is better to have the unit here and not need it rather than look back and think if we had only... In the case of an emergency. When you place the pads on the body, it automatically senses whether or not it needs to shock the person to save them. It mounts on the wall in a convenient location and can be taken anywhere needed. We just grab the unit and take it with us if we go off sight for a meeting such as our annual meeting or tractor show.

**Woodford, "Take a "break"fast with the County Farm Bureau this Harvest" -** As we all know Harvest is an extremely busy time, and farmers along with their help have a great deal on their minds. To make sure that they don't forget to practice safe habits during harvest, the Women's Committee made up breakfast burritos early one fall morning and passed them out at a local elevator. Each grain truck that stopped at the scale was greeted by a committee member and given a hot breakfast compliments of the county farm bureau. The "break"fast sacks included our homemade burritos, Prairie Farms milk or water, and tips on staying safe. These tips included: drink plenty of water, take breaks, and always let someone know what field you are working in. The burritos were so delicious we had drivers asking if they could take a couple back to the guys in the fields. This was a very effective way to remind our local farmers to be safe, but to also thank them for all of their hard work. Throughout the morning we gave out close to 100 burritos. This program will definitely be continued next year, but at a different elevator location, to spread the message around the county.

**\*Champaign, "Farm and Labor Medicine" -** Realizing that joint and muscle pain is an outcome of physical labor and everyday tasks on the farm, the Women's Committee want to hold a meeting addressing the issue. A local surgeon took the model of Sports Medicine in Orthopedic care and applied it to farmers and laborers. He presented, and demonstrated, several techniques to address specific issues with rotator cuff tears and knee arthritis, which was close to most farmers who attended because of the stress they had on their bodies over the years. This required an understanding of different activities and different injuries. The surgeon focuses his practice on understanding and treating the conditions which prevent people from functioning and working. Attendees learned how to exercise their shoulder muscles and legs daily utilizing resistance bands. These bands range from different gauges of resistance to create more strength in the shoulders and legs.

**Sangamon, "Community Health Roundtable" -** CFB is a partner in a community based health organization that studies all aspects of quality of life for residents of the county. Being in an urban setting creates challenges for having rural representation. The Farm Bureau maintains two members on the roundtable to carry the voice for rural life. The Roundtable meets monthly to develop and execute programs aimed at addressing issues such as food insecurity, mental illness, sexually transmitted diseases, access to care, family and neighbor cohesiveness, etc. To date the group has been evaluating data collected from a variety of sources in order to determine priorities and finalize actions to address them. The issues become quite complex and the determination of why quality of life issues are occurring is difficult and widespread. Rural residents, for instance, have a high volume of lack of access to care. Very high quality care is available nearby but seniors and people in poverty aren't always able to get transportation to the care they need. Since that determination, a countywide transportation system has been developed on an "on call" basis to pick up people for daily living needs and transport them similar to that of urban bus service. Since that time CHR determined that we would now focus on how substandard housing conditions relate to childhood asthma in our community. We think this can be valuable to vulnerable people and families in our community. The effort is in final planning stages and about to be put into action.

**Will, "Grain Bin Safety/Safety on the Farm" -** We provided grain tubes to the local fire districts to help with farm safety rescues and we were able to do so thanks to a grant from the Illinois Corn Growers who assisted with the efforts. Through this process we worked directly with the fire departments and the district person’s dad who owns a farm in our county. We used their farm for a full 2 day program on 2 different Fridays in cold February. The program was fantastic as we had 39 fire fighters the first program and 34 for the second program and they did grain bin rescue, cutting of tin, how a grain bin works, cutting of grain augers, and assembly of the units and looking at different emergency procedures. We had 6 different media cover the last event because we wanted to make sure all was working properly in our process. The exciting part was while we assisted the heavy lifting was done through the departments on setting up the items they wanted and getting people to attend and their advertising worked so much better than ours going to the fire departments as we had 17 different departments represented in these 2 days. Our work they told us was vital and we were so pleased to be part of this effort when so many of these in the past have not had this kind of attendance! We had 6 volunteers assist with different parts of the program.

**Kane, "Safety Treats for Safety Week" -** Safety Treats for Safety Week: September 21-25,2015. Held in cooperation with local elevators, SWCD, FSA, implement dealers and others. As farmers gear up for the harvest season, it is important to remind them of safe practices and that they are involved in a dangerous occupation. Committee purchased candy and developed Safety Treats

**HEALTH & SAFETY (continued)**

by placing messages on the candy to be placed in the businesses above with farm safety reminders like: Safe farmers make “Jolly Ranchers”; Be a “LifeSaver”, Remember to play it safe this fall! ; Don’t put a stop to your “Payday”, Practice farm safety! ; Don’t be a “Butterfinger” when it comes to farm safety! ; and four others. Committee ordered cardboard display boxes and designed a Safety Treats full-color flyer to mount on each box to advertise the program and invite farmers to take a treat. 12 committee members assisted in making 400 treats and placing them in 7 locations across the County. The messages were a fun and memorable way to drive home a serious topic and much appreciated by the farm community. 7 locations, 400 treats for farmers.

**Macon, "Feed the Farmers" -** We teamed up with a local radio station to do something to give back to the farmers for all of their hard work they do to feed us and for us to provide them with a lunch to allow them to take a break during the long hours they put in. We agreed that serving lunch around the county to everyone would probably have the biggest impact. We decided that harvest time would be a great time to do this since the farmers will be coming to the elevator to deliver grain. We provided a sack lunch that consisted of a BBQ sandwich, a bag of chips, soda or bottle of water, and a caramel apple to the drivers coming through as well as extra lunches for those who the drivers were working with in the field. All of our food items were donated by local businesses that we had gone out and solicited. We had a banner made up that was hung outside near the scales that had all of our sponsors listed on it to show our appreciation for their efforts in assisting us. Each week, we targeted a different area of the county and had advertisements on the radio that mentioned which elevator we would be serving lunch at that week. Flyers were also sent to the elevators to hang in the windows in the weeks ahead of our scheduled day to make everyone aware of the specific day we would be there to serve the meals. Regardless of the crop conditions, we still want our farmers and hired hands to know that we appreciate their hard work and want them to remain safe during the harvest season. Even though many of them were done with harvest depending on their location, they still took the time to come in and have lunch on us! We served about 100 lunches at each of the 5 locations we went to this year.

**LEGISLATIVE / POLITICAL PROCESS**

**\*Stark, "Keeping Ag in the Green with Atrazine" -** Because we are very concerned with burdensome, at times predatory, regulations from the EPA that threaten common sense and farm profitability, our CFB latched on to the call from Adam Nielsen to submit comments to the EPA. Our request was simple listen to the real scientists and not the political spindoctors. Atrazine has consistently been found to be safe - in fact there is more than 7,000 scientific studies backing atrazine's safety. Even their own Science Advisory Panel finds it to be safe. After the WOTUS fiasco, our guard is on high and we worry that despite the best minds, the EPA will succumb to outliers and activists instead of scientists and farmers. To get cards signed and returned our CFB set up at our local FS customer appreciation dinner. Beyond FS, we also will be approaching other chemical dealers in the area. Additionally our CFB is working with FS to identify our members/their clients who are stakeholders. We are sending them the cards in the mail to better ensure that we get every farmer's voice heard. Because this is not just for farmers, we included this in our weekly newspaper column and scheduled Facebook posts touting Atrazine's safety. Atrazine will also be brought up on the monthly CFB radio program. Our goal is to collect at least 150 comment cards. As of 8/31/2016 we have 95 completed cards. At present, the goal of 150 may be reevaluated and raised due to enthusiasm from members.

**Gallatin, "Annual Legislative Lunch" -** 10 volunteers worked together to provide a great legislative program to our members. We invited all of our federal and state legislators, along with all local government officials, various department heads throughout the state, and IFB legislative staff. We had almost 100 people in attendance for this program. This year we were honored to have a state Senator and state Representative attend and many other local officials. We also had a Governmental Affairs IFB staff attend to give a Farm Bureau update. We were also happy to see faces from various local agriculture companies come out to visit and show support. All guests had an opportunity to speak to the group and answer any questions from our members. We provided a lunch of rib-eye steak sandwiches, corn on the cob, sides, and desserts. This is a wonderful event that gives our members a chance to personally interact with our legislators and always gets positive feedback.

**Scott, "COUNTY GROUP TO WASHINGTON DC" -** The FB planned, organized, and funded a three-day leadership trip to Washington DC in March. The main goal of the trip is education on many issues facing agriculture and the business of farming. Secondary to this is to build an understanding of the complex nature of public policy and the many factors that influence that policy—both internal and external. We held discussions with national and international business, media, science, and policy leaders. The focus of the trip was climate change science, media and agriculture in an election year. Included on the itinerary were visits with the Argentinian Embassy, NASA, AFBF, our Congressmen and his staff, Animal Ag Alliance, Waterways Conference Inc., Renewable Fuels Association, Center for Responsive Politics and the National Association of Counties. The group visited with several POLITICO reporters at their office. They also participated in a legislative reception hosted by two national water associations. Seven county leaders, three leaders from an adjoining county, and staff participated in the trip. The participants were involved in issue identification, introduction of host speakers, and presentations. They held a pre-trip briefing. They also held daily briefings and debriefings while in Washington DC. Participants were presented with briefing papers on the groups, people, and issues they would study. Each participant was responsible to serve as a group leader during each meeting or dinner function. We discussed FB policy with agency officials directly impacting our members. We identified issues of direct concern to county members with Congressional staff members. Our goal of empowering the participants was exceeded as exemplified by the enthusiasm of the group upon our return. An added benefit was the relationships between participants that will pay dividends to the organization well into the future. We have also built relationships with agency officials and diplomats that we continue to foster. 2 counties

**LEGISLATIVE / POLITICAL PROCESS (continued)**

**Pulaski-Alexander, "Congressman's visit to Levee Devastation" -** A Federal Congressman visited the devastated area following the breech of a local levee. Contacts were made to his office by local members to make a scheduled visit with local farmers to see first-hand the devastation of the levee breech and the damage it caused. Local farmers and members planned and contacted the congressman's legislative aid and drove him across sand, barren land that used to be farmland and on to the levee to see the negative impact of the mighty Mississippi. He was shown pictures of before, during, and after for comparison purposes and he was able to ride in a helicopter over the area to fully understand. He spoke with the local, highway department engineer to understand the effects on local roads and infrastructure. After the tour, he had a better grasp on the needs and concerns that come with farming next to levee. Our county hopes that this will bring more awareness to the national platform on necessary funding for levee repairs and maintenance.

**Brown, "Citizens for Representatives" -** To show our appreciation to our Representative, Legislative Political Committee, Seven County Farm Bureau Managers, and Presidents gathered for coffee one morning to present "Friend of Agriculture" Award to our Representative based on her 100% voting record during the 99th Illinois General Assembly. Her support on Legislative issues impacting Illinois agriculture shows that she will fight for Illinois farmers.

**\*Mercer, "Farm Tour with Congresswoman's District Director" -** Our County Farm Bureau hosted a farm tour with our Congresswoman's Legislative Director. She grew up in Maine and was not raised around agriculture so she is very unfamiliar with Illinois agriculture. The tour started out at a local cooperative where the General Manager talked to her about how the EPA's new classification of anhydrous ammonia to a more hazardous chemical has impacted their business. The new classification has done nothing but cause ag retailers more paperwork to jump through. It is just one more example of the EPA's overreach. We then took the Legislative Director on a farm tour and showed her cover crops and what they are doing to protect soil health and fertility. We also showed her an ephemeral stream (that currently did not have any standing water) to point out what could potentially be regulated by the EPA under the Waters of the United States ruling. We hope her afternoon in our county helped her to understand how the EPA's general overreach is impacting small ag businesses and family farmers.

**Franklin, "Action Request Calls and Texts" -** Our county FBs major focus is on getting as many members to make Action Request calls as possible. We have worked very hard to accumulate a list of over 200 names and phone numbers of those interested in being involved in making these calls. Our FB Manager and Office Assistant take it upon themselves to call each person on the list to let them know about the issue. Even though many of these people are FB Act Members we still take the opportunity to make the personal calls. Once the call has been made then a text is sent with the information for the call along with the names and phone numbers of the Legislators that need to be contacted. The person then either calls the office back or send a text to let us know that they have made their contacts. Most people would find this a tedious process but we find that this also gives us an opportunity to talk to them about the results of the last Action Request. Our members are getting more involved in the issues and in FB as a whole. Our county FB is very proud of the accomplishments that have been made in the county and have put our county on the map as a whole. We averaged 93 calls per Action Request for the year making us No. 1 in the state. The purpose of the Action Request Calls is to engage our members to make contact with their Legislators concerning the issues. Sometimes it takes several days to call everyone on our list. When we sign up a new member we always get their phone number (cell is possible) and then their name goes on our list for future calls. We explain to them what the process will be should an Action Request come up and they then know what to expect. Each person who makes their call is considered a volunteer since it is not actually their job.

**Pike, "COUNTY GROUP TO WASHINGTON DC" -** The FB planned, organized, and funded a three-day leadership trip to Washington DC in March. The main goal of the trip is education on many issues facing agriculture and the business of farming. Secondary to this is to build an understanding of the complex nature of public policy and the many factors that influence that policy—both internal and external. We held discussions with national and international business, media, science, and policy leaders. The focus of the trip was climate change science, media and agriculture in an election year. Included on the itinerary were visits with the Argentinian Embassy, NASA, AFBF, Congressmen and their staff, Animal Ag Alliance, Waterways Conference Inc., Renewable Fuels Association, Center for Responsive Politics and the National Association of Counties. The group visited with several POLITICO reporters at their office. They also participated in a legislative reception hosted by two national water associations. Seven county leaders, three leaders from an adjoining county, and staff participated in the trip. The participants were involved in issue identification, introduction of host speakers, and presentations. They held a pre-trip briefing. They also held daily briefings and debriefings while in Washington DC. Participants were presented with briefing papers on the groups, people, and issues they would study. Each participant was responsible to serve as a group leader during each meeting or dinner function. We discussed FB policy with agency officials directly impacting our members. We identified issues of direct concern to county members with Congressional staff members. Our goal of empowering the participants was exceeded as exemplified by the enthusiasm of the group upon our return. An added benefit was the relationships between participants that will pay dividends to the organization well into the future. We have also built relationships with agency officials and diplomats that we continue to foster. 2 counties

**Crawford, "Coffee Chats with U.S. Representative" -** To help foster a closer relationship between our counties and our U.S. Representative we held a breakfast. This was our first year holding a program like this so we kept it fairly small by only inviting the two county farm bureau boards and our ACTIVATOR trustees. It was a great time to visit and learn more about our Representative, while also expressing where Farm Bureau stands on the issues. Our Representative votes with the Farm Bureau a majority of the time so we were also able to thank him for his support. We look forward to continuing this program next year and hope to make it bigger.

**LEGISLATIVE / POLITICAL PROCESS (continued)**

**McDonough, " Legislator Pocket Reference" -** NEED: Our members were in need of something small that listed their legislators contact information. PROCEDURE: Since we are fortunate to live in a county that doesn't divide legislators up depending on address, this worked quite well by designing a third of a sheet front and back with our legislators information. The sheets were made available to members in the office and at events. IMPACT: Several members have commented about how handy they sheets are and have asked for more to distribute to other local service groups.

**\*Wayne, "Legislative Listening Session" -** We feel it is a priority to maintain an open and positive relationship with our federal and state elected officials. Therefore, each year we invite our congressman, state senators, and state representatives to a monthly board meeting to discuss Illinois Farm Bureau’s legislative priorities for the spring session. This year we held a joint board meeting with an adjacent county Farm Bureau, as each county shares the same legislators. Topics discussed with our state legislators included the Illinois budget shortfall, maintaining tax incentives for agriculture, funding for soil & water conservation districts, maintaining a reduction of property taxes on filter strips, overweight tolerances on trucks during a harvest emergency, opposition to Illinois' minimum wage law, opposition to increased gun control measures, consolidation of units of local government, and the Governor's proposed freeze on property taxes. National issues discussed with our congressional representatives were the future of the Renewal Fuel Standard, exporting US produced crude oil, funding for lock and dam repair, WOTUS, implementation of the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy, GMO labeling, the slow rate of seed approval by USDA, agribusiness monopolies, and federal gun control. These sessions were very helpful in allowing our legislators to hear firsthand, the issues our farmers were concerned with. It also allowed an opportunity for our Farm Bureau directors to strengthen their individual roles as spokespeople for agriculture. We had agricultural liaisons from one U.S. Senator, one U.S. Congressman, 1 Illinois Senator, and 1 Illinois Representative attend our program (total of 5), plus 23 Farm Bureau directors from two counties attend our program.

**Fulton, "Meet the Candidate Night" -** Held in cooperation with our Chamber of Commerce at a local community center. 2 of our volunteers obtained a sample ballot, researched candidate addresses on the internet, and sent invitations to everyone included on the ballot; federal, state, county, and judgeships. We had 32 candidates attend and over 60 citizens. A local cable channel recorded the event and played it several times during the following week in area communities

**Jo Daviess, "County Board - agriculture as a priority" -** Our CFB met with our County Board's planning and development committee and were able to show them the importance of agriculture in the county. So much that they voted to put a priority on promoting agriculture. We are currently spearheading an ag promotion effort with other organizations to do just that - promote agriculture. The County Board has also committed to this goal financially, but giving us a significant donation towards the cause.

**Lee, "Action Request Drawing" -** In an effort to encourage more members to participate in action requests and to reward those members that do, the Governmental Affairs Committee created a drawing. Each member who reports their contacts from an action request will be entered into a drawing for a $25 gift card for each elected official they contacted. One winner is selected after each action request. The winner is published on the CFB Facebook page and CFB publication in an effort to increase awareness for participation in action requests and to recognize the member for their participation.

**\*Kankakee, "Congresswoman and Co FB Host Women in Ag Discussion" -** The County Farm Bureau arranged and hosted a meeting between our US Congresswoman and prominent area women in agriculture.The group discussed the rewards and challenges in each of their agricultural careers. Each discussed how technology has become a large part of agriculture and the importance of communicating agriculture’s story to the non-farming public. Our Congresswoman learned more about our industry, the issues we face, and she discussed ways she could further encourage women to become involved in our industry. These Women in Agriculture who participated in the session were the Director of the Ag & Horticulture program at the Community College, a Pioneer Seed sales account manager; a Grain Originator at the FS company; Office Manager at the FS company; and a farmer with and her two daughters who are involved in their family farm. This group included 2 of our more active Young Leaders.Each of the meeting participants had at some point assisted in educating the public about agriculture through the Farm Bureau’s Agriculture in the Classroom program and the annual Kids Day at the Farm event. The group decided to host a discussion later on to encourage other women to consider the field of careers in agriculture. A local newspaper placed an article about this meeting on the front page with a photo from the event which increased the reach of this effort.

**Livingston, "What a Debate!" -** With the county being primarily Republican, the primary election for circuit clerk, coroner and State’s Attorney had gotten very contentious. We felt it was vital that citizens be educated before they hit the polls. With the race beginning to heat up, we had constituents submit their questions beforehand. Our legislative committee met early the night of the event to select the questions they felt would be the most valuable. We worked with the local radio station to have one of their personalities serve as the MC for the evening. We then worked with the local radio station, newspaper and our FB publication to advertise the event. After the questions were collaborated by the committee, all 5 candidates took the stage. Our MC along with our legislative committee chairman sat on the stage to read questions as well. Attendees could submit questions that night as well but the committee reviewed them to decide if they would be asked. The sole candidate for circuit clerk introduced herself to the audience first. Next was the coroner's candidates. Each gave a 3 minute opening statement followed by 45 minutes of questions. The same format went for the state's attorney's candidates. Candidates could give their answers but there was no debate. The forum gave the candidates an opportunity to share their ideas on how they would run their perspective offices and attendees the chance to learn more about the candidates running for office, so they may make an educated decision

**LEGISLATIVE / POLITICAL PROCESS (continued)**

at the polls. Because the forums were sponsored by FB, Radio Station and Local Newspaper, we received a tremendous amount of recognition in all the advertising media.

**Bureau, "Activator Program Review with the Board" -** In February, when new board members were placed, the board was surveyed about programs in which they wanted more information. Activator was chosen as one of those programs. At the July board meeting the entire board took time to review the program. Each board member received a packet of information highlighting Activator, outlining the Friend of Agriculture Award and then explaining expectations of trustees. Each Activator Trustee also received a copy of the by-laws. It is the hope of leadership within the county that with the gained knowledge of the program, more active trustees are produced which will engage more in the conversation and represent the county in an effective manner.

**Henry, "Legislator Contact Incentives" -** Our county Farm Bureau Directors, members and volunteers do a phenomenal job of contacting legislators whenever action requests are issued. No matter the topic they make calls, send emails, write letters and post on social media to get the word out and encourage others. To award our volunteers for their work on action requests, our Legislative Action committee established a year-long contest to award them for their efforts. For each contact made and reported to the County Farm Bureau that individual receives an entry into an award drawing. At the end of the year those that responded to every action request will receive an additional entry. The grand prize winner will then receive a $75.00 gift card and additional items to be determined by the chair. Many directors continue to monitor their progress and are even more motivated to contacted their legislators. From our 72 FBACT members, 47 reported, thus totaling 223 contacts to legislators!

**Adams, "Legislative Luncheon" -** Our local State Representative and Senator joined us for a lunch meeting on February 26th to give us an update on current legislative happenings in Springfield. This was a priority of our legislative committee to get both the Senator and Representative together to discuss what is happening in Springfield so our members could hear directly from them and more importantly the elected officials could hear from our members. We held the lunch in a private room at local restaurant starting at 11:30. They were very candid and spent a long time answering questions from the crowd. There were over 65 in attendance. This was particularly interesting as they are from different party lines so we were able to get both sides and views of the issues.

**Stephenson, "Adopted Legislator Program" -** We enjoyed a great 8-year relationship with our now-retired former adopted legislator, and we are now in our fourth year of a positive relationship with our new adoptee, a state representative from the south side of Chicago and south suburbs. We have made four district visits and enjoy an extended visit with her over dinner each year during the IAA Annual Meeting, and we brought a busload of her constituents to our county in September 2013 for "A Day in the Country" after similar tours in 2005, 2008 and 2010. This year she and her office assistant came out during harvest for a combine ride and some tours, and we are working on plans for another busload of constituents visiting next summer along with another district visit and tour. On previous district tours we have visited the Chicago High School for Ag Sciences, Cook County Jail, Beverly Arts Center, an inner city high school, and a new fire station.

**\*Kane, "Harvest Leadership Picnic” -** Sept. 23, 2015: (Legis Apprec.& Acquaint) Legislative Committee hosted their 9th Harvest Picnic for public officials to thank, inform and acquaint legislators and local officials with our members and issues. Also invited Co. Board, Co. elected and appointed officials, mayors, township clerks, supervisors, assessors and highway commissioners. FB Board and Legis Comm served as hosts. 170 attended. Catered meal inlcuded pork chops, bratwurst and sweet corn, specialty crop producers provide remainder of meal. Volunteers also helped our farmer-host transform his greenhouse into a banquet hall with stage and screen for the presentations and husked the sweet corn, served the wine and the meal, and cleaned up the greenhouse afterwards. Event included a local wine and cheese reception, 4 different tours and demonstrations of the greenhouse operations, fall harvest combine ride sign-up for public officials, green industry quiz ice-breaker, local farm product sampling and displays from 4 grower groups and agencies were among the activities. Officials learned about the green industry, nurseries and greenhouses. 170 attended with 50 public officials. CFB asked for comments from the host (the County's largest agricultural employer), and did an after dinner recognition program for volunteers. The event resulted in many productive conversations among the guests in attendance, which included local public officials and their guests or staff.

**Peoria, "Grassroots Picnic" -** Eighty-five people attended our annual Grassroots Picnic held at our Farm Bureau Park. All of our elected officials serving in our county and also the candidates that will be on the November ballot were invited. All of our "M" members were invited. The picnic was held on August 23. A questionnaire was handed to members as they arrived and was then gathered after the meeting was complete. A catered pork chop meal was served at 6 p.m. After people were finished with their meal, our County Farm Bureau Legislative Chairman introduced each candidate in attendance. There were a total of 10. They included people running for Congress, State Representative, States Attorney, County Board, Circuit Clerk, County Auditor, and Circuit Judge. All of the candidates did a great job in giving a brief background on themselves and why they were running for office. Also, our county Farm Bureau President presented the Friend of Agriculture Award to one of our State Representatives and a plaque was also presented to a County Board member that represented a rural section of the community for 27 years. They were both very appreciative of the recognition. It was a very pleasant evening weather-wise for an outside event and people remained for quite a while after the program was complete to visit.

**LEGISLATIVE / POLITICAL PROCESS (continued)**

**Champaign, "Ag Influencer`s Reception" -** With schedules being ever so busy but yet more and more issues impacting agriculture, volunteers scheduled an ag influencer`s reception with the goal of getting those that influence our industry on the local, state and national level together in one evening. Volunteers reached out to 25 ag influencer's ranging from representatives from our community college, statewide commodity group district representatives and our local and state elected officials. The volunteers established a date and timeframe for the event and ensured that invitations went out to the influencer`s. Invitations were sent out explaining that of the 25 invitee`s 18 would be attending, these invitations went out via electronic notices, social media and flyers at various events prior. Several of our volunteers decorated the room and brought in food for the event. In all, 77 members had a great opportunity to visit with the influencer`s from our region representing dozens of groups and entities that truly have an impact on our agriculture industry. Additionally, they were able to get their issues addressed while gaining a better understanding of the position of the influencer`s in a casual setting.

**Cook, "County Key Votes" -** 9 Policy Team volunteers and 1 staff member reviewed county board voting records and identified issues of importance to members. INTENT: Prior to the June meeting, staff compiled: \* Approved county legislation pertinent to Farm Bureau \* Related policies \* List of actions undertaken by the organization Staff then compiled a list of: \* Ordinances \* Resolutions \* Descriptions \* Related policy \* Recommended values. High priority ordinances and resolutions were then assigned points based on their significance. In June, 9 Policy Team volunteers reviewed and approved the document and the point values. Also in June, 9 Policy Team volunteers approved the document and presented it to 12 board members for final approval. 2 volunteers discussed the document with 100% of county board members. The final “key vote” document included: \* Description of each ordinance and resolution \* Statement of Farm Bureau policy \* Each county board member's final score and percentage NEEDS MET: This project identified significant county issues, provided a basis for recognition for an outstanding voting records, and educated elected officials about agricultural issues. This project also enabled us to track county board members' positions on priority issues over an extended period of time. IMPACT: 18 county board members benefited from this project. VOLUNTEERS: 21 Policy Team and board volunteers planned, reviewed, and participated in this project and 2 volunteers discussed the results with 100% of the county board.

**Tazewell, "Congressman Learns about Farming" -** Our Adopted Legislator was selected to serve as Chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Since he does not have a farming background, he was invited to visit farms in our area. The State Senator came and visited various farm sites beginning with a farm with high quality Angus cattle, approximately 250-300 cattle. A local group of farmers joined the Senator for lunch at a farm to table restaurant. Then the group visited a local Horse Farm with Saddlebred horses. A Dairy Farm was next with up to date technology such as robotic milkers and artificial insemination, embryo transfer and other technologies to produce the highest quality animals possible. Last on the tour was a farm where soybeans were being planted. The planter and seed selection were introduced to the Senator. The Senator had the opportunity to ride on a tractor and plant soybeans. The Senator said that he did not realize what all was involved in farming in 2016 and he was pleased to introduced to so many areas of farming.

**LOCAL AFFAIRS**

**\*Pulaski-Alexander, "Welcome to the World of Refuges" -** As concerns for a possible refuge grew for 2 CFBs in the northern part of Illinois, our CFB hosted a tour for concerned members and local officials to see our refuge and the impacts it has made. The purpose of the tour was to showcase what a refuge looks like and to educate the other attendees about the negative effects that the refuge created for the land and the community. After lunch, conversations about a refuge in your community was shared followed by a bus tour of the local refuge. To prepare for the tour, a route was prepared. Our volunteers wanted to make sure that the attendees went on a route that showed them first-hand the wetland and the socioeconomic decline. Old documentation of the refuge was reviewed and information was gathered to help explain the process of working with a refuge and how they attain private properties through various methods. The attendees were given insight on what could happen to their area if the refuge was successful. Their eyes were open by this process and the concern was evident. Later, attendees continued to reach out and contact presenters on ways to handle complications with the process of refuge creation. Attendees shared their experiences with others within their counties and the message was driven home as they fully understand the challenges and the negative effects that are possibly coming in their direction.

**Stark, "Stronger Economies Together" -** Our vision for the Regional Economic Development Plan is to serve as a road map to strengthen the future economic development efforts of the three county team. Key regional stakeholders embrace a spirit of regionalism to support this initiative. Implementing the action items described within this document will strengthen the ability of the region to secure its economic future and position it as a competitive region. This plan reflects an active participation from business, civic and community leaders. Significant research and discussions led to the development of the region's High Quality Plan. Launched in 2009 by USDA Rural Development in collaboration with the nation's Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC) and their land-grant university partners. The purpose of Stronger Economies Together (SET) is to strengthen the capacity of communities in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of their region. Important elements of the Stronger Economies Together program are to build collaboration between communities in a region, provides economic analyses that is tailored to help capture the region's current or emerging clusters and comparative economic advantages and is supported by technical assistance provided by land-grant university extension systems to the regions over a period of several months including the SET training. Our three county region decided in May 2015 to apply for the Stronger Economies Together. The region started

**LOCAL AFFAIRS (continued)**

working with the SET Team in the summer of 2015. The SET team started recruiting participants in August 2015. The Civic Forum was the first meeting which was held in September 2015. The second SET meeting was held October 29, 2015 at a county EMA building. At this meeting the results of the Civic Forum were discussed and clusters were identified for further research. At the December 10, 2015 meeting held at a community center at which further analysis of the clusters were presented and discussed. The March 23, 2016 meeting was held at the county Farm Bureau. Strategies were developed for the topics of tourism, broadband infrastructure and an economic development council using the CARE Model (Creation, Attraction, Retention, Expansion). On April 21, 2016 the SET meeting held at a coffee shop and the participants discussed how to connect community capitals. The June 16, 2016 meeting was held at the EMA building again. SMART goals were developed for the areas identified. The final meeting was comprised of making additions and corrections to the final plan. This included approval from our community partners. The SET initiative has brought together a resurgence in regional thinking, planning, and action. New partnerships have been created, plans have been set, strategies are outlined, and people are engaged in implementing the ideas developed during the SET discussions. The steering committee has generated a 20+ page document outlining the goals and process to be used in implementing projects relating to economic development for the 3 county region. Outlined in the report are the three regional goals developed through SET. 1) The Agribusiness-Technology and Economic Development goal focuses on building, creating and retaining an entrepreneurial culture for businesses. We will create a regional consortium of small and large companies in order to increase their competitiveness by combining efforts that create new uses for existing commodities, technology enhancement and advancement as well as value chain development. 2) The Tourism goal focuses on a growing regional cluster, which has the potential to grow our economic reach into the three county region and increase outside revenue. 3) The Infrastructure goal focuses on facilitating the expansion of existing businesses while attracting new higher wage industry sectors.

**Calhoun, "Saving Ag Education in High School" -** The purpose of this program was to raise funds to keep Ag in our schools. We are developing members of our FFA Alumni Committee. Our school was going to have to cut the Ag teacher for the 2015-2016 year. We had Dinner/Auction last November to raise funds. We asked the school board what it would take to keep our Ag teacher. They stated if we could donate $20,000, they would be able to keep an Ag teacher. We raised over $24,000 and was able to donate $20,000 to our school. We succeeded in our endeavor. Committee 40% Alumni 40% FFA 20% We put repeated articles in our local newspaper, radio, FB and FFA newsletter, and the multi county free newspaper. Local paper (6,500 distribution)

**Edwards, "Tile Drain Monitoring Project" -** Intent: To analyze the economic impact of nutrient loss from fertilizers on tiled ground, while identifying which conservation practices and nitrogen application methods achieve the most desirable results; To test crops for nutrient uptake through soil tests and N-Watch studies; To monitor different types of farm fields for the best management practices to minimize fertilizer loss; All while supporting and preserving the best interests of our agricultural communities while working with various groups involved in the agricultural industry. Results: Our project involved 37 fields in 9 counties in southeastern Illinois. We used student interns to sample tile drains multiple times in the growing season for nutrient loss. These fields are also soil tested multiple times and when applicable, N-Watch tests were performed on them. Based on the testing we conducted, we observed a consistently low output of phosphorus in our tile lines. Nitrates fluctuated greatly. Our results also showed our area some concrete, real world numbers on nutrient loss. These results will allow all groups involved to help farmers make better decisions on their fertilizer management practices, which is turn should help them reduce their loss of

nutrients. Additionally, we will be able to show environmental groups and other anti-agricultural groups how our farmers are being the best stewards of the land they can be. Those farmers who volunteered their fields to be tested were presented their results and are now using these to have conversations with their input suppliers on what practices to use on these fields to minimize the nutrient loss and maximize their profits. We plan to continue this project into the next year, and produce a PowerPoint and hard copy report of the data to share with agricultural partners, in the area and around the world. This project involved GROWMARK, the local service company, Water Agricultural Lab, the local junior college, the Illinois Corn Marketing Board, and the IFB. "In-kind" contributions amounted to over $50,000. The project was featured in multiple articles in FarmWeek, local media, social media, as well as, the multi-county member publication.

**Douglas, "Drainage Law Workshop" -** Our County is heavily invested in having field tile. With the amount of tile, we are also heavily invested in drainage districts. At a morning CFB breakfast this year, it was brought to our attention by a Farm Bureau member that there seems to be a lot of questions and confusion when it comes to drainage districts and how they operate. To help our members with these concerns and questions, our CFB held a workshop on drainage districts. This meeting explained how drainage districts were formed, how to re activate abandoned drainage districts, the law behind the districts, and lastly how to form new drainage districts. 46 people attended this workshop that included 4 speakers well versed in drainage law, drainage engineering, and other information. Water testing from our local SWCD was also available at the meeting and was completed while members were able to take advantage of all the information presented to them. A lunch was also provided for all that attended.

**Johnson, "Who should pay for the Courthouse?" -** Our Board of Directors was approach by several of our members wanting advice on the Sales Tax Increase referendum that would be on the March ballot. The 1% sales tax would be used to build and maintain new County government facilities. After much discussion with County Commissioners, County Officials, and various county leaders, our Board decide to actively support the Sales Tax increase referendum. With funding for the new facilities coming from sales tax, it would spread the cost beyond our local residents and landowners and also prevent the funding being

**LOCAL AFFAIRS (continued)**

attached to real estate taxes. The Board published an open letter to county residents in our local papers and our president also published a letter to the editor. By working closely with several community organizations and leaders as a united front, county citizens understood the importance and advantages of passing the sales tax increase and the referendum was successfully voted in.`

**\*Mercer, "Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy Videos" -** 800 impacted. As part of Illinois Farm Bureau's Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy grant, our County Farm Bureau partnered up with two other County Farm Bureaus to produce our own videos that promote the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy. We used a local tv station cameraman to capture and edit the footage. The videos cover the following topics: benefits of using cover crops, saturated buffers, fall aerial application of cover crops, the results of using the cover crops, and livestock and their impact on the NLRS. The videos were promoted through social media and an email blast with the video link to every voting member's email address in the three counties. The videos that have been shot, edited, and published have about 100 views each. We have more videos to come with the fall harvest season quickly approaching and will use the same method to get the word out about the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy. We decided to do the video project because we thought that farmers could watch the videos on their schedule and learn from what is and isn't working for other farmers. We also saw it as an excellent opportunity to educate consumers on what farmers are doing to reduce their nutrient loss.

**Washington, "Community Impact Grants" -** Our CFB understands the amount of hard work and sweat equity that is required to make a lasting impact in our community. For over 90 years, our CFB has offered programs and services in our county to inform, strengthen, and develop the agricultural industry. We continue that same mission today by investing time and resources to improve the economic well-being of agriculture, and enriching the quality of our rural way of life. Despite our best efforts, we realize that we cannot meet all of the needs in the county by ourselves. This is why we offered our 3rd Annual “Community Impact Grant Program” this year. There are many great ideas for community-based projects which, unfortunately, do not become a reality. Our Community Impact Grant Program sought to identify various projects that will improve our community and create partnerships with groups and individuals to make those projects a reality. Examples of eligible organizations included: schools, civic organizations, churches, 4-H clubs, FFA chapters, fraternities, sororities, and etc… Our Board of Directors developed this program as an opportunity to identify and partner with others in our county on projects that will have a lasting impact in our communities. We had another great response in our third year, receiving six outstanding applications that requested more than $10,000 of the $5,000 in funds budgeted (received four applications in our first year, and 9 in our second). Ultimately, only five of the six proposals were granted their requested funds at about the 96% level, utilizing the full $5,000 allocated for the program. Technology updates at a community library, a new gazebo at a community park, hydroponics equipment for a local FFA Chapter's, a new deep freeze for the county's food pantry, and a cleaning supplies bucket project for a local 4-H club were the efforts that received funding in our second year. Our leadership was extremely pleased with the quality of the partnerships developed, and look forward to next year's crop of community partners.

**Crawford, "Tile Drain Monitoring Project" -** To analyze the economic impact of nutrient loss from fertilizers on tiled ground, while identifying which conservation practices and nitrogen application methods achieve the most desirable results; To test crops for nutrient uptake through soil tests and N-Watch studies; To monitor different types of farm fields for the best management practices to minimize fertilizer loss; All while supporting and preserving the best interests of our agricultural communities while working with various groups involved in the agricultural industry. Our project involved 37 fields in 9 counties in southeastern Illinois. We used student interns to sample tile drains multiple times in the growing season for nutrient loss. These fields are also soil tested multiple times and when applicable, N-Watch tests were performed on them. Based on the testing we conducted, we observed a consistently low output of phosphorus in our tile lines. Nitrates fluctuated greatly. Our results also showed our area some concrete, real world numbers on nutrient loss. These results will allow all groups involved to help farmers make better decisions on their fertilizer management practices, which is turn should help them reduce their loss of nutrients. Additionally, we will be able to show environmental groups and other anti-agricultural groups how our farmers are being the best stewards of the land they can be. Those farmers who volunteered their fields to be tested were presented their results and are now using these to have conversations with their input suppliers on what practices to use on these fields to minimize the nutrient loss and maximize their profits. We plan to continue this project into the next year, and produce a PowerPoint and hard copy report of the data to share with agricultural partners, in the area and around the world. This project involved GROWMARK, the local service company, Water Agricultural Lab, the local junior college, the Illinois Corn Marketing Board, and the IFB. "In-kind" contributions amounted to over $50,000. The project was featured in multiple articles in FarmWeek, local media, social media, as well as, the multi-county member publication.

**Jersey, "Cover Crop & Livestock Integration Field Day" -** In an effort to offer our members an opportunity to learn more about cover crops and how to incorporate livestock into the mix, a program and field day was developed to cover the subject. A Farm Bureau family (past director and 2 current Young Leaders) have quite a bit of experience with cover crops and just recently added a few cattle to their operation, so they agreed to host the program. Our local Energy & Environmental Stewardship Educator with U of I Extension was contacted to help develop the program. The evening began with all participants touring the cover crop plots and hearing from the farm family who hosted the program. Following the tour, participants were divided into three groups to participate in round table style discussions. The three topics discussed were - overviews of cover crop experiences (led by area farmers who have been using cover crops for several years), Manure Applications & Cover Crops: Understanding the Nutrient Cycling (led by Dr. Morgan Hayes, Extension Assistant Professor and Ed Ballard, retired Educator, U of I Extension) and The Challenges of Livestock Buildings & Emerging Issues (led by Nic Anderson, Illinois Livestock Development Working Group). Each group spent 15-20 minutes at each station, then rotated to the next topic. After all groups had discussed

**LOCAL AFFAIRS (continued)**

each topic area, they came back together as one group for a panel discussion with all the speakers. We are very pleased with the outcome of the program. We had good participation from within the county, as well, we drew members from four surrounding counties. An unintended benefit of the program, was the creation of a personal connection for producers within a several county area who can use each other as resources as they move forward with cover crops and livestock.

**Clay, "CFB Hosts Cover Crop and Nutrient Strategy Meeting" -** With the increasing threat of more regulations from the EPA, we find it is extremely important to inform our farmers of the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy, as well as cover crops, and other practices to help reduce nutrient loss. That's why we held a meeting that spoke about these topics and others. The evening started with a catered dinner for the attendees, as well as speakers. The first speaker of the night was Lyndsey Ramsey, Associate Director of Natural and Environmental Resources with IFB. She informed farmers about the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy and how the EPA is pushing for a 15% reduction of Nitrate as well as a 25% reduction of Phosphorus in the Gulf of Mexico by 2025. She also wanted farmers to know that the strategy is there to help reduce what we lose, not reduce what we use. Attendees were also given handouts that listed various strategies which help with nutrient loss and the cost of each of those. Ramsey also discussed what NREC does for farmers and how for every 1 ton of fertilizer purchased, $1 goes to that council to help with nutrient research and education. NREC will be hosting webinars this year, so be on the lookout if you would like to hear more about their efforts. The next speaker was Kris Reynolds, a cover crop specialist with the Illinois Council on Best Management Practices. He discussed various cover crops and which were best to utilize in our area. Reynolds also spoke about different seeding methods and pressed to always pay attention to seeding dates of cover crops. Other topics that he covered included: erosion control, herbicide programs, and cover crop termination. In addition, CCA credits were offered for attending the meeting. Afterwards, our local Resource Conservationist and District Conservationist spoke about the programs that the Natural Resources Conservation Services offered and what practices were included in those programs to help with nutrient management. They also discussed and showed pictures of practices that were being implemented locally to help reduce nutrient loss. In all, the meeting was extremely educational and we hope it gave our farmers a better understanding of what they can do to help reduce nutrient loss in their fields.

**Edgar, "Ameren Transmission Project" -** For our county, Ameren’s proposed transmission line remains on high priority in members’ minds. One member specifically organized landowner meetings regularly to connect and present a united front to land agents and contract survey employees. As a result of the controversial nature of this topic, meetings typically bring 50 or more people to the County Farm Bureau. Landowners hired a local attorney to represent the group. Together with Illinois Farm Bureau’s resources and IFB Laura Harmon, the local lawyer worked with residents to mount a case against an unconstitutional procedure in reviewing such a large project through Illinois Commerce Commission (ICC). When new pertinent information is made available the local lawyer provides residents an update on his case, other wise a local member has lead the meetings. Though residents know not to expect actual transmission poles anytime soon, Ameren sent contracted survey agents to survey land. Residents resisted surveying efforts, however the local lawyer informed landowners of their rights and reviewed the Public Utilities Act to help landowners under terms such as “soft survey.” Local media from the university TV station to our local newspaper covered local court dates resisting this public utilities act and continued features with landowners through actual surveys. Residents also frequently corresponded with local legislators regarding this project. Local legislators joined in efforts to fight this transmission line. In total, approximately 100 people joined this cause through meetings, media coverage, local court dates, and connecting with local county board meetings. Due to the continued resistance and united force of these landowners, the county is the only current county with resisting landowners that have a large majority owners not having signed easement agreements. over 50 landowners have been served eminent domain papers and are currently fighting the proposed line in court.

**Wabash, "Tile Drain Monitoring Project" -** Intent: To analyze the economic impact of nutrient loss from fertilizers on tiled ground, while identifying which conservation practices and nitrogen application methods achieve the most desirable results; To test crops for nutrient uptake through soil tests and N-Watch studies; To monitor different types of farm fields for the best management practices to minimize fertilizer loss; All while supporting and preserving the best interests of our agricultural communities while working with various groups involved in the agricultural industry. Results: Our project involved 37 fields in 9 counties in southeastern Illinois. We used student interns to sample tile drains multiple times in the growing season for nutrient loss. These fields are also soil tested multiple times and when applicable, N-Watch tests were performed on them. Based on the testing we conducted, we observed a consistently low output of phosphorus in our tile lines. Nitrates fluctuated greatly. Our results also showed our area some concrete, real world numbers on nutrient loss. These results will allow all groups involved to help farmers make better decisions on their fertilizer management practices, which is turn should help them reduce their loss of nutrients. Additionally, we will be able to show environmental groups and other anti-agricultural groups how our farmers are being the best stewards of the land they can be. Those farmers who volunteered their fields to be tested were presented their results and are now using these to have conversations with their input suppliers on what practices to use on these fields to minimize the nutrient loss and maximize their profits. We plan to continue this project into the next year, and produce a PowerPoint and hard copy report of the data to share with agricultural partners, in the area and around the world. This project involved GROWMARK, the local service company, Water Agricultural Lab, the local junior college, the Illinois Corn Marketing Board, and the IFB. "In-kind" contributions amounted to over $50,000. The project was featured in multiple articles in FarmWeek, local media, social media, as well as, the multi-county member publication.

**\*Marshall-Putnam, "SET Program" -** The CFB was approached by the county board to assist with finding new members for our local Economic Development Council. Due to the fact that our county is small, we are unable to hire a full-time Economic Development Coordinator. The CFB took it upon themselves to seek out grant opportunities for the county and learned of the SET program through a website at Purdue University. Our vision for the Regional Economic Development Plan is to serve as a road

**LOCAL AFFAIRS (continued)**

map to strengthen the future economic development efforts of the three county team. Key regional stakeholders embrace a spirit of regionalism to support this initiative. Implementing the action items described within this document will strengthen the ability of the region to secure its economic future and position it as a competitive region. This plan reflects an active participation from business, civic and community leaders. Significant research and discussions led to the development of the region's High Quality Plan. Launched in 2009 by USDA Rural Development in collaboration with the nation's Regional Rural Development Centers (RRDC) and their land-grant university partners. The purpose of Stronger Economies Together (SET) is to strengthen the capacity of communities in rural America to work together in developing and implementing an economic development blueprint that strategically builds on the current and emerging economic strengths of their region. Important elements of the Stronger Economies Together program are to build collaboration between communities in a region, provides economic analyses that is tailored to help capture the region's current or emerging clusters and comparative economic advantages and is supported by technical assistance provided by land-grant university extension systems to the regions over a period of several months including the SET training. Our three county region decided in May 2015 to apply for the Stronger Economies Together. The region started working with the SET Team in the summer of 2015. The SET team started recruiting participants in August 2015. The Civic Forum was the first meeting which was held in September 2015. The second SET meeting was held October 29, 2015 at a county EMA building. At this meeting the results of the Civic Forum were discussed and clusters were identified for further research. At the December 10, 2015 meeting held at a community center at which further analysis of the clusters were presented and discussed. The March 23, 2016 meeting was held at the county Farm Bureau. Strategies were developed for the topics of tourism, broadband infrastructure and an economic development council using the CARE Model (Creation, Attraction, Retention, Expansion). On April 21, 2016 the SET meeting held at a coffee shop and the participants discussed how to connect community capitals. The June 16, 2016 meeting was held at the EMA building again. SMART goals were developed fro the areas identified. The final meeting was comprised of making additions and corrections to the final plan. this included approval from our community partners. The SET initiative has brought together a resurgence in regional thinking, planning, and action. New partnerships have been created, plans have been set, strategies are outlined, and people are engaged in implementing the ideas developed during the SET discussions. The steering committee has generated a 20+ page document outlining the goals and process to be used in implementing projects relating to economic development for the 3 county region. Outlined in the report are the three regional goals developed through SET. 1) The Agribusiness-Technology and Economic Development goal focuses on building, creating and retaining an entrepreneurial culture for businesses. We will create a regional consortium of small and large companies in order to increase their competitiveness by combining efforts that create new uses for existing commodities, technology enhancement and advancement as well as value chain development. 2) The Tourism goal focuses on a growing regional cluster, which has the potential to grow our economic reach into the three county region and increase outside revenue. 3) The Infrastructure goal focuses on facilitating the expansion of existing businesses while attracting new higher wage industry sectors.

**Logan, "Farm On" -** Farm On We have been working on a program aimed at a potential issue right here in our County. Area Farmers are the life blood of our local economy. They pump large amounts of funds into our economy and provide multiple jobs that trickle through our entire community. From equipment dealers to mechanics, welders, feed mills, elevators, seed dealers, seed packagers, cob plants, fertilizer retailers, veterinarians, tax and accounting services, banks, auto dealers and even businesses such as local restaurants their reach is far. A growing concern is the age of the farming community. In the past the farm was typically passed to a family member to take over. This still happens on a regular basis today. However, more and more frequently there is not someone of the next generation ready to take on the lifestyle and responsibility of the farm. Many times the assets are sold on auction and the farmland is either rented to a neighbor or often times rented to the highest bidder or sold. To combat this dissolution of the midsize family farm, we created a program called “Farm On”. The idea of the Farm On program is to inform retiring farmers about some local young men and women who have interest in production agriculture. Our hope is that one of these young people could be a potential suitor for the transition of the operation in question. This transition could consist of anything from a onetime buy-out to a partnership that evolves over time. A database with applications of these aspiring young farmers has been compiled at the office. The applicants may or may not already be farming, but they all have a desire to farm. Each of these applicants has paid $50 to have their application submitted. This is in hope of showing their true sincerity in their interest to farm. If a local producer is considering retirement they can come in and view the applications. From that point the program would bring the two parties together to see if there is a good “match” for a future transition. The goal of the program is to ensure that production agriculture continues to thrive in our County and surrounding communities by opening the door of opportunity to young aspiring farmers at the same time providing retiring farmers a new option of giving a young person a chance.

**Wayne, "Tile Drain Monitoring Project" -** Intent: The purpose of this project was to analyze the economic impact of nutrient loss on tiled ground, while identifying which conservation practices and nitrogen application methods achieve the most desirable results; all while supporting and preserving the best interests of our agricultural communities while working with various groups involved in the agricultural industry. The planning committee met on multiple occasions through the year and utilized Cloud Technology to plan and share documents related to the project. Results: Our project involved 37 fields in 9 counties in southeastern Illinois. We used student interns to sample each tile drain multiple times in the growing season. It also involved GROWMARK, the local service company, Waters Agricultural Lab, the local junior college, the Illinois Corn Marketing Board, and the IFB. "In-kind" contributions amounted to over $50,000. The project was featured in multiple articles in FarmWeek, local media, social media, as well as, the multi-county member publication. Based on the tile testing we conducted, we observed a consistently low output of phosphorus in our tile lines. but nitrates fluctuated greatly. Our results also showed our area some concrete, real world numbers on nutrient loss. These results will allow all groups involved to help farmers make better decisions on their fertilizer management practices, which in turn should help them reduce their loss of nutrients. Additionally, we will be able to show environmental groups and other anti-agricultural groups how our farmers are being the best stewards of the land

**LOCAL AFFAIRS (continued)**

they can be. We plan to continue this project into the next year, and produce a PowerPoint and hard copy report of the data to share with agricultural partners, in the area and around the world.

**Fayette, "Summer Weekend Meal Bag for Children" -** The Women's Committee hosted a craft show in the fall and raised over $400 for use in a future project. The WC decided to use the funds to help support the Summer Lunch Bag Program for children that is put on by a local church. The church assembles bags that consist of peanut butter and jelly sandwiches, drinks, and other food items depending on what is donated. The bags are distributed to children every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday for 10 weeks throughout the summer, beginning in June and ending in August, at 5 different locations throughout the county. The WC met with the lady in charge of the program and asked how they could help. She said whatever help they wanted to provide would be appreciated. The WC decided to provide a weekend meal bag for the children. Members of the WC met every other week to assemble 200 bags. The weekend bags were given out every other Friday, along with the lunch bags at all 5 locations. Over the coarse of those 5 weeks, approximately 1000 weekend meal bags were distributed. The weekend meal bags consisted of ramen noodles, oatmeal, a granola bar, a drink, applesauce, and peanut butter crackers. The children and families really appreciated the extra meals, especially since the children aren't receiving any meals from school. The cost of the weekend bag the WC assembled was approximately $1 per bag. Due to the volume of bags distributed, the $400 from the craft show was not enough to cover the cost. The Board of Directors thought this was a great program for the WC to take part in and generously donated the remaining $600.

**Fulton, "Livestock Farm Support Among Local Elected Leaders" -** It January a member of our County Government Board notified us that a group of neighbors had formed to oppose a hog farm being planned for west of our County Seat. The group was coming to the board to pass a resolution opposing the farm and to ask for changes in Legislation to create an avenue for local citing. We made a presentation to the Zoning Committee of the County Board on February 2 using a power point presentation prepared by IFB and our own local staff. The opposition addressed the board first. Following our presentation, the Zoning Committee refused to entertain a motion to take up discussion on the resolution. The Zoning Chair then asked us to make the same presentation at the meeting of the entire County Board the following week. Following our presentation that night, the same opposition group from the committee meeting addressed the County Board during the Public Comment period (limited to 5 minutes) asking for the same resolution. Again, no member of the County Board introduced the resolution. Another hog farm is being planned. We are not naive enough to think that the issue has gone away, but we are appreciative of our County Government Board members' actions and willingness to communicate with us. This issue has also provided us with a wonderful opportunity to work with our County Board and to improve our communication and cooperation with them. They are actually calling our staff now when opposition groups bring materials to them! We also wrote Letters to the Editor of the one daily paper in our county and the weekly paper. (combined circulation of approx. 30,000). We had many favorable comments as a result.

**\*Cass-Morgan, "Lock & Dam Tour (Corn Grant)" -** With the grant, we were able to secure a nice charter bus on a hot day (100 degrees!) for our members and guests to ride around that day. The area has not had the opportunity for a tour of the lock & dam on the Illinois River for a while. It is time for our legislators and local producers to see for themselves the (worst-shaped) locks in the state. The LaGrange Lock & Dam site was ready for us when we arrived that morning with a full staff of Corps of Engineers waiting. We had 4 presenters and tour guides showing us every aspect of the lock system. Members, media, local officials, and legislators were able to see first hand, the conditions and happenings in our area and on the Illinois. We then boarded the bus for Alton with a quick lunch and then tour of Melvin Price Lock & Dam on the Mississippi. The tour of that facility was a little different. It had a beautiful museum attached and obviously, a larger lock which was great to compare La Grange to. Through these tours we had a large audience who will be able to tell the story of river transportation and the important role it plays for Illinois agriculture. The event gave nearly 30 people a chance to tour the locks up close. The greater audience will be others hearing by word of mouth and hopefully other legislators who could help find money to fix what we need done on these locks to ensure efficient river transportation. In our audience we had a local Senator, two county board members, chamber staff, radio personnel, IFB, IL Corn, IL Soy, and others represented. News releases of the event went to local papers and to our members. Pictures were shared on all social media sites. TWITTER: IFB, IL Corn, and a local Senator all tagged CFB on their tweets. Estimated reach: 2,000 FACEBOOK: CFB shared pictures, others shared or tagged family in the photos. Estimated reach: 1,000 NEWSLETTER: 1,140 CFB farmer members. RADIO: 1,000 listeners LOCAL PAPER: 15,000 households saw the invite for members and community leaders to attend. FARMWEEK: 7/5/16 edition had photos and a cutline describing our event and a similar tour in northwest IL.

**\*Montgomery, "Adopt County Board Members" -** Our 18 board members decided that since the county board had only 2 or 3 of the 21 county board members that were directly related to the farm that they would implement a new program similar to ILFB’s Adopted Legislator Program. We would implement Adopt-a-County Board member. After talking it over with the county board chairman he was excited to take it before his board. We now have 2 of our 18 board of directors who have adopted 2 county board members. They have done everything from planting soybeans in the spring to combining wheat this summer to trimming hooves on mules, getting them prepared for the show circuit. The adopted county board members are amazed at the technology that the modern farmer has at his finger tips. It's not scratching in the dust with your finger anymore, it is having the I-Pad or smart phone with you all the time to monitor what's going on in the field. Our board has also went to work with the county board members also. One visited a local news paper where one of the county board members is employed. Both parties agree how similar each business is keeping up on the new technology, the long hours getting either a crop in or a newspaper out and the importance of keeping the equipment in perfect running order. This program makes working on tuff issues a whole lot easier because the board members know each other.

**LOCAL AFFAIRS (continued)**

**Bureau, "Nutrient Stewardship Field Day" -** After a survey of the lady landowners who attended a Nutrient Loss Reduction Seminar, it was apparent that a local field day demonstrating conversation efforts should be held. Members stated that they were interested in seeing, first hand specific conservation practices which were highlighted during the seminar held earlier in the spring. The County Farm Bureau got to work. Staff members contacted a local group to ask to join their efforts in Nutrient Management. This led to co-sponsorships in the upcoming field day, among other local opportunities Several planning meetings were held with those involved. Duties for the event were delegated. There was alot to do; order tents, contact speakers, line up equipment, solicit donations and market the event. Farm Bureau was asked to take over the marketing. A list of over 400 names were surfaced of farmers and operators who have an interest in nutrient stewardship. This made for a huge mailing list! Post cards were created, printed, and sent to everyone on the list informing them of the field day on August 23rd. Inserts were placed into ag business billing statements and press releases were sent to local publications. The planning committee, consisting of members from FS, Crop Production Services, Monsanto, DeKalb-ASGROW, John Deere, Northern Partners, and various Farmers met the day before to set up the location, which was held at a local farm. The day’s events started with a welcome by a committee member in the main tent and then continue with speakers covering subjects relating to current Nutrient Loss Reduction efforts, N Watch, Nitrate Testing and N rate plots and finally Cover Crops. At the outside stations, participants were able to take part in three sessions of their choosing. Exhibiters at outside stations talked about Nitrogen stabilizers, precision technology, soil health, cover crops and starter fertilizers. A local FFA was on hand to cook and serve lunch. Field trials began after lunch. Water testing was also available for those landowners or operators who would like to test their tiles, streams or ponds for Nitrates. Those involved in the planning were happy with the day. The committee has already met again to begin planning for its next Nutrient Management educational program.

**Kankakee, "US Fish & Wildlife Refuge Reintroduced & Opposition Activities" -** A wildlife refuge in our County was proposed in 1997 by the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS). The County Farm Bureau along with County Government and the regional Chamber of Commerce each passed resolutions taking positions against the proposal. The main reasons for opposition were that the refuge would have taken valuable farmland out of production, altered and disrupted established watersheds and drainage patterns, altered and disrupted transportation infrastructure, displaced many residents, reduced the tax base for the area, reduced recreational activities, and was inconsistent with the County’s land use plans. With virtually no community support for the proposal and from pressure from state and federal legislators, the refuge proposal was defeated and was withdrawn in 2001. Unfortunately, the refuge was reintroduced and the same concerns with the federal project remain. The Farm Bureau is fully engaged in this issue and conducted many activities in opposition of the refuge this program year. Our County Farm Bureau connected with a Farm Bureau in southern Illinois which has had a USFWS refuge in their community for over 25 years. A conference call was held between the two groups and IFB staff to discuss the impact of having a refuge in their area. Following the conference call, it was decided to organize a trip to tour the southern Illinois community and refuge. 15 community members participated in the trip which included Farm Bureau members, elected officials, a Congressional staffer, and other interested parties. The cost of the trip was nearly $2,500 but it was worth the expense due to the information gathered. Members of a neighboring FB (which is impacted on a much smaller scale) also participated in this trip. The Farm Bureau hosted an informational meeting giving a presentation on the concerns with the project to an audience of 200 landowners, farmers, and residents. IFB staff assisted with this presentation and two Farm Bureau members from southern Illinois who our group met during the trip to their community made the 5 hour drive to speak about the real world impact of having a refuge in their community. Members of a neighboring FB (which is impacted on a much smaller scale) also participated in the meeting and discussion. Large 2' by 3' maps showing the refuge focus areas in our community were made and have been displayed in the community. Three different background and update papers were written by our County Farm Bureau as well as a handout given at events and the county fair. Many interviews with the media were conducted in order to express our concerns with the refuge. Through this work, we have gained several new FB members, have activated some of our more passive members, and have built some strong coalitions in our community that had not been explored previously. This is a priority issue for our County Farm Bureau. We will continue sharing information on the federal project and will continue working to defeat this refuge. In the next program year there is a petition ready to be circulated online and in hard copy format and a "congressional inquiry" letter is being prepared for delivery in Washington DC by our County Farm Bureau president.

**Stephenson, "Community College Ag Program Support" -** Following our $10,000 donation to help jump start the expansion of ag programming at our local community college, we continue to work with the school to provide support on various levels. We are soliciting donations of various equipment and resources to support programs, and we are working with staff to provide whatever means of support we can. A new Collegiate Farm Bureau chapter was started last year, and we look to become further engaged and integrated with that effort.

**\*Cook, "Two-Day Staff Exchange Program" -** This project provided county legislative, communication, and economic development staff with a hands on learning experience in farming and farm businesses in an urban county. INTENT: The goal of this project was to develop participants' awareness of farms, farm businesses, and food processors in the county while furthering Farm Bureau's relationship with county government. Over the course of 7 meetings, 9 Policy Team volunteers selected 3 tour sites including: \* Worldwide food processor \* Start-up distillery \* Urban farm 2 Policy Team volunteers and 2 board members participated on the tours. This was the fifth year of the program. Of the 23 participants: \* 4 county staff members attended last year's program \* 10 were new to the program In addition, 2 lawmakers attended the program. Historically: \* 13 individuals attended the program in 2012 \* 28 individuals attended the program in 2013 \* 26 individuals attended the program in 2014 \* 28 individuals attended the program in 2015 \* 23 individuals attended the program in 2016 This program was discussed in the monthly and legislative publications, website, and on social media. NEEDS MET: This project provided 23 county and state staff with a hands on learning experience in farming and farm businesses. ATTENDANCE/IMPACT: 23 county staff members benefited

**LOCAL AFFAIRS (continued)**

from this program. VOLUNTEERS: 9 Policy Team volunteers participated in the planning process, 2 Policy Team volunteers and 2 board members participated on the tours.

**Kane, "County Board Agriculture Committee Presentations & Attendance" -** Year round. Since our County has a Farmland Protection Program and a Local Farm & Foods Ordinance to promote agriculture in the County, the County Board also approved the addition of an Agriculture Committee to help coordinate issues and initiatives between the Health, Development and other county departments and keep the County Board abreast of the needs of agriculture and farmers in our County. Farm Bureau is a key player in the Ag Committee, providing a monthly report of FB issues and activities. Our CBF Secretary/Treasurer serves as a member of the County Board Ag Committee. At least one CFB representative attended each of the 11 meetings of the committee in 2015-16, making presentations to the committee on FB purpose, philosophy and history; Harvest for ALL opportunities, work with direct marketers and specialty growers and a host of other topics. Agendas include education sessions for County Board members on farmland, drainage, zoning, land use and other ag issues from FB and other local ag “partners”. The Committee gives farmers the opportunity to work with on all types of ag issues & appointments and as advocates for agriculture in County government. Ag Committee monthly Agendas topics included: 9-17-15. Food Hub Feasibility Study: Phase I conclusion and USDA “Know your Farmer, Know your Food” Chicago conference debrief 10-22-15. Food and Agriculture RoadMap (FARM Illinois) update and University of Illinois Horticulture research center future presentation 11-19-15. Presentation on beekeeping and model ordinances, and a IFB local and regional food summit debrief. 1-21-16. Ag Outlook 2016, update on farmland protection presentation by County staff at an APA national conference and Food and Farm blog update. 2-18-16. Presentation from Susie Thompson, Illinois FFA State Secretary & updates from Farm to School Program. IL Association of Drainage Ditch Conference update, report from February 17, 2016 Annual Farmers Market Conference and presentation about Regional Planning for Lands in Transition. 3-17-16. Reports on the Farmland Protection Program 15th anniversary & the University of Illinois Horticulture Research Center status. 4-21-16. Ball Horticultural Company presentation, updates from the Plan4Health program and County Export Grant Program. 5-19-16. Food Hub grant opportunities & webinar on Growers experiences selling through food hubs. 6-23-16. Liberty Prairie Foundation report, updates on county food and farm blog & county farmers markets 7-21-16. Max McGraw Wildlife Foundation report & Walmart Foundation State Giving Program 8-18-16. Food to Market Challenge update & the authorization of a new contract with New Venture Advisors, LLC, for food hub project activities and consulting services.

**Winnebago-Boone, "Proposed Rail Project" -** A member contacted the CFB regarding a proposed 280 mile rail project that would significantly affect not only our agricultural industry, but our local communities as well. We immediately contacted IFB. The proposed project affected a total of 7 counties. To assist our members, we created a webpage on our website and posted information on our Facebook page to provide our members the most recent and accurate information available. Our CFB was praised by local county officials and other groups for providing helpful information. The CFB encouraged members and stressed the importance of submitting their comments on the environmental impacts to the Surface Transportation Board (STB). 5 CFB Board members testified at the STB's public scoping hearing on the effects this would have on the agricultural community. The CFB took a position against the proposed rail project and continues to update information as the process moves forward. Over 59 members of the community spoke at the local public scooping hearings.

**Champaign, "Economic Benefits of Agriculture" -** With more development occuring in the county each year, our Land Use Committee felt that perhaps our elected officials needed to look at farmland as a livlihood versus a blank canvas for development. The volunteers looked at some models from Wisconsin and New York on how they presented the value of agriculture to elected officials and the public. Our first step was to reach out to IFB staff and indviduals from the local university for some help in securing current data. We realized that most of the data was old and from the 2007 U.S. Census of agriculture. However, with the help of these two individuals and the recently released 2012 census data, we were able to put together a concise six page document, with charts and graphs. Our Board of Directors then approved the report and we have made numerous presentations on our findings to both the public and our membership. This has been a great way to tell the story of agriculture and it`s value on the counties economy. Our members have also valued this report in that it has helped them in talking within the community on just how much the industry means from an economic development standpoint.

**DuPage, "STEM and Agriculture Roundtable" -** A museum is in the process of trying to construct an Agriculture building with several different Ag exhibits. Being a very urban county, a majority of their donors don't see why they need this type of new building and the exhibits. The Museum decided to hold a roundtable. The museum invited individuals from government, businesses, schools and agriculture. The focus was to hold a discussion on how important STEM was to children today and how agriculture fits into that as well as our urban county. The panel had 9 panelists. The panelists ranged from Presidents of Banks, Superintendents of schools, Curriculum Coordinators, State Treasurer, State Senators, a US Representative, and the Farm Bureau. There were many news channels and newspapers that showed up for the Roundtable.

**Will, "Pipeline" -** We had a major problem with one pipeline that was an oil line that was to be done with their work in September 2015. They were still working well into the harvest and then in December cold weather hit and they had to stop. Our landowners thanked us many times for having a group representation. Issues that arose included: additional agreements that needed to be filled out, new compensation, compaction, field tiles that were not fully fixed only temp fixes and they also had road agreements expire with townships. We had in place a farm specialist and local tile repair people (3 total). The pipeline was to notify these people when they were to inspect and farmers called us in September indicating that the pipeline had filled in the line without inspection as they asked our farm specialist. We quickly stopped the process and had a meeting and then they used the proper people and said it was a miscommunication. It was more than that because the company hired to do the work by

**LOCAL AFFAIRS (continued)**

the pipeline company tried to hide mistakes and we found them. These were addressed but then in November they discovered (because of us having them dig up areas) that there was leaking from tiles. It was discovered that the coating on the pipe was cracking and they were going to have to re-dig up many connections. Road agreements expired with townships and the pipeline company did not renew them. We had a group attorney and then a litigation attorney and all has been settled with the assistance of 5 more meetings with the landowners and pipeline officials and the roads have all been paid. The project took 14 months longer than expected and we have everyone paid and updated now but it was a hassle. Also we have 10 tiles that have not been totally fixed and because of 17 inches of rain in August. They may not get fixed until October. We had to address weed control, cover crops & additional compensation to roads. It was a total mess but without our involvement it would have been worse. We were also the holder of their performance bond. We were able to get many items addressed that others who did not go along are still dealing with! We are assisting these landowners but their agreement is totally different than the group who had an attorney! This entire process has promoted us to work on solving a problem which is another program in this report.

**COMMUNICATION AND PROMOTION**

**\*Massac, "Farm Frenzy... the Farm comes to Town!" -** The YF Committee sponsored a community wide event call "Touch a Tractor", on the last Saturday in June 2016. It was coordinated with a national archery event that brings over 10,000 people to town. Children, parents, and adults wanted to see antique farm equipment along with the newest technology that a farmer uses on their farms. 5 pieces of equipment were brought from a semi to a tractor & planter. Attendees asked local farmer's questions about agriculture an see the machinery that they use every day. There was also a petting zoo for kids in the park across the street. The event was free to local community. It was advertised in the local newspaper, Farm Bureau Newspaper, local Radio, Facebook, national events websites, and the local city buzz report, and TV stations. The committee wanted for everyone to have to opportunity to come and see what the farmer next door uses to plant, grow, and harvest the food on our tables first-hand. The Young Farmers had to organize who was bringing what animals and equipment, while also making sure that there was a wide variety of both for the kids to see. The project provided insight on what animals are really like in real life and how big tractors and equipment are. By showcasing the animals and equipment, the group was able to fully show families the details of farming.

**Edwards, "Harvest Bounty" -** Intent: To bring together those involved in agriculture and those impacted by agriculture, in a relaxed dinner environment; to facilitate communication between the two groups of people Results: A celebration of agriculture in Southeastern Illinois was held on a Saturday in August. In a wedding reception like atmosphere, a four-course meal comprised solely of local food was served by local FFA members to tables of 6. Each table was comprised of a Women's Committee member and her husband (whom served as the hosts of each table), someone from agricultural industry and their guest, and someone who is impacted by agriculture without direct connections to agriculture. The hosts focused the conversation on "hot topics" in the agricultural industry including: GMOS, gestation crates, and organic food. Short (3 minute) presentations were given between each course discussing where the food came from and how it was produced. The event received media coverage on Facebook and was the cover story in the multi-county, weekly publication that reached over 12,000 households. The results of this event can also been seen in the education that was done that evening; and in the resulting conversations for years to come.

**Lawrence, "Herb Gardening" -** After reviewing our programming and identifying populations that we, as a Farm Bureau, are not reaching, one of these populations is the elderly. Farm Bureau staff and volunteers worked together with our county Extension office to develop a workshop those those who live in a retirement community in our county. Two planning meetings were held and during these it was determined that each individual who attended would be able to make and take with them their own personal herb garden. six 4-H members volunteered their time to assist those who attended and three Farm Bureau and Extension staff served as instructors. fifteen residents of the retirement community attended. During this program, residents learned how to take care of their herbs, how to harvest and how to utilize their herbs. After this event, an article appeared in our county's two papers, our county's Farm Bureau Publication and FarmWeek. We plan on hosting more workshops with this retirement community.

**Cumberland, "Farmers' Share Breakfast" -**In March, the CFB brought back our Farmers' Share Breakfast to celebrate National Agriculture Week. The charge was $1.00, the farmers' share of the food served that day. Over 250 people, members and non members, attended the breakfast. The CFB board decided that the money collected would be donated to the Foundation, which will be used for scholarship funds. We raised $400 for our Foundation that day. We used the table tents with agriculture facts and information to educate attendees. We also had place mats purchased from AFBF at each seat, that had agriculture facts and games. The CFB invited our affiliates to join us, and they set up booths on the services they have to offer. The CFB also had a booth with membership information, benefits, and upcoming programs. 13 Volunteers helped out with the program.

**Calhoun, "Donates Stuffed Farm Animals to Volunteer Ambulance Service" -** The purpose of this is to provide comfort to a child or an Alzheimer patient. 15 stuffed animals were donated to have on the ambulances for a child or an Alzheimer patient. An emergency situation can be scary and stressful, we thought these animals would help calm them. We gave away stuffed cows, pigs, kitties and puppies. This was done in cooperation with the Women's Committee. Photo and article was placed in our newsletter and local newspaper (6,500 circulation).

**Johnson, "Consumer Education Awareness & Speaker Training" -** On April 21-22, a spokesperson from IFB's Illinois Farm Families program visited high school agriculture and civics classes, a CFB Women's Committee, as well as community college

**COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION (continued)**

animal science and agriculture business classes, to discuss the IFF program and its success with city moms. She also focused on tools available to students and those involved in agriculture that help to decipher the myths from the facts related to issues such as GMOs, animal care and food safety. She discussed tactics for weeding through and identifying consumer concerns and the best ways to address issues about food safety and farming practices. The intent of this program was to give various individuals with ag backgrounds the confidence to tell their own ag related stories and also, give them strategies about how to have discussions regarding controversial topics.

**Schuyler, "Ag Day Around the Square" -** Our Annual Ag Day around the Square program consists of several booths that are set up around the city square by the Soil & Water Conservation District, FFA, University of IL Extension, COUNTRY Financial and the Farm Bureau. First & 2nd graders participated in Barnyard Bingo with Extension, 3rd & 4th graders participated in a Cows & Pigs lesson with Farm Bureau--learning about all the different things we use from Cows & Pigs by playing the game pin the product on the Cow or Pig. 5th & 6th graders participated in making homemade Ice Cream with our COUNTRY Financial Agent & Soil & Water Conservation District. Our local FFA had a petting zoo with a horse, calf, pig, goat, rabbits, chickens and sheep. The local farmers brought implements for kids to have a turn setting in the drivers seat. This program reached pre-K through 6th grades and the general public, approximately 825 people, and was a fun way to teach the public about agriculture and how important it is in our everyday lives.

**\*Union, "Farm-to-Fork Expo" -** The 2 collaborating CFBs are both known for their rich agricultural roots, success of specialty crop growers, unique markets and farmers’ market vendors, and growing wine industry. The Farm Bureau’s, along with local and regional partners will provide an interactive setting showcasing the region’s unique agricultural attributes, farmers, their crops, and accurate information about food safety, agricultural practices, nutrition and availability of local foods. Through funding received from the state Farm Bureau’s Consumer Grant program, both counties entered into a collaborative effort to conduct a consumer education event. This comes at a time when these CFBs have been hearing more and more member concerns fielding difficult consumer questions; questions often prompted by consumer’s fears and misinformation in the media. The primary goal is to improve consumer knowledge and awareness of safe agricultural practices; also, to expose consumers to the broad scope of local foods and agricultural products. Participating CFBs believe the best way to achieve these goals is through direct contact with farmers, educators and advocates... If we can reach a few people through this program that can help spread the word about agriculture, we have done our job. Food items in the event included local produce and meat for sampling and recipes for using those ingredients. Displays at the event addressed common myths about hormones in meat, educate on the many uses of corn, and show bees at work and their importance as pollinators. Guests were asked to make a donation for admission to the event with proceeds going to local ag literacy programs. The counties fall within an American Viticultural Area. There is a large, well-established winery with good vineyard management practices and a large area for events. The winery and vineyard are located on the county line between the two counties and within 13 miles of a major university. It is also located in a heavy traffic area during the summer tourist season. This event date was determined based on the availability of local produce, planned around other CFB activities and also based on venue availability. While rain is not typical for August, a rain plan was developed (and implemented). For communication - CFB Managers collaborated to create a letter for farmers in the counties to inform them of the opportunity to participate and begin recruiting participants and volunteers. This was distributed three months prior to the meeting. Consumer communication about the event began eight weeks out from the event via local newspapers, Facebook, and the regional CFB newspaper (circ. 18,000). To market the event, a logo was developed that is timeless, easy to reuse with elements that can be easily repurposed for this event and future events. The simple logo was broadcasted in the newspapers and on Facebook in hopes that it will be easily recognized in the future. Volunteer recruitment included invitations to the counties’ Young Leader/Farmer group, Women’s Committee, directors, and members. Volunteer duties to include: event set up and teardown, food handlers, greeters, and general help as needed. While letters were sent out three months in advance, the busyness of the local growing season saw follow-up calls made to each farmer a letter was sent to three weeks before the event. Two days before the event volunteers and staff gathered materials and stuffed the insulated bags full of information that were handed out to attendees. The day of the event volunteers, staff, and farmers arrive an hour or so early to set up for the event. Attendees were surveyed. We asked only a few questions: Did you gain any NEW KNOWLEDGE of farming operations during this event? If so, what? What are your BIGGEST CONCERNS when buying food for you & your family? What did you like about this event? Any suggestions for coming years? Both Farm Bureau’s boards were extremely satisfied with the survey results and feedback. Having almost a 50% response rate was more than expected. Through the responses of this survey and speaking with participating farmers, we feel as if we are on track to create an even bigger and better event next year for consumer relations. 2 CFBs/50%

**Mercer, "Rooted in Agriculture" -** Our County Farm Bureau teamed up with two other County Farm Bureaus to host a Family Fun Night at a museum in a nearby metropolitan area. The theme for the evening was "Rooted in Agriculture." We decided to work with the museum to offer the Family Fun Night because we viewed it as an excellent opportunity to teach city dwellers about where their food comes from and have them meet the farmers that grow their food. The evening featured agricultural activities for the kids, a feed display, and an agricultural science experiment. Following the hands-on activities, the documentary "Farmland" was shown free of charge to all museum goers on their giant screen. After the documentary, we had a panel discussion moderated by a local TV personality that featured five farmers. The evening gave consumers a chance to meet farmers and gave farmers the opportunity to let consumers know that growing safe food is very important to them. The night was a great chance to teach youngsters about agriculture through hand-on activities and let consumers ask the questions that have been weighing on their minds to a farmer and not a web search that leads them to a biased website.

**COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION (continued)**

**Coles, "Agriculture Museum" -** Educating, Progression, Reminiscing and Celebrating…..is what led the CFB to create an agriculture museum during the CFB’s Farm Show. The CFB is celebrating 100 years, the Board of Directors wanted to continually celebrate throughout the year at various CFB activities. One of the largest events the CFB host is the Farm Show at our local mall. The Farm Show draws both agricultural enthusiast and the general public. With that, the CFB wanted to create an opportunity that would showcase agriculture and the Farm Bureau celebration, while meeting the needs of all farm show attendees. The goals of the museum were to draw attention to the CFB for being a part of the community for 100 years, education about rural life, agriculture and the Farm Bureau, along with progression and leadership the farming community has endured to enhance the way of life for everyone. An empty store in the mall provided a great location to set-up an agriculture museum. Pallets were used to create walls and encased the different sections. Within the six sections, a scene for each was created to tell the story of rural life, agriculture and the Farm Bureau. In front of each scene was a description - scenes created were: one-room schoolhouse, an old-fashioned living room, mercantile with a variety of goodies, 1916 Roadway Act – from dirt roads to all-weathered roads, Farmers Feed Comparison from 1916 to 2016 and a scene with miscellaneous items from antique tools to toys. In the center of the museum, the Farm Bureau had a display set-up with Farm Bureau and affiliated companies’ artifacts. A life-size cow, rooster and pig (the animals were made by a local high school art dept.) were displayed behind gates. A wall of Past CFB Presidents was included too. In front of the store, a Ford truck (from the 1920s) and a family heirloom farm wagon were on display. Old and new equipment were also on display throughout the mall. Everyone was invited to walk through the museum. It offered great interaction among the volunteers and the individuals and families walking through the museum. The museum showcased the progression of agriculture and rural life - In one place, people from all walks of life could learn and see the progression of agriculture and rural life through scenes and written descriptions in a make-shift museum. It supported agriculture education awareness and promoted the Farm Bureau and the farming community. In three days, the CFB was able to provide educational outreach and promotion to the communities that the CFB serves. A better understanding of the farming community and the CFB was achieved - the activity was educational and promotional, it gave us a platform to interact with about 1,000 people from agriculture enthusiast and the general public, and showcase the CFB and the ever-changing world of agriculture.

**Washington, "St. Louis Zoo Partnership" -** Our CFB is part of (and our CFB Manager is Chairman of) a Regional Advertising Group that again partnered with the St. Louis Zoo this summer for efforts to reach consumers with information about agriculture. Farm Bureau staff, leaders, and volunteers from county Farm Bureau’s in Illinois and Missouri revamped plans from the previous year's on-site activities to an exciting new opportunity with a featured commercial spot in the Zoo's new 4-D theatre. As a result, theatre visitors experienced a 15-second SpongeBob Square Pants-themed commercial about how "farmers grow our food with care for their families and yours" prior to the 4-D SpongeBob feature presentation. This proved to be an outstanding opportunity to spread our message to a captive audience through this unique theatre experience. In addition to the commercial in the Zoo's theatre, from June through August farm facts from Illinois and Missouri were also on display at zoo restaurants. Over 30 table-top displays and two large posters included short facts about Illinois and Missouri agriculture, and directed consumers to learn more at each state Farm Bureau’s consumer websites at WatchUsGrow.org for Illinois, and FitToEat.org for Missouri. With a gate-measured attendance figure of 1.3 million people during our campaign from May through August, the $20,000 total investment with the St. Louis Zoo provided an ideal venue for Farm Bureau to reach our consumer target audience of women ages 18 to 49 with children. We are able to work together to effectively deliver our messages to consumers, and the zoo is supportive of local farmers and agriculture too, so it was a win-win situation for everybody involved!

**Perry, "Farmer Appreciation Night with the SI Miners" -** 17 CFB’s joined efforts to provide an educational night for the non-farm public. "Farmer Appreciation Night" was held after several discussions of doing something that everyone could enjoy and remember. A contact was made to a local minor league baseball stadium about doing something to teach the public about agriculture. After several contacts and visits to the stadium for tickets, banners, and logistics, the resulting event included our participating Farm Bureaus being a major sponsor of a night of baseball. 500 customized t-shirts were designed and printed with the IFB Brand, baseball team logo, and the phrase "If you ate today, thank a farmer" on the back and were handed out to the first 500 through the gates. Specifically designed welcome banners were placed around the ballpark that exhibited facts about agriculture, and Illinois Farm Family commercials were aired twice during the baseball game to further highlight the importance of agriculture. Illinois FFA Vice President Paxton Morse was even present to help a county President throw out the opening pitch. The night was capped off by Fantastic Friday Night Fireworks. The 5,383 attendees, not only enjoyed the evening, but were educated about agriculture and why farmers care about their families too! In the final weeks of the season the shirts have been seen in the public and of course at the ball park. The staff at the ballpark commented to the group the crowd was the largest all summer. It was a grand slam event for 2016.

**Wabash, "Young Leaders American Flag Program" -** The CFB Young Leaders recently took over the American Flag Program in our town. The Young Leaders put up Old Glory eight times a year in observance of the following holidays: President’s Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Remembrance Day, Columbus Day, and Veteran’s Day. The program was started in 1963 by a local Club and have moved around to different clubs over the years. The Young Leaders started by volunteering to help the Chamber of Commerce put up the flags. That volunteering led to the Young Leaders taking over the program entirely. The Young Leaders are proud to show their community and American patriotism! There are currently 62 flags that get displayed at each holiday. Area business owners and residents can purchase an annual membership to the program for $75. The membership buys an American Flag, the bracket and pole to hang the flag, displaying the flag eight times a year, storage and maintenance of all equipment. The YLs hope to grow the program and grow pride in their community by displaying more flags. Each holiday 8 YLs put the flags up early in the morning and take them down in the evening. Approximately 15 Young Leaders and 5 volunteers have helped with the program multiple times throughout the year.

**COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION (continued)**

**\*Knox, "Farm to Fork Gala" -** A 2016 priority for the cfb was to build relationships with local, County business professionals and serve as a resource for agricultural information. A 9-member committee was formed to address this need. The inaugural Farm to Fork Gala was an elegant dinner hosted at a local farm and focused on the conversations between “Ag Advocates,” County farmers, and community “influencers.” Influencers are the individuals in the community that consumers would turn to for advice on the topics of food and nutrition. Seventy-one attendees were welcomed into a cocktail hour featuring local wines, beers, and served appetizers. After the Hors D’oeuvres concluded, the two Ag Advocates that were assigned to each table provided a brief introduction, which included agricultural experiences and areas of expertise. Influencers then selected which table to sit at based on topics of interest, or questions he or she may have. A local, Executive Chef that attended stated, "I got to have dinner with the only people in the county more passionate about food than I am, because they grow it." The chic meal prompted additional conversations as all of the food was raised or grown within 200 miles of the event. One Ag Advocate stated, “We presented a positive image of agriculture and farmers, and showed that we are open to answer any questions consumers might have.”

**Christian, "A Day on The Farm Tour" -** The CFB Program Committee and Board wanted to offer "A Day on the Farm" for members and non-members to showcase what our County has. We visited three different farms. We started at a 2,000 acre organic farm, where the family has been in organic farming and livestock production since 1990. The farmer has 25 plus years of on-the-farm research that is geared to finding the tillage cutting building blocks of organic, no-till systems for soybeans and other cash crops. Guests had particular interest in learning about organic compared to conventional methods and how they differ. Our County has very few organic farms, so this showcased some diversity within our county and educated guests about farming practices at the same time. Then we stopped at the local winery, where the family has restored their great-grandpa's barn that he purchased in 1908. This stop featured, not only the retail wine business, but also the ag tourism aspects of our County. The barn is used for events and is open to the public for wine tasting. Guests enjoyed learning the history of the winery and learning about wine making. While there, we had lunch with a IFF mom as our guest speaker. She spoke on how being involved with IFF has changed her view and outlook of agriculture. The speaker had incredible insights of views on agriculture from a more urban view. This is great to hear as our County is mostly rural. After lunch we stopped at the local Prairie Farms Co-op dairy. This family milks 180 Holstein cows, three times a day. Each child has a certain area of expertise that they give to the family operation. This stop on the tour was the true definition of a family farm! In Illinois, most farms are family operated and that was the focus of this stop on the tour. Guests were shown how a progressive dairy farm operates and how family members come together to make it happen.

**Warren-Henderson, "Moms Morning with Farmers" -** We invited non-farm moms to come learn a little bit more about planting and what farmers do in their fields. We had video-taped one of our farmers planting a field of beans prior to the program and had that ready to show the moms the day of our event. We felt this might be easier to do rather than trying to get a date that would work for everyone to get them to the field. We invited them Monsanto Learning Center and encouraged them to bring their children with them as we had programs planned for the children. Our ag lit coordinator was there to entertain the children and do agriculture learning activities with them while their moms learned more about agriculture. She took the children to a different building while we took the moms to the classroom at Monsanto. The children participated in all sorts of agriculture learning projects with our Ag Lit Coordinator while the moms went on the tour. The staff at Monsanto talked to the moms about what they do at Monsanto, , breeding by natural methods, GMOs and what that really means ,etc. They then took them on a tour of their research plots, explained why they are doing the research they are doing, etc. The moms were able to see pest damage to crops and learn how traits in certain seeds can cut down on insecticide use. After the tour, we went back inside for lunch where the moms and children rejoined and watched the video. There was great discussion between the moms and our farmers who were present about what they are doing in their fields. After lunch, the children took us to their building and presented us with an agriculture puppet show that they created from what they learned that morning.

**Carroll, "Backpack Program" -** The YL committee started something new last year for those children who are in need of nutrition over the weekend. The idea came about when schools were being cancelled for weather this past winter. Some schools do not like to cancel as they know some of their students only get free school lunch and breakfast. Four volunteers worked with school administration to survey the needs and evaluate the students who may be in need. Once it was determined letters were sent home to the parents of those students. The letters were returned and the numbers of kids participating was sent to the Farm Bureau. When talking to administration, we found out that a local grain elevator wanted to be a part of the program. Our two organizations donated over $7000 and then solicited other businesses to be a part of it. We have volunteers who are on shopping detail, packing bags, and delivering bags to the schools. This is our second year and currently we have 77 students who participate during the school year. Each Friday, they receive a bag with two breakfast items, two lunches, two juices, and two snacks. We have received nothing but positive feedback on the program from the schools and parents. This is just another way for our organization to show how they care for feeding the world.

**Monroe, "What's on my Plate?" -** Based on past displays at the county fair and grocery stores, our WC continues to discover consumers do not realize the importance of agriculture in their lives. The committee used National Ag Month as a time to educate non-farm consumers. After contacting our five fitness centers, 4 committee members developed posters using the IAITC What's on my Plate Poster to display during the month. Information about where your food comes from and “Did you know” facts about agriculture, livestock, crops, and conservation. Information about our AITC program, our Facebook information along with ag websites and Farm Bureau information were also included. A total of 2,500 individuals read the posters. When committee members picked up the displays, they received rave reviews from the fitness center customers about how much they learned about agriculture.

**COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION (continued)**

**\*Henry "Family Night on the Farm" -** In order to educate consumers about agriculture and the work of our family farmers, the County Farm Bureau Education Committee hosted a “Family Night on the Farm” for a metropolitan Moms Blog. The committee met several times in the year leading up to the event. Many details were arranged such as a caterer, seating, restrooms, sponsors and more. Committee members were assigned to topics that would serve as the stations for the event. Those attending would have a punch card and once they had a discussion with the station volunteers, they would get the card punched and then could be entered for prizes at the conclusion of the evening. The evening’s activities included farm animals, Ag in the Classroom activities, farm equipment and educational stations focusing on topics such as Illinois Agriculture, Technology, Food Choices and Animal Welfare. The event bought together farmers and consumers for a fun, informative and educational evening. Over 200 attended at the family farm of a Young Leader couple. “It's not every day you have the chance to bring so many people together who are passionate about what they do and willing to share their story with consumers. We were able to create a positive experience that will hopefully resonate with attendees the next time they are challenged with a story that doesn't portray agriculture in favorable manner.” -County Farm Bureau Education Committee Chair The Moms Blog we partnered with is a network established to support and connect moms while encouraging families to get out and try new things. The group has over 6,000 followers on their social media outlets. Many Young Leaders volunteered to assist with the event and also contributed financially, as did the Women's Committee and the Farm Bureau Foundation. We had strong support from the County Beef Association and the County Pork Producers. We had an overwhelming amount of positive feedback from the family night. The Committee has begun talking about another event next year and how we can improve and continue our Consumer Communication efforts.

**Stephenson, "A Day in the Country" -** Replicating the format used four times previously with busloads of constituents of our adopted legislators, we hosted a tour on August 20 for area residents to learn more about modern agriculture and the people involved in it. We chartered a bus and took the group for a morning tour of a large dairy farm operated by a board member and his family. We then traveled to the family grain/livestock farm operated by another director and his extended family, where they had all of their farm equipment on display and explained the purpose of each item. The Beef Assn. grilled ribeye steak sandwiches and burgers for lunch, and we also toured the dairy operation where they raise replacement dairy heifers for several farms including the one toured in the morning. The entire event lasted less than five hours on a Saturday, which fit well into the schedules of all involved. The diverse group included a minister, bank president, city alderman, reporter, high school administrators and teachers, a county health department director, county zoning administrator, and a college administrator. The group was very pleased and impressed with the day, and the interest level from those unable to join us this time indicate that this event will be repeated. The event was funded in great part from the IFB Consumer Communications grant.

**Bureau, "Farmland Movie Screening and Discussion" -** In an effort to share with the public, the farmer’s story, we are pleased to announce that the Farmland movie and discussion was a huge success. Farm Bureau partnered with our local FS and the Farmers’ Market to host programs at one of the local Farmers’ Markets this summer. The Farmland movie viewing and discussion was the June event. After the event date was set and the cost was negotiated, the movie rights and media kit and DVD were ordered. Advertising for the event took place by flyers, Facebook, free radio talk shows and a local newspaper ad. Interested attendees were encouraged to reserve a seat, but walk-ins were welcome the day of the event. At registration, attendees were given a Farm Bureau grocery tote filled with ag mags, brochures and more and encouraged to visit the farmers' market next door to the event. Each attendee was also offered free pop and popcorn for the show! When the participants took their seats, instead of pre-movie commercials, the audience was treated to a colorful slideshow filled with County Ag facts and statistics. In all, 85 people attended the movie. It was estimated that at least half were interested consumers; the others were farm families interested in the movie. After the movie, a panel of local farmers, including a young leader, the Farm Bureau president and a farmers' market vendor, participated in a discussion led by agricultural advocate Katie Pratt. This was a very successful program and the support from the Illinois Farm Bureau's Consumer Education grant was much appreciated. Now that Farm Bureau owns the movie and general discussion guide, our plan is to next offer the movie package to ag teachers in the area. It is our hope that they show the movie in class and lead a follow up discussion with the students.

**Livingston, "Breakfast on the Farm" -** In June, Dairy Month, 600 people enjoyed breakfast on a dairy farm provided by 18 YL members. The YL served a hearty breakfast of sausage gravy & biscuits, 2 scrambled eggs, 8 oz. orange juice, milk and cup of coffee for $1. How was the price figured? $1 is roughly the price the farmer would receive for the products that they sell that are included in the breakfast. The group created posters to show how much each product they were eating for breakfast cost and the amount the farmer is paid. Tours of the dairy operation were given and visitors got a chance to see calves, goats pigs, the feeding operation and milking stations. The milk bottling operation was a chance to show how farmers are diversifying. Our new "Meet a Farmer" booth was available to chat with consumers before they headed out for the tour. We handed out cups with the watchusgrow.org site for consumers to visit later. We also had a table for the new "Farm Hats" poster to promoted at the event along with Mr Farm Hats himself to explain the group. The Midwest Dairy Association sponsored a booth to highlight the benefits of dairy in your diet. A local 4-H group also came out and provided games highlighting dairy and encouraging kids to have 3 dairy servings each day.

**Whiteside, "County Barn Tour" -** Barns are an iconic symbol of rural America and our country's agricultural heritage. The tour has two goals: 1) Reconnect the urban population with rural Illinois and our State's agricultural heritage, and; 2) Highlight the significant role barns played in the early agricultural history of our county and their demise. This was the ninth year for our tour and the first year as a fundraiser for our Foundation. Planning begins in October. We have a committee of nine volunteers, including a Chamber of Commerce, a regional tourism office and seven volunteers. The tour moves to different areas of the county each year. The most difficult task of the event is securing the barns. This year's tour included 11 barns on nine farms. A

**COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION (continued)**

subcommittee is appointed to select the barns for the tour. After barns are confirmed, we have the barn owners complete a historical data questionnaire. We also have an artist pencil sketch each barn. We use the historical information and drawings to put together a tour book. Each tour participant gets a book as part of their paid admission. The barn owners are expected to be at their barn during the event to answer questions and provide historical background. Several of them also show antique tractors, flower gardens, and old tools. The committee meets monthly beginning in October up until the tour. The tour is a two-day event drawing people from all over Illinois, Iowa and Wisconsin. This year's tour had approximately 675 people attend. Prior to the event, the tour was featured on a local television show, as well. The County Farm Bureau manager chairs the committee and coordinates the promotions. We believe the barn tour is a great way for our organization to connect with the general public. It raised approximately $3,000 for the Foundation. We receive tremendous feedback from tour-goers and great media coverage.

**\*Champaign, "Ag Night at the Symphony" -** Trying to reach a different audience, our county Farm Bureau partnered with the local symphony to take part in a rare opportunity to farming members and symphony patrons of the community. The music featured in the symphony that evening was a set list featuring music that was to capture the nature, wildlife, countryside and prairies of rural America. The Master of Ceremonies that evening was Max Armstrong, who conducted an interview with our state FFA Association President so concert attendees could gain more knowledge about youth in agriculture. In the lobby of the performance hall, a McCormick Farmall International Harvester A was on display, creating a neat photo opportunity for symphony attendees and farming members alike. county Farm Bureau staff and directors of the board conversed with consumers about where their food comes from, machinery, conservation practices and production agriculture. Our county Farm Bureau offered partners magazines, brochures, ag trading cards and gave away books containing history of the county Farm Bureau within the community. To provide a focus on our dairy industry, we had 24 gallons of Prairie Farms ice cream donated to be served after the concert. Max Armstrong also met with attendees and signed his new book for them to take home. Our county Farm Bureau looks forward to participating at this event again next year.

**Will, "Wreaths Across America" -** We worked with a local military support group on this effort. We accepted 3 semi-truck loads of wreaths at the FB office. We arranged for 8 livestock trailers and 31 volunteers to unload the semi's and place the wreaths in the trailers. The livestock trailers allow air to flow through and keep the wreaths fresher. One truck was delayed with issues and was 9 hours late so the thousands of wreaths were unloaded at 10:00pm on the day before they were due at the cemetery. The farmers brought the wreaths back to their farms for the rest of the night and then brought them out to the national veterans's cemetery. We had an additional 35 volunteers there to help unload them and place them at the grave sites to honor our veterans during the holidays. We were in charge of dropping off the boxes at the cemetery lot and then took the extras to the stage area to sell. There were 300 that sold in 15 minutes that day. 10 additional volunteers provided a lunch for the helpers at a local hall. This is a fantastic event and a great tribute to our troops. A total of 11,800 wreaths were handled.

**Cook, "Join the Conversation" -** Our project utilized Facebook to feature local faces of farming. Through 6 paid social media advertising, urban consumers learned about farming, food, and the shared values of local farmers and urban families. 6 Facebook ads featured a local farm family, message about the shared values of local farmers and urban families, and instructions to enter to win a $250 grocery store gift cards. Consumers were asked to “like” our Facebook page and comment or share the post to be entered into a drawing for the grocery store gift cards. Gift cards were awarded in June, July, and August. At the conclusion of this project, we continued to engage Facebook users through positive consumer trust messages and images of local farmers. INTENT: 11 Public Relations Team volunteers determined that our project should use organic and paid social media advertising to connect urban consumers with local farms and farm families. Volunteers identified that social media would enable to target urban consumers with positive messages and images of modern farming. Each Facebook ad ran for 14 days and was promoted in the monthly publication, "Partners," and on the website. Each ad included a photo of a local farmer, their families, farm, and guidelines for the grocery gift card giveaway. In June, 8 volunteers and their families were photographed at their farms. Photos and positive consumer messages were then selected by 11 Public Relations volunteers and one staff member. Facebook boosts ran in: \* 2 ads in May \* 1 ad in June \* 1 ad in July \* 2 ad in August 11 volunteers and one staff member were assigned to monitor Facebook, reply to comments, and engage with urban consumers. Volunteers awarded 4 grocery store gift cards in June, July, and August. Staff was assigned to maintain a record of those moms who liked the Facebook page and commented, shared, or liked posts. Staff compiled eligible entries and and selected the winners. NEEDS MET: The purpose of this project was to reach numerous urban consumers via social media and to positively influence their thoughts about farming and modern farming methods. The primary objective of our project was to: build consumers' trust of modern farming practices by engaging them in a discussion about the shared values between farmers and consumers, including the importance of healthy and nutritious food, the proper care and treatment of animals, and the joint commitment to improving the environment. Secondary goals of our project include: increasing consumers' awareness of local farmers; connecting urban consumers with farmers in a highly urban county; and generating consumer contacts for future social media campaigns. IMPACT: According to Facebook data 357,013 individuals viewed the paid ads and over 17,000 individuals actively engaged with the page and volunteers. Facebook data showed that: \* Boost 1 reached 47,888 individuals \* Boost 2 reached 55,603 individuals \* Boost 3 reached 55,760 individuals \* Boost 4 reached 34,143 individuals \* Boost 5 reached 48,923 individuals \* Boost 6 reached 115,696 individuals VOLUNTEERS: 11 Public Relations Team volunteers planned and implemented this project. 6 board members participated in the photos of family farms. 11 volunteers participated in monitoring Facebook and replying to comments.

**Lake, "Race for Hunger" -** Our organization sponsored a Race For Hunger event at a local supermarket to raise public awareness of Food Check Out Week. This year's race featured a race between our a US Congressman and one of our local State Representatives. Media coverage of the event was outstanding, and involved numerous representatives from various media outlets. Overall, the race went very well, and the contestants were able to collect nearly $3,000 in non-perishable groceries into

**COMMUNICATION & PROMOTION (continued)**

their carts. All of these groceries were then donated to local food pantries to benefit the people in the communities where the participants are located. Our entire staff attended this event in order to help ensure that it ran smoothly. In addition, eight volunteers came out to help facilitate the event.

**Sangamon, "Pre-Civil War Farmhouse Search" -** CFB partnered with County Historic Preservation Commission to hold a contest to identify the oldest known farmhouses on operating farms in the county. Among the purposes of the project are enhancing farmers’ pride in their historic homes. Also, identification and recognition of the county’s historic farmhouses helped the commission to broaden their database and preservation efforts. There were eleven houses submitted that met the criteria and had sufficient documentation to determine their pre-civil war age. The winning entry was built in 1823. Originally a two-room log cabin, the structure has since been added to and sided over, but the cabin remains intact. The winner was revealed at the County Fair where media covered the event and interviewed CFB and CHPC representatives along with the winner. It was a great exercise in highlighting the longevity of farming in the county. It was also a real eye-opener for the public to realize how many of these old farm homes are still standing today.

**MEMBER RELATIONS**

**\*Stark, "#WIA2016" -** The 2016 Women in Agriculture Conference boasted a wide variety of breakout sessions with engaging presenters. The conference, held March 17-18, brought together over 220 women in agriculture. Topics ranged from nutrient loss and political engagement to farm legacy planning and animal health and welfare issues. Now in its fifth year, the Women in Ag Conference has grown and matured to be an event that women from Illinois, Iowa and beyond are eager to register for. Most of the meat of the conference occurred on Friday but a large contingent came in for a networking event Thursday evening headlined by a panel from ladies of the Iowa Soybean Association. This soy joy team tackled the topic of work/life balance and if such a balance is even possible. Then Friday morning quickly came with a cadre of vendors – including booths from many of the conference sponsors. The morning was kicked off with a keynote address from Wisconsin dairywoman Laura Daniels whose speech entitled “Using Baler Twine and Barn Lime to Live a Life with Purpose” had participants laughing and somber as Laura discussed her family farm and legacy. Corey Winstead with AgriVisor, a joint project of Illinois Farm Bureau and GROWMARK/FS, gave a market outlook that could be described as either bearishly optimistic or pessimistically bullish. Corey and the AgriVisor team’s advice is available for voting members of the Farm Bureau and is staple of FarmWeek. As mentioned there was a wide variety of breakout sessions for participants to choose from. There were 3 rounds of breakouts each with 3 different topics allowing for a customized experience at the conference. Speakers included our County native Julie Armstrong who works for the Illinois Nutrient Research and Education Council as well as former Iowa Representative Annette Sweeney, Western FBFM’s Nate Edelfson, COUNTRY Financial’s Rick Morgan, Veterinarian Jessica Bates and many other talented presenters. Capping off the day was an engaging live Confessions of a Farm Wife podcast which was highlighted with a special guest – Natasha Nicholes. Natasha, a mother and blogger from Chicago’s southside, is an alumna of the Illinois Farm Families’ field moms program which included a dozen different farm visits. Natasha’s perspective as a “farm outsider” kept laughs rolling in the crowd and ripened understanding of the breakdown of understanding by those more distantly removed from agriculture. This conference is hosted and sponsored by 12 county Farm Bureaus including our County with additional generous sponsorships from a variety of companies including COUNTRY Financial, GROWMARK/FS, River Valley Cooperative, John Deere, River/Gulf Grain Company, 1st Farm Credit Services, Scott County (IA) Farm Bureau, U of I Extension and Iowa State University Extension. The conference was covered thoroughly in FarmWeek, in CFB publications, in local papers, on regional TV, on RFD Illinois, on local radio, Our CFB handled social media for the Conference with live tweeting and Facebook posts. After the conference was finished, a social media plan was drafted to help keep pages active through the year. Instagram has also been added.

**Brown, "Customer Appreciation Day" -** Seven years ago, we held our first Customer Appreciation Day in conjunction with our Country® Financial agents. The event has been a huge success and we still continue with it. We feel our joint event is a great way to say Thank You to our members. This year we held a Customer Appreciation Day in August. We publicized our Customer Appreciation Day in our countywide newspaper once covering 3,400 households, and FarmWeek Ad in "From The Counties" column going to our 489 voting members. Also, we put up flyers around our community along with slips handed out to our customers that stopped by our office prior to our Customer Appreciation Day. We served lunch and supper consisting of hamburger/porkburger, which were grilled fresh by our Directors and Agents, chips, cookies, and drinks. We found this to be convenient for our members as they could choose the best time for them to attend lunch/dinner. They come and enjoy, sit back and relax, and visit with each other like "old times". It is a very relaxed atmosphere. Membership displays are set up for the members to browse, and County Farm Bureau Directors are close by to answer any question members might have. We have membership applications on hand for any guests that might be attending. Pamphlets are provided of current happenings within farm bureau for our members. We were able to announce our news of the placement of our Foundation and had forms for our members to sign if they were interested in donating to our Foundation. A display was also set up for the Foundation showing members where their donated dollars would go. Hopefully, this gives members the comfort of knowing their donation to the Foundation will help further the education of children in the future in agriculture. Country® Agents had a display table also. We had a table with door prizes for everyone attending to register to win. It was a very rewarding Customer Appreciation Day greeting our members along with working with Country® Financial Agents.

**Pulaski-Alexander, "Affiliated Company Relations Round Table" -** With new privacy rules and further segregation of companies over the years, the relationship between COUNTRY and FB has been strained. Managers in the region wanted to build better relationships with the Agency Mangers. Each participant was asked to submit questions, topics, concerns, and etc… prior to the

**MEMBER RELATIONS (continued)**

event. The roundtable began with comments from the District COUNTRY Director and Regional IFB Manager, followed by a compiled list of items sent in by the group. Each item was discussed openly, and we soon figured out that most of the concerns were just presumed and not real. Everyone committed to an open door policy, so issues get resolved quicker in the future. Half way through the meeting the managers split up into Agency Manager territories. Everyone was encouraged to discuss programs that were successful partnerships in the past and come up with 3 events they could work together in the future. Tremendous event that strengthened our relationship and will help all of us serve our members better. We plan to have a roundtable discussion each year with COUNTRY and every other year with FS. 15 FB Managers, 6 Agency Mangers, 1 District Manager, 1 Regional Manager.

**Massac, "Membership Drive 2016" -** A membership drive began by surfacing names of potential Voting Members. The Board worked with other committees and members to start a list to begin a Voting Membership Drive. With membership at a point of saturation, it was going to be a challenge. A kickoff began with breakfast and volunteers were given membership sales tips and an update on membership benefits & services, from our Regional manager. The group left and returned to a local restaurant for the "final report", 10 members were written by just asking one simple question, "How can Farm Bureau help you in your farming operation". We did sign several MS members during this drive to show that the spouses are important in making decisions for their family farms. The drive ended in writing an MS membership in the restaurant which made it an end to a great day!

**Cumberland, "New Member Welcome Packet" -** Welcome letters are sent out to all new Farm Bureau members to inform them of the purpose and goals of the Farm Bureau. The packet is also used to explain the many benefits that are available to members, both tangible and intangible. We utilize the discount informational sheets from IFB to equip the member with all the tangible discount information. The members are also informed of the various committees available on the county level, including FB ACT. We take this opportunity to inform them what Farm Bureau does for them in and their farm. This year we sent out 73 new member packets.

**Menard, "Member Appreciation Day" -** Membership retention is vital to our organization. Because of this, we find it important to provide events throughout the year to show our appreciation. This year we held an appreciation event during our county fair. On the hottest day of the summer, 285 members spent the evening with us! At the same time as our event, the antique tractor pulls were going on and our members had front row seats! We also gave out ride tickets to kids and their parents! Both associate and voting members received an invite. It was a fun evening and we are already in the planning stages for next year.

**Pope-Hardin, "Secretary of State License Remitter" -** Our CFB sponsors our secretary as a License Remitter for the Secretary of State. She can license new vehicles and also do title work. This is an invaluable benefit to our members because it is at least a thirty minute drive to the nearest Secretary of State office. As a result of providing this service we have signed 136 new members this past year. It is this service that allowed us to make our 2016 Total and Voting Quota. We have helped over 1/4 of our membership this past year by providing this service.

**\*Franklin, "FB ACT Appreciation Dinner" -** Our counties focus is on FB Act and Action Request Calls. We feel that by having as many people make these calls as possible we are able to make a difference in the way that our Legislators vote. We had a very successful 2 years and we wanted to show everyone who was consistent in making these calls that they were very appreciated, not just by our county but by the IFB and by our Legislators as well. We sent 125 postcards to those who made their phone calls on a consistent basis. Those wishing to attend made their RSVPs to our office for an evening meal that consisted of Filet Mignon, grilled asparagus, baked potato and tiramisu. Our county COUNTRY Financial Reps attended the meeting to speak to everyone to make sure that their needs are being taken care of and to help with the event. The waitstaff served everyone at this event which took place at a Resort in our county. We had sponsors for this event that included our local Polaris Dealer, COUNTRY Financial, Our State Senator and our District Representative. We invited Ryan Whitehouse, Associate Director of National Legislation & Policy Development attended the event and made those in attendance aware that their voice was being heard. He encourage everyone to get their friends involved as well. Even though everyone in attendance had made their Action Request calls not all were FB Act members. We were able to sign up 22 FB Act Members at this event. The main purpose of this dinner was to show our appreciation to everyone in attendance for their participation in the Action Request call. We wanted this dinner to be something more special that even our annual meeting - with personal invitations and also with the meal being served instead of buffet style. It took several months to get everything planned out - from location, to mailing the invitations, to making sure that Ryan Whitehouse was in attendance as well as inviting our legislators. We had 4 COUNTRY Financial Representatives, FB secretary, manager, president, district director, COUNTRY Agency Manager and 3 YL to help greet people and to make sure everything was running smoothly.

**Jersey, "Shooting for Our Roots" -** The Young Leader Committee is fairly new, going on its second year. During their planning meeting for the upcoming years' activities, the group decided they wanted to organize an event that would act as a fundraiser for some of their programs and activities. The board has been very supportive of the committee, however the Young Leaders wanted to show the board that they are willing to support their activities too. Five committee members took the lead and organized a trapshoot, eventually called "Shooting for Our Roots." A date was secured at a local shooting range, which was also able to supply food for the day's events. Committee members secured sponsors at either the gold ($250), silver ($100) or bronze (less than $100) level. Each sponsorship level came with advertising (at the range and on t-shirts) and participation opportunities. A committee member, who is majoring in graphic design, designed a logo which was used in advertising the event and for t-shirts, which each shooter and sponsor received. Yet another committee member was responsible for setting up on-line

**MEMBER RELATIONS (continued)**

registration and payment. The day of the event, committee members checked in shooters, in addition to handling a gun raffle. The trapshoot was a huge success, raising around $3200 for committee projects and activities. The event was also a great way for committee members to work with businessness in the county, acquainting them with the Young Leaders Committee and its purpose. Upon evaluation of the program, the committee agreed that the shoot will become an annual event.

**Mercer, "Young Leader Idea Exchange" -** Our Young Leader Committee teamed up with two other Young Leader Committees to host an Idea Exchange. The State Young Leader Committee Chair came to moderate the event. The evening kicked off with dinner at a restaurant. The State Young Leader Chair then led a discussion with everyone in attendance on what challenges their respective Young Leader groups are facing as well as what are some of the successes that their groups have achieved. The evening concluded with a tour of a local brewery. Everyone had a great time and left with some ideas of things to implement in their committees. The evening also served as a great networking opportunity as different Farm Bureau districts were represented at the exchange.

**Clay, "CFB Annual Membership Picnic and Family Fun Night" -** Roughly 220 CFB members and special guests gathered for food, fun, and fellowship at the annual picnic. Both MM and A members are invited to the picnic. For the past few years, we have blocked off the street next to the CFB office and made it a "block party" type of event. We like to utilize the office because it keeps the event here in town and is a way for members who might not ever come to the office to see where we are located. This year, we provided a bounce house, farm related games (milk can toss, corn dig, duck pond) and prizes for kids, corn hole, and rounds of Bingo. This year, there was also an AITC booth our new coordinator set up. A local band was the entertainment for the night, and they were a huge hit with the crowd. Members were entered into a drawing for door prizes such as embroidered coolers, chairs, and blankets. Free giveaways included hats embroidered with our logo, serving spoons for the ladies, cups with our logo on them, yardsticks, pens, and notepads. Foundation Scholarships were presented at the picnic. Our scholarship winners were there early to help call bingo, and we got 2 to sign up for membership that night. COUNTRY financial provided homemade ice cream, and local FFA members helped serve this year. A free pork chop meal was prepared by the local meat market and served by the Women's Committee. This picnic serves as a "thank you" for the support and participation of the membership throughout the year.

**Piatt, "Prep.Freeze.Cook" -** Our Women's Committee wanted to offer a program where women could get together and prepare freezer meals for use during the busy planting season. We had a company come to do the activity. The company comes with all of the ingredients, chopped and in individual containers. They set up 10 stations and at each station a different meal would be put together. We had 1o participants so they worked in groups of 2. Each group would bag 10 of the same meals. They did this twice. Everyone prepared two meals for the entire group. When they left, each person went home with 10 meals that they could put In their freezer and pull out for cooking when they needed something easy. Our attendees loved it and thought that it was so easy. The cost was $150 per person with a portion going to the Foundation as a fundraiser, which raised a total of $265. We will definitely be doing this in the future based on the positive feedback we received,

**Richland, "Trap Shoot" -** The 5th Annual County Farm Bureau’s Young Leaders Trap Shoot was Saturday, August 27th at the County Line Gun Club in Noble. The CFB Young Leaders Committee hosted an individual and team trap-shooting contest. Proceeds from the event will sponsor 2017 college scholarships for County students. We had ten teams participate. A $200 cash prize was given to the top team which consisted of Duane Thomann, JR Jackson, Tony Hemrich, Donald Herdes and Hayden Hemrich. We also gave out 2nd and 3rd team cash prizes consisting of $150 and $75 respectively. We had approximately seventeen individuals compete in the individual contest. The top three individual spots were paid out as well. The top individual was Donald Herdes receiving $75, second place went to Tony Hemrich receiving $50 and third place to Duane Thomann receiving $25. The committee also raffled a Bushmaster M4A3 Magpul MOE Black .223/5.56. Overall, more than $2000 was made in profit during this event.

**Washington, "Affiliate Baseball Outing" -** In an attempt to encourage comradery between the CFBs and our affiliated FS service company, an evening of baseball was offered for staff, Directors, and volunteers from FS and the five (5) CFB's in the cooperative's service territory. Approximately 75 members attended the evening minor league baseball game, complimented by a picnic-style dinner offered at the ballpark an hour prior to game time.

**White, "6th Annual Young Leader Pistol Shoot" -** The Young Leader Committee worked with our local Rifle Club to develop plans for a steel target shoot event. This is the sixth year for this event. We designed a dedicated web page for the event, and set it up for participants to download registration forms and flyers. Our Young Leader Committee members sought sponsors of the event, securing 9 sponsors at $100 each and 3 at $200. Sponsors received a sign at the event, recognition at the event, their logo on our website, and recognition in our county publication. We worked with a local gun dealer to purchase a Browning Buck Mark .22 target pistol for the grand prize. The event had 5 different shooting stations; with a different target arrangement and shooting order at each station. Each shooter shot 5 targets, 5 different times at each station; for a total of 125 shots. Each round was timed. The three shooters with the best time in both the youth and adult divisions received extra chances in the drawing for the gun. We utilized volunteers to help setup, keep time, and clean up. After lunch, shooters were invited to compete in a marksmanship competition. We set up targets at 30 yards. Shooters had to use the same gun they used for the morning competition. The shooter with the best score received a brick of ammunition. We submitted the results of the shoot to local media and posted it on our website and in social media. 3 volunteers from the YL Committee & 6 volunteers from the Rifle Club helped. We had 19 shooters participate, and raised $770 in funds for committee projects.

**MEMBER RELATIONS (continued)**

**\*Lee, "Young Leader Exchange" -** Our YL Committee reached out to a few CFB YL's committee outside of our district and coordinated a Young Leader Exchange. The goal of the program was to learn from other county YL's and bring back new ideas and new energy to our individual county programs. The YL's enjoyed dinner and discussion, led by IFB YL Chairman, Evan Hultine, and toured a local brewery after. Good dialogue was had during the discussion and our YL's who attended felt it was a valuable and worthwhile event.

**\*Warren-Henderson, "Ag Service Award" -** We feel it is important to recognize individuals who have sacrificed their time & given of themselves for the betterment of agriculture. So we decided that once a year, at our annual meeting, we will award an “Ag Service Award”. We advertise that we are looking for nominations & set up a deadline for submittals. We review the nominations & a committee makes their selection. Their selection is then presented to the FB board for their approval. The winner’s family is notified and given free tickets to attend our Annual Meeting. They are asked to get the recipient to the annual meeting where the award would be given as a surprise. Sometimes the family lets us know that the winner wouldn’t want to be surprised, so we contact the winner ahead of time & let him/her know what will be happening. We also invite the person who nominated them and their families to our annual meeting where the winner is presented with a plaque. The winners’ name is added to a plaque that hangs in our FB meeting room for others to see. After the award, an article about the winner is published in our FB newspaper and area newspapers.

**Jackson, "Membership Recruitment Brochures in Teacher Packets" -** Included in teacher packets this year, was the IFB insert that promotes a Farm Bureau membership to educators. While many teachers in the county are already members, we hope to see the results of this simple addition this year! The AITC Committee creates the teacher packets and delivers them to the county schools.

**Logan, "County Member Benefit Program" -** This year we launched a county discount program for our members with eleven local businesses participating. The businesses were given the option to choose what kind of discount or incentive they wished to offer. We hope to keep this program growing in the future by encouraging other businesses to participate. We are happy to be able to offer our members premium benefits and to encourage them to support local businesses.

**Fayette,"Young Leader Trapshoot" -** The Young Leaders were looking for a fun way to interact with fellow Young Leader committees and with other members in the county. They decided to host a trapshoot, and invited all the YL committees in our district. They also invited all members in the county to participate. They trapshoot was a 50 bird derby, and prizes were awarded to the top three shooters. They also provided an award to the shooter with the lowest score. The prize was a box of claybirds and a box of shells. They had a local ag business cook pork burgers for all shooters. Following the trapshoot, shooters could participate in an Annie Oakley shoot for fun. The Young Leaders had a great turnout for the shoot, and each Young Leader committee in the district was represented.

**Saline, "Ice Cream Social" -** This is the second year that our board has sponsored and ice cream social for the 4-H exhibitors and volunteers at our county fair. We were able to provide ice cream and over 25 different toppings for nearly 75 people. We had 6 volunteers helping scoop ice cream into cups before people headed over to the toppings table. This was another great was for us to get involved in the community, get our name out, and socialize with community members.

**\*Cass-Morgan, "Post-Harvest Celebration" -** The Young Leaders, in an effort to expand their committee by acquiring guests while at the same time meet board members and retaining those members, created this event last year and decided to do it again with adjustments and improvements to make it better. A Young Leader hosted it in her shed one Saturday night. That night, everyone was given color coded name tags to sit at various tables to encourage YL & Board conversation. The YL Chairman started the meeting with a welcome and then everyone introduced themselves. The CFB President spoke about the CFB, encouraged this committee to grow with full support of the board and took questions about the organization. The speaker for the evening was Thomas Titus, a hog producer and Next Faces of Farming and Ranching winner. Thomas was young enough to relate to the youngest of YL's and also blend in the board. He was inspiring and encouraged a lot of young farmers to go do more when talking to the non-aggies of the world. The event was casual and inviting making it a relaxed atmosphere for young people to feel comfortable asking questions without sounding dumb around peers. The board was incredibly encouraged by the program, the turnout and the quality of young people in our organization. The committee gained 6 prospective YL's that evening and has since continued to grow as we prepare for the 2017 celebration with a new topic.

**Woodford, "Future & Present Leaders Cook Out" -** This summer our Young Leaders hosted a cookout out at the county farm bureau park. Invitations to the event were extended to the Board of Directors and their families as well. The farm bureau provided the main course of burgers or hot dogs for the evening, and each family was encouraged to bring a side dish to share. There were both familiar and new faces a this event, with at least 3 different generations in attendance. The goal of the evening was to have the future leaders of our organization meet the current leaders. When young minds and experienced minds come together, many new and innovative ideas seem to arise. The entertainment for the evening, besides all the young kids running wild, was Mr. Bill Graff. Bill has a long resume of Ag related jobs, but his current job title consists of being a social media guru, a Trump Delegate, and a farmer. During his presentation Bill touched on the need for utilizing technology and social media to grow our organizations in the future. He also spoke on how out of 64 Illinois Delegates, he is the only one with any kind of Agricultural background. He reminded those in attendance that agriculture has never been known for being "first adopters", but it is about

**MEMBER RELATIONS (continued)**

time that we start, because as an industry, we are no longer "in the know" when it comes to most things. All of our members in attendance walked away with a little more of an understanding of what needs to be down to grow our organization and our own businesses.

**Kendall, "2nd Annual Appreciation picnic" -** The FB Board started looking into how to get young people involved in our annual meeting. We looked around at this meeting and it was the same older group every year. The board's decision was to forgo an Annual Meeting/dinner in the fall and have an Appreciation picnic in the summer at the fairgrounds. The annual meeting in late November would be a short business meeting only before the regularly scheduled board meeting. A date was picked in late Aug. in which the Ed. Building on the fairgrounds was available. A pork chop caterer was hired, ticket price determined for both children and adults,and advertisement was done in the FB publication and the local paper. Families were encouraged to attend, our AITC coordinator made geo pets with the kids and adults, the Extension Service made bracelets with the kids, and Country Financial had drawing with the winner receiving a $100 gift cert. to the local meat market. It was a beautiful cool night which allowed many of the group to sit outside at picnic tables or to sit inside if desired. There was a pay bar set up outside for those who wished this type of refreshment and our goal was to bring in a younger group and we succeeded. We had at least 10 of our Young Leader group attend. The only program for the evening was the announcement of our 2016 Scholarship winners and handing out their awards and introducing our State representative who received his "Friend of Ag' award that evening. This took place at 6:30 p.m. nearly 3/4 of the way through the evening. The evening was a great success and we accomplished the goals we had set forth.

**Livingston, "#MemberMondays" -** Hashtags are a fun new way to capture people's attention! #membermondays has given us a chance to not only promote our local member benefits, but also to increase traffic to our Facebook page. Using the hashtag, we feature a different local benefit each week. We have 25 local restaurants, car detailing, stores and more that offer discounts to our members. This has given us a chance to promote those businesses. Through the promotion, we have reached 5,823 people. We plan to grow the program next year and hope to grow our member benefit program.

**Effingham, "Assistant Delinquent Contest" -** This program had two goals - to retain members and promote the good working relationship between Farm Bureau and COUNTRY Financial Assistants. This also provided an opportunity for the assistants to participate in some friendly competition. During this Delinquent Drive the assistants received a list of delinquent members a month after our dues were due. They had one week to look over the list and let us know of any members that should be canceled. The new revised list acted as the base for the contest. The assistants were awarded cash based on the percent of members that were retained. If they retained 50% of the members on their list they received $25, for 60% retention they received $30, for 70% retention they received $35, for 80% retention they received $40, for 90% retention they received $45 and for 100% retention they received $50. Overall there was a 70% retention rate of members as a result of the contest. The nine assistants appreciated being recognized for their efforts. They were given their cash reward following a luncheon at a local restaurant.

**\*Champaign, "Leadership Academy" -** In an effort to further develop leaders for the present and future, volunteers worked to develop a Leadership academy. The academy, is meant to help volunteers improve their skills on such subjects as public speaking, the legislative process, trade, international agriculture, affiliate relations, etiquette dining and so much more. The eight intense training sessions are spread over four months. Volunteers helped immensely serving as speakers, offering suggestions for speakers, providing supplies for the class and so much more. The highlight of the program this year was a day long tour of agri-businesses in Chicago. This year`s class of six included a broad spectrum of participants, from YAL leaders, farmers new to farming, a dietician, an absentee landowner, and agri-business representatives. Overall, this program has provided our volunteers the skill set to be leaders within our organization and the community as well, since many of the skills covered are not just usable within Farm Bureau. during our last session we require that each participant set goals for where they want to go in the future, it`s amazing where with the help of this class, these graduates are going within agriculture and or community - it truly is exciting!

**Cook, "Master Membership Club" -** PLANNING: The 17 volunteers from the Member Relations Team met with the Board, Staff, and Agency Managers for the purpose of developing a Voting Member recruitment strategy INTENT: The short term goal was to find a way to achieve quota...the long term goal was to establish a program that created an exclusive and perpetual effort by volunteers to recruit voting members for years to come. NEEDS MET/IMPACT: The result was the creation of the Master Membership Club. Eligibility is restricted to volunteers from the organization. Induction for year one is based on a point system achieved through members recruited. Rewards for being inducted into the club include recognition on our club member display, and induction ceremony, prizes and privileges. Remaining in the Club is also based on continual point generation through member recruitment. The result was 27 new voting members recruited in the final 2 weeks of the quota year as we achieved voting member quota and a number of first year inductees into the Club! The most effective recruitment and retention voting member efforts come from committed, passionate members advocating for their own organization.

**Kane, "CFB complimentary trial membership" -** CFB established a new complimentary trial membership for 2016-17 CFB scholarship recipients. In addition to the scholarship recipients, to recognize the interest, attendance or assistance of non-members at 2 or more Young Farmers activities during the year, the CFB expanded the complimentary trial membership to include these students as well. A letter was mailed to all students who had met pre-requisites for trial membership. The letter explains why they received CFB trial membership. Being a member qualifies you to participate in their College or University's

**MEMBER RELATIONS (continued)**

Collegiate Farm Bureau Chapter and/or participate in Young Farmer events they previously qualified for as a dependant of a parent. Information was provided about CFB and our Foundation. The second page of the letter provides clear instruction of the renewal process upon expiration of membership and the dues notice will be mailed in September of 2016. A follow up welcome letter, membership card and benefit brochure was mailed to all the complimentary trial membership recipients. It is easy for Collegiate members to become overwhelmed with the hard work and dedication they are building to ensure a successful future for themselves as well as the future of farm and food. CFB goal is to first give a free trial membership to engage students with Ag related interest to our organization providing opportunity to participate and utilize benefits CFB offers. Second, encourage renewal and retain their membership.

**Lake, "Local Business to Member Discount Program" -** This past year our office has worked on the creation and promotion of a list of local businesses that will offer discounts to members of our CFB. This list is ever-expanding, and includes a variety of businesses that provide both goods and services in various communities throughout our county. As this is a newly created program, we are very happy to have 31 businesses signed up in the program. Businesses that partake in the discount to member program receive promotion of our partnership on our website, our social media outlets, as well as in our publication. Participating businesses also receive a window cling that can be attached to their front doors which notify members that discounts are available. We hope this program continues to grow, which will in turn allow us to provide even more value to our members.

**DuPage, "Member Benefits on Digital Picture Frames" -**

The membership committee this year felt that we need to give our Financial Representatives something to help them explain Farm Bureau. They felt that we lose a lot of members due to the member not knowing that they are a member or why they are a member. This is due to the Representatives having so much to go over with the client that the FB information gets forgotten. The committee decided to purchase a digital picture frame for all 70 Representatives and put pictures of all of the benefits and a few farm pictures. The Executive Director and one additional volunteer was tasked with delivering and setting up all of the frames to all of the Representatives. The ED and volunteer received many compliments from the Reps.

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT**

**\*Douglas, "Policy Development Breakfast Scrambles" -** During Ag Week volunteers hosted breakfast for all farmers in each township throughout the county. Breakfasts were held at 5 different locations. Volunteers updated farmers on all the projects the county Farm Bureau has been working on, committees within the county farm bureau, membership benefits, and general Farm Bureau information. Also, a policy development survey was passed out and we had a 100% return rate of the surveys.

**Stark, "Fielding Issues for Policy Consideration" -** Taking advantage of the opportunity presented when state legislators visit our CFB, our manager took note of issues brought up to the legislator, gathered information on those topics and presented it to the board for their information and to potentially draft or amend policy. Policy ideas also include members coming forward with an idea. From discussions last year (2015 Annual Meeting), the following were prepared and proposed as policy resolutions: - Country of Origin Labeling (Voluntary) - Country of Origin Labeling (Mandatory) - Inclusion of Whole Milk for School Lunch Program - Creation of a State Fair Foundation - Commodity Dockage Equity - Right to Farm Amendment - Illinois State Fair/School Start Dates Of the policy resolutions proposed from our CFB, the commodity dockage proposal was considered for AFBF policy and the State Fair Foundation breezed on through and was even acted upon by the state legislature before dying thanks to political posturing. The following topics have surfaced, are being discussed and may be proposed as policy resolutions for the 2016 Annual Meeting: - Hay leachate and storage - Small-scale Slaughterhouse Inspection - Welcoming Next Generation Dairy Farmers

**Brown, "Open Discussion Delegate Meeting" -** Policy Development Committee meets in November, along with our Delegates and County Board of Directors, to go over all the resolutions before our monthly board meeting. This way, they have time to discuss the different resolutions before attending our District Resolution Meeting that is usually held a week later. Before our monthly board meeting they discussed different resolutions and how they had been changed or what was being added to so everyone had the opportunity to discuss current issues and debate possible policy developments. Then, our District IFB Director and six county managers, delegates, and alternates meet together to prepare for IFB Annual Meeting in December. All counties in our district are encouraged to attend so everyone would have a better understanding of all the proposed resolutions. Six County Farm Bureaus in our district take turns each year having a president serve on the resolution committee and to be the one who leads our meeting about what changes are made and why. This is a time when all delegates and alternates have to go over all resolutions and make notes of any changes that need to be explained before addressing the IFB Annual Meeting delegate body on different issues. Everyone in our district always enjoys working together and having time to visit before and after our meeting.

**Massac, "Pie and Policy" -** In a way to encourage vocalization, a pie and policy discussion was planned. Local farmers were invited to attend a meeting. The Farm Bureau policy newsprint was distributed along with pie. While the farmers were eating, comments and concerns were discussed about certain policies. To a receive a piece of pie, attendees first had to fill out a paper describing five topics and issues that they wanted Farm Bureau to tackle. Overall, there were 15 various issues brought up ranging from local, state, and federal. These idea were then implemented for another policy program.

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT (continued)**

**Edwards, "M Member Survey" -** Intent: To gain our members opinions on issues effecting them; To gain our members opinions on IFB policy; To see if there are any issues our county should submit possible resolutions on Results: During the winter, a 28 question survey was mailed to every "M" member in our county; there were 36% returned. The survey was divided into three parts. Part one contained questions related to elections, rural reference signs, tax incentives, trucking issues, nutrient stewardship, programs and activities, and Farm Bureau policy. . All of these questions asked members to mark either "Disagree," "Agree," "No Opinion." or "Not Applicable to Me." Part two contained three personal opinion questions. These questions are open ended and asked members- 1) The main priority for my county should be... 2) My main concern about ??? County is.. and. 3) What issue should be ??? County Farm Bureau become involved with? Part three contained four personal information questions. These questions allow us to know the demographics of those who respond, and allow us to make some statistically analysis of the responses. To bring in a greater response, the survey indicated that when the survey was filled out and returned a coupon would be sent for $5 off their annual membership dues. To keep the surveys anonymous, each survey had the membership number written on it. When the survey was returned, this number was cut off and the coupon mailed to them.

**\*Washington, "Annual Meeting Survey" -** The Viewpoint subcommittee wanted to surface issues affecting our community and area farmers. With this in mind, the committee developed a one-page member survey and distributed them at our Annual Meeting. By filling out the survey, the members were entered into a drawing for a flat-panel LED TV, with one lucky winner being drawn at the end of the program. Overall we received 38 surveys with issues or concerns for our CFB to work on in the upcoming year. The committee evaluated the surveys, grouped them together, and searched for answers. Survey responses helped committees understand what members are concerned about, and therefore, plan programs and projects that will be effective at meeting our members’ needs. In the previous year we received 53 surveys, and should continue to expect a similar response in subsequent years.

**Mercer, "County Annual Meeting Survey" -** A survey was provided to the 65 members who attended our County Farm Bureau Annual Meeting. 29 surveys were completed and returned. Also, as a way to encourage the policy development process among our members, copies of the newsprint editions of the 2015 IFB Policy Resolutions were placed on each table at the Annual Meeting. Below are a few of the questions that the survey asked: - What is the most important issue that you would like to see Illinois Farm Bureau address? - Are there any other issues that are of significant importance to your farming operation? - How can our County Farm Bureau promote a positive image of agriculture with local consumers? Program ideas were discussed based on the results from the survey. Also, several policy resolutions were discussed by both the Board of Directors and the Governmental Affairs Committee as a result of the survey. The survey proved to be an excellent tool to both surface program ideas and policy resolution submittals.

**Franklin, "Member Survey" -** At our Annual FB Meeting we included at each place setting a card for members to fill out. This card had questions asking if there were any issues that they needed more information about? Would they like to be contacted when we have policy meetings in the future? Are there any programs that they would like to see in the future? Would they like to be a part of a FB committee? We received a total of 9 cards back by doing this. The purpose of this questionnaire is to get feedback from our members on what events they fell work in the county, what events they would like to see that are not currently being done and to find out if anyone is interested on serving on a committee to help implement any of these. Once the questionnaires are received at the annual meeting the manager, office staff and the board goes over them to see what the ideas are.

**White, "2017 Policy Resolutions" -** Through the efforts of our Board of Directors, our county Farm Bureau submitted the following resolutions to the Illinois Farm Bureau for consideration at the 2016 IFB Annual Meeting... CONCEALED CARRY The Illinois State Police is in the process of changing eligibility and training rules for concealed carry permitting. The training required in Illinois to obtain a concealed carry permit is arguably the most stringent in the country. The rules and processes for obtaining a permit are working well, and do not require changes at this time. We sought policy change that would modify existing policy opposing more stringent gun control laws to include wordage relevant to concealed carry. The Resolutions Committee did slightly amend current policy as result of this submittal. ELIMINATION OF AXLE WEIGHTS Farmers using farm trucks during harvest do not have the ability to weigh individual axles as they exit the field. When loading trucks, farmers can reasonably estimate how much total grain to load in the truck (gross weight). However, they do not have the ability to weigh individual axles (axle weight). We asked for a policy change that would grant a harvest exemption from axle weight limits for farm-plated vehicles. The Resolutions Committee included our policy resolution in the recommendation to the delegates. GRAIN INSURANCE Farmers who sell grain to markets outside of Illinois are not protected under the Illinois Grain Insurance Fund. Farmers should be protected on all bushels produced in the state, regardless of where they chose to sell that grain. We asked that out of state grain dealers be required to collect and pay assessments on Illinois sourced grain into the IL Grain Insurance Fund. However, we were told that the State of Illinois cannot impose law on businesses located out of the state. NLRS EXTENSION We were interested in seeking policy that would call for an extension of the voluntary practices in achieving nutrient load reduction in the NLRS. The extension would allow farmers to implement practices after the target date of 2025. The Resolutions Committee did not include this policy, as they thought it was premature to ask for an extension. TRUCK INSPECTION SAFETY We have an issue where farm trucks are being pulled over for inspection when there is no space on the side of the highway for them to pull off. We asked for a policy change with Illinois State Police and the Illinois Department of Transportation, where an officer of the agency will direct a heavy truck they have selected for inspect to the nearest suitable location that is off the highway. The Resolutions Committee included our submittal in the rewrite of existing policy. Three of our five submittals were included by the Resolutions Committee in their recommendation to the delegates. We look forward to seeing our resolutions debated on the delegate floor.

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT (continued)**

**Crawford, "Get to Know Your Policy" -** As a way to improve the policy development efforts in the county, the committee took an active role in promoting and explaining Farm Bureau policy. Once a month, the CFB ran educational articles in the local paper, titled "Get to Know Your Policy…" Each article gave a short background on current agricultural issues, and listed the IFB policy that corresponds with the issue. Readers were encouraged to contact the CFB office or Board members with any questions or comments about the poilcy. This year, the CFB submitted articles about trade, agriculture tourism, local government, rural development, governmental economic policies, energy, and How Farm Bureau Policy is Formed. By putting IFB policy language in the hands of our members, the committee hopes to increase the grassroots efforts from our county.

**Perry, "Newspaper Survey" -** To provide our members with another opportunity to be a part of the grassroots policy development process, a short “What Do You Think” survey was developed. An article explaining the policy development process from member, to county, to IFB, to the AFBF was also incorporated. Finally, we developed a chart showing the steps involved in the development of a policy. All of these were put together on a “Policy Development” page of our Farm Bureau newspaper and mailed to approximately 20,000 members of all 10 County Farm Bureaus. In total, twenty (20) volunteers were utilized for this project.

**\*Fulton, "Policy Development Meetings" -** Our Board conducted two “regional” policy development meetings in the County for members. In addition to surfacing policy, we wanted to “fire-up” members about being advocates for the farming industry. A free meal would be served at each. A post card was sent to each of our 2700 members with the dates and location of each meeting, asking them to attend the one meeting that was most convenient for them. Board members were encouraged to attend at least one meeting; preferably the one in their area. Members called their reservations to the office. The meetings were held March 21, 2016 and March 29, 2016. A total of 100 members attended the meetings. The presentation was an update on Legislation at both the Sate and National level. Presenter at one meeting was Andrew Lawson and at the other was Bill Bodine. We had excellent comments after the meetings. The meetings also gave members a chance to discuss policy and local issues, to meet their Directors, and to give our Board direction in setting policy for the organization. A 12-question Viewpoint Survey developed by our Policy Development Committee was also completed by 81 members. Total cost of $1830.

**Marshall-Putnam, "CFB Board Meeting Policy Development Discussion" -** Encouraging our CFB Board to participate in policy development discussions has become a daunting task and one that they do not look forward to, due to the amount of reading that is necessary. because of this, as a CFB board we have decided to make a "contest" out of the process. The CFB board is numbered off after our regular meeting has been adjourned. As a result, the board members are put in teams and must move around the room. We break up a larger IFB policy or distribute smaller policies for each team to read, discuss and then come up with an idea. They may choose to affirm, remove, make changes or write a new policy and decide what to do. When the time is up, a representative from each team stands up and explains to the board what they would like to see done. It has encouraged a lot of discussion and in turn gives the board a chance to interact with each other in an informal way. The board now looks forward to the discussion, their interaction and the silly prizes awarded to the top team at the end of the board meeting.

**Wayne, "Board Policy Development Exercise" -** Our county Farm Bureau Manager put together a 30 minute policy development exercise with our Board of Directors. The 10 directors were divided into teams of 3 or 4 and asked to identify three issues per team that they felt Farm Bureau should be addressing more than we currently are. Then each team reviewed current policy language on each of their issues and drafted new language to add or amend that policy. Each group presented their recommendations to the entire board. Staff took their recommendations, researched each issue, and then developed a draft policy resolution to be considered at the next board meeting. The board approved those resolutions they wanted to forward on to IFB. Four resolutions for 2016 were developed out of this exercise.

**Jackson, "Getting to know your Farm Bureau Policies" -** Ten county Farm Bureaus discussed various ways that we could better inform our members of what the IFB policy book contains. It was decided that one way we could educate our members was to feature a different policy in each monthly issue of our county Farm Bureau publication. The title of the story feature is "Getting to Know Your Farm Bureau Policy". It is difficult to gauge the success of programs of this nature. However, through conversations with members, it does appear that the repetition of this article is getting member's attention. Through the county publication, approximately 16,000 Farm Bureau member households were reached.

**Hancock, "Resolution Development" -** In October, we were approached by a MM member with concerns about a specific IFB policy and it's relevance to agriculture. With the help of IFB staff, we were able to guide him through the resolution submittal process. The member attended our CFB board meeting and submitted a resolution, which was later amended and passed at the annual meeting in December.

**\*Randolph, "Noise Ordinance" -** This last fall, the county board was discussing the possibility of enacting a noise ordinance outside of city limits. This would greatly affect the Farm Bureau and its members, especially during the long hours of spring and harvest. The Board of Directors made it their policy to oppose a noise ordinance outside any city limit. Directors attended the town hall to speak out against this issue, and wrote a letter to the County Commissioners in opposition of the ordnance. Ultimately the ordinance did not come to fruition due to the lack of support and input from the Farm Bureau.

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT (continued)**

**Adams, "Viewpoint luncheon" -** The Viewpoint Committee had gone to breakfast meetings about 10 years ago to attract a crowd at the local coffee shops to hear what was on our member’s minds. After attendance had dipped the past several years we decide this year to try a lunch meeting at a popular restaurant in their private meeting room. This seemed to work better for peoples schedule than an early morning meeting. We invited local elected officials to join us and allowed them to give a brief update. We asked the group what Farm Bureau should be doing for them and we have taken several suggestions from those meetings and developed into our plan of work for various committees this upcoming program year. We passed out the newspaper copies of the IAA policy manual which led to good discussion about current policy. There were suggestions that came out of the meeting which were approved by the board of directors and submitted to the resolutions committee for further review and possibly inclusion into the policy book. As an added attraction we invited the newly elected Sheriff for our county.

**Bureau, "Persistence on Policy Development" -** Encouraging the County Farm Bureau board of directors to participate in policy development discussions can be somewhat of a daunting, but necessary, task. In order to lighten the load and spread out dialogue over time the board has decided to break down discussion areas by district. Each quarter, board members in a different district of the county are encouraged to listen to other members about local areas of concern. The manager begins this process by sending an e-mail to board members in that district. The e-mail sent to the directors, reminds them of their duty, and contains an attachment which highlights their members responses from the written viewpoint policy survey sent earlier in the year. The directors are also encouraged to go out and personally speak to members about their thoughts and concerns on current or potential policy. The board members are then directed to speak about these areas of concern at the next board meeting. After hearing the topics the board discusses the issues at hand or directs the manager to gather more information and bring it back to the next meeting where it can be further discussed. This has encouraged a lot of discussion and in turn gives the board direction while interacting with members within their district.

**Livingston, "Policy Discussion" -** To inform our legislators of the new 2016 IFB priorities prior to their legislative session, the Farm Bureau hosted a Legislative Breakfast. We secured a date in March with our state Senator, 3 state Representatives and Congressional representative aide. Invited guests included County Board members, SWCD members, Supervisor of Assessments, Zoning Officer, FB members and Young Leader members. At the breakfast each state and congressional representative gave a briefing on what was happening in Springfield or Washington, respectively. Everyone attending received a copy of the IFB Legislative Priorities. The open forum gives County Board members, SWCD members and FB members the opportunity to discuss issues important to the agricultural community. We were able to discuss the IFB Priorities openly with our legislators

**Cass-Morgan, "Viewpoint Survey" -** In the CFB quarterly publication, the members were asked 3 questions. If the members responded they would be entered in a drawing for a gift card. The survey was put together and approved by volunteers who felt a need for this to be done in the county.

**\*Will, "What is Your Opinion" -** We brought back radio personality Dan Proft to discuss and give his thoughts on issues and to help stimulate conversation by our membership on the hot issues. Topics included how do you currently receive your news? A look forward at Illinois landscape, redistricting and the chances, affordable health care and where do we go from here, mandatory food labeling, thoughts on the Presidential election, money in elections and property rights to name a few. These topics were reviewed in detail and he broke down the failed policy agenda and political landscape for our state and offered what his opinions and real-life solutions to the most pressing problems of the state including the budget. He then took 60 minutes of questions and he helped us foster ideas to discuss and helped with local policy and helped direct us to reliable information areas that tell the entire story. One of the statements made by Dan was regarding money in politics. He stated yes a lot of money is spent on races but that is the environment we currently live in. He did not feel that there was too much money being spent or involved in the races. He did however feel there was too much politics for sale! We had 69 attend the program and we had 11 volunteers participate with the lite meal we served along with introductions and emceeing the meeting.

**Champaign, "Toolshed meetings" -** Committee volunteers invited Illinois Farm Bureau staff and leadership to present information on the state organization’s priority issues during three toolshed meetings. The format for the meetings was simple in that Illinois Farm Bureau’s Mark Gebhards and our IAA District Director gave opening remarks and then opened the floor for discussion, questions, and comments. Numerous members attended the meetings, giving them an opportunity to visit with state and local leadership and discuss state and federal topics such as the Farm Bill, livestock related issues, EPA regulations and the government consolidation. The planning committee was pleased with the turnout and with the exceptional quality of discussion. Additionally, one of the meetings was covered by a local newspaper that shared the comments and views of the members with an even wider audience.

**Kane, "Farm Bureau Policy to Legislators" -** At our annual Lunches to Legislators program, 35 volunteers presented Farm Bureau policy books to 95 individuals (including legislators and their office staff) at 15 legislative offices. Volunteers included Women's, Young Farmers and Legislative Committee members and Directors. The program has become so popular (and our number of legislative districts has grown so much) that the program now takes place over a three day period, giving volunteers a break and legislators more opportunities to schedule a visit by volunteers when they are in their district offices. Through the Lunches to Legislators program, Policy Resolutions were delivered to 1 U.S. Senators offices; 3 Congressmen and 12 State Legislators (4 State Senators, 8 State Representatives), as well as to our County Board Chair. Delivery of our Policy Resolution through this annual program has become a tradition our legislative offices look forward to, allows our volunteers to visit with legislators and their

**POLICY DEVELOPMENT (continued)**

staff about issues important to farmers and reinforces the grassroots nature of Farm Bureau policy development and implementation.

**Cook, "Food Safety Roundtable" -** 14 people joined 5 experts on food safety and sanitation for a discussion on food safety and sanitation. INTENT: 9 Policy Team volunteers and 1 staff member met on 3 occasions to discuss the topic and meeting logistics. 1 volunteer and 1 staff member secured the experts on the following topics: \* GMO testing/safety \* GMO labeling \* Department of Public Health regulations \* On-farm sanitation \* Processing safety/sanitation/quality control NEEDS MET: This discussion educated policymakers and their staffs about a pertinent farm and food issue and engaged leaders in a candid discussion about food safety, sanitation, and GMOs. IMPACT: 14 leaders benefited from this discussion as we were able to drive home FB policy on a number of food and farm related topics including GMOs, farm food handling, antibiotics, hormones, and regulations. VOLUNTEERS: 9 Policy Team volunteers planned the roundtable and 2 board members and 1 Policy Team volunteer participated in the discussion.

**DuPage, "Monthly Policy Review" -** Our Board of Directors has reviewed one of the Illinois Farm Bureau policies at each monthly board meeting. This exercise was to familiarize the Directors of the policy, and also to spark conversation. The conversations had generated ideas for programs and possible changes.

**YOUNG LEADER / YOUNG FARMER**

**\*Brown, "County Fair Children's Ag Expo" -** Women's Committee, Young Leaders and Board of Directors had the honor and privilege of participating in our local county fair with our Children's Ag Expo. Our free expo was open everyday from 5-8pm. Children and adults could enter our expo through our farm gate and once inside, had many different ag activities to choose from. Each night, we provided a different make & take. These included making a Beanie Baby, Corn Pin, Circles of the Earth Bracelet, and Farm Charm. Also available was a large variety of Ag Mags that children could take home. We had our "milk cow", "apple tree", "egg gathering", and the most popular activity, our Corn Pit, complete with pails and shovels for digging! On Saturday, during Kid's Day, we were open from 9am-1pm. Along with all of our activities, we offered free popsicles for everyone! It was a hit and we can't wait to participate again in the future.

**Massac, "Farm Frenzy... the Farm comes to Town!" -** The YF Committee sponsored a community wide event call "Touch a Tractor", on the last Saturday in June 2016. It was coordinated with a national archery event that brings over 10,000 people to town. Children, parents, and adults wanted to see antique farm equipment along with the newest technology that a farmer uses on their farms. 5 pieces of equipment were brought from a semi to a tractor & planter. Attendees asked local farmer's questions about agriculture an see the machinery that they use every day. There was also a petting zoo for kids in the park across the street. The event was free to local community. It was advertised in the local newspaper, Farm Bureau Newspaper, local Radio, Facebook, national events websites, and the local city buzz report, and TV stations. The committee wanted for everyone to have to opportunity to come and see what the farmer next door uses to plant, grow, and harvest the food on our tables first-hand. The Young Farmers had to organize who was bringing what animals and equipment, while also making sure that there was a wide variety of both for the kids to see. The project provided insight on what animals are really like in real life and how big tractors and equipment are. By showcasing the animals and equipment, the group was able to fully show families the details of farming.

**Douglas, "Countywide Tire Collection Event" -** Our Young Leader group is always looking for ways to help with the beautification of our county. Last year, we hosted a very successful electronics recycling day. This year, the Young Leaders wanted to tackle another problem in our county which is old tires. This problem goes further than helping keep the county cleaned up but the potential health hazards from old tires. On a hot Saturday in June, 9 of our Young Leaders brought in over 400 tires from 39 individuals from around the county. The breakdown of the tires included 312 passenger, 17 light truck, 21 semi, and 6 tractor, and roughly 40 assorted other tires. Working with a local company, these tires were properly disposed of and will be blended with coal to be burned at a local agricultural institution.

**Edwards, "4-H Ag Olympics" -** Intent: To create a fun, interactive activity for the county 4-Hers; to bring in food donations for our local food pantries; to support our community Results: The YLers sponsored an Ag Olympics for the local 4-H clubs. each club rotated through the different games competing against themselves, all while trying to get the best score/fastest time overall, for the club competition. There were 8 different games set-up at the fairgrounds. Prizes were given for the overall winner at each game. Snacks were offered to the 4-H members while scores were tallied. A pizza party was given to the club that won the most events. Each 4-Her wishing to participate in the Ag Olympics was asked to bring at least 2 cans/boxes of food with them as their entry fee. This year over 200 pounds of food was collected. 65 4-Hers participated and 21 young leaders coordinated and implemented the event. This was the 5th year for this event in our county, and all remarks were positive. The 4-Hers and their parents had a great time, and are already asking when the event will take place again.

**Gallatin, "Gardening in the Classroom" -** The Young Leaders donated a full size 20 gallon Tower Garden. The Tower Garden is a shared project with two teachers at the local junior high. They will be using this Tower Garden as part of their curriculum along with using AITC lessons also. During the time of the Tower Garden, the teachers and students will be writing monthly updates for the local CFB paper. The teachers will be using the Tower Garden to help benefit the Home Economics class with their cooking lessons.

**YOUNG LEADER / YOUNG FARMER (continued)**

**\*Jersey, "Driving safely around farm equipment" -** As the Young Leaders Committee was planning their activities for the year, they were adamant that a program teaching young drivers about sharing the roadways with farm equipment be top priority. Committee members contacted the high school in the county and received permission to hold the program on school property during the school day. The Drivers Education teacher agreed to have each of his classes participate in the program, which had them watch the "In the Blink of an Eye" video prior to the day of the event. As the word spread, several other teachers asked that their classes be able to participate as well. Committee members arranged for a tractor, a spray coup and a semi to be brought to the school. A pickup truck was placed behind the tractor and spray coup and a smaller car was placed beside the semi. A Young Leader was stationed at each piece of equipment and addressed each group that came through, covering topics like traveling/stopping distances, blind spots, space & turning needs and what the flashing lights mean. Following the verbal information, each student was encouraged to climb into each piece of equipment to see what the operator sees. The student's reactions were priceless, as they were challenged to see items around them. The feedback from the school was wonderful and the committee was asked to make it an annual program. Committee members are hopeful that this program had a positive impact on students and they put what they learned to use on the roads.

**Clay, "FFA Hunger Games" -** With American farmers still producing the most affordable and safest food source in the world, it is important to give back and bring awareness to the importance of agriculture and where our food comes from. In honor of National Agriculture Week in March, the Young Leaders challenged each FFA chapter in the county to the "FFA Hunger Games." Each chapter was given the week, from Monday to Friday, to collect as many nonperishable food items as they could. The school that collected the most items by the end of the week was declared the winner and received a pizza party with the Young Leaders. All participating students were also put into a drawing to win tickets to the Ranch Rodeo we are hosting this summer at the county fair. The FFA chapters pulled together and collected over 3,200 items for our pantry--way more than we could've hope for. The Young Leaders then matched the amount of the winning team and donated 1,535 items. In all, 4,807 items were donated to our food pantry as a result of this contest. Our pantry feeds over 600 families (about 1700 people) a month. Three of the leading donors from the winning FFA chapter also volunteered to help the Young Leaders deliver the items. Those three FFA volunteers also stayed after we finished unloading our delivery to help the pantry prepare and sort items for their distribution. This contest was a fun way to get high-school FFA students involved with Farm Bureau and introduce them to our Young Leader group, as well as have a huge impact on our local food pantry.

**Franklin, "FB Act Members" -** We went from 49 to 88 FB Act Members this year. We were able to get 9 of these people to sign up for FB Act due to the help of our YL. Once the people knew that they would be able to receive the calls, texts and/or the emails they were very glad to sign up for this. Even though we continue to make the calls to them from the office often times these people will have already made their contacts and then they just have to report them to us. The purpose of have members sign up for FB Act is to have their information on file at the IFB so they will know who is interested in legislative issues. When a new member is signed we always try and take the time to have them sign the form - we fill it out for them and they don't mind so much. This is not a requirement so everyone who is an FB Act Member is a volunteer.

**Mercer, "Conservation Tour with Lt. Governor" -** Our Farm Bureau Young Leaders hosted Lt. Governor Evelyn Sanguinetti for a conservation tour. One of our Young Leaders is currently doing 100% of his acres in cover crops, so he talked to her about how farmers don't need to be forced to use conservation practices and that they employ these practices on their own because they want good soil and safe drinking water for future generations. He also showed her an ephemeral stream (that currently did not have any standing water) to point out what could potentially be regulated by the EPA under the Waters of the United States ruling. Even though the Lt. Governor doesn't have any jurisdiction over the EPA, we felt that it was important for her to be aware of the conservation practices that farmers are employing on their farms so that she can stand up for farmers and their farming practices should the issue arise in Springfield.

**Wabash, "Young Leaders American Flag Program" -** The CFB Young Leaders recently took over the American Flag Program in our town. The Young Leaders put up Old Glory eight times a year in observance of the following holidays: President’s Day, Memorial Day, Flag Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Remembrance Day, Columbus Day, and Veteran’s Day. The program was started in 1963 by a local Club and have moved around to different clubs over the years. The Young Leaders started by volunteering to help the Chamber of Commerce put up the flags. That volunteering led to the Young Leaders taking over the program entirely. The Young Leaders are proud to show their community and American patriotism! There are currently 62 flags that get displayed at each holiday. Area business owners and residents can purchase an annual membership to the program for $75. The membership buys an American Flag, the bracket and pole to hang the flag, displaying the flag eight times a year, storage and maintenance of all equipment. The YLs hope to grow the program and grow pride in their community by displaying more flags. Each holiday 8 YLs put the flags up early in the morning and take them down in the evening. Approximately 15 Young Leaders and 5 volunteers have helped with the program multiple times throughout the year.

**Washington, "Auxiliary Lighting for Farm Equipment" -** With the challenges of ever-changing farming seasons and conditions, farmers are sometime forced to transport their equipment in early morning hours or after dark. In addition, the size of equipment and number of distracted drivers on rural roads have both increased over the years, increasing the likelihood of dangerous situations when sharing the road with each other. Our involved committees wanted to help these implements stand out better during these periods of decreased visibility by offering free auxiliary lighting. The battery-powered magnetic strobe and caution lights can be placed where most needed on farm implements to help grab the attention of motorists as they share the road. Hopefully the additional lighting will alert motorists and help curb a troubling statistic of an increasing number of

**YOUNG LEADER / YOUNG FARMER (continued)**

deadly accidents with farm equipment in our area. Directly, 39 farmers in our county benefited by receiving a free set of important auxiliary lighting equipment for their implements. Aside from the 39 lights distributed directly to farmers in our county, our members, the public, and others were all made aware of this program and driving safely with farm equipment during our campaign to deliver the free lighting throughout the county. Project publicity included an article and picture in our CFB publication, which reaches approximately 2,000 member households. Our CFB Facebook page (over 280 "likes") was also utilized to share the message and encourage farmers to call the office for the free safety lights.

**\*Marshall-Putnam, "Seminar On GMOS And Organics" -** Our CFB Young Leaders in conjunction with a nearby county held a seminar on GMOs and Organics. Over 30 people were in attendance for this special presentation. An associate professor of agriculture at our local community college discussed the science behind genetically engineered crops highlighting the misconceptions and advances in recent years. Special attention was given to the process through which genes are introduced into conventional crops and how that technology is now being used beyond the world of GMO crops to one day treat diseases in humans. The second half of the presentation focused on organic labeling and the procedure that producers must follow to obtain that label. Questions were answered regarding the differences between organic, certified organic, sustainably raised, and all natural. Attendees left with a better understanding of the topic of GMOs and Organics and how to address questions when asked by the general public.

**Hancock, "Down on the Farm" -** In an effort to provide a hands-on, out of classroom experience that educates public school students about agriculture, our CFB felt it was important to organize this program. Nearly 200 first graders and preschoolers, representing every school district in our county, participated in the 12th annual Down on the Farm program. Home school students were also included in this year's event. Students had the opportunity to visit several different stations, where they learned about topics such as farm safety, tractors, combines, dairy, soils/worms, and commodities. They also enjoyed learning about farm animals and interacting with them. FFA students provided the farm animals. Students also enjoyed a horse-drawn wagon ride and had the opportunity to design their own farm poster. Over 35 volunteers from our CFB, YL, and WC assisted with the event, which was more than double the number of volunteers from the previous year. In addition, the resource conservationist with the county Soil & Water Conservation District and our county Ag Literacy Coordinator served as presenters. For the first time, a local swine management company sent 9 volunteers to help with the event. Prairie Farms donated cartons of milk for the students and machinery was provided by two local implement dealers. Two local farmers assisted with horse-drawn wagon rides, and our local radio station conducted a live broadcast from the event, where they were able to interview several students and volunteers. The event was held at the local Extension Center. Media coverage included two television stations, two newspapers, and one radio station. Our CFB feels that we provided a valuable learning opportunity for all of the students, teachers, and volunteers involved with this program. We plan to continue this program next year.

**Wayne, "Young Leader Golf Scramble" -** Intent: To develop a fund raiser for the Young Leader Committee to raise funds for their collegiate scholarship and state/county programming and to promote the purpose of the committee. Committee members were involved in the planning of the project at each step, and took on the bulk of the responsibilities during the event. Staff assisted with promotion, logistics, finance, and other general support functions. Results: We promoted the program using various media including newspaper, radio, our website, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and our multi-county publication. Committee members developed a list of individuals and businesses they would like to target for sponsorship of the event. We sent initial sponsorship letters to these businesses. Committee members followed up with them. Multiple sponsorship levels were offered including Harvest, Hole, and Cart sponsorship levels. We advertised the sponsors during pre and post promotions of the event. We made up signs for sponsors and placed them on the tee boxes. We affixed cards on the golf carts for the cart sponsors. The committee secured a total of $5,048 in sponsorships. They also earned another $800 through team registrations. This year's event featured a "golf ball cannon" where golfers could pay $10 to shoot their ball to the green on a Par 4. We also added a "Tee the Tarp" contest, where golfers tried to land their tee shot onto a green to be entered into a $100 drawing. We offered a $50 cash prize for longest drive, longest putt, and closest to the pin contests. We had a 50/50 drawing where if the golfer hit an “island green” on their tee shot, their name was put in the drawing, in addition to a "Double or Nothin" contest, where you could place a bet that you would hit the green on your tee shot. We also had a hole-in-one contest for a John Deere utility tractor. Each golfer received a can coozie with the Farm Bureau’s logo and name on it. We served a pork chop dinner and presented the awards. A total of 13 teams participated in the event. The committee raised $1,860 after expenses.

**Warren-Henderson, "Moms Morning with Farmers" -** We invited non-farm moms to come learn a little bit more about planting and what farmers do in their fields. We had video-taped one of our farmers planting a field of beans prior to the program and had that ready to show the moms the day of our event. We felt this might be easier to do rather than trying to get a date that would work for everyone to get them to the field. We invited them Monsanto Learning Center and encouraged them to bring their children with them as we had programs planned for the children. Our ag lit coordinator was there to entertain the children and do agriculture learning activities with them while their moms learned more about agriculture. She took the children to a different building while we took the moms to the classroom at Monsanto. The children participated in all sorts of agriculture learning projects with our Ag Lit Coordinator while the moms went on the tour. The staff at Monsanto talked to the moms about what they do at Monsanto, , breeding by natural methods, GMOs and what that really means ,etc. They then took them on a tour of their research plots, explained why they are doing the research they are doing, etc. The moms were able to see pest damage to crops and learn how traits in certain seeds can cut down on insecticide use. After the tour, we went back inside for lunch where the moms and children rejoined and watched the video. There was great discussion between the moms and our farmers who were present about what they are doing in their fields. After lunch, the children took us to their building and presented us with an agriculture puppet show that they created from what they learned that morning.

**YOUNG LEADER / YOUNG FARMER (continued)**

**Carroll, "Harvest for All" -** It was our second highest total recorded for the Harvest for All hosted by our CFB Young Leaders. After the evaluation of the Harvest for All from last year, the group decided to host this year’s event in January before the farmers ran out of corn. A meeting was set to decide who was driving semis and to split up the call list. Two days before the set date, the guys made their contacts and lined up times with the farmers to pick up either bushels of corn or checks. With cash and corn donations, the committee was able to donate over $26,915 to the four food banks in our county. The food banks on an average serve 400 families in a month. The event was publicized in three area newspapers along with blurbs on the local radio station. We bought a big promotional check and invited all the food pantries along with all our Young Leaders to take part in a large presentation due to the size of the donation this year. To inform the public of our success and to acknowledge those who donated, we took out a full page ad in our countywide publication on the event listing the names of those who donated. All four of the food banks greatly appreciated our donations as this year they are helping more families than they have in the past. The Young Leaders spent 175 hours planning and implementing this program. We also had a local potato farm donated to us 150 pounds of canned potatoes and vegetables to distribute as part of the Harvest for All since they do not produce field corn.

**\*Bureau, "Food Conversations with Consumers Seminar" -** As a follow up to a seminar held earlier in the year, which informed committee members about practices affecting modern agriculture and their food supply, the Young Leader Committee decided to join forces with the local FS company to host a Consumer Conversations Seminar. After a farm shop location, speaker and a date were confirmed the committee invited all other Young Leader committees in the FS territory. A flyer was created and sent out to YL committee members. Everyone was asked to register with their Farm Bureau. Dinner and drinks, provided by FS, began the evening. Following the meal, Laura Rowe, Strategic Agronomy Marketing Manager from GROWMARK, shared her knowledge of the industry and how farmers can share what they know with inquiring consumers. Members left the evening understanding common misconceptions and recognizing questions and how to react to them in a way that the consumer appreciates and in a way that the intended message is delivered.

**Cass-Morgan, "Post-Harvest Celebration" -** The Young Leaders, in an effort to expand their committee by acquiring guests while at the same time meet board members and retaining those members, created this event last year and decided to do it again with adjustments and improvements to make it better. A Young Leader hosted it in her shed one Saturday night. That night, everyone was given color coded name tags to sit at various tables to encourage YL & Board conversation. The YL Chairman started the meeting with a welcome and then everyone introduced themselves. The CFB President spoke about the CFB, encouraged this committee to grow with full support of the board and took questions about the organization. The speaker for the evening was Thomas Titus, a hog producer and Next Faces of Farming and Ranching winner. Thomas was young enough to relate to the youngest of YL's and also blend in the board. He was inspiring and encouraged a lot of young farmers to go do more when talking to the non-aggies of the world. The event was casualand inviting making it a relaxed atmosphere for young people to feel comfortable asking questions without sounding dumb around peers. The board was incredibly encouraged by the program, the turnout and the quality of young people in our organization. The committee gained 6 prospective YL's that evening and has since continued to grow as we prepare for the 2017 celebration with a new topic.

**Kendall, "Farming for the Community" -** We had the opportunity to rent a farm from a local school district.. 14.4 acres. We had the IAA Attorney draw up a legal lease that was agreed upon and signed by both parties. The wonderful thing about this program the school district charged us no rent. Our goal was to get all inputs donated by local seed and fertilizer companies with all the farming supplied by the Young leader Committe members, and we have succeeded with this goal. This total program is being run through our local FB foundation. This school has no ag program and we felt this was a great way to introduce some type of agricultural program to this high school. Our end result was a very positive one, we were able to get public interest thru articles in the local paper and FARMWEEK. Initially we were trying to assist them in securing a summer enrichment program in turf and not enough students signed up. The crop was sold directly out of the field through 2 of our agri -businesses who also donated fertilizer and herbicides. Our total profit for the corn crop was $8942.57.....$3000 was donated to our AITC program, $1500 to the Catholic Charities Mobile food Pantry, $2000 was donated back to the Communities Rockin Xmas event where presents are purchased for the children in the community that will not receive much at Xmas and the remainder $2442,57 was given back to the Science club of the high school to purchase a drone. For the planting year of 2016 we again contacted our suppliers from the previous year to see if they would be able to help support our bean crop this year. We again had great support from our local agri-businesses and an additional one came on board last fall to supply the fall fertilizer. This fall when the bean crop is harvested we will again sell the crop through our local FS company and CHS. Wonderful support from the agricultural community and we are helping the local community fill some of its needs. A large sign is planted at the corner of the field thanking all our agricultural donors, the school district and young leaders who have done the work.

**Randolph, "Flood of '93 Challenged" -** Over 300 people pulled together to help a community along the river to be proactive with the rising flood water. Just after Christmas, anywhere from 7-10 inches of rain poured on the county and state. The predicted crest level of the River was predicted to challenge that of the Flood of '93. The Young Leader Committee gathered volunteers to help sandbag and prepare for the ever rising water. With everyone's help, no one was injured and houses were spared. Over 1,000,000 bushels of grain were hauled out to the FS locations in an effort to save the farmers' grain. Young Leaders and those on the Board of Directors helped to haul grain, and none was lost.

**Effingham, "Drive Out Hunger" -** The Young Farmer Committee (28 people) decided to sponsor a Tractor Drive with the proceeds to benefit area food pantries. The committee named the event "Drive Out Hunger". The YF developed a 20 mile route, planned a

**YOUNG LEADER / YOUNG FARMER (continued)**

meal following the drive, and recruited sponsors. The YF held a contest for the 4-H clubs in the area to create the logo for the event. Unfortunately the tractor drive was rained out, but $1,200 was still raised and donated to local food pantries.

**\*Kane, "CFB complimentary trial membership" -** CFB established a new complimentary trial membership for 2016-17 CFB scholarship recipients. In addition to the scholarship recipients, to recognize the interest, attendance or assistance of non-members at 2 or more Young Farmers activities during the year, the CFB expanded the complimentary trial membership to include these students as well. A letter was mailed to all students who had met pre-requisites for trial membership. The letter explains why they received CFB trial membership. Being a member qualifies you to participate in their College or University's Collegiate Farm Bureau Chapter and/or participate in Young Farmer events they previously qualified for as a dependant of a parent. Information was provided about CFB and our Foundation. The second page of the letter provides clear instruction of the renewal process upon expiration of membership and the dues notice will be mailed in September of 2016. A follow up welcome letter, membership card and benefit brochure was mailed to all the complimentary trial membership recipients. It is easy for Collegiate members to become overwhelmed with the hard work and dedication they are building to ensure a successful future for themselves as well as the future of farm and food. CFB goal is to first give a free trial membership to engage students with Ag related interest to our organization providing opportunity to participate and utilize benefits CFB offers. Second, encourage renewal and retain their membership.

**Champaign, "Operation LEAD" -** Our county Farm Bureau Young Leaders wanted to provide a new opportunity to our local county 4-H members. The Young Leader Committee teamed up with our county 4-H Youth Educator and decided to focus on youth leadership opportunities. Operation LEAD was a day filled with challenges, finding strengths and identifying leading personalities. Youth started the day with a True Colors Training, helping them identify their strengths and personalities. After the participants identified their true color, they broke into groups to discover similarities with their teammates. The groups created posters to present to an audience, incorporating public speaking, so other groups would gain a better understanding on how people with a certain color personality may have a different opinion, or way of conducting different tasks given to them. The day was concluded with a trip to the youth camp where a challenge course is offered to organizations and groups within the area. The youth were given different scenarios and stories to overcome challenges and obstacles as a team. Concluding every challenge, the group facilitator debriefed the group and asked questions to help the participants identify the challenge, the planning process to overcome the challenge, what they could have done differently, identify a leader and asked how they might incorporate what they learned into leading situations at home. Overall, youth gained confidence through leadership, team building and realized their top strengths and personalities.

**LaSalle, "Riverfest" -** For the past several years County Farm Bureau has been participating in the Riverfest. This is a local event that attracts many local people visitors to our county. In the past our display featured only a few show cattle, a corn pit, and volunteers handing out Farm Family brochures. This year our Young Leaders voted to take over the project with the motto of bigger and better than previous years. They brainstormed and decided their primary purpose would be to inform the public with many Agriculture Facts but in a fun and positive manner for both adults and children. We reserved two local blocks at Riverfest. Our final display offered several attractions and interactive activities for young people as well as the adults. We had a tractor and a combine and the “ask a farmer” booth. We also had a homemade mister for people to walk under and cool off. Our volunteers posted did you know Ag Facts around the perimeter of our area and many people read them and then discussed them with us. Some interactive activities were a corn pit, a barn with cattle face cut outs, a mock apple orchard and milking cow. A very popular attraction for both the young and “young at heart” was the barn cut out. Our Young Leader committee purchased a Polaroid camera and took pictures of everyone that put their face in the barn. They were given their photo and were able to take home a great souvenir and a positive experience from County Farm Bureau. Popsicles and water were handed out to help beat the heat. We had a great turnout of over 300 people that visited us. The parent’s gave us positive feedback and voiced their opinion how refreshing it was to have an attraction that was child-friendly. Overall all it was a very successful event and both adults and children left with a positive image of agriculture. We will participate again next year and continue with our motto, bigger and better.

**Sangamon, "Ag-Stravaganza" -** This year our Member & PR and our Young Leader committee's decided to combine three past events into one. We created an event called, Ag-Stravaganza. This event was designed to be a hands-on learning experience for the public to learn about agriculture. We invited over 40 day-cares and summer camps in the county and pursued numerous media outlets to promote our event. With a crowd of 450 people we held our event from 9a.m.-7p.m. The event was at a local church. Our stations included: dairy, beef, sheep, swine, gardening, corn, poultry, honey bees and equipment. Each station provided a lesson and gave event goers the opportunity to interact with the livestock and learn about the commodity. Prairie Farms donated chocolate milk and ice cream to go along with the dairy portion of our event. A local COUNTRY Financial Representative donated water and passed it out to event goers. The Illinois Pork Producers Council & Illinois Beef Association provided food samples for event goers to try. We provided the public with a Passport to Learn at the beginning with farm facts and the stations available to attend. Popcorn was passed out to attendees as they rode a hayrack to some of the stations. A local equipment dealer and farmer donated machinery for the day including: combine, sprayer, planter, semi, etc. so children had the opportunity to climb in and see what a farmer would see when harvesting his corn or planting his crop. We received excellent feedback from day cares and attendees and we plan to have a two day event next year.

**St. Clair, "Leave Tailgating in the Parking Lot" -** We live in a very urban county. Farmers have to share the road with impatient drivers who do not understand the safety challenges posed by our equipment. Our committee was invited to provide a

**YOUNG LEADER / YOUNG FARMER (continued)**

demonstration for teen drivers at a very urban high school during its day-long wellness event. We parked a tractor and large grain cart in the school's parking lot. We then parked a car behind the grain cart. As students came to our demonstration, we helped them to climb up into the tractor cab to experience our vantage point in traffic. Most students were in awe about the size of our equipment and how it was impossible to even see the car behind the grain cart. This created an opportunity to talk with the students about the many challenges and dangers that farm and urban drivers face. We believe that our demonstration helped each of the students better understand the situation when they encounter farm equipment on the road. The effort will be a success if we saved just one teen driver from a serious accident.