**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 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.

**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.

**\*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.

**\*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 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 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.