



WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION NEWS

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American agriculture under President Trump



Nick Levendofsky
Gov. Relations Associate

Just days before one of the most historic elections in America, Dr. Barry Flinchbaugh, agricultural economics professor at Kansas State University, presented "Agriculture and Economic Policy under President X and the New Congress." The presentation was hosted by High Plains Journal and K-State Research & Extension and broadcast live on Facebook. It has since been viewed over 29,000 times.

I am one of Flinchbaugh's former Ag Policy students. He has taught and mentored over 4,000 students during his 40-plus years at K-State and has



Photo by Danielle Endvick

As harvest wraps up around the state, a question on many farmers' minds is what impact the recent election may have on agriculture. Here, corn was harvested Nov. 5 on WFU Communication Director Danielle Endvick's farm in Chippewa County.

worked with countless politicians over the years to develop agricultural policy for America's farmers and ranchers.

Donald Trump's resounding upset victory was fueled in part by strong support in rural America — and the

New York City real estate mogul may not forget it soon. Trump, who doesn't have a record on agriculture policy, has pledged to keep the farm bill together, go big on infrastructure, slash regulations and re-negotiate trade deals.

Flinchbaugh noted from the beginning of his speech, "This is a risky election, and nobody understands risk more than farmers, except maybe their bankers. Risk defines agriculture. On top of weather, we have political risk." Someone asked him recently, "What has changed about politics from 1966 to 2016?" He answered, "During the 1970s, when I worked with politicians on ag policy, leaders put farmers first and party second. Now it's opposite. It's party first and farmers second."

Flinchbaugh noted the election's crucial timing, as "U.S. net cash farm income has dropped significantly." He added that the current farm bill, which was supposed to offer a safety net, hasn't done enough to protect against price volatility. "The next President and Congress will have to handle this

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Be a part of the 'groundswell' rural movement

Groundswell is defined as (1) a broad, deep swell or rolling of the sea due to storm or gale or (2) a surge in support or enthusiasm.

"That surge is precisely what we need to see today across our rural landscape," said Wisconsin Farmers Union Executive Director Tom Quinn. "Our agricultural community is at a pivotal point where the future hangs in balance — it's going to take a groundswell movement from the grassroots to ensure a vibrant future that continues our family farm heritage."

WFU invites you to be a part of that movement. Join us Friday, January 27 at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells for Groundswell: Building the Future of Farmers Union. The event, which will kick off WFU State Convention weekend, will offer a chance to take part in an empowering discussion about what kind of future we want for our farms and small towns.

Set from noon to 4:30pm, the conference will feature interesting speakers, workshops and discussions look-

ing at the challenges and new ideas shaping the future of agriculture.

We are pleased to feature Doug O'Brien as the luncheon keynote. O'Brien recently stepped down from his role as senior policy advisor of rural affairs at the White House to sign on as National Cooperative Business Association's executive vice president for programs. O'Brien will address what role we — both as an organization and as individuals — can play in making a positive change in the future of rural Wisconsin.

The workshop cost is \$35 for members or \$65 for nonmembers (includes a one-year family Farmers Union membership). Cost includes lunch. Several free registrations are being offered to the county and local Farmers Union units throughout the state — check with your county leadership for availability. Sign up today at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com!



O'Brien

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From the Director's Desk

Wisconsin Farmers Union Notes & Updates



Tom Quinn

WFU Executive Director

Happy Holidays from all of us at Wisconsin Farmers Union! Our annual WFU State Convention is just around the corner — I hope you'll consider joining us

Jan. 27-29 at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Check out the Top 10 Reasons to Attend Convention on pages 4-5.

Aside from preparing for convention, the WFU staff and board have been busy traveling the state for Farmers Union's annual meeting season, and we've also been rolling on a number of other projects. Following is an update of WFU happenings.

WI Dairy Producer Survey

Watch for a summary to be released soon from the Wisconsin Dairy Producer Survey. In the past few months, WFU circulated a comprehensive survey to every dairy farmer in the state, asking directly about the impact of low milk prices and a range of other concerns.

Over 1,100 responses have been received and tabulated. We recently used an initial summary of farmer opinions on the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) trade agreement in a press release that was widely printed in media — both in Wisconsin and nationally. The survey showed that dairy farmers were very concerned about TPP, with nearly 80 percent of respondents asking Congress to reject or place a moratorium on TPP until key concerns were addressed. As one farmer put it, "I can't understand why we are importing dairy products at a time when we are dumping millions of pounds of milk in the U.S. because of over production."

WFU will release a summary of the full survey results in early December, and have follow-up press conferences to discuss the full range of results.

The Food, Land & Water Project

Water issues are clearly a top priority for Wisconsin farmers and rural residents, but getting agreement on what to do is a contentious process. WFU is now partnering with the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association and other groups on a year-long discussion of water issues that can help find common ground. The Food, Land and Water Project has organized four separate taskforces (each with a diverse group of 15-20 participants) to look at ground water (quality/quantity), surface water

and working lands. Each group has members with strong opinions on all sides of their issue, and the discussions can be contentious. The project will meet four times during the year, with a final two-day public conference in the fall of 2017. WFU has seven members actively engaged on taskforces.

Groundswell Gathering

The 2017 pre-convention workshop will explore the "big picture" on building the future of WFU and rural Wisconsin. Join us on the Friday afternoon of convention weekend, January 27, in Wisconsin Dells. The times are changing. That's clear from the emotional roller-coaster of our recent election. Rural Wisconsin and family farms are changing. That's clear by just looking at our countryside, farms and small towns. Maybe it's time to step back and ask some thoughtful questions about whether these changes are what we want, what our shared values really are, and what we can realistically do about it together.

We are inviting all WFU members to come to convention a little early on Friday afternoon and join in a lively "big picture" discussion on rural Wisconsin and WFU. We promise thought-provoking presentations. Lunch and a keynote speaker will kick things off at noon, and then workshops and shared wrap-up at 4:30. Our local chapters will each be able to offer free attendance to at least four members. Regular registration fee is \$35 to cover our costs. Check out the convention article in this issue, and watch for more information. Come to convention early and also join in the WFU Foundation Fundraiser on Friday night.

Join WFU Committee Discussions

WFU committees on Water, Dairy and Grain are now meeting or having conference calls on an occasional schedule. We would like to expand participation, and generate new areas of discussion. If you are interested, watch for upcoming information, or contact Tom (tquinn@wisconsinfarmersunion.com) or Kara (koconnor@wisconsinfarmersunion.com).

CHS New Leaders Forum

Each year, CHS Cooperative's annual meeting hosts a forum for younger farmers to provide training on cooperative business practices and updates on current topics in agriculture. WFU will again send a group of young farmers — special thanks to Nial Murray and Carlos Castillo of Prairie Farm, and Max Hart of Black River Falls for representing WFU this year.

From p.1 ► TRUMP

as issue number one, but there are many other significant agricultural issues," he said. Trade, immigration, bio-technology and GMOs, climate change, water policy, concentration, crop insurance, and a weak economy will all have to be addressed by President-elect Trump and Congress.

Trump doesn't have a formal agricultural policy platform, but he does have a committee of more than 70 agricultural advisers that includes many top Republican farming officials and business owners. His top policy adviser, Sam Clovis, hails from Iowa and is well-versed on agricultural issues. And the President-elect spent time stumping in rural parts of the country. Trump claims to be a big supporter of ethanol, tax cuts for agriculture, deregulation, elimination of the estate tax, repealing WoTUS, ending the "War on Family Farms," withdrawing from the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), and renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Immigration - Flinchbaugh said, "Half the cows in the U.S. are milked by undocumented immigrants. Seventy-five percent of the fruits and vegetables grown in the U.S. are picked by undocumented immigrants. Comprehensive immigration reform must happen for agriculture. Contrary to what is said, more people are leaving the U.S. for Mexico. The agriculture labor force has declined, and the wage rate went up 7.9 percent in October. Who was the last President to get a comprehensive immigration bill through Congress? Ronald Reagan, 30-plus years ago. It's long overdue, and needs to be done." Trump, who laid out his immigration plan in a speech in August, wants to make Mexico pay for a wall along the Mexican border and vowed to get rid of anyone who is in the U.S. illegally. In a recent 60 Minutes interview, he backed off on deporting 11 million undocumented immigrants, and is now calling for deportation of 2-3 million immigrants with criminal backgrounds.

Trade - "Twenty-five percent of what we produce, at a minimum, must be exported ... We either export one quarter of what we produce, or we shut down one quarter of agriculture. It's that simple. Agriculture is trade-depend-

ent." Trump not only opposes TPP, but said he would look to renegotiate existing multilateral trade deals, like NAFTA, and potentially withdraw from the World Trade Organization (WTO). "What we are opposed to is countries that have a competitive advantage coming out of the shoot," Clovis said of Trump's trade stance during a Farm Foundation Forum in October. The WTO and other international trade groups must enforce their own rules, or the U.S. should look to get out of those agreements, Clovis said.

Infrastructure - Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton had a plan to spend \$275 billion over five years. Her plan included \$250 billion of direct public investment in priorities like roads, bridges, airports, and clean energy. A further \$25 billion would fund a national infrastructure bank. President-elect Donald Trump, has said he wants to double the amount of infrastructure spending proposed by his Democratic opponent.

The benefits from investing in infrastructure would be numerous. First, it could give the economy a much needed and almost immediate boost during a time of stubbornly low growth. According to one paper, "In the short-run, a dollar spent on infrastructure construction produces roughly double the initial spending in ultimate economic output." Infrastructure investment could also boost long-term growth. Over 20 years, the authors of that paper note, every \$1 spent on infrastructure generates \$3.20 of economic activity.

Climate Change - Trump once said climate change is a "hoax perpetrated by the Chinese," but Flinchbaugh remarked, "Farmers all agree, we want to make the GMO decision based on science, not politics. When it comes to climate change, though, we want to play politics. I have been to Alaska and watched the glaciers melt. Unless you're Rip Van Winkle and sleeping, you know something is going on. I don't know what it is, or what causes it, but Earth has increased 1 degree in 50 years. If it goes up 1 degree in 50 more years, San Francisco will be under water. The corn planting date has changed by an average of nine days. This issue is going to be addressed ... So why are we fighting this? We are part of the solution, not part of the problem."

Farm Bill - The Trump-Pence administration plans to play an active role in crafting the 2018 Farm Bill, the campaign said in a Farm Bureau survey. And based on their relatively mainstream 70-member agriculture advisory council, they're likely to stick to their support of safety net programs like crop insurance. One of Trump's top advisors says he's not interested in splitting the farm bill in two, as many Republicans have advocated.

"We've often talked about that, that the nutrition title needs to be part of the farm bill," Sam Clovis, co-chair of the Trump campaign, said this fall at the Farm Foundation agricultural forum in Washington. Clovis also said the food stamp program doesn't need cuts, and instead should rely on the improving economy to reduce the program cost.

Trump hasn't made plain his thoughts on crop-support payments, but Clovis, his top policy adviser, told the Farm Foundation Forum that the payment system is probably "going to have to be addressed down the road. We are going to have to start taking a look at weaning ourselves" from crop support payments, and "allow the markets to settle some of these factors."

Environmental Protection Agency - Trump wants a farmer to head EPA. The GOP nominee has said he would get rid of the agency, but while it's still around, he would have it be led by someone familiar with agriculture. Trump also said he would scrap the controversial Waters of the United States rule and EPA rules on energy production, but he's backed the Renewable Fuel Standard. "We are going to end this war on the American farmer," Trump said at Iowa Sen. Joni Ernst's annual Roast and Ride fundraiser, in Des Moines in August. The speech was his first and only substantial foray into agriculture on the campaign trail. While campaigning, Trump didn't talk a whole lot about farm policy, but he did far more rural stops and brought up hot button issues like Waters of the U.S. and ethanol more often than Clinton. "Family farms are the backbone of this country," Trump said at the time, veering often from the prepared speech he provided in advance to the press. "We are going to end the EPA intrusion into your family homes and into your family farms for no reason. What they

are doing to you is a disgrace. We are going to get rid of a lot of those regulations that don't mean anything except cost you a lot of money and a lot of time and, in many cases, you lose your farms over the regulations."

This all may have seemed like lofty rhetoric in August, but President-elect Trump is now looking at a Republican House and Senate, which makes slashing regulations very much possible.

Trump also pledged to lower the tax rate on family farms to 15 percent and stop the so-called "death tax."

Secretary of Agriculture - There are several current and former farm state governors on the transition's working short list for agriculture secretary, according to Arabella Advisors, a firm that advises top foundations and is closely tracking transition efforts. Kansas Gov. Sam Brownback and Iowa Gov. Terry Branstad both are among the 70 top officials to serve on Trump's agricultural advisory committee. Other names include Nebraska Gov. Dave Heineman, former Georgia Gov. Sonny Perdue, former Texas Gov. Rick Perry, as well as Charles Herbster, a Republican donor and agribusiness leader, and Mike McCloskey, a major dairy executive in Indiana.

Bruce Rastetter, a major Republican donor in Iowa, and Kip Tom, a farmer who ran for Congress in Indiana this year but was defeated in the primary, are also among those being considered. Other top Republican insiders suggest Chuck Connor, president and CEO of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives; Don Villwock, former Indiana Farm Bureau president; and Ted McKinney, current director of the Indiana Department of Agriculture in the Pence Administration, are also likely in the running.

Only time will tell what agriculture policy under President Trump will look like, but Flinchbaugh noted, "Trump is not an ideologue. He will compromise, and will attempt to work with Congress to end the gridlock." He went on to say, "It's very easy to be an ideologue. Just drink the Kool-Aid and do what the doctor tells you. Being a moderate, middle-of-the-road compromiser, now that's work, really hard work. Compromise is not a dirty word."


**Wisconsin
Farmers
Union**
86th Annual State Convention
 JANUARY 27-29, 2017
 CHULA VISTA RESORT, WISCONSIN DELLS

CULTIVATING RURAL VALUES



TOP 10 REASONS TO ATTEND CONVENTION!

1 The Wisconsin Farmers Union State Convention, set for Jan. 27-29, is a gathering of farmers from all backgrounds and walks of agriculture — dairy, beef, crops, CSA, and more! Veteran farmers, beginning farmers, you name it! Attend and **network with other farmers from across the state!**



2 We're pleased to welcome **National Farmers Union President Roger Johnson** to convention this year. Be sure to catch his keynote celebrating shared Farmers Union values during the banquet on Saturday evening! He'll also offer his take on the next Farm Bill during one of Saturday's workshops.

3 Did we mention convention 2017 is in Wisconsin Dells, aka the **Waterpark Capital of the World?** Chula Vista Resort offers plenty of fun with its Lost Rios indoor water park. Convention is family-friendly, with a coinciding Youth Co-op Convention (generously sponsored by CHS) and child care available for the younger children. Bring the whole family for the weekend!



4 Choose from **8 workshops** offered on Saturday with an array of topics including:

- *Turning the Tide of Corporate Consolidation*
- *The Farmer's Role in Protecting Groundwater*
- *Searching for Sustainability: New Documentary*
- *Cover Crops & Conservation Programs*
- *Looking Ahead to the Next Farm Bill*
- *Supply Management in Dairy: Success Stories*
- *Adding Livestock to Your Farm*
- *Grow Your Chapter: Effective Outreach*



5 Join in lively discussion about the future of rural Wisconsin during the Jan. 27 pre-convention event, **Groundswell: Building the Future of Farmers Union.** Details on page 1!



6 Wondering where Wisconsin's dairy industry is headed? **Bruce Muirhead, a professor at the University of Waterloo in Ontario, will share his stance on supply management.** Don't miss out on this rare opportunity to hear a different perspective on Canada's dairy system!



7 Each year, we kick off convention on Friday night with the **WFU Foundation Fundraiser.** Proceeds raised benefit the facilities fund for WFU Kamp Kenwood, home of the Farmers Union Camp Program. Join us for a fun-filled evening celebrating the camp, featuring networking, a buffet dinner, live auction and raffles.



9 Hear from **Doug O'Brien**, who is fresh out of the White House, where he served as Senior Policy Advisor for Rural Affairs with the Domestic Policy Council. As keynote for Friday's Groundswell event, O'Brien will share his outlook for rural America — and what we can do to shape a vibrant future for our communities. O'Brien recently was named executive vice president for programs for the National Cooperative Business Association. He will also speak at the Youth Co-op Convention.



8 This year's convention theme is Cultivating Rural Values, and we're excited to share with you a **special panel** of farmer members who will explore the values of the diverse Farmers Union membership. Talented WFU member and filmographer Louie Fisher has been out to the panelists' farms working on a special project to complement the panel! Don't miss it on Saturday afternoon!

Register today at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com!



Please note the following before mailing the registration form:
Registration and payment must be mailed by Thursday, Jan. 12, 2017 to receive the early bird rate.

Convention Agenda is available at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com.
All delegates and voting individuals are required to purchase the convention registration and meals, which include Saturday and Sunday meals. Delegates who are also youth/youth leaders must purchase a delegate registration and meal package. Individual meal tickets are available.

Indicate names with your package and/or individual meal orders so we can prepare tickets in advance for ease during registration. Registration table opens at 4:30pm on Friday, Jan. 27 and will continue on Saturday, Jan. 28 at 7:30am. Convention officially opens at 9am Saturday.

LODGING

Chula Vista Resort
2501 River Rd.
Wisconsin Dells, WI

To reserve call 855-923-8144 and refer to **ID#E18801**. A room block is reserved through Mon., Dec. 26.

All individual reservations require a one-night deposit plus taxes at the time the reservation is made. Also reservation cancellations 72 hours or more in advance will receive a refund less a \$25 processing fee. Any cancellation inside the 72 hour cancellation period will forfeit the full deposit amount. There is also an early check out fee of one night's room and tax for departing before arranged departure date.

YOUTH OPTIONS

WFU holds concurrent youth activities during select times of Convention weekend for three age groups: Youth Co-op Convention (middle & high school), Co-op Youth Zone (elementary) and child care (infant-K). **A \$35 per youth registration fee covers meals and programming/child care for all youth.** For more details about youth activities and child care, contact WFU Education Director Cathy Statz at 715-723-5561, cstatz@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Cancellation Policy: Any cancellations must be reported to the WFU State Office by Friday, Jan. 16 in order to receive a refund. Please call Diane at 800-272-5531 with cancellations or questions.



86th Annual State Convention
JANUARY 27-29, 2017
CHULA VISTA RESORT, WISCONSIN DELLS

ATTENDEE REGISTRATION FORM

Please PRINT CLEARLY all information as you would like it to appear on your name badge. List additional attendees below and youth on reverse side of form.

Event information: 800-272-5531
www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Name(s) _____ & _____
Address _____ City/State/Zip _____
County/Local _____ Phone _____
Email _____ Cell _____
CIRCLE: Vegetarian Gluten-Free Other: _____
Affiliation/Organization (guests/sponsors/exhibitors) _____
Payment contact, other than attendee (where applicable) _____

REGISTRATION & MEAL PACKAGE PLEASE NOTE THAT PACKAGE RATES INCLUDE ALL MEALS: Saturday lunch and banquet, Sunday breakfast and lunch. Use Separate Meal Tickets area below for non-delegate guests who need an individual meal only.					
Type of Registrant	Early Bird Price before 1/12/17	Price after 1/12/17	# of Packages	Total	
DELEGATE Member	\$65	\$85		\$	
ADULT Member	\$65	\$85		\$	
NON-Member	\$85	\$105		\$	
YOUTH or YOUTH LEADER (Member) (Please fill out youth info on reverse)	\$35	\$55		\$	
Annual Membership (I wish to join WFU)	\$30	\$30		\$	
PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOP					
		Nonmember	Member	Total	
Groundswell Workshop Registration (Workshop is noon to 4:30pm on Friday, includes lunch)		\$65 x # _____ (includes membership)	\$35 x # _____	\$	
SEPARATE MEAL TICKETS Tickets available for non-delegate individuals who want to join us for meals only — includes programs.					
Meal (List attendee name after each meal)	Early Bird on or before 1/12/17	Price after 1/12/17	NON-MEMBER Rate ONLY	# of Tickets	Total
Saturday Lunch	\$20	\$24	\$30		\$
Saturday Banquet	\$35	\$38	\$45		\$
Sunday Breakfast	\$20	\$23	\$28		\$
Sunday Lunch	\$20	\$23	\$27		\$
REGISTRATION TOTAL					\$

YOUTH CO-OP CONVENTION ATTENDEES					
Youth Activity	First and Last Name	Age	Grade	Dietary	
<input type="checkbox"/> Co-op Convention (Gr 7-12) <input type="checkbox"/> Co-op Youth Zone (Gr 1-6) <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare (Infant-K)				<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian <input type="checkbox"/> Vegan <input type="checkbox"/> Gluten-free <input type="checkbox"/> Allergies (we'll contact you)	
<input type="checkbox"/> Co-op Convention (Gr 7-12) <input type="checkbox"/> Co-op Youth Zone (Gr 1-6) <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare (Infant-K)				<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian <input type="checkbox"/> Vegan <input type="checkbox"/> Gluten-free <input type="checkbox"/> Allergies (we'll contact you)	

Please use this space to list additional attendees, if needed:

MAIL REGISTRATION FORM WITH CHECK PAYABLE TO:
WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION, 117 W. Spring St., Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

Is consolidation inevitable?



Kara O'Connor
Gov. Relations Director

Winter is approaching, and that means that it is annual meeting time for those of us in the agricultural sector. This year, as in every year, commentators will talk with cool certainty about the “inevitability” of consolidation of farms and of agribusiness corporations. These proclamations raise an obvious question, which so few people seem to ask: is a different future possible? This column is a call for all of us to think critically in this upcoming season about whether consolidation is as inevitable as it seems.

There is no disputing that consolidation is the trend that currently is. We lost 400 dairy farms in Wisconsin in 2015. Nationwide, farm numbers have decreased steadily since the 1950’s. In the agribusiness sector, the top six agricultural input companies own 63 percent of the global seed market, 75 percent of the agricultural chemical market, and 95 percent of the trait acres for corn, soybeans, and cotton in the United States. Meanwhile, the top four meat processing companies slaughter 85 percent of the cattle, 74 percent of the hogs, and 54 percent of the chicken in the U.S.

The present is not so different from what our great-grandparents would have seen at the turn of the 20th century. Railroads controlled the shipment of grain, and farmers were at the mercy of the rail monopoly. Then, as today, a small number of meat packers had both farmers and their employees over a barrel, as Upton Sinclair’s “The Jungle” so compellingly depicts. Our great-grandparents could have easily thrown up their hands and declared industry consolidation and loss of family farms “inevitable.”

But they didn’t throw up their

hands. Instead, farmers in the 1920’s and 30’s mounted an all-out campaign for economic democracy. From those efforts came a slate of legislation aimed at busting the trusts and curbing abusive market practices: the Sherman Antitrust Act; the Capper-Volstead Act, which serves as the foundation for all agricultural cooperatives; the Agricultural Adjustment Act of 1933 (the first “Farm Bill”); and the Glass Steagall Act that regulated the banking sector. In addition, farmers of that era pushed for the Rural Electrification Act in 1936, bringing electricity to farmhouses and barns all over the countryside.

Farmers in that era weren’t

tive movement. The most dramatic examples of farmer self-help were instances of farmers pooling their resources to discharge the debt of their neighbors who were at risk of losing their farms.

It is not an exaggeration to say that the family farm as it exists today would have been gone long ago if not for these landmark pieces of legislation and the cooperative self-help and mutual assistance that farmers provided to one another. That bears repeating: today’s farms — your farm — would probably not exist today if not for those actions by past generations of farmers. We would have had food production, to be sure, be-

“Today’s farms — your farm — would probably not exist today if not for those actions by past generations of farmers ... that generation did not work, and even die ... for us now to roll over and accept the ‘inevitable.’”

— Kara O'Connor
WFU Government Relations Director

looking to the government for taxpayer-funded subsidies. Instead what they wanted from Congress was basic market fairness. They also advocated for expansion of basic infrastructure like electrification. And finally, farmers asked for government programs to rein in overproduction. We might do well to remember these themes as we look toward our modern-day policy discussions.

In addition to seeking help from the government, it’s important to remember that farmers of that era also worked together to help themselves. The most successful farmer self-help efforts were farmers pooling their resources to form cooperatives — both marketing cooperatives to sell agricultural products, and supply cooperatives to buy farm inputs. Wisconsin Farmers Union, organized during this time, has its roots in this coopera-

cause at the end of the day (and hopefully in the middle of the day too) we all need to eat. But that food production would have been carried out by handful of consolidated and vertically integrated food production conglomerates, rather than by the tens of thousands of family farms that have also stewarded our landscapes and built our rural communities over the past 100 years.

To those of you who are farmers: I think that your farm matters. I think that the upbringing that you have given to your children and grandchildren matters. I think your ownership of land and property matters. I think it would have been a loss to society had your farm not existed. Our society is different — and better — because throughout our nation’s history we have widespread ownership of land and property, rather than having own-

ership of land and property consolidated in the hands of just a few.

Today we face market conditions that are not so different than the ones our great-grandparents faced. That generation did not work, and even die, as dairy farmer Gunder Felland did while peacefully participating in the Milk Strikes of 1933, for us now to roll over and accept the “inevitable.” Consolidation is not inevitable. It is the product of an unmanaged market, unenforced antitrust laws, inattentive oversight of our cooperatives, and the decline of mutual self-help in our farming communities.

Instead of spending our annual meetings declaring consolidation “inevitable,” let’s spend some time and energy thinking about how we rebuild truly competitive markets that offer fair prices and real choice for farmers and consumers. How can we bring our nation’s antitrust framework up to speed for the 21st century? How do we ensure that our cooperatives are holding true to their intended mission of standing up for the interests of farmers in the marketplace? And how do we support our neighbors and fellow dairy farmers, rather than circling like vultures waiting for the neighbors to sell out so we can buy up their land?

The Wisconsin Farmers Union’s convention will dig into these topics. The January 2017 gathering will feature a breakout session with UW law professor emeritus and agriculture antitrust expert Peter Carstensen, who will help us understand why current policy is failing to ensure competitive markets, and what we can do to turn the tide of consolidation.

We hope that all farmers will consider joining us for these discussions, and we hope that all farm organizations will join us in working toward a future in which our members’ farms will continue to exist.

The fact that we still have enough farms to have organizations is a credit to our forbears. Whether those farms continue to exist in the future is up to us.

Beginning farmers virtual conference coming up

More than 600 people have signed up for "Growing for the Future," a free virtual conference for beginning farmers and ranchers being hosted by National Farmers Union from 4-7pm Central Dec. 5-8. Join in the fun by taking part at home or attending one of the several potluck watch parties Wisconsin Farmers Union is hosting around the state!

Central Rivers Farmshed, 1220 Briggs Court, Stevens Point. Info: Tommy Enright, tenright@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 715-513-0460.

Northeastern Wisconsin Technical College Horticulture Building, Green Bay. Info: Val Dantoin Adamski, valerie.dantoin@nwtc.edu or 920-498-5568.

Fond du Lac Public Library, Midstates Room, 32 Sheboygan St. Fond du Lac. (Monday night only) Info: Joe and Nicole Schauer, 920-583-2121.

WFU Kamp Kenwood cabin, 19161 79th Ave., Chippewa Falls. (Monday night only) Info: Danielle Endvick, 715-471-0398 or dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

The event will feature farmer-to-farmer webinars, live Q & A, a discussion board and giveaways!



Registration is free, so sign up now and invite your friends! Interested in hosting a watch party? Contact Deb Jakubek at 715-590-2130.

Tentative topics and presenters:

December 5th

- Tom Driscoll – Grant Writing 101
- Paul Goeringer – Managing On-Farm Legal Risk
- Harrison Topp – Less Than or Equal To: Turning Mentor Relationships into Healthy Business Partnerships (LIVE 4pm CT)
- Eric Sannerud TEDx Talk – To Save Farming We Have To Save Farmers (Live 6pm CT Q&A)

December 6th

- Barbara Patterson – Farm Bill Breakdown
- Sarah Campbell & Allison Bridges – NAP: How it Benefits Beginning Farmers
- Michael Kovach – Sticking With It: Surviving the 'Seven Year Itch'
- Brian Massey (Interview) – Urban Farming as a Beginning Farmer

December 7th

- Bridget Holcomb – Managing Your Farm/Businesses/Nonprofit: It All Comes Down to Communication
- Michael O'Gorman – Beginning Farmer Needs for Veterans
- FarmHer – (Live Q&A, 6pm CT)
- Lisa Kivirist – How She Does It: Women Farmers Generating Income through Diversification

December 8th

- Bill Stevenson – Co-Ops 101
 - Ben Dye – MachineryLink Sharing
 - JoAnn Baumgartner – Biodiversity on the Farm
 - Tom Giessel – Farmers Union Progressive
- Learn more about the event and Farmers Union's efforts to support beginning farmers at <https://nfu.org/growing-for-the-future/>.



WFAN Conference coming to Wisconsin in 2017

Above: WFU members Lisa Kivirist (left) and Erin Schneider (right) connected with over 150 women farmers Nov. 4-5 at the Women, Food and Agriculture Network (WFAN) Conference at Lied Lodge in Nebraska, including the founder of WFAN, Iowa farmer Denise O'Brien. The WFAN Conference is an annual gathering of women farmers who are championing conservation, sustainable growing practices and building the collaborative community of women farmers. Erin co-presented with Clare Hintz on "Beyond Startup: Growing Your Perennial Farm," sharing reflections from the start-up of her farm, Hilltop Community Farm in LaValle. Lisa represented the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service and the Rural Women's Project, sharing organic resources and presenting on farm diversification. Mark your calendars and stay tuned for details when the WFAN Conference comes to Madison next year: Nov 2-4, 2017.



Eliminates litter box odors so well, you'll think you lost your cat!

Naturally effective.

S Wheat Scoop litter's natural wheat enzymes work to eliminate rather than mask litter box odors, no matter how many cats you own. Plus, natural wheat starches form solid clumps fast to make cleanups easy.

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Make a natural change for the better.



Chapter Chatter *Share it here!*

Submit chatter to Danielle at 715-471-0398 or dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com



Sing on

Left: Columbia County Farmers Union members joined together in song, led by Anita Nelson, during a Nov. 10 meeting. Traditional songs like Farmers Union Button were often sang at meetings in the early days of Farmers Union and are still enjoyed each summer by youth at Farmers Union Camps at Kamp Kenwood.

Emerging Leaders Retreat set

TOMAH — Plans are underway for the annual Farmers Union Emerging Leaders Retreat, Feb. 10-12 at Cranberry Country Lodge in Tomah.

Are you new to Farmers Union? Or interested in stepping up your leadership skills? Then join us for this family-friendly retreat and learn how you can be active in Farmers Union.

Youth activities and daycare for younger children will be available. Bring the whole family and network with other farm families from across the state!

Featured topics throughout the weekend will include Farmers Union history, making conservation programs work for you, effectively marketing your farm and sharing your story. We'll also have lively lightning rounds on topics chosen by the attendees.

There will also be time for visiting and enjoying the waterpark. There is a small fee to attend and space is limited. For more details please contact WFU Membership Coordinator Deb Jakubek, 715-590-2130 or djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Women's Conference moves to March

The NFU Women's Conference will be held March 3-5 in San Diego, California, immediately preceding the NFU 115th Anniversary Convention.

The conference brings together women farmers and ranchers from across the country to network, refine their leadership and farm management skills, and learn from agricultural experts and leaders.

The event will feature an inspiring and diverse group of speakers that will touch on leadership development, finances, generational transitions and more. Learn more at www.nfu.org.

Convention sponsors & exhibitors sought

Sponsor and exhibitor registration is open for the 86th WFU State Convention Jan. 27-29 at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Cooperatives, farm organizations, and agribusinesses are encouraged to take part in the trade show, which runs throughout the weekend, or consider investing in an ad in the convention program. Registration is available at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com. For sponsorship details, contact Tommy Enright, 715-563-2169 or tenright@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Some local food items are still needed. Farms or businesses interested in selling or donating local food for the weekend's menu or snacks for break times are asked to contact Heather Flashinski at 715-289-4896 or grassheather@hotmail.com.

Convention fundraiser donations sought

Wisconsin Farmers Union invites you to join us for the WFU Foundation Fundraiser from 6-9pm on Fri., Jan. 27, kicking off convention weekend at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells! Enjoy a buffet dinner, raffle, live auction and networking with Farmers Union friends! The evening supports the WFU Kamp Kenwood facilities fund.

Individuals and WFU chapters are encouraged to donate an item or basket! Donations can be dropped off at the WFU Office (117 W. Spring St., Chippewa Falls or 108 S. Webster St., Suite 201, Madison) or brought to the County President's Meeting Jan. 9 in Tomah. Donations are preferred prior to convention. (Late additions still welcomed at registration table.) Contact Amanda at 715-723-5561 or akollwitz@wisconsinfarmersunion.com for more details.

FARMERS UNION HAPPENINGS

• **Resolutions and bylaw changes due to WFU, Dec. 1**

• **Dodge/Fond du Lac/Sheyboygan/Ozaukee Farmers Union Annual Meeting, Dec. 2, noon, Sunset on the Water, N7364 Winnebago Dr., Fond du Lac. Info: Joel Narges, 920-477-4207.**

• **Sauk County Farmers Union Annual Meeting, Dec. 3, noon, Farm Kitchen, S5718 State Rd 123, Baraboo. Info: Erin Schneider, 608-257-6729.**

• **Vernon County Farmers Union Annual Meeting, Dec. 3, noon, Gasser's Bar & Grill, 920 N. Main St., Viroqua. Info: Brian Austin, 608-632-1579.**

• **Marathon County Farmers Union Annual Meeting, Dec. 3, 1pm, Marathon Public Library, 300 1st St., Wausau. Info: Tony Schultz, 715-432-6287.**

• **Growing for the Future beginning farmers virtual conference, Dec. 5-8, 4-7pm, details on page 8**

• **South Central Meeting & Cookie Swap, Dec. 8, 6pm, Orange Kitten Yarns (back room), 1620 11th St., Monroe. RSVP: Lisa Kivirist, 608-329-7056 or lisakivirist@gmail.com.**

• **Dane County Annual Meeting, Dec. 11, noon, Dan & Lori Kvalheim's house. Info: Krist Kvalheim, 608-658-9106.**

• **Adams-Waushara County Annual Meeting, Dec. 11, 1pm, Adams Town Hall, 1980 11th Ave, Friendship. Info: Gary Barnes, 608-339-7688.**

• **Chaseburg Local Farmers Union Annual Meeting, Dec. 12, 8pm, Hide-away Bar & Grill, 107 W. Mill St., Chaseburg. Info: Jim Servais, 608-483-2800.**

• **86th Wisconsin Farmers Union State Convention, Jan. 27-29, Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells, www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com.**

• **Farmers Union Emerging Leaders Retreat, Feb 10-12, Cranberry Country Lodge, Tomah. Info: Deb Jakubek, 715-590-2130.**

• **WFU Farm & Rural Lobby Day, Feb. 21, Madison. Info: 715-723-5561.**

• **National Farmers Union 115th Anniversary Convention & Women's Conference, March 4-8, San Diego, California, www.nfu.org**

• **The Big Share day of giving, March 7, watch for more details!**

Calendar events can be submitted to Danielle Endvick at 715-471-0398 or dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Beginning Farmers Institute travels to California

SALINAS, Calif. — The National Farmers Union (NFU) Beginning Farmers Institute (BFI) reconvened in Salinas, California, on Friday, November 4, for the second of three annual programming sessions. Seventeen beginning farmers and ranchers from across the country attended the two-day, hands-on learning session hosted in partnership with the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA), the Farmer Veteran Coalition, and California FarmLink.

“It’s no easy feat to get started in the business of farming and ranching. Through BFI, beginning farmers and ranchers connect with a variety of experienced producers and industry experts, who share best practices for being successful in agriculture,” said NFU President Roger Johnson. “NFU is proud to offer collaborative educational opportunities, like BFI, that help empower the next generation of family farmers.”

The BFI programming offers hands-on technical training that emphasizes many of the challenges beginning farmers face in their careers, increasing their likelihood to be successful in their operations. The central California session featured presentations on land and capital access, grant writing, marketing, and best production practices from several local farmers and Michael O’Gorman, executive director of the Farmer Veteran Coalition.

Participants also had the opportunity to tour ALBA, Hain Ranch Organics, Pinnacle Organics Ranch, Coke Farm and JSM Organics.

The beginning farmers participating in the 2016-17 BFI program are:



Above: The National Farmers Union Beginning Farmers Institute met in California in early November, where they took part in farm tours, received technical training and enjoyed networking with other farmers from across the United States.

- Betty J. Anderson, Wisconsin
- Jaime Baker, Wisconsin
- Brittany Ann Bula, Wisconsin
- Layne E. Cozzolino, Wisconsin
- Jimmy Dula, Colorado
- Tommy Enright, Wisconsin
- Caitlin Hladky, Colorado
- Justin Loch, Montana
- Katie Jantzen, Nebraska
- Christy Ottinger, Maryland
- De’Quinton Robertson, Iowa
- Eric Robert Sannerud, Minnesota

- Amanda Schaub, Montana
- Ariana Taylor-Stanley, Washington
- Josh Stolzenburg, Wisconsin
- Zach Teske, Kansas
- Daniel Waldvogel, Colorado

The BFI program is made possible through the generous support of CHS Foundation, Farm Credit, Farmers Union Industries Foundation, and the National Farmers Union Foundation. The final program session will be held in San Diego, California, in March 2017.

Learn more about BFI at www.nfu.org.

WFU applauds ruling striking down gerrymandered districts

In a decision on Nov. 21 that constitutes an enormous victory for democracy, a panel of federal judges struck down Wisconsin’s legislative map as unconstitutional. The Court declared that Wisconsin’s gerrymandered legislative districts unfairly diluted the votes of over half of the state’s citizens, in violation of both the First Amendment and the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th Amendment. The state will now decide whether to appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

Wisconsin Farmers Union (WFU) President Darin Von Ruden applauded the court’s ruling, noting “This Federal Court decision moves us a step closer to fair and competitive legislative districts, and a more responsive democracy.”

A number of states, such as Iowa and Arizona, use a nonpartisan commission to draw legislative districts that are compact, contiguous, and respect county and municipal boundaries. In Wisconsin, by contrast, the party in power draws the legislative districts after each 10-year census. Both Democrats and Republicans have used this process to draw the districts to their own political advantage. The result is districts that favor incumbents and lean heavily toward one party, rather than being conducive to competitive races and moderate candidates.

“Most Wisconsinites want members of the Legislature to work across party lines and achieve consensus. Unfortunately, the way that our legislative districts are drawn sets us up for extreme

partisanship,” Von Ruden said. “There is something wrong with democracy when legislators are choosing their voters and not the other way around.”

Previous challenges to partisan legislative redistricting maps have been unsuccessful because courts were unsure of how to quantify the level of unfairness in legislative maps. The current Wisconsin case is groundbreaking because for the first time, plaintiffs challenging the maps have proposed a way to measure the number of wasted votes, dubbed the “efficiency gap,” in a legislative map. The more lopsided a district is, the greater the efficiency gap. Plaintiffs argued that an overall efficiency gap of 7 percent or more results in uncompetitive legislative structure.

Wisconsin’s electoral maps logged an efficiency gap of 11 to 13 percent in the 2012 elections, making Wisconsin’s maps the most inefficient in the nation.

In the November election 38 of the 99 state Assembly races featured candidates running without any opposition at all in the general election. On the state Senate side, most of the races were blowouts – only three of them were decided by less than 10 percentage points.

“If we don’t change our current system of drawing legislative maps, many of Wisconsin’s voters will continue to be left without a meaningful choice to make at the polls,” Von Ruden said. “This lack of competition and choice across the state disenfranchises voters and is bad for democracy.”

BITS & PIECES

WFU membership to elect directors at convention

Along with setting the important policy that will guide our organization through the coming year, delegates at the WFU State Convention Jan. 27-29 at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells will carry out the important task of electing or reelecting directors to fill seats on the WFU board. The election will be on Sunday, January 29.

Up for reelection this year are District 1 Director Janet Nelson of Prairie Farm (Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglas, Iron, Lincoln, Oneida, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, Vilas and Washburn counties), District 4 Director Craig Myhre of Osseo (Buffalo, Jackson, La Crosse, Monroe, and Trempealeau counties) and At-Large Director Mark Liebaert of South Range.

In an effort to increase transparency in the election process and encourage competitive races, WFU will publish brief biographies of any board incumbents or new candidates in the January 2017 edition of *Wisconsin Farmers Union News*. Those interested in running for a board position are encouraged to email a brief biography (200 words or less) to WFU Communications Director Danielle Endvick at dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com no later than December 15.

A delegate will also be elected to represent WFU at the National Farmers Union Convention March 5-8 in San Diego, California. See the convention registration form included in this newsletter or register today at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com!

WFU seeks Farm & Rural Lobby Day intern

WFU is looking for a committed and reliable college student in Madison who can help with preparations for our Farm and Rural Lobby Day at the Capitol in Madison on February 21.

Key tasks will include entering registrations into our Excel database, making appointments with legislators, helping design written materials, and working with the caterer to set up a lunch order.

The time commitment will be 5-10 hours per week between December and February. The position offers modest compensation and a wealth of experience!

Please contact Government Relations Associate Nick Levendofsky at 608-234-3741 or nickl@wisconsinfarmersunion.com for more information or to apply.

Conservation Stewardship Program enrollment open

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is currently accepting applications for enrollment in the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), the nation's largest conservation program. Applications are available at local service centers.

"This year, the Conservation Stewardship Program provides even more opportunities for conservation and greater flexibility at the local level to prioritize resource concerns and conservation approaches," says Jim Bramblett, State Conservationist in Wisconsin. "Customized CSP tools for Wisconsin will improve the customer experience during application evaluations."

NRCS has made several updates to the program this year to help producers better evaluate their conservation options and the benefits to their operations and natural resources. New methods and software for evaluating applications will help producers see up front why they are or are not meeting stewardship thresholds, and allow them to pick practices and enhancements that work for their conservation objectives. These new tools also allow producers to see potential payment scenarios for conservation early in the process. Learn more at www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov.

Wisconsin Farmers Union **KAMP KENWOOD** CHIPPEWA FALLS, WI **CABIN ON WISSOTA**



The cozy Cabin on Lake Wissota at WFU Kamp Kenwood is available to rent from mid-October through April. A perfect getaway for the outdoor enthusiast, the cabin offers convenient access to hiking and cross-country trails in Lake Wissota State Park.



**Family Gatherings • Business Retreats
Birthday & Holiday Parties • Winter Fun**

WFU Kamp Kenwood

19161 79th Avenue • Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

www.kampkenwood.com

www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com

To reserve, contact Brad Henderson at 715-214-7244.

Is our farmland in jeopardy?



W. Michael Slattery
WFU Member, Maribel

Can a private corporation assume the rights of using unrelat-

ed farmland owned by people like yourselves and in opposition by the farmer owners? Legally, yes. An exemplary case is that raised in a lawsuit being filed by 17 Iowa farmers against the Dakota Access LLC, a subsidiary of Energy Transfer Crude Oil Company, that seeks to construct and manage a 1,134-mile crude oil pipeline from the Bakken Field in North Dakota to Patoka, IL.

The pipeline transverses North and South Dakota, Iowa, cuts across the Mississippi River near Keokuk, IA and into south central Illinois where it can link up with a sister pipeline of the parent company that runs to a refinery in Nederland, TX. The pipeline company will employ 8,000 to 12,000 construction workers initially and 40 permanent workers to maintain the line; the pipeline will cost \$3.7 billion and is expected to ship about 500,000 barrels of light crude.

More than 100 tribes of Native Americans coming as far away as Hawaii and from various parts of Canada and Latin America have joined in resistance to the construction of this pipeline because of their opposition to the potential pollution risk of their waters and the encroachment on their cultural sites.

In 2005, the US Supreme Court ruled by a 5-4 decision in *Kelo vs. City of New London* that a private real estate developer through the right of eminent domain could acquire the rights of private land, including private homes, for an urban redevelopment plan to build a housing complex.

Justice Stevens reasoned that the land being handed over to the private developer was permitted so long as there is an indirect promised public benefit. Public purpose, not public use, was the rationale of the decision. The court rationalized that jobs



Above: Soybeans neared harvest in a field on Michael Slattery's Maribel farm in October.

would be created, the tax base would be increased and the project would revitalize a poorer area.

Five liberal judges aligned against the four most conservative justices. The opinion of the conservative justices astutely stated, "Any property may now be taken for the benefit of another private party, but the fallout from this decision will not be random. The beneficiaries are likely to be those citizens with disproportionate influence and power in the political process, including large corporations and development firms."

Pfizer, the main client of the New London development, pulled out of the development and left the plan to rot, a situation in which it is found to this day as the property, that was once private homes, has become a city dump along the coast.

In court cases in 1937 and 1984, eminent domain by government over private property was employed because the public good resulted in provision of sidewalks, streets, water and sewer installation, etc. But, in *Kelo*, the court justified one private entity's rights super-ceding the rights of other private home owners. The power of eminent domain is limited by the Takings Clause of the Fifth Amendment (which requires appropriate remuneration) and the Due Process Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. Since *Kelo*, 44 states

have amended their laws of eminent domain, some only cosmetically.

Why should we as farmers be concerned about these judicial precedents and the case raised by these Iowa farmers?

For Iowa farmers and farmers anywhere, as in the Keystone XL opposition in Nebraska, key concern is just not the acquisition of another's property rights, but the high level of environmental risk to the public good in the event of a break or leak that despoils and contaminates farmland and surface water as well as seepage that pollutes our aquifers for decades or centuries and, thereby, deprives potable water to the public.

Eminent domain is a major threat to farmers neighboring urban development and sprawl. Cities as part of their development plan, not just for addressing urban blight, can now take over farmland that has been a farm family's legacy.

The development of infrastructure, be it above- or below-surface pipelines, railroads, etc. that are controlled and owned by large private corporations appears to have superior and preferential rights of land against the rights of family farmers.

As the conservative minority opinion in *Kelo* indicated, there is real worry of creeping corporate control over our society and infringement on individual rights. This results in the

benefits of the property being forcibly absconded from less wealthy and influential persons and being shifted to those with greater wealth, power, and influence.

This is a moral hazard and a slap in the face of justice to those who are poorer or more marginal compared to moneyed interests. Corporations owned by a wealthy individual or multiple investors and raising more revenue and profits than an individual family farmer is capable of are now given government preference over single individual or family property rights.

While this writer opposes the use of eminent domain in the cases mentioned above for the aforementioned reasons, the concept of eminent domain will most certainly be part of the rationale applied both in the federal and state legislatures and in future court cases concerning the Waters of the U.S. (WotUS) rule and the Clean Water Act of 1977.

Many farmers, farm groups, agribusinesses and agribusiness-interest organizations are highly critical of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers in their respective administration and regulatory interpretation of the aforementioned laws and rules, even after adjudication and re-clarification of the rule. How far can the government go in controlling the use of private property?

The use of eminent domain by the EPA and Army Corps would seem justified in the case of the Clean Water Act and WotUS for the basic reason that it is protecting the public good, namely clean, uncontaminated, unpolluted water that is essential for life of all creatures and plants and the enjoyment of the citizenry.

While we seek to discuss only the aspects of eminent domain as it affects farmers hereabove, the regulatory control over water by the EPA and the Army Corps would be better addressed by farmers through more rigorous employment of conservation practices and avoiding use of marginal land. The WotUS rule is too complicated for discussion here.

Photo by Danielle Endvick

Grain Committee: *It's time to gear up for the 2018 Farm Bill*

Respectfully submitted by the WFU Grain Committee

WFU's Grain Committee met this fall to consider policies to advocate in the next farm bill, targeted for renewal in 2018. The next session of the Congress and Senate in January 2017 will commence discussions and negotiations for the legislation.

The following are the positions and policies proffered by the Committee.

- Accelerate Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) payments from the fall after year harvested to the spring because even the crop insurance prices applicable to coverage level were set the previous harvest year.
- For forage and hay crops (alfalfa, clover, sudan grass, timothy, etc.), Actual Production History (APH) should not just include volume of production, but also quality which is as important in feed value.
- Encourage expansion of buffer strips that may be used for hay/forage and that pays rates used under the Conservation Reserve Program.
- For Marketing Assistance Loans ("commodity loans"), extend the loan period from the present nine months to up to 18 months, increase the grain collateral value (presently, about 50 percent of market value, e.g., \$1.83/bu for shelled corn; \$1.37/bu for high moisture corn; \$4.89/bu for soybeans, but rates differ by county), and allow loan repayment with collateral sale proceeds rather than requiring repayment prior to sale.
- For base acres, expand the covered crops to include crops such as rye, carrots, vegetable beets, snap beans, kidney beans, popcorn, sweet corn, etc. because markets are inducing farmers to plant more diverse crops that may offer higher returns and will improve rotational regimes.
- Base acre reallocation and yield updates: Allow for reallocation of base acres and incorporate yield updates into the APH. For crops not previously recognized as covered, use farm APH and, if insufficient data, permit APH of county or of state production. Consider employing a five-year rolling calculation of APH.
- Resubmit the "farmer reserve" program for non-perishable farm commodities offered by NFU as an alternative approach to securing farmers from excessive market volatility during negotiations for the 2014 farm bill.
- Continue revenue protection as one of the options for crop insurance protection because it provides vital support for most farmers in

the face of significant declines in market prices, even though some farmers, many who are large operators, game the coverage, particularly on marginal acres to finance expansion and subsidize operations with claims payments.

- Conservation compliance requirement for crop insurance:
 - Strengthen language of non-crop land deemed applicable under Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation to deter conversion to arable land.
 - Emphasize the need to employ conservation practices such as reduced or no-tillage and cover-cropping to increase the insurance subsidy or through expansion of programs offered under Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) or Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP).
 - Promotion of carbon sequestration with subsidy for conversion to no-tillage.
 - Assuring and promoting greater protection of water quantity and quality as a condition to government subsidies. (See below.)
 - Greater emphasis on and funding of conservation (CSP, EQIP, Conservation Reserve Program [CRP], etc.) while leaving crop insurance coverage and subsidies at their present levels.
 - Expand land under CRP from 24 million ac. presently to 30 million ac. at present market rates.
 - Water and Regulatory Control: While the Grain Committee did not have time to discuss this issue, given the increasing state, regional, and national importance and contentious discussions regarding both ground and surface water and ensuing effects of climate change, the following is the chair's comments for consideration because it will most certainly be addressed as part of the next farm legislation.
 - Despite the fact that the director of the Environmental Protection Agency has assured farmers that the EPA and the Army Corps of Engineers will not administer the Clean Water Act (CWA) of 1977 and interpretation of the rule, Waters of the US (WotUS), with respect to farmers in any way different than previously.
 - "Congress has exempted certain discharges, and WotUS does not affect any of the exemptions from CWA section 404 permitting requirements provided by CWA section 404(f), including those for normal farming, ranching, and silviculture activities; . . . (WotUS) not only maintains current statutory exemptions, it expands regulatory exclusions from the definition of "waters of the United

States" to make it clear that this rule does not add any additional permitting requirements on agriculture." (Federal Register)

- Greater focus on water conservation (both quality and quantity, inclusive of irrigation effects) for ground and surface water is needed and should be treated as a requirement for continued federal farm assistance from the farm program.
 - The EPA and the Army Corp of Engineers should remain as administrators of these rules and assure the protection of all resources directly related to the public good and necessary for life.
 - Fund more investment in R&D for traditional crops to development new market uses.
 - Eligibility for coverage and subsidies with FSA & NRCS both direct and indirect program assistance to farmers:
 - The Committee was split three to two for the eligibility requirement such that the majority wanted Adjusted Gross Income (line 37 on IRS Form 1040) to be no more than \$75,000 as per WFU policy with the minority wanting the eligibility cap at \$250,000.
 - Tighten definition of subsidy recipients for "actively engage in farming" to exclude passive investors who are not directly managing operations.
 - Cap on benefits: The committee split three to two on this like the case for the eligibility cap with the majority favoring a cap of \$75,000 vs. the minority wanting \$250,000.
 - Increase beginning farmer loans, at rates mostly comparable to term rates of US Treasuries or agencies (e.g., 10-year Treasury and agency are now 1.78% and 2.61%, respectively), and guarantees.
 - Retain nutritional section (mostly Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program [SNAP] and Women Infants Children [WIC]) of farm legislation as key component and require that administration of these programs be conducted by federal government; oppose any attempt to make them block grant funds.
 - Attention should also be directed at stopping increasing concentration in agriculture as related to farm inputs and outputs where monopolistic or oligopolistic market domination results.
- While the above positions and interests reflect the thinking of the Grain Committee, we are open to advice, recommendations, and response from all of the WFU membership and farmers in general. Please feel free to contact the committee via the WFU State Office at 715-723-5561 with any thoughts or questions.

Students learn value of cooperatives at career day



Cathy Statz
Education
Director

Students from Kickapoo and La Farge High Schools learned about career opportunities while discovering the rich history and socio-economic impact of cooperatives during the Vernon County Co-op Career Day at Kickapoo Valley Reserve in La Farge, Nov. 9. The event was coordinated by Wisconsin Farmers Union on behalf of the Vernon County Cooperative Association.

During the morning program, 63 students, primarily juniors, met with representatives from nine local cooperatives. The students were given an introduction to cooperatives and learned about each co-op's mission, history and membership. The students also learned about scholarship and internship opportunities with the cooperatives and were offered short-term and long-term goals for preparing

for potential co-op related careers.

"Co-op Career Day presentations help students envision the possibility of working or interning for a co-op or credit union in the future, while also better appreciating the value of being a member of a cooperative or credit union," said Cathy Statz, WFU education director. "Students are introduced to opportunities ranging from that first job to a lifelong career that could feature national — or even international — influence."

In anonymous follow-up evaluations, the students expressed surprise at what they'd learned:

- "It was surprising that there are so many of them."

- "Co-ops are everywhere, working together as a community to arrive at the best outcome for everyone."

- "Their purpose is to provide a service."

- "I learned that women can be line workers [in an electric co-op]!"

- "The most surprising thing I learned was that most

people are already a part of co-ops."

- "They are not just for profit, they are democratic, they are consumer/farmer owned."

Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative hosted lunch and a tour of their headquarters in La Farge after the program of speakers, and Westby Co-op Creamery, Organic Valley and the Vernon County Cooperatives Association graciously contributed to morning and afternoon snacks for the youth.

The career day was one of a number of special events Wisconsin Farmers Union attended to promote co-operatives this fall. Summit Credit Union brought together co-ops for Co-op Connection in Madison, which showcased cooperatives to thousands of attendees. The Dunn County cooperative community co-hosted October Co-op Month in Menomonie while hosting a food drive. Barron County cooperatives offered an open house and lunch, Citizens Connected had a

member appreciation event in New Auburn, and Group Health of Eau Claire held their annual Haunted Hustle run. WFU took part in all these great events.

While October Co-op month is an ideal time to spread the good word about

cooperatives, WFU continues carrying the message of the value of cooperatives year-round. Groups interested in hosting an educational session on cooperatives are urged to contact Cathy Statz at 715-723-5561 or cstatz@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Wisconsin Farmers Union Kamp Kenwood Chippewa Falls, WI

2017 Farmers Union Camp Sessions

Junior 1/Junior High 1
(ages 8-14) • \$85
June 12-15

Junior Camps
(ages 8-12) • \$85
Aug 6-9 • Aug. 9-12
Aug. 13-16 • Aug. 20-23

Junior High 2
(ages 12-14) • \$90
July 30-Aug 3

Senior
(ages 14-18) • \$95
June 19-23

Acorn Day Camp
(ages 7+) • \$15
Aug. 17

Family Camp (all ages)
1 adult & 2 children • \$65
(Extra adult \$25; child \$15)
July 28-29



hiking
campfires
swimming
sports
singing
drama
workshops
co-op games
theme nights
arts & crafts



Making
memories
since 1950

Thank you Associate Members!

Does your organization
share the values of
Wisconsin Farmers Union?

Contact WFU Membership Coordinator Deb Jakubek at 715-590-2130 to learn how being an Associate Member can benefit you and further our efforts in protecting family farms and rural communities.

Barron Mutual Insurance Company
Cooperative Network
County of Marathon
Crawford Stewardship Project
Dallman Insurance Agency
Douglas County Land & Water
Conservation Dept.
Falls Silo Repair
Greenville Co-op
Hay River Pumpkin Seed Oil
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute
Midwest Renewable Energy Association
Natural Heritage Land Trust
North Wind Renewable Energy
Osseo Plastics & Supply
People's Food Co-op
Premier Co-op
Ruby Coffee Roasters
Vernon Telephone Co-op
Viroqua Food Cooperative

COOPERATION • LEADERSHIP • FUN
Registration opens January 1st!
www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com

What's on Your Table? with Diane Tiry

Sweets for Your Fancy



When I first became a farm wife, I joined the Chippewa County Extension Home and Community Living group in my local area. We shared many different tips for helping to create a safe and healthy family life. We would take turns giving the monthly presentation from the county extension agent from stir-fry cooking or international foods to reading the new food labels.

One of the gifts of meeting with, at that time, older women, was receiving so many great recipes, especially for the holiday season. One of these was Mashed Potato Candy made from your leftover mashed potatoes. Although I can't say I actually have made this, I can say that I have tasted it and find it just as delicious as a Mounds candy bar. I have also taught microwave cooking classes back in the 1980's with a lot of experience in trying new candy recipes. So even though candy might not be the healthiest for us, it sure does taste good.

I have also included a ButterBeer Fudge recipe that was currently on Facebook. It makes you think you are putting in a secret ingredient, when in actuality you aren't. It is the familiar marshmallow crème recipe only using white and butterscotch chips rather than chocolate and a rum extract along with a small amount of vanilla.

And for an extra touch, I have included Soft Chewy Caramels for you to try and experience the goodness of home – sweet – home.

Please be careful in remembering to keep on stirring so you don't scorch the bottom of the pan and use a candy thermometer where indicated. If you aren't familiar with a candy thermometer, email me at dtiry@wisconsinfarmersunion.com, and I will give you more information.

MASHED POTATO CANDY

By Jane Wellner

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup mashed potatoes
- 1 lb flaked coconut, about 4 cups
- 1 lb powdered sugar, sifted
- 1 tsp almond extract

FOR CHOCOLATE COATING

- 6 oz semi-sweet chocolate pieces
- 4 squares semi-sweet chocolate
- 1/3 bar or block of paraffin

Directions:

1. Combine all ingredients except coating; drop by teaspoonful on waxed paper.
2. Roll into balls; refrigerate 1/2-1 hour. If mixture is too soft to form balls, refrigerate first then roll into balls.
3. CHOCOLATE COATING:
 - a. Combine all coating ingredients in the top of a double boiler. Melt over hot water, stirring occasionally, until ingredients are blended.
 - b. While still in the double boiler dip rolled balls using tongs, candy dipper or 2 forks into chocolate, coating all sides. Place on waxed paper. Place in refrigerator to firm up. Store in tightly sealed container.
 - c. Optional: sprinkle the top of the chocolate with chocolate or other colored sprinkles for an added touch.



MADAM ROSMERTA'S BUTTERBEER FUDGE

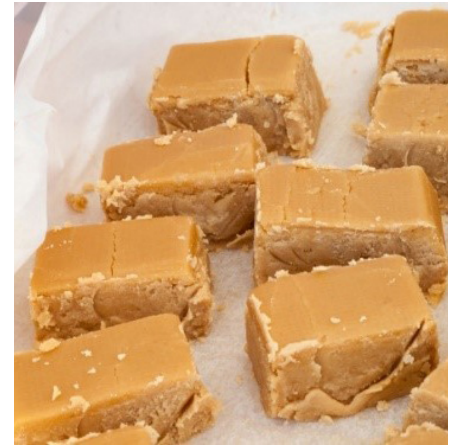
By Jamie Harrington

Ingredients:

- 3/4 Cups Sugar
- 1 Jar (7 oz.) Marshmallow Creme
- 3/4 Cup Evaporated Milk
- 1/2 Stick Butter
- 1 Cup Butterscotch Chips
- 3/4 Cup White Chocolate Chips
- 3/4 Teaspoon Rum Extract
- 1/4 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract

Directions:

1. Line 8-inch square pan with parchment paper, extending paper over edges of pan.
2. Combine sugar, marshmallow creme, evaporated milk and butter in heavy 3-quart saucepan. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture comes to a full boil; boil and stir 5 minutes.
3. Remove from heat. Gradually stir in white chocolate and butterscotch chips, 1/4 cup at a time, stirring until the chips are completely melted. Stir in the vanilla and rum extracts. Pour into prepared pan; cool until set.
4. Remove from pan; place on cutting board. Peel off paper. Cut into squares. Store tightly covered in cool, dry place. Enjoy!



SOFT CHEWY CARAMELS

By Taste of Home

"One of my first experiences with cooking was helping my mother make these caramels. We'd make up to 12 batches each year. Today, I do at least 95 percent of the cooking at home, but my wife does much of the baking."

—Robert Sprenkle, Hurst, Texas

Total Time: Prep: 5 min. Cook: 20 min.

Ingredients: (Yields 100 servings)

- 1 tablespoon plus 1 cup butter, divided
- 2-1/4 cups packed brown sugar
- 1 can (14 ounces) sweetened condensed milk
- 1 cup dark corn syrup

Directions:

1. Line a 15x10x1-in. pan with foil; grease the foil with 1 tablespoon butter. In a heavy saucepan over medium heat, melt remaining butter. Add the brown sugar, milk and corn syrup. Cook and stir until candy thermometer reads 250° (hard-ball stage).
2. Pour into prepared pan (do not scrape saucepan). Cool completely before cutting. After cut, wrap in wax paper. Yield: about 2-1/2 pounds.

Editor's Note: We recommend that you test your candy thermometer before each use by bringing water to a boil; the thermometer should read 212°. Adjust your recipe temperature up or down based on your test.

Nutritional Facts: 1 each: 58 calories, 2g fat (1g saturated fat), 7mg cholesterol, 32mg sodium, 9g carbohydrate (8g sugars, 0 fiber), 0g protein.

May your time of reflection over the holidays bring to mind memories of the past and may your cooking and baking make new memories!



In search of 'community'



Alan Guebert

Recently, a baker's dozen of Old farm and food friends got together with a group of young farm and food friends to discuss everything from yesterday's disappointments to tomorrow's hopes.

The differences in our age (mid-20s to early 80s), vocation (farmers to poets), education (undergraduates to Ph.Ds.), and experience (beekeeper to university dean) fueled warm—and, sometimes, hot—conversations about the future of farms, farmers, and food.

One topic, "Building Community," surprised me in the diverse emotions it generated and the depth of intellect it mined. Few mentioned the words "city" or "town" during the discussion because the "community" we seemed to be searching for wasn't a hard spot on any map but a soft spot in our hearts.

Soft but not too soft. Just as "neighbor" and "friend" may have defined community two generations ago, today we hear words never before used in describing community; words like "imbalance" and "irresponsibility," one presenter offered.

These changes in vocabulary, explained one Old Friend, changes how community-building institutions—like Land Grant universities, say, or the U.S. Department of Agriculture—approach their tasks now. Many struggle because they are unsure of what's being asked of them.

Those struggles, continued this Friend, can be seen in the first step institutions may take in addressing community problems. Some begin from a "culture of un-helpfulness: I don't know what you want, but I can't do it," while others start from a "culture of helpfulness: "What do you want; I'll try to find out."

In this administrator's experience, institutions can help build and rebuild communities but they must take care to be "riders, not drivers." They are there to facilitate, not dominate.

Facilitate who exactly, asked another Old Friend; just what is "community" today?

That simple question generated the conversation's hardest examination of just who we are and where we fit in today's capital intensive, less-populated farm community and more-populated, question-intensive food community.

In short, the Old Friend asked, are we now a community of cool-headed accountants whose critical measures of success are bushels, acres, and dollars or are we a community of mutual need like, say, a threshing ring of the past, where neighbor helped neighbor with no thought of any

accounting?

Ideally, replied yet another Old Friend, it's the latter; a community is "where no one is done until everyone is done. Done is done. There's no accounting."

That definition of "community," this Old Friend continued, was given to him by an Amish farmer friend after a day of plowing. The story, he related, went like this:

The Amish farmer and a young friend were plowing one fine fall day when it came time to give the horses a rest. After tending the livestock, the two walked up a nearby hill so they, too, could rest. Once there the farmer and his young friend looked out on the small valley below and counted 13 other farmers plowing.

The sight of all those plowmen and teams, the Amish farmer told the young friend, meant that if anything happened to prevent him from finishing his work he knew his neighbors would complete it for him.

"And that would happen not out of charity," my Old Friend said in his retelling. "It would happen out of culture and community."

That small slice of that morning's very detailed conversation resonated deeply with me because that too was the way it was on the southern Illinois dairy farm of my youth. My father and our neighbors often shared machinery and labor without any accounting whatsoever over who owed what to whom. Done was done and that was that.

Now, 50 years later, the community of my youth no longer exists because all those farms and farmers, save one, are as long gone as their six-row corn planters and one-row silage choppers.

What's left, I'm left to wonder, and whatever that is, is it a community?

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The Farm and Food File is published weekly through the U.S. and Canada. Source material and contact information are posted at www.farmandfoodfile.com.



From all of us at
Wisconsin Farmers Union

**HAPPY
HOLIDAYS!**

From left, front row, Government Relations Director Kara O'Connor, Accountant Amanda Kollwitz, Administrative Assistant Diane Tiry; middle row, Education Director Cathy Statz, Facilities Manager Brad Henderson, Executive Director Tom Quinn, Gov. Relations Associate Nick Levendofsky, Communications Director Danielle Endvick; back row, Membership Coordinator Deb Jakubek, Membership & Programs Organizer Kirsten Slaughter, President Darin Von Ruden, and Communications Associate Tommy Enright.

