**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.

**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.

**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 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.

**\*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 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.

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