**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.

**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.

**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.

**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 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.