



# WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION NEWS

UNITED TO GROW FAMILY AGRICULTURE

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# Stop and see the lilacs

Lately, I've been thinking a lot about lilacs. No, not just because spring is tantalizingly close, but rather because of a moving speech given by Farmers Union Builders Award honoree Helen Quinn at the WFU State Convention back in January.

In an impromptu moment at the mic, Helen brought many in the room to tears with her heartfelt reflections on the changes she has seen in the countryside since moving to western Wisconsin.

"There's something I remember – that I think about a lot – when we moved out here and we drove down the country roads, there were farms everywhere. Now when I drive – and this is what I think about – I see lilac bushes. The lilac bushes break my heart, knowing that where I see those bushes and the remains of sheds, there used to be family farms."

Since that day, I've been thinking a lot about Helen's words and the work of the Quinns and others in generations before us who have fought so hard for family farms to have a place in the countryside.

Rather than using the lilac metaphor as a eulogy for a bygone time, Helen spun it into a call for action, stressing the value of Farmers Union's work in ensuring a future



**Danielle Endvick**  
*Communications  
Director*

for family farm agriculture.

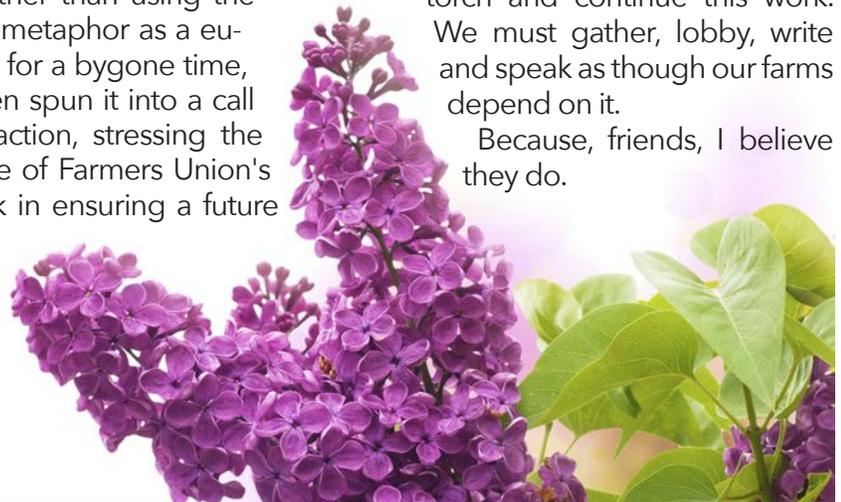
I feel like we are at a pivotal moment here in Wisconsin. The rate at which we are losing farms is heartwrenching and alarming – and it leaves me thinking about those lilacs.

It seems clear to me that there is little hope for family farms unless we can address some key issues. At the top of my list: farmers must be paid a fair price. We cannot continue to rely on speculative and corrupt markets that do not even meet the farmer's cost of production.

Farmers Union is forging full-steam ahead on efforts to help family farmers rally. We are gathering farmers from across the nation to mobilize on dairy policy (page 16). Our spring and summer programming will focus on value added dairy opportunities (page 14), connecting farmers to conservation resources through Women Caring for the Land (page 11), minimizing inputs with grazing, and exploring new horizons, like hemp.

As Helen's words echo in my head, one thing is clear to me. You and I, we must pick up the torch and continue this work. We must gather, lobby, write and speak as though our farms depend on it.

Because, friends, I believe they do.



# Rural voices are needed in Green New Deal

*Editor's Note: For this issue, WFU Executive Director enlisted the help of Dunn County Farmers Union member Dale Wiehoff to tackle a big topic – the recently announced Green New Deal.*

If the recent spate of winter storms isn't enough, the mess in Washington would make anybody want to pack up and run away to someplace sunny. One possible bright spot on our horizon, though, is the introduction of a congressional resolution calling for a Green New Deal. This is not a new idea, but one whose time is long overdue. It's a combination of Roosevelt-style programs with a focus on renewable energy and economic justice. Unfortunately, an examination of the current resolution reveals that, once again, rural America, small towns and agriculture have been left out in the cold. Let's change that.

Whatever one thinks of the particulars of the Green New Deal – the absence of rural concerns or its chances of legislative success – it is a bold, aspirational infrastructure plan, and the progressive farm movement should be part of that conversation. National Farmers Union recently applauded this congressional effort to curb climate change. As a leading agricultural organization in the country, it recognizes what is at stake for farm families and rural communities in terms of climate change and unsustainable agriculture practices and policies. One only has to think of climate-related disasters, such as extreme weather, to understand how close farmers are to the problem.

We in Wisconsin have a long tradition of progressive farm and labor policy initiatives. Our absence from the Green New Deal coalitions merely confirms the terrible toll globalization and corporate concentration have taken on rural communities and ag-

riculture. Through financial disinvestment, the elimination of family farms and the corresponding concentration of industrial agriculture, rural concerns have simply fallen off the agenda. We have an opportunity here. With serious discussion of a green infrastructure plan, Farmers Union can help provide the leadership that will point towards public policy that serves the real needs of rural America.

The Green New Deal must align with rural communities to be successful. Its supporters aim to secure clean air and water; climate and community resiliency; healthy food; access to nature; and a sustainable environment. In our minds, none of those things can be achieved without powerful rural alliances. Let's examine areas of common ground as the first step.

**“ Whatever one thinks of the particulars of the Green New Deal – the absence of rural concerns or its chances of legislative success – it is a bold, aspirational infrastructure plan, and the progressive farm movement should be a part of the conversation. ”**

Infrastructure is widely recognized as a place where America can come together. Anybody in a rural Wisconsin township who has had their black-top roads replaced with gravel can tell you our infrastructure is in trouble. Our family farms are disappearing. Our schools are being consolidated and our children move away as soon as possible. According to a report by the Economic Innovation Group, only 9 percent of new jobs being created in the country are happening in rural

counties. Our local economies have been hollowed out. The time to invest in our rural economy and infrastructure is now.

This is not to say that bringing about a comprehensive Green New Deal is going to be easy or even likely in the short term, given the current makeup of Congress. It is to say that if we don't step up with a bold, aspirational vision for rural infrastructure, no one else is going to do it for us. And, worse, it will be done for us and the country will be stuck with “infrastructure” that does nothing but grease the skids for corporate conglomerates. As supporters of the Green New Deal point out, not all jobs and infrastructure plans are created equal. Giving a giant foreign company like Foxconn \$4 billion will not help rural America. President Trump and former Governor Walker's failed infrastructure proposal would only have put billions of public funds into the pockets of giant corporations while paying for it by selling off our infrastructure and raising tolls, with a total disregard for the effect on working Americans. We need to turn this model on its head and put principles of democratic decision making, community investment and control, respect for people and safeguarding of natural resources as the drivers of a real new deal for rural America.

If you are interested in the Green New Deal and you want to rally rural voices, host an event in your local chapter and get a conversation started, write to your congressional leaders, make a video or pen an op-ed. Farmers Union wants to hear from you to help direct action on this very important resolution.

*Dale Wiehoff, Dunn County Farmers Union & Julie Bomar, WFU Executive Director*



# FROM THE PRESIDENT

Crisis can be a catalyst for change. That has been especially true this past year. We've seen growing unity in Farmers Union, bridging the urban and rural divide and bringing people together around values, regardless of farm size, type, ethnicity or politics. It seems as though we're entering a new progressive era.

In recent travels to Germany where I spoke about WFU's Dairy Together efforts, I was reminded that the plight of the family farmer is not limited to America. There are commonalities in the issues being faced by farmers worldwide. At the heart of the problems we share are growing consolidation, outdated pricing systems, climate change, and conservation concerns, particularly around water quality. The German dairy farmers are facing a similar price crisis, having had their inventory management abolished and markets flooded by corporate interests.

There is energy building for a global push on these corporate forces. Farmers Union has been – and will continue to be – a bridge builder as we usher in this new era.

Among the lessons we've learned this year is that our commonalities are greater than our differences. Sometimes it takes crises to make us realize that.

Now more than ever rural Wisconsin needs people who are willing to step up, and in recent months many of these folks have been Farmers Union members. Folks like the Dairy Together farmers who have traveled across the nation, met with media and helped raise awareness and shift the narrative on the

By Darin Von Ruden



need for oversupply management. Or Marathon County farmer Hans Breitenmoser, who has sparked a movement on non-partisan redistricting, leading to counties across the state to demand a more fair and just political system. Or the 20 Wisconsin farmers who traveled to Washington D.C. in September to speak up for family farmers at the National Farmers Union Fly-In. I think of people like those in the South Central Wisconsin Farmers Union, who are pulling together around cooperative endeavors like hemp production and specialty meat processing.

We have much to be proud of in Farmers Union, and still more work to do. Looking ahead, I think the energy is building, with new chapters forming in Ashland-Bayfield and the eastern side of the state with Lake to Bay and Outagamie-Winnebago.

We are moving the needle on economic justice for all families and a future rooted in sustainable agriculture.

WFU will continue to build upon this energy and organize for change. In the coming months, watch for more efforts from WFU to raise awareness about the issues that truly matter to rural Wisconsin like clean water, fair prices, social justice, anti-trust enforcement and building a better future for family farms.

## WFU welcomes Billen as Lobby Day Intern

Wisconsin Farmers Union welcomed Camryn Billen as the 2019 Farm & Rural Lobby Day intern. In that role, Billen helped plan the logistics and coordinate registrations for the annual advocacy event.



Billen

"Camryn did a phenomenal job pulling together so many of the Farm & Rural Lobby Day details," said WFU Government Relations Associate Bobbi Wilson. "We appreciate her hard work in making the day a success."

Billen grew up in Chippewa Falls and has been involved in Wisconsin Farmers Union since she was 14. She quickly moved from attending Farmers Union Camps to staffing them. She has served on the Senior Youth Advisory Council and was recently elected to the National Farmers Union's National Youth Advisory Council, where she works with people from all across the United States in educating Farmers Union youth.

In 2018, Billen attended the National Fly-In. While her interests in school have never been policy-driven, her involvement with the Farmers Union, from grassroot to federal levels, has led her to develop a strong appreciation for member-driven policy implementation. Camryn believes that all members of the Farmers Union should strive to understand and engage in policy implementation and development processes. She has enjoyed working closely with legislators and members in this year's Lobby Day and plans to use the knowledge and skills developed both at school and from the Farmers Union to support and expand existing communities in her future endeavors. WFU would like to extend a special thanks to Billen for her efforts.



## Farmers Union members speak up on rural issues

*Groundwater, hemp, healthcare and budget priorities among topics discussed*

**MADISON** - Sixty family farmers and rural advocates gathered in Madison Feb. 27 for Wisconsin Farmers Union's Farm & Rural Lobby Day.

Participants advocated for policy priorities set by the grassroots membership at the family farm organization's state convention in Appleton in January. They spoke with their representatives on issues related to groundwater quality, hemp production, and access to affordable healthcare.

Members also shared a number of budget priorities related to agriculture, conservation, and

rural economic development.

"The Farm and Rural Lobby Day is an inspiring opportunity to see democracy in action," said Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden, a dairy farmer from Westby. "Not only does this event help legislators put faces and names to the farmers in our state, it also gives Farmers Union members a better understanding of how they can help shape change in their rural communities."

"Lobby day with the Wisconsin Farmers Union was a fantastic way to work towards positive communication with our legis-

lators," said first-time attendee Alicia Leinberger of Viroqua. "It was a day very well spent, and I got to know other WFU members in my area better as an added bonus."

WFU members will have the opportunity to lobby again this fall, when hundreds of farmers from throughout the country will gather in Washington, D.C. for the National Farmers Union Fly-In, generally held in September. Scholarships are available for first-time attendees. For more information, contact the WFU State Office at 715-723-5561.





**Above:** Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden, far left, and Education Director Cathy Statz, at right, recognized the 2018 Torchbearers, including left to right: (front row) Julia Kauffman, Erin Elsner, and Emma Kooij, and (back) Isaac and Xavier Hanson, Rachel Hamele, and Liam Buche-Pattison.

## Farmers Union youth recognized as 'Torchbearers' at convention

**APPLETON** – Wisconsin Farmers Union honored a group of devoted youth for their commitment to community, involvement and leadership development at the organization's state convention in Appleton Jan. 25-27. The Torchbearer Award is the highest achievement in the Farmers Union youth program. To receive the award, youth must complete five years of Senior Youth participation, which can include meetings, camps, and community service or other projects.

The 2018 Torchbearers include Erin Elsner, Medford; Rachel Hamele, Fort Atkinson; Isaac and Xavier Hanson, Wabasha, MN; Julia Kauffman, Chippewa Falls; and Emma Kooij, Sun Prairie. Receiving a deferred award for completion in 2017 was Liam Buche-Pattison of Westby. Hamele, the Hansons and Buche-Pattison are all second-generation Torchbearers.

Since 1934, Farmers Union youth have pledged to light the way to a peaceful world as Torchbearers. Over 1,600 Torchbearers from Wisconsin have used their leadership skills to better the world.

"It has been a pleasure seeing these excellent young people each year at Farmers Union camps, conventions, and other events, and watching them become generous leaders and hard workers. Among them are travelers, actors, scholars, farmers, and volunteers, but – perhaps most importantly – they have also become good friends," said WFU Education Director Cathy Statz.

"WFU invests in youth starting at a young age to ensure the next generation of leaders in our rural communities," added WFU President and Torchbearer Darin Von Ruden. "We appreciate these youth and their families who have devoted their time and energy to the Farmers Union youth program."

## WFU names ag journalist a Friend of the Family Farmer

**W**isconsin Farmers Union honored Rick Barrett of the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* with the Friend of the Family Farmer award



**Barrett**

providing insight into the issues impacting our family farms."

Endvick credited Barrett for immersing himself in his jour-

nalism, spending time in the field with farmers and sharing their first-hand stories of the struggles and triumphs of farm life.

Jan. 26 at the 88th annual WFU State Convention in Appleton. First given in 2013, the Friend of the Family Farmer award recognizes individuals who have gone above and beyond in efforts on behalf of family farmers and rural communities.

**About the recipient**  
Originally from south-east Michigan, near Port Huron, Barrett grew up in farm country. His father worked at a grain mill, then managed a stockyard, and Barrett spent his summers and weekends traveling along from farm to farm, buying and selling cattle.

Barrett has been a business reporter with the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* for more than 18 years, and before that was the agricultural reporter for the *Wisconsin State Journal*. In recent years he has returned to his rural roots, covering Wisconsin agriculture.

Through the years, Barrett has also worked as a journalist in Michigan, Texas and Arkansas and Florida. In Milwaukee, much of his reporting has also covered manufacturing companies including Harley-Davidson, Oshkosh Corp. and Mercury Marine.

"Rick has been an ally to family farmers," said WFU Communications Director Danielle Endvick. "His ethical, balanced coverage of agricultural issues has shed a light on the impact of the dairy crisis, trade disputes, growing consolidation in agriculture and more. In a year when journalists have been subjected to immense and unfounded criticism, we are proud to recognize the very important role journalists like Rick play in being guardians of the truth, raising awareness, and

providing insight into the issues impacting our family farms."

Barrett thanked the farmers in the room for their willingness to allow him to share their stories.

# Quinns recognized for dedication to Farmers Union

**A**PPLETON - Wisconsin Farmers Union members Tom and Helen Quinn were honored for their dedication to the family farm organization at the 88th annual Wisconsin Farmers Union State Convention Jan. 25-27 in Appleton.

The Dunn County couple received the Builders Award, which recognizes outstanding commitment to building Farmers Union through local involvement, leadership development and member recruitment.

Tom and Helen have been pillars within Farmers Union in their decades of involvement. Both Tom and Helen have been active in many Farmers Union roles at the local, state and national level. Tom has a long history in organizing for food system and agrarian movements. Early on, he helped establish the Twin Cities' first co-op grocery store, North Country Cooperative. The Quinns were one of three young Wisconsin farm couples chosen to



**Above:** Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden presents the Builders Award to long-time Farmers Union members Helen and Tom Quinn.

participate in the American Farm Project, an effort by National Farmers Union to connect young farmers from around the country in shared learning about the history of farm policy and rural culture. Tom and Helen carried that experience forward through lifelong efforts on behalf of family farms and rural Wisconsin.

The Quinns became part of a close-knit community

of farmers while dairy farming in northwestern Wisconsin. Helen worked on faculty at UW-Stout while Tom worked as a farmer, logger, feed mill worker and organizer. Inspired by the writings of rural author Wendell Berry and historical farmer movements, Tom and Helen were keen to do their part to better their corner of rural Wisconsin. They have done that, serving as

strong voices on many agricultural issues.

Tom has served on the WFU Foundation board of directors and served as WFU Executive Director from 2011-2018, during which time he strengthened the family farm organization's voice, programming, and organizing efforts. He also previously worked as executive director of the National League of Rural Voters and the Wisconsin Farmland Conservancy and with West CAP, helping rural cooperatives with business development. He remains active on the Dunn County Board of Supervisors. The Quinns reside in Downing.

"We are very proud to recognize the Quinns' longtime commitment to Farmers Union," said WFU President Darin Von Ruden. "They have certainly left their mark on the organization throughout the years, and we are grateful for their contributions on behalf of family farmers."

## Members honored at convention

**S**everal Wisconsin Farmers Union members and chapters were recognized for their efforts at the 88th WFU State Convention.

Lisa Soyring of the Amnicon-Douglas Farmers Union received the Go-Getter Award, which recognizes youth program recruitment efforts, increased volunteer engagement, and development of greater leadership.

Mary Dougherty of Bayfield was honored for recruitment efforts on behalf of the newly formed Ashland-Bayfield Farmers Union.

Three Wisconsin Farmers Union chapters also received recognition for excelling in membership growth in 2018. They included the Chippewa, St. Croix and Wood-Portage-Waupaca chapters.



**Above:** WFU President Darin Von Ruden and Education Director Cathy Statz present Lisa Soyring, right, with the Go-Getter Award.



# WFU members set 2019 policy priorities

**A**PPLETON – At the Wisconsin Farmers Union State Convention Jan. 25-27 in Appleton, delegates from across the state adopted policy that will guide the family farm organization in 2019.

"The policy discussion at the annual convention is the democratic process in its purest form," said WFU President Darin Von Ruden. "Farmers from all backgrounds come together to respectfully discuss issues impacting their farms and rural Wisconsin."

The following Special Orders of Business reflect priorities, as chosen by the grassroots membership:

## DAIRY POLICY REFORM

WFU urges Congress to overhaul or eliminate the Margin Protection Program and replace it with a dairy policy that makes price stability the top priority. WFU proposes management to deter oversupply and/or price support levels that are high enough to constitute a floor, but not so high that they encourage overproduction and constitute a burden on taxpayers. WFU also urges dairy cooperatives to implement internal oversupply management systems that apply proportionally to all. We support efforts by the Commodities Futures Trading Commission (CFTC) to impose position limits on speculators trading in agricultural commodities.

Agricultural commodities markets should exist for the benefit of those with a stake in the industry, and not simply speculators seeking to make money off of growing price swings in commodities.

## GROUNDWATER TESTING/MAPPING

WFU respectfully encourages, on behalf of all counties, that the state legislature make available additional resources for counties to plan and implement groundwater testing and mapping that will lead to better understanding, protection, and utilization of our groundwater and drinking water supplies.



**Left:** Ashland-Bayfield Farmers Union member Mary Dougherty speaks up during the policy process.

## LIVESTOCK FACILITIES REGULATION

State standards under ATCP 51 regarding acceptance, regulation, and enforcement of CAFOs have failed to enable towns and counties to protect their people, land, water, and health. WFU urges the legislature to amend the statute to require that findings of the Technical Committee must be presented in writing to the Board of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), and that the DATCP Board must present a scope statement to the Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture within 90 days, and if DATCP fails to take action on the scope statement within six months, the scope statement must be sent to the Joint Committee for Review of Administrative Rules and scheduled for a public hearing. WFU also supports lifting the preemption of local control of siting of large livestock operations.

## CONCENTRATION IN AGRICULTURE

WFU calls on the the state and federal Departments of Justice to follow through on the antitrust investigation and to aggressively prosecute violators of antitrust laws. WFU urges the federal government to increase its oversight of consolidation and vertical integration in the agriculture industry and to establish a constant dialog within agriculture about market control and antitrust con-

cerns. WFU opposes the investment in arable lands in all countries by institutional investors (corporations, commercial and investment banks, pension funds, life insurance companies, endowments, high net-worth individuals, sovereign wealth funds, all of which apply to both domestic and foreign entities, amongst others). These lands should primarily be owned, managed, and farmed by domestic family farmers. WFU urges DATCP to vigorously enforce the law limiting ownership by foreign entities to 640 acres of land in Wisconsin.

## INDUSTRIAL HEMP

Until 2016, hemp had not been legally grown in Wisconsin since 1957, causing a lapse in experience and education in hemp production and processing. Due to the significant lack of infrastructure and equipment for harvesting and processing hemp in Wisconsin that severely restricts potential growth for farmers and the overall industry, WFU advocates for use of available resources to host statewide hemp workshops in partnership with Industry Agents, UW-Extension, local Technical Schools, and farmers. WFU also calls on DATCP to lower the fee of an individual field location/variety test from \$250 per field test to \$50 per field test. WFU also supports removal of industrial hemp

from the list of controlled substances in Wisconsin statutes and suggests the allowable THC content of "Industrial Hemp," as defined by state and federal law, to be raised from 0.3 percent to 1.0 percent. In order to create a robust, diversified seed-sourcing and seed-saving program and to protect against corporate control and consolidation of hemp breeding, WFU advocates for the formation of an open-source Industrial Hemp seed-saving program, as well as legislative initiatives to protect farmers' rights to develop new strains, plant hemp seed, and sell hemp seed without unnecessary restriction. We also support adding industrial hemp and cannabis to the list of prohibited crops in Wisconsin's anti-corporate farming law.

### **BADGERCARE & PUBLIC OPTION**

WFU supports legislation to create a public option to buy into BadgerCare, available to any citizen of Wisconsin no matter their income and for inclusion of the BadgerCare public option on the Healthcare.gov marketplace, thereby allowing Wisconsin citizens to apply federal premium subsidies to make health insurance more affordable. WFU urges the governor, state legislature and Department of Health Services to pursue a Medicaid strategy that:

- Prioritizes maintaining eligibility for the largest possible number of citizens.
- Maintains service delivery centers throughout the state, not just online, recognizing that many rural residents lack access to high-speed internet.
- Leverages all available federal dollars to support Medicaid programs, including immediate acceptance of the federal Medicaid expansion funding.
- Incorporates a methodology that recognizes fluctuating annual income, characteristic of farming and other self-employment.

### **EMINENT DOMAIN**

WFU calls for a comprehensive revision of Wisconsin's eminent domain statutes in order to:

- Revise the definition of "blight" to ensure it is limited to properties that are abandoned, dangerous, or in disrepair.

- Limit the power of eminent domain to units of government that are accountable to voters. Private corporations should not have this power.

- Ensure there is a clear public purpose for any use of eminent domain.

- Permit landowners to have a representative of their choosing in condemnation proceedings.

- Ensure that offers to purchase in eminent domain proceedings reflect full value of the acquired property and adjacent property devaluation.

- Consider how taxpayers and the public at large should be compensated for loss of wetlands, farmland, and green space.

- Investigate eminent domain statutes in other states, such as Minnesota's "Buy the Farm" law.

- WFU opposes any reduction in landowner rights in eminent domain proceedings.

### **STABLE TRADE**

WFU prefers open market access, to the extent that it does not destabilize market supply management, where farmers can compete with other exporters of agricultural products, rather than relying on US government compensation subsidies.

The USDA and the federal government should provide compensation payments to farmers in an amount that actually covers farmers' market losses and their lost income in commodity prices when the federal government causes farmers' lost revenue because of deficient policy. WFU advocates that the US Administration, the US Trade Representative, and the US government use more conciliatory approaches in resolving trade disputes with major trade partners, rather than ineffective practices like tariffs and embargoes.

### **Other highlights included support for:**

- Eligibility requirements that require farmers have adjusted gross income no greater than \$75,000 adjusted annually for inflation and an annual aggregate limit of federal government farm payments to individual producers to \$75,000, excluding weather-related

disaster programs. Non-active farmers and farm investors who have no operating earnings at risk in farming should be ineligible for USDA/FSA assistance.

- Greater safeguards to end abuse of checkoff programs and ensure that organizations engaging in lobbying activities do not derive benefit from checkoff dollars.

- Amendments to the milk pricing formula so farmers' pay price reflects a blend price of all cheeses, including specialty cheeses, rather than the CME price of cheddar. We further support alternative price formulas that provide a profitable price to dairy farmers.

- Withdrawal of the oral fluids testing for selling feeder pigs or instituting an effective sample collection procedure be developed that will work on all kinds of hog farms, not just confinement operations. (Due to the cost of oral fluids testing for selling feeder pigs being onerous to small producers.)

- Approval of new high-voltage transmission lines only when demand for electricity is clearly demonstrated by a publicly transparent assessment process carried out by an independent public agency and not a private developer. Increased energy needs should be addressed by development of non-transmission alternatives and local resources including energy efficiency, wind power, solar power, demand response, and energy storage.

- The rights of farmers to retain the right to repair equipment purchased inclusive of related technologies without violating warranty.

- Lifting the current 9pm limit for winery and cider-house hours, and granting tasting rooms the ability to sample/sell other producers' wines and ciders.

- Full funding of the Farm and Ranch Stress Relief Network and similar programs supporting suicide prevention.

- More robust efforts by Department of Natural Resources to control and contain chronic wasting disease and adequate remuneration to farmers if animals and livestock need to be destroyed.



# Wisconsin stands out at Women's Conference



**Mariann Holm**

*Dunn County Farmers Union*

The 2019 National Farmers Union Women's Conference took place Jan. 13-17 in San Diego, California. Last year, I attended the Women's Conference for the first time as a Wisconsin Farmers Union scholarship recipient. Four scholarships were again granted this year to WFU women who had never attended the conference, including Renee Richards and Anastasia Wolf-Flasch, both of South Central Farmers Union; and Amy Wallner and Kirsten Jurcek, both of Kenosha/Racine/Jefferson/Walworth Farmers Union.

Last year's Women's Conference at the beautiful Catamaran Resort and Spa left enough of an impression on me with its engaging conference sessions and inspiring

attendees that I decided to mark my calendar to return to the conference at the same venue this year without financial assistance. WFU often has a large presence at the conference with Wisconsin women coming as both attendees and presenters.

Last year, we heard from the Soil Sisters represented by Lisa Kivirist, Kriss Marion and Katie Christiansen Dickson, who shared the successes of the South Central chapter and the challenges as home bakers involved in championing the "Cookie Bill." WFU members Alicia Leinburger, Kriss Marion and Sarah Lloyd educated all of us by sharing their experiences in local and state political campaigns. Little did we know then, that our own Kriss Marion was about to announce her very competitive

Wisconsin State Senate race just days later!

This year, the conference theme was "Farming in Community." The event not only focused on the concept of agricultural community building, but it aimed to provide attendees with their own network of women farmers and ranchers they can reach out to throughout the year.



Photos by Hannah Packman  
National Farmers Union

**From top, clockwise:**

Wisconsin attendees caught a laugh at the NFU Women's Conference; WFU members Lisa Kivirist and Kriss Marion addressed attendees; edible flowers adorned a salad at a stop on the farm tour; and (left) women from all across the United States gathered in San Diego Jan. 13-17 for the NFU Women's Conference.

Farmers, policy makers, educators, and specialists presented on financial management, food safety, marketing, and conservation.

Wisconsin women once again inspired and provided strong representation at the conference. Lisa Kivirist helped welcome and introduce women to the conference and presented "How She Does It: Women Farmers Generating Income through Farmstays, Value-Added Products, and On Farm Food Service." Kriss Marion gave an authentic and raw view of politics in her session entitled, "Stepping Up in Leadership, Speaking Out for the Farm: One Woman's Race to Make a Difference." Patty Edelburg spoke as National Farmers Union Vice President and shared her story as a Wisconsin dairy farmer and leader in Farmers Union.

WFU Membership Director Deb Jakubek and four fabulous Pheasants Forever farm bill biologists from Wisconsin – Becky Brathal, Gretchen Oleson, Julie Peterson and Tally Hamilton – continued the Wisconsin theme in presenting "Pheasants Forever: Conservation, Connections and Community." Their session highlighted Women Caring for the Land field days that WFU and Pheasants Forever implemented in the last two years. Many Wisconsin farm photos and families were introduced through the slide show. Wisconsin cheese, sausage and cranberries were served as snacks following the presentation and provided a reminder of the excellent products produced from the farms we had just learned about.

A conference highlight for me was hearing from Karen Washington. Since 1985, Washington has been a community activist, striving to make New York City a better place to live. As a community gardener and board member of the New York Botanical Gardens, she worked with Bronx neighborhoods

to turn empty lots into community gardens. In 2010, she co-founded Black Urban Growers (BUGS), an organization supporting growers in both urban and rural settings. In 2012, *Ebony* magazine voted Washington one of their 100 most influential African Americans in the country, and in 2014 she was the recipient of the James Beard Leadership Award. I appreciated the chance to hear about Karen's good work in her state as co-owner/farmer at Rise & Root Farm. Sitting beside her and eating a meal together, we made a connection over the many social issues that farming touches.

As I arrived at the hotel prior to the 2019 conference, I noticed a group of ladies approaching. One friendly and vaguely familiar woman pointed at me and yelled to her cohorts, "She is a farmer!" It was Faith – another returning attendee from Hawaii. She triumphantly motioned to the group of several women surrounding her. "Last year, I was the only one from Hawaii! And now, we have representation from almost every island!" By the end of the 2019 conference, Faith challenged her state to rise to the level of Wisconsin's participation.

I have attended various conferences in the past where a webinar could have served as replacement. The NFU Women's Conference is a conference where the women who attend and the interactive sessions are not easily duplicated by any other means than face-to-face.

I encourage those who have never attended to apply for the WFU scholarship for 2020. I challenge local Farmers Union chapters to assist their members to attend or return to the conference next year. Women from WFU can continue the trend of leading at a national level and coming back home renewed and engaged on the farm and in our communities.

## Women Caring for the Land events planned around state

Wisconsin Farmers Union is pleased to partner with Pheasants Forever of Wisconsin to host a series of Women Caring for the Land workshops around the state this summer.

The Women Caring for the Land series, developed by the Women, Food & Agriculture Network, serves women landowners who are interested in learning more about conservation. The events provide a chance to network with peers and learn from resource professionals.

- **PESHTIGO** – July 8, 4-8pm, Pape Family Pastures, W5420 Leslie Rd.

- **WALDO** – July 10, 4-8pm, Perennial Farms LLC, N3804 Cty. Rd. E.

- **RIDGELAND** – July 15, 8:30am-3pm, EB Ranch, N13346 490th St.

- **ASHLAND/BAYFIELD** – July to-be-announced.

- **FERRYVILLE** – August to-be-announced, Fenn's Folly, 12041 Severson Rd.

- **BROWN COUNTY** – September to-be-announced. Stay tuned for more details!

Registration will open soon at [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events). Watch for more details in the next issue of WFU News.





# Chapter Chatter

Submit chatter to Danielle at 715-471-0398 or [dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com)



## Future camper

Hugo, the son of Pepin-Pierce County Farmers Union members Cella Langer and Emmett Fischer, sported a "Future Farmers Union Camper" onesie. Want to get your hands on a Farmers Union onesie for the favorite new little in your life? Contact WFU Membership Director Deb Jakubek at [djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com) or 715-590-2130.

## FARMERS UNION HAPPENINGS

Register for WFU events: [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com)

**Adding Value to Your Farm: On-Farm Dairy Processing**  
March 27, 9:30am-3pm,  
Best Western, River Falls  
Details on page 14

**Making More From Milk**  
April 23-25, Madison  
Details on page 14

**Begin a Farmstead Micro-Creamery**  
May 23, details on page 14 or <https://mosesorganic.org/>

**WFU Summer Conference**  
Aug. 15, Kamp Kenwood,  
19161 79th Ave.,  
Chippewa Falls

## Apply by April 1 for Farmers Union Scholarships

Each year, National Farmers Union awards scholarships to eligible students:

- Stanley Moore National Scholarships are awarded to Farmers Union members enrolled in a two-year or four-year college/university, for tuition and books.
- The Hubert K. JoAnn Seymour Scholarship is awarded to students en-

rolled in a two or four-year program.

• Stanley Moore FUI Foundation Scholarships are awarded to Farmers Union members in MN, MT, ND, SD and WI.

To learn how to apply, visit <https://nfu.org/education/scholarships/>. Applications must be postmarked by April 1.

## WELCOME NEW FARMERS UNION MEMBERS!

### New Member

Adam Dowling Family, Mt Horeb  
 Andrew/Colleen Kolberg Family, Poynette  
 Anna Marhefke, Ashland  
 Ashley VandeVoort, Superior  
 Barry Cook Family, Menomonie  
 Brian & Jennifer Weiss, Durand  
 Brittany McFadden Family, Chippewa Falls  
 Burning River Farm, Frederic  
 Candace & Dean Lederman, Juda  
 Charles & Jenny Born, Sheboygan Falls  
 Chris Dean, Iola  
 Danielle & Anthony Dockery, New Glarus  
 Derek & Meg Plucinski Family, Jefferson  
 Elsa Kulig Family, Whitehall  
 Emily Pence, Ashland  
 Emmily Tomulet, Madison  
 Gayla Schmidt, Chaseburg  
 Global Dairy Outreach LLC, Madison  
 Gretchen Oleson & JJ Skudlarczyk, Lake Mills  
 Hidden Valley Farm, Lancaster  
 Jackson Family Farms, Chippewa Falls

### Recruited by

Camp Program  
 Camp Program  
 Jenise Oertel  
 Mark Liebaert  
 Camp Program  
 Jerry Thompson Insurance  
 Camp Program  
 Jason Montgomery-Riess  
 Kirsten Jurcek  
 Deb Jakubek  
 Larry Reid  
 Dela Ends  
 Kirsten Jurcek  
 Camp Program  
 Jenise Oertel  
 Bobbi Wilson  
 Sarah Korte  
 Kara O'Connor  
 Deb Jakubek  
 The Insurance Center.  
 Jim & Bonnie Jackson

Jade & Ethan Proksch Family, Genoa  
 Jessica & Andrew Spayde, Blue River  
 Joan Hoy, Eau Claire  
 John Hoffman Family, Roaholt  
 Julie Krenz Family, Chippewa Falls  
 Kate Darling Family, Chippewa Falls  
 Kiefer's Maple Ledge Farm, Menasha  
 Ledgeview Dairy, Greenleaf  
 Mark & Marcia Opitz Family, Belmont  
 Morning Sun Farms, Frederic  
 Nick Zimbrich, Sun Prairie  
 Peter Kinsman, LaValle  
 Randall & Janice Borri, Salem  
 Rebecca Baron, Appleton  
 Richard & Karen, Redeker  
 Ryan Wagner, Viroqua  
 Squashington Farm, Mount Horeb  
 Stephen M Cutter Jr, Madison  
 Tamara & Chris Johnson, Centuria  
 Heidel/Baker Family, Random Lake  
 Tressie Kamp, Madison  
 Tyrone & Laura Larson, Amherst

Sarah Korte  
 Sarah Lloyd  
 Jessi Peterson  
 Alicia Razvi  
 Camp Program  
 Camp Program  
 Aaron Pape  
 Nolan Insurance Agency  
 Hastings Mutual  
 Jason Montgomery-Riess  
 Krist Kvalheim  
 Sarah Lloyd  
 Mangold Insurance  
 Valerie Dantoin  
 Nolan Insurance  
 Sarah Korte  
 April Prusia  
 FL Morris Carpenter  
 Mike Miles  
 Deb Jakubek  
 Kara O'Connor  
 Deb Jakubek



## Pheasants Forever WI honors WFU with award

At their Jan. 18-19 convention, Pheasants Forever Wisconsin recognized Farmers Union with an award for collaborative work on 2018 Women Caring for the Land events. The Women Caring for the Land model, created by the Women, Food and Agriculture Network, focuses on conservation training for women landowners. Find 2019 event details on page 11.

## CSA farmers gather

About 20 local farmers met Jan. 14 for the Western Wisconsin CSA Farmer Gathering at the Lake Country Land School in Glenwood City. The group enjoyed forward-thinking conversations, a good potluck meal and hearty discussion on measuring financial success, farm collaboratives, fostering member relationships, and CSA box offerings. Special thanks go out to the planning committee and event coordinator Megan Greeson!



## WFU Board of Directors

Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden was re-elected at the 88th WFU State Convention in Appleton Jan. 25-27. Serving on the 2019 WFU Board are, left to right (front row) Secretary Chris Holman, Custer; Vice President Craig Myhre, Osseo; Darin Von Ruden, Westby; Treasurer Rick Adamski, Seymour; (back row) Linda Ceylor, Catawba; Ed Gorell, Eleva; Tina Hinchley, Cambridge; Mark Lieb-aert, South Range; and Lauren Langworthy, Wheeler.



## WFU partners on farmer events exploring value-added dairy

Have you thought about processing your own milk, cheese, yogurt or ice cream? How would you go about changing your business model, marketing and making your own product? Farmers Union is collaborating with agricultural partners to help farmers explore these options in three different workshops this spring.

*Adding Value to Your Farm: Exploring On-Farm Dairy Processing* will be offered March 27, at the Best Western, 100 Spring St., River Falls, Wisconsin, from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. It will feature nuts and bolts of early business planning including processing practicalities, building a farm-based dairy business, and advice from Farmers Union members who are making and marketing food products from cow and goat milk. WFU panelists include Meg Wittenmyer of Bifrost Farms, Josh Bryceson and Rama Hoffpauir of Cosmic Wheel Dairy, and Theresa Depies of Springbrook Dairy. Michelle Farmer, Dairy Pilot Plot Manager from UW-River Falls, and Norm Monsen, a Market Development Specialist, at the State of Wisconsin will also be featured. The program cost is \$15 per person at the door. UW-Extension and WFU have teamed up to offer this workshop. Register at <https://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events>.

*Making More From Milk* is multi-day experience offered by Global Cow and Global Dairy Outreach. It includes visits to processors and retailers, marketing seminars, and step-by-step cheese making. The workshop also offers Spanish translation. The event is April 23-25 in Madison and costs \$495/person. An additional cheese making workshop with Cesar Luis (Cesar's Cheese in Columbus) is \$200/person. WFU will sponsor three \$495 scholarships for members to attend. For more information about scholarships, contact WFU at 715-723-5561. For information about the workshop and registration: [globalcow.com/making-more-from-milk](http://globalcow.com/making-more-from-milk).

*Begin a Farmstead Micro-Creamery* is a field day opportunity offered by MOSES focused on what it takes to start and operate a successful on-farm creamery business. WFU members Josh Bryceson and Rama Hoffpauir of Cosmic Wheel Creamery are an example of farmers developing a unique system to give themselves some distance from the commodity market. They will share their experience with this production model and give other producers a real farmer's-eye-view of the process they went through and what they learned and experienced along the way. This field day is May 23 and registration information and field day details can be found on the MOSES website: <https://mosesorganic.org/>.



## 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 easy access to the hiking and cross-country trails at nearby 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](http://www.kampkenwood.com)

[www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com)

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

# Rural Mental Health: Connections for Help and Hope



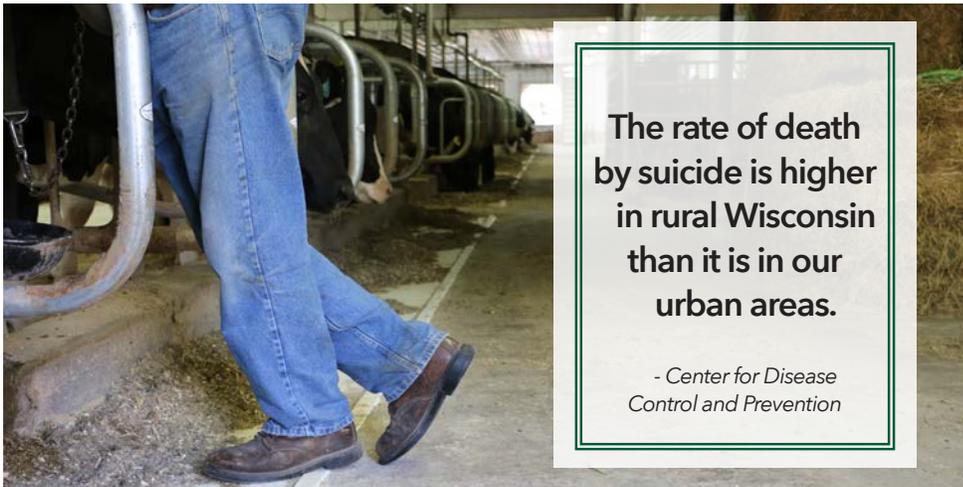
**Rick Adamski**  
WFU Board Member

The Center for Disease Control placed suicide as the tenth most common cause of death in Wisconsin in 2016. There were 866 suicides listed as the cause of death that year.<sup>1</sup> This data also lists "accidents" as the third highest cause of death in the state, putting that category higher than the national average. Sometimes it is hard to distinguish between these two causes of death.

In a time when our farm communities are facing relentless financial struggles, it's important for us to be aware of these statistics, and the deeper story they tell. Many farmers are shouldering heavy debt loads and the burden of depressed dairy, crop and beef markets – and market forecasts for 2019 don't look much better. Being aware of the mental health struggles farmers face in these difficult times may be more important than ever.

That knowledge recently led me to share about my own struggles. As a lifelong farmer who has struggled with mild depression for many years, I stepped forward when the topic of mental health was suggested for a workshop at the 2019 Wisconsin Farmers Union State Convention.

Data indicates that the rate of death by suicide is higher in rural Wisconsin than it is in urban areas. My age group, males in their 50's and 60's have some of the highest suicide rates. I am concerned about this data, because I have depression. I have not dwelt upon suicide, but I have dealt with periods of extended depression. I wanted to share my story to connect and give hope to others. Many people live with



The rate of death by suicide is higher in rural Wisconsin than it is in our urban areas.

- Center for Disease Control and Prevention

a member of their family who has had depression or other mental health issues. Often people are uncertain about how to help their struggling family members.

At the Jan. 26 workshop, I co-facilitated with Christine Hamele and Kristen Yeager, WFU members and school counselors, to share about mental health issues and coping tools. We also talked about the statistics of suicide. Here are some that we shared:

- On average, a person dies by suicide every nine hours in Wisconsin
- More women attempt suicide, more men complete suicide
- White men account for 7 out of 10 suicides in the U.S.
- For every suicide death, 11.4 people go to a hospital for self-harm related injuries
- In 2017, an estimated 1,400,000 suicide attempts were made in the US

If you know someone who has made comments about being suicidal, take it seriously and **ACT**:

**A**cknowledge the person (Say, "I know that you've been down lately.")

**C**are (Say, "I really care about you. You're important to me. Are you having thoughts about ending your life?")

**T**ell/Treatment (Say, "Would you like

to call or should I call to get help?")

We also shared information about depression and anxiety symptoms and how these two conditions so very often occur simultaneously.

### Learning to cope

Most importantly, we talked about skills that will help people get through some of the most difficult times. Some coping skills may include:

- Deep breathing
- Determine and honor priorities
- Keep perspective
- Find positive humor
- Spend time with people who make you feel good
- Practice self-care (prioritize sleep, eating healthy, do things that promote happiness)
- Find things for which to be grateful
- Get help when you need it
- Forgive yourself and others

For me, one of the most powerful items I shared was that our children had learned about depression and the connection to suicide when they were in elementary school. They knew that I was depressed sometimes and asked me if I was going to commit suicide. I promised them that I would not commit suicide. I told them, that

See p.19 ► MENTAL HEALTH

<sup>1</sup><https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/states/wisconsin/wisconsin.htm>



# Farmers Union plans national Dairy Together Roadshow

The current state of the U.S. dairy economy is putting family farms out of business. Join together with other farmers from across the country as we address the dairy crisis and continue to work toward a viable dairy economy.

With events planned across the nation, the Dairy Together Roadshow is focused on improving the situation for dairy farmers.

The Roadshow welcomes farmers of all backgrounds and is being organized by national Farmers Union, National Farmers Organization, Holstein Association USA, and state Farmers Union organizations, from Wisconsin, New England, Michigan, Minnesota, New Mexico, California, and the Rocky Mountain Region.

"We are focused on policy changes that align with our organizations' core values of family farming, fair economic policies, and thriving rural communities," said Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden. "We're looking beyond milk labeling, increasing exports, and dairy insurance plans to actual long-term solutions."

The groups' goal is to present options rooted in research and to engage farmers and policy makers in conversations to move the dairy industry forward.

Sign up for updates and register for events, and learn more at [www.dairytogether.com](http://www.dairytogether.com).

com. Locations will include:

## NORTHEAST

- **Cortland, New York:** March 28, 11am-2pm, New York State Grange Building, 100 Grange Place. Includes lunch. RSVP at [DairyTogether.com](http://DairyTogether.com), or by calling the NFO Cortland office at 844-378-4169 or local 607-543-4169.

- **Brattleboro, Vermont:** April 3rd, 11am-2pm, Holstein Association USA Headquarters, 1 Holstein Pl. Includes lunch.

RSVP at [DairyTogether.com](http://DairyTogether.com), or to Roger Noonan, New England Farmers Union, 603-487-2540.

## WISCONSIN

- **Oshkosh, Wisconsin:** March 27, 10am-noon, WPS Farm Show, EAA Grounds (Hospitality Room inside

Hangar A), 1001 Waukau Ave. Free for WPS Farm Show attendees but you must pay \$3 per vehicle to park.

- **Eau Claire, Wisconsin:** April 2, 11am-2pm, 29 Pines Conference Center, 5872 33rd Ave. Includes lunch.

- **Platteville, Wisconsin:** April 4, 12-2:30pm, UW-Platteville Pioneer Farm, 29200 College Farm Rd. Includes lunch.

RSVP for the Wisconsin event of your choosing at [DairyTogether.com](http://DairyTogether.com), or by calling WFU main office at 715-723-5561.

## MICHIGAN

- **St. Johns:** April 9, 11:30am-2:30pm. Agroliquid Headquarters, 3055 M-21. Includes lunch. RSVP

at [DairyTogether.com](http://DairyTogether.com), or by calling Jackie McAlvey at 989 285-2547.

## MINNESOTA

- **Greenwald:** April 16, 10am-12pm, Greenwald Pub, 310 1st Ave. N. Lunch to follow. RSVP at [dairytogether.com](http://dairytogether.com) or to Bruce Miller at 651-288-4064.

## CALIFORNIA

- **Modesto, California:** April 29, 2-4pm, Stanislaus County Agricultural Center, 3022 Service Rd. RSVP at [www.DairyTogether.com](http://www.DairyTogether.com) or by calling Lynne McBride at 925 385-0217.

## NEW MEXICO

- **Clovis:** May 2, 11am-2pm, Curry County Extension, 1900 East Brady Ave. Includes lunch. RSVP at [DairyTogether.com](http://DairyTogether.com) or to Nick Levendofsky at 303-283-3528.



Farmers, are you *tired* of selling milk below the cost of production? Hear how farmers across the nation are organizing for meaningful dairy reform.

- March 27th: Oshkosh, Wisconsin
- March 28th: Cortland, New York
- April 2nd: Eau Claire, Wisconsin
- April 3rd: Brattleboro, Vermont
- April 4th: Platteville, Wisconsin
- April 9th: St. Johns, Michigan
- April 16th: Greenwald, Minnesota
- April 29th: Modesto, California
- May 2nd: Clovis, New Mexico

Learn more at [www.DairyTogether.com](http://www.DairyTogether.com)

# Farmers Union mourns loss of past leader Cyril H. Carpenter

The Farmers Union family is mourning the loss of former National Farmers Union President Cyril H. Carpenter, who passed away on February 4, 2019.

Carpenter grew up on a family farm in Sauk Centre, Minn., joining Minnesota Farmers Union (MFU) as a lobbyist and secretary in 1965. He served as president of MFU from 1972-1984, and in 1984, he was elected by NFU membership to serve as president, a position he held until 1988. In 1989, the NFU Board of Directors honored Carpenter with a Meritorious Service Award to Agriculture and to World Agriculture, the organization's highest honor.

NFU President Roger Johnson issued the following statement on the passing of Cy Carpenter:

"The Farmers Union family mourns the loss of former NFU President Cy Carpenter, who passed away on Monday.

"Cy was a Farmers Union advocate for life, from the time he joined the organization at 23 years of age until the time he passed. He was a forward thinker and a



leader at a tough juncture for family farm agriculture.

"Cy came from farm country—north central United States—and his contributions to not only the state of Minnesota, but to that region and to our country as a whole are significant. He believed in promoting innovative and progressive policies that strengthen farm operations and rural economies. He developed important coalitions within family farm agriculture, as well as with labor and rural groups. And he ensured state and federal-level policy victories for family farmers, particularly for young farmers, including military veterans returning home to farm.

"Today we honor the life and legacy of Cy Carpenter. Our organization and members are eternally grateful to Cy for his contributions to Farmers Union and family farm agriculture."

## Apply by March 22nd for FUE Leadership Program

Each year Farmers Union Enterprises sponsors a program that is committed to developing and empowering future Farmers Union leaders in the FUE region of Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin.

### Participant(s) experiences include:

- Visits and activities that enhance knowledge of cooperatives and the role of Farmers Union
- Training and hands-on experiences enabling effective leadership
- Know-how to manage and coordinate meetings
- A fly-in to Washington, D.C. to take part in the legislative process
- Relationship-building and networking with other local, state, and national Farmers Union leaders through the National Farmers Union Convention and a State Convention
- The pleasure of being involved with hard work and good times.

### Nomination/Application Process:

To nominate an individual or couple from your chapter or to submit your own application, please call 715-723-5561 or email Diane Tiry at [dtiry@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:dtiry@wisconsinfarmersunion.com).

Applicants must submit a 1-2 page essay by March 22, 2019 that includes:

- Description of their farming enterprise
- A brief resume of each candidate
- Explanation of why you would like to be considered for the program

Essays can be emailed to Diane or mailed to: WFU, 117 W. Spring Street, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

The WFU Board will review the essays and notify the selected individual by mid-April.



# College Conference on Cooperatives teaches co-op values

**WASHINGTON** – National Farmers Union (NFU) hosted 71 students in Minneapolis, Minnesota Feb. 14-16 for its annual College Conference on Cooperatives (CCOC). The three-day conference provides an interactive learning experience for American agriculture’s next generation on the importance, structure and operations of various types of cooperative groups.

“Cooperatives play a vital role in strengthening both rural and urban economies and communities across the country,” said NFU President Roger Johnson. “NFU’s CCOC draws on our more than 115 years of leadership in cooperative development and education, and demonstrates our organization’s commitment to cooperative principles. We engage tomorrow’s agricultural leaders in



**Above:** National Farmers Union (NFU) hosted 71 students in Minneapolis, Minnesota, last weekend for its annual College Conference on Cooperatives (CCOC).

hands-on application of cooperative business principles and structures. This teaches them about the opportunities available to them through the co-op model.”

Representatives and farmers from traditional and value-added agricultural cooperatives, housing and worker-owned co-ops, and consumer cooperatives offered their insight on

cooperative development. Students heard from William Nelson, former president of CHS Foundation, and Nanci Lilja, current president of CHS Foundation. In addition, participants visited several area cooperatives, including Mississippi Market Food Co-op, Seward Co-op, Valley View Senior Housing Co-op, Riverton Housing Co-op and REI,

as well as the Mill City Museum, a river-front museum built into the ruins of what was once the world’s largest flour mill.

Johnson explained, “NFU was founded on the core principles of education and cooperation, and we proudly continue that emphasis today with in-person learning experiences like CCOC.”

“Thanks to the support of our sponsors, NFU is able to provide cooperative education beyond the farm and ranch gate to young leaders from college campuses across the United States,” Johnson concluded.

This year’s conference was made possible by premier supporters CHS Foundation, CHS Inc., CoBank, Farmers Union Industries Foundation, and NFU Foundation.

To learn more, visit [www.nfu.org/education/ccoc/](http://www.nfu.org/education/ccoc/).



**Making summer memories for generations!**

Wisconsin Farmers Union  
 **KAMP KENWOOD**  
 CHIPPEWA FALLS, WI

**COOPERATION - LEADERSHIP - FUN**

**Register today!**

[www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com)

**Junior (Age 8-12)**

June 16-19 • Aug. 7-10  
 Aug. 11-14 • Aug. 18-21

**Senior (Age 14-18)**

July 28-Aug. 1

*For younger children & families:*

**Jr High (Age 12-14)**

June 10-14

**Family Camps (All Ages)**

July 26-27 • Aug 2-3

**Junior/Jr High (Age 8-14)**

Aug. 4-7

**Acorn Day Camp (7+)**

Aug. 15

**From p.15 ►  
MENTAL HEALTH**

if I was seriously considering suicide that I would look for help. That was what grounded me throughout my struggles. I did not want those that I love to have to live with that horrific memory of how I would have ended my life.

That grounding worked for me, however I emphasized that it may not work for you. I encouraged everyone to find something that is easy to remember that returns

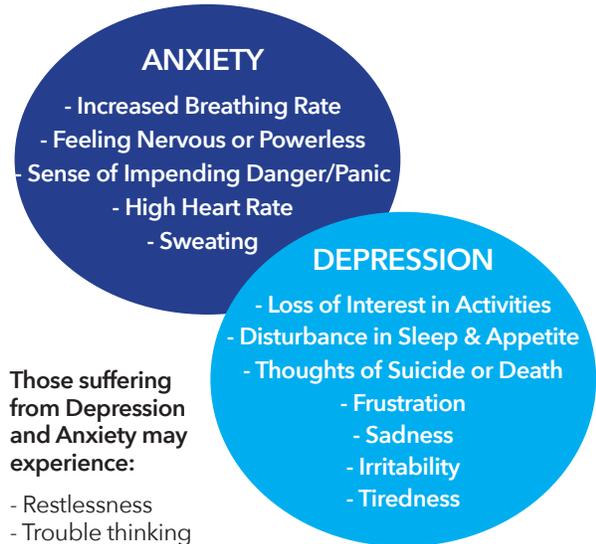
them to a vision of not only surviving, but working towards thriving. One word that Christine used was, "Indignation." She described a story of one of the survivors of the Sikh Temple shooting in Oak Creek, WI in 2012 using a breathing technique and an attitude of indignation that he was not going to die that day. The difference between surviving and thriving is essential to understanding the different degrees of recovery from any mental or physical illness.

**Lost Connections**

Another reason I wanted to share my story of depression with others is my discovery of the book, *Lost Connections* by Johann Hari last summer. I read the book with excitement as I discovered an author telling a story that I felt since I was diagnosed with mild depression 23 years ago. Hari believes that many cases of depression are misdiagnosed because our society is disrupting connections through which we historically have found meaning for our lives. It is not unusual for people to lose their connections with meaningful work, with other people, or the natural world. Meaningful values are challenged when powerful people disregard the Golden Rule to gain "success." There is a shunning of those who struggle with trauma incidents. So very many of these *Lost Connections* resonated with me.

Among the coping skills we shared, I have found that good quality sleep for at least 7 hours daily is essential for my own mental and physical health. Exercise is another skill that helps to improve our health. Journaling regularly is listed as a tool to help reflect upon daily struggles. Prayer and/or meditation works to help

**SIGNS OF ANXIETY & DEPRESSION**



- ANXIETY**
- Increased Breathing Rate
  - Feeling Nervous or Powerless
  - Sense of Impending Danger/Panic
  - High Heart Rate
  - Sweating

- DEPRESSION**
- Loss of Interest in Activities
  - Disturbance in Sleep & Appetite
  - Thoughts of Suicide or Death
  - Frustration
  - Sadness
  - Irritability
  - Tiredness

**Those suffering from Depression and Anxiety may experience:**

- Restlessness
- Trouble thinking
- Excessive Worrying
- Unexplained physical complaints (headaches, stomachaches, etc.)
- Agitation

most people. Some people find relief from singing, others get help by reaching out to family and friends. Do whatever works for you.

**Resources**

There are agencies available to provide help and hope for those who are struggling. The Wisconsin Farm Center can be reached at 1-800-942-2474. The National Suicide prevention line is 1-800-273-8255. United Way has a help line across the entire country; dial 211 to access assistance.

Obviously, this article and the presentation only touched upon a very small portion of the whole of mental health issues affecting rural Wisconsin. What we are striving for is to break down the barriers that prevent good treatment outcomes.

**Breaking the stigma**

We want to confront and destroy the stigma that mental health is only a symptom of a weak person. We want to reach out to anyone that needs assistance and to be able to guide them to a place where they can get help.

WFU is reaching out to other farm and rural agencies to partner on projects that will help all of us. We can all help each other.

*Are you interested in learning more about rural mental health? Check out the April 8th webinar being hosted by Farm Bureau and featuring John Shutske, cooperative extension specialist. The webinar begins at noon. Learn more at <https://wfbf.com/programs/lunch-and-learn/>.*

**Make a Difference this Summer!**

Do you love the outdoors?  
Enjoy spending time with kids?

**Seeking Summer Staff Applicants!**

Employment available  
Mid-May through August 2019

Each summer, Farmers Union hires motivated, energetic and co-op minded individuals to fill staff positions at our educational summer camp and for outreach at special events around the state. Kamp Kenwood is near Chippewa Falls. Work and live in an outdoor setting at this beautiful lakeside camp facility.

Develop and lead educational classes and recreational programs with youth ages 7-18. Staff training is in May and overnight camp sessions are in June, July and August.



To apply, contact Cathy Statz at 715-723-5561 or [cstatz@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:cstatz@wisconsinfarmersunion.com)

# Apply for Beginning Farmers Institute by April 12

National Farmers Union is now accepting applications for its Beginning Farmer Institute (BFI) program class of 2019-2020. NFU encourages new farmers of any age from operations of any size, type or geography to apply for the class.

The hands-on training provides beginning farmers with the tools they need to lead successful farms and the opportunity to grow as leaders in their communities and American agriculture.

"NFU continues to build on BFI's past successes to provide new farmers and ranchers from across the country with the best training and development opportunities in adult education," said Tom Driscoll, director of National Farmers Union Foundation. "It is vital to the future of both American agriculture and our entire country that we have skilled family farm operations and proven leaders in rural communities."



**Above:** The 2018-2019 BFI class in Salinas, CA.

The BFI program will host three in-person sessions in Washington, D.C., California, and Georgia over the coming year. Programming will focus on equipping participants with skillsets in business formation, accounting, taxation, labor, credit and business planning.

"We've focused our trainings on the aspects of running a farming operation that are essential to succeeding in modern agriculture, no matter the size or location of

the farm, nor what it produces or how it markets its products," said Driscoll. "This year's participants can look forward to a refined curriculum and the same networking opportunities and sense of community that BFI has always provided."

Farmers from all geographic regions and a diverse range of production methods have benefitted from the training. The most recent class of the program – which will graduate at the upcoming NFU Convention in Bellevue, Washington – has 18 farmers and ranchers from 13 states. Women and veterans represent a majority of program's past participants.

The application period for the 2019-2020 class will be open until April 12, 2019. BFI is sponsored by FUI Foundation, Farm Credit Council and CHS Foundation. More information about BFI is available at <https://nfu.org/education/beginning-farmer-institute/>.

## Spring Fling volunteer day planned at WFU Kamp Kenwood

Wisconsin Farmers Union  
**KAMP KENWOOD**  
**SPRING FLING CLEAN-UP**  
Saturday, April 27th  
7am-2pm  
19161 79th Ave.  
Chippewa Falls, WI  
**Volunteers needed. Food served.**  
**RSVP to Brad - 715-214-7244**



Farmers Union will host a volunteer day at Kamp Kenwood on Saturday, April 27. Friends from across Wisconsin are invited to come help Farmers Union prepare for the summer season at the camp, located at 19161 79th Ave., Chippewa Falls.

The day begins at 7am with coffee and networking. Then we will start on projects to improve and beautify camp.

All you need to bring is a hat, water bottle, sturdy shoes and enthusiasm. Children are welcome, but are expected to work on the same project as their parents. We provide the projects, tools, direction, and lunch. Projects will continue until complete or 2 pm (whichever comes first).

Those who have participated before have uniformly reported a deep satisfaction from putting in a wholesome day of work in support of WFU. And you can't beat the spirit and camaraderie!

## West Central WI Grazing Conference set

The West Central Wisconsin Grazing Conference will be held from 10am to 3pm on Friday, March 22 at Grand Occasions Event Center in Osseo. This year's featured speaker will be Geoff Brink, retired USDA Ag Researcher. Also hear from a panel of local graziers including multi-species, dairy heifers, sheep, goats, and beef.

Registration by the March 17th early bird date is \$55 per person or \$80 for two. After that date, registration is \$65/person or \$90 for two.

Visit [www.rivercountryrcd.org](http://www.rivercountryrcd.org) to register and for more details.

## Wisconsin Prairie Chicken Festival planned

The 3rd annual Wisconsin Prairie Chicken Festival is April 13. The day will begin at 4:30am at the Sigel Town Hall in Rudolph. Pre-registered participants can choose from two events at the Paul J. Olson Wildlife Area 1) viewing Greater Prairie-chickens on their "booming grounds" or 2) a guided grassland birding tour. Boy Scout Troop 187 will prepare a Dutch oven breakfast for reserved morning participants.

At 11:00 am the Festival extends to the Nepco County Park shelterhouse in Wisconsin Rapids where there will be numerous exhibitors and a silent auction. At noon a locally-sourced luncheon will be available for \$15 with featured keynote speaker Dr. Curt Meine, a nationally-recognized Aldo Leopold scholar. Additional speakers from 1:00 - 4:00 pm will include: history of the Greater Prairie-chicken; pollinators in Wisconsin; and agricultural operations favorable to grassland species.

McMillan Memorial Library will show "Our Birds", an In-Wisconsin Public Television documentary at 10am and 2:00pm. This free one-hour film tells the story of Wisconsin's migratory birds journey to Central and South America.

Space is limited! Go to [www.Showtix4u.com](http://www.Showtix4u.com) and search Wisconsin Prairie Chicken Festival or call 866-967-8167. No registration is required for the movie. Questions? Call 715-540-0236 or email at [wisconsinprairiechickenfest@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinprairiechickenfest@gmail.com). For more details visit A Wisconsin Prairie Chicken Festival on Facebook or [www.cleangreenaction.org](http://www.cleangreenaction.org).

## DATCP to start inspecting produce farms this year

Through a cooperative agreement with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) will begin inspecting produce farms for compliance with federal food safety regulations this year. The inspections are part of the FDA Food Safety and Modernization Act's Produce Safety Rule to better protect public health by focusing food safety efforts on prevention of foodborne illnesses.

"Implementing the Produce Safety Rule for Wisconsin has required additional resources, training, and education for our staff and the industry," said Shawn Bartholomew, DATCP Produce Safety Supervisor. "Starting these inspections will be a major milestone as Wisconsin's fresh fruit and vegetable industry align with nationwide food safety requirements."

While inspections for large produce farms will begin this year, inspections for smaller produce farms will start in 2020. The FDA defines the size of a produce farm based on the following annual food sales revenue:

- Large produce farm: More than \$500,000
- Small produce farm: \$250,000-\$500,000
- Very small produce farm: \$25,000-\$250,000

Throughout the implementation, DATCP will continue to provide education and training to help produce growers implement nationally standardized food safety practices.

### Education and Training for Produce Growers

In partnership with the UW-Extension, produce growers can prepare their farm for inspections by participating in produce safety training. The training is required for fresh produce growers who must meet the federal produce safety rules. Details about training dates and how to register is available at <http://safeproduce.wi.gov>. WFU also has been working to educate growers. For assistance from WFU, please contact Kirsten Slaughter at [kslaughter@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:kslaughter@wisconsinfarmersunion.com) or 608-514-2031.

Another resource produce growers can use to prepare for an inspection is to participate in an on-farm readiness review with a team of state food safety officials and cooperative extension staff who provide an assessment of the farm's readiness to meet the new requirements. There is no charge to the grower, no regulatory paperwork, and feedback is provided.

For more information about DATCP's Safe Wisconsin Produce program visit <http://safeproduce.wi.gov>, call (608) 224-4511, or email [safeproduce@wi.gov](mailto:safeproduce@wi.gov).



# What's On Your Table?

## Local Food Flair



**Diane Tiry**

*Administrative Assistant*

**E**ach year during convention planning, the WFU staff works with the convention center chef and banquet manager to incorporate local foods into meals. Sometimes it has been a breeze, but most times it is like pulling teeth to

encourage buying from our local growers and producers.

WFU is blessed to have an agreement with Organic Valley where we can obtain some dairy products in exchange for a sponsorship. People's Food Co-op also generously provides cookies. We are also thankful for members who ask for cheese curd donations from their local creameries and dairy co-ops.

Most importantly, I have learned from most of our convention centers that WFU is one of the few or only organization requesting local foods be purchased for our event. This means that we all need to have our growers, producers, and fellow organizations holding conferences do more advocating to obtain local foods for these events all throughout Wisconsin.

WFU is working to improve this process each year, and we would appreciate your thoughts or ideas on how to encourage more support of local foods. We are always open to suggestions and help in making the next convention even better.

In retrospect, though, I really look forward to whatever new menu items are served at convention and found the sweet potato hash sparked my interest and was very delicious.

## HEALTHY SWEET POTATO HASH

*Source: Delish.com*

This hash can upgrade any breakfast or lunch entree and comes together in one, single pan.

### Ingredients:

- 3 large sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 2 bell peppers, chopped
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- Kosher salt
- Black pepper
- 1/4 tsp. paprika
- 3 sprigs rosemary
- 6 slices bacon, chopped
- Freshly chopped chives, for garnish



### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees. On a large rimmed baking sheet, toss sweet potatoes with bell peppers, onion, garlic, and oil. Season with salt, pepper, and paprika. Scatter rosemary and bacon on top.
2. Bake until sweet potatoes are crispy on the outside and soft on the inside, about 45 minutes, shaking the pan halfway through.
3. Garnish with chives to serve.

## BAKED SWEET POTATO FRIES

*Source: NutritiousLife.com*

Another sweet potato favorite in restaurants these days is sweet potato fries, considered more delicious than regular french fries. They are also considered more nutritious than regular fries and you can get creative by adding a little sea salt, or other spices like Cayenne, chili powder, cinnamon, and cumin, even in combinations.

### Ingredients:

- 2 sweet potatoes
- Cooking spray
- Sea salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste



### Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Peel and slice sweet potatoes into thin (1/8 inch) strips.
3. Spread in single layer on baking sheet. Can use parchment paper on the baking sheet.
4. Spray with cooking spray (generously) or use olive oil and sprinkle with salt and pepper.
5. Bake for 30 minutes or until crisp!

Enjoy these sweet potato recipes.

Happy and healthy eating to all!

# In the long run it's, well, a long run



**Alan Guebert**  
Farm & Food File

One of the oldest theoretical constructions in economics declares that in a perfect market, short term profits and losses eventually even out so that, in the long term, all profits are zero.

Famed 20th century English economist John Maynard Keynes gets credit for restating this jargon-rich theory into clear, concise language when, in 1923, he wrote, "In the long run we are all dead."

Keynes, who evidently didn't believe in commas, wasn't trying to be clever, says Simon Taylor, himself, like Keynes, an economist and faculty member of University of Cambridge. In fact, as Taylor explains in a 2013 blog post, Keynes was just trying to encourage his bland, statistics-stuffed fellow economists to be bold in their bland, statistics-stuffed forecasts.

The full Keynesian quote, offers Taylor, better explains the concept. "The long run is a misleading guide to current affairs. In the long run we are all dead. Economists set themselves too easy, too useless a task if in tempestuous seasons they can only tell us that when the storm is past the ocean is flat again."

No one can accurately predict the future; certainly no economist can. Still, Keynes is spot-on when he admonishes all, including you and me, that it's "too easy, too useless a task" to "...only tell us that when the storm is past the ocean is flat again."

That picture came to mind when

plowing through the trove of 10-year market and income forecasts the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) released Feb. 14. (All will be included in USDA's more detailed "Agricultural Projections to 2028" report to be released March 13.)

For example, USDA forecasts 2019 net farm income at \$77.6 billion and, in 2028, pegs it at \$79.5 billion, which also is guessed to be the highest income year in the coming decade. As such, USDA sees just a \$1.9 billion growth in net farm income over the coming 10 years—with a few cork bobs along the way.

Now that's a flat ocean.

The breakout numbers that compose the net income projections do, however, imply some "tempestuous seasons" ahead. For example, under "Direct Government Payments," USDA economists forecast annual taxpayer support dropping from 2018's, mitigation-boosted \$13 billion to \$9 billion in 2023 and rising again to \$14.4 billion in 2028.

That means \$1 in every \$5 in net farm income earned by farmers and ranchers 10 years from now will come from taxpayers.

Just as worrisome is how USDA sees U.S. ag trade 10 years out. In the coming decade, USDA estimates that the international soybean market will grow 25 percent yet U.S. soybean sales will capture only one-third of the global growth. And, too, while the global corn market will increase by 20 percent, U.S. corn exports will rise by just 11 percent.

These are not good numbers if your domestic ag policy almost entirely depends on international exports to deliver year-in, year-out

profits.

The decade-long forecasts for other key commodities are equally disconcerting. For example, dairy shows slowly building stocks and slow-growing prices; hog and beef prices are seen as flat; cotton prices remain under 80-cents; and wheat prices never top \$5.50 per bu. all decade.

Perhaps the only good news here is that all 10-year economic forecasts—especially ones like USDA's that predict specific commodity prices a decade out—are rarely accurate.

They are, however, benchmarks of what will happen short of an even harder-to-predict political or weather event that will drive global and domestic ag markets in directions no one can foresee.

But that's where U.S. farmers and ranchers find themselves today: at the mercy of unpredictable short term, farm-altering events that will play an overly large role in their long term success or failure.

Is there any other sector of the U.S. economy that all but requires—and indeed has designed and funded ag policy that institutionalizes—cataclysm to play the largest role in year-to-year profitability and long term success?

Turns out that Keynes was on to something; we've got a flat-ocean ag policy that only really works during tempestuous seasons.

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The Farm and Food File is published weekly through the U.S. and Canada. Past columns, events and more are posted at [www.farmandfoodfile.com](http://www.farmandfoodfile.com).



# 'Little Pink House' film shines light on eminent domain

**F**armers Union chapters around the state are gearing up to host film screenings of the Little Pink House.

The film, starring two-time Academy Award nominee Catherine Keener, is based on a true story of a small-town paramedic named Susette Kelo, who never expected to be at the center of one of our nation's most controversial legal battles. Kelo leaves a bad marriage, and starts over in New London, Connecticut. She buys a run-down cottage with a gorgeous water view. She fixes it up and paints it pink.

Then she discovers powerful politicians want to bulldoze her blue-collar neighborhood for the benefit of pharmaceutical giant Pfizer. Kelo emerges as the reluctant leader of her neighbors in an epic battle that goes all the way to the Supreme Court and helps millions of Americans protect their homes.

Government officials have long used eminent domain to build hospitals, schools, roads, and other facilities for public use. But what happened to Kelo and her neighborhood was different. Come hear their story, and learn how their courage inspired a nation to push for reforms that have protected millions from sharing their fate.

"Many Americans remain vulnerable and unaware of the threat of eminent domain," said Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden. "It's time we wake up and work together to end eminent domain for private gain."

In policy set by its grassroots membership, WFU opposes the implementation and use of eminent domain when unrelated private entities become the beneficiaries of farmers' or private persons' assets and no direct benefit to the local public occurs. The family farm organiza-

tion also calls for fair and balanced eminent domain guidelines that protect the rights of individual property owners and promote the public good. WFU opposes allowing private businesses to condemn public land.

Screenings are still being set, and details will be updated at [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events), where you can find the links to RSVP.

Locations include:

- **MEDFORD** – Thurs., April 4, 7-9pm, Frances L Simek Memorial Library, 400 N Main St.
- **WESTBY** – Thurs., April 4, 6:30pm, Westby Community Center, 206 N. Main St.,
- **PARK FALLS** – Sat., April 6, 11am-2pm, Park Falls Public Library, 121 4th Ave. N.
- **DALLAS** – Thurs., April 11, 5:30-9:00pm, Valkyrie Brewing Co., 234 Dallas St. Tour of brewery first and then film showing.

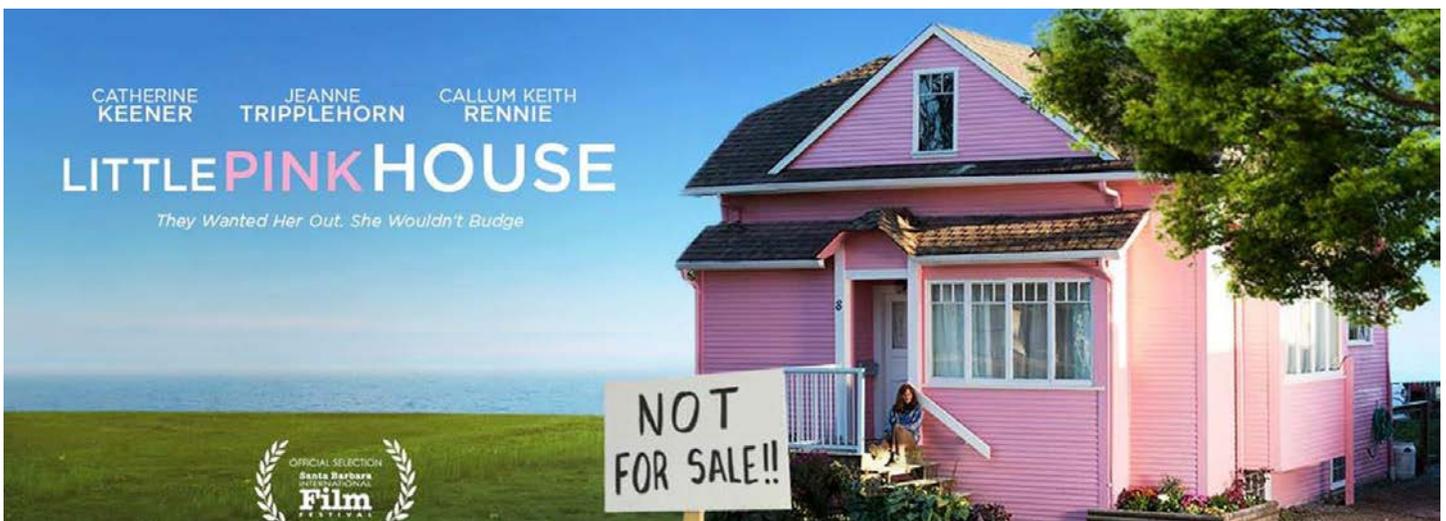
- **GREEN BAY** – Mon., April 15, 5-8pm, Student Center Auditorium at NWTC, 2740 W. Mason. Please park in Lot G or H and enter the Student Center through Door 6. Go to the lower level and follow the hall to the right to SC130. Note the two-hour parking lot is monitored and you could be ticketed.

- **MENOMONIE** – Wed., April 17, 6:30pm, Menomonie Public Library, 600 Wolske Bay Rd.

- **MONROE** – May 19, 12-3pm, Pleasant View Nursing Home, N3150 WI-81.

- **CHIPPEWA FALLS** – Thurs., May 23, 6pm, WFU Kamp Kenwood, 19161 79th Ave. Come early, between 4-6pm, for an open house to learn more about Farmers Union summer camps! 5:30pm potluck dinner, bring a dish to pass.

Interested in hosting a screening? Contact Kirsten Slaughter at 608-514-2031 or at [kslaughter@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:kslaughter@wisconsinfarmersunion.com).



## 'Your Farm Future' events planned around the state

The UW-Extension program "Your Farm Future: A blueprint to move your farm forward" is intended for farmers interested in preparing for the future.

"Wisconsin farmers are evaluating their options for 2019 and beyond, and will need to take stock of their business and their goals for the future. This program will provide a blueprint for navigating important decisions. The blueprint will outline important financial and succession considerations in order to make informed decisions about the future," says Jenny Vanderlin, UW Center for Dairy Profitability.

Depending on location, financial and/or legal specialists will be on hand to help clarify important production and financial information and/or how to prepare for a legal consult. Participants of the program will become more confident about understanding their farm financial position in order to discuss the future with family members, business partners, legal professionals and consultants.

The program is sponsored by the UW-Center for Dairy Profitability, Extension Farm and Risk Management Team and by local Extension County offices. If you don't see a program in your area but would like one, contact WFU Special Projects Director Sarah Lloyd at 608-844-3758. UWEX is considering additional programs and WFU can help start that conversation.

- GREEN LAKE – March 13, Extension Green Lake County office, 571 Co Rd A. Info: Ben Jenkins, 920-294-4032
- BURLINGTON – March 20, Gateway Technical College, 496 McCanna Pkwy. Info: Leigh Presley, 262-767-2929 or Jim Versweyveld, 262-741-4951
- CHIPPEWA FALLS – March 25, Chippewa County UW-Extension (Courthouse), 711 North Bridge Street. Info: Katie Wantoch, 715-232-1636
- SOUTH RANGE – April 3, Amnicon Town Hall 8985 US-2, South Range. Contact: Cheryl Shockley, 715-395-1547 or Jane Anklam, anklam@ces.uwex.edu

## Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin proposals due March 20th

Farmers and businesses involved in Wisconsin's food industry who are seeking to grow local markets are encouraged to apply for 2019 Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin producer and processor grants.

Managed by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP), the grants help farms and business more efficiently produce, process, market and distribute food in local markets.

"These grants fund innovative ideas that help producers and other local food businesses become more successful at selling their local products around Wisconsin," said BLBW program manager Kietra Olson. "We encourage growers and processors with projects that help expand Wisconsin's food system to apply for the grants. Projects must clearly demonstrate a need, show creativity, and help grow the food industry."

Proposals must be received by DATCP by noon, March 20. Each proposal must include a cover page, a completed budget template and project description. Necessary documents are available at <https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/BuyLocalBuyWisconsinGrants.aspx>. Grants will undergo a competitive review and recipients will be notified in April.

A total of \$170,000 is available in grant funding; the maximum award for each project is \$50,000. Grant applicants must provide a cash or in-kind match of at least 50 percent of the total project budget. Grants may not be used to fund feasibility projects or startups.

Qualified applicants include individuals, groups or businesses involved in Wisconsin production agriculture, food processing, food distribution, food warehousing, retail food establishments or agricultural tourism operations. Proposals could include collaborations or partnerships.

Since its inception in 2008, the program has funded 58 projects, totaling \$1.6 million. Previous grant recipients have generated nearly \$10 million in new local food sales, created and retained 211 jobs, and benefited more than 2,700 producers and 2,900 markets.

For more information, contact BLBW program manager Kietra Olson at [Kietra.Olson@Wisconsin.gov](mailto:Kietra.Olson@Wisconsin.gov) or 608-224-5112.

Have additional questions or need someone to review your grant? WFU Special Projects Director Sarah Lloyd has written successful BLBW grants and is available to assist. She can be reached at 608-844-3758 or [sllloyd@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:sllloyd@wisconsinfarmersunion.com).

### Farmer to Farmer – REGENERATIVE AGRICULTURE:



*healthy soils, clean water and increased profits*

**Keynote Speaker – Dan Shelliam**, Windy Hill Ranch, Hazel Green, Wi.

Presentation will be followed by a panel offering additional information and resources along with an opportunity for questions.

**Saturday, March 30, 2019 — 1 - 4 pm**

Nohr Gallery, Ullsvik Hall, UW-Platteville • Free Admission  
Hickory & West Main Street • Platteville, Wisconsin





# WASHINGTON

from National Farmers Union

## Corner

March 2019

Now that the longest-ever government shutdown is over, federal employees are back at work on the issues that affect family farmers and ranchers. Farm Service Agency offices are fully open, economic reports have been released, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture is rolling out the 2018 Farm Bill. Congress has been busy as well; in February, Senator Ed Markey and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez released their framework for addressing climate change and creating new jobs, known as the Green New Deal. With the shutdown over, President Trump was also finally able to give his delayed State of the Union address. However, the content of his speech did not reflect the realities that most of rural America is experiencing, in part due to antagonistic international trade policies. To encourage the administration and Congress to address these challenges, the NFU Board of Directors published a resolution calling for the strengthening of the farm safety net.

### NFU APPLAUDS IMPETUS ON CLIMATE CHANGE

Senator Ed Markey (D-MA) and Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez (D-NY) released a long-anticipated framework for their “Green New Deal.” Though the nonbinding resolution is not expected to be adopted, it has kickstarted Congressional conversation around climate change and creates opportunity for future action that could benefit family farmers and ranchers.

The proposal, though radical in spirit, is fairly vague and abstract in practice. Its long-term goals are primarily to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2050 and to create new, high-wage jobs. To achieve this, it suggests sweeping changes to nearly every sector, including manufacturing, energy production, waste management, transportation, infrastructure, and - of course - agriculture.

The deal proposes that policy makers work “collaboratively with farmers” to “eliminate pollution and greenhouse gas emissions . . . as much as technologically feasible.” More specifically, it suggests they support family farming, invest in “sustainable farming and land use practices that increase soil health,” and build “a more sustainable food system that ensures universal access to healthy food.”



The wide-ranging reactions to the Green New Deal prove that farmers and ranchers must have a seat at the table as Congress considers climate solutions. Farmers are already feeling the effects of climate change, and more frequent and severe weather events pose a direct threat to their livelihoods and global food security. In a press release,

NFU Vice President of Public Policy and Communications Rob Larew reiterated the need for farmers’ voices to be heard in the climate debate, stating, “NFU stands ready to work with Congress to ensure that federal legislation recognizes what’s at stake for farm families and rural communities and the potential we have to offer national and global efforts to sequester carbon and curb the worsening effects of climate change.”



Farmers are not only especially vulnerable to the challenges presented by a changing climate, but as stewards of the land, they are also uniquely positioned to be part of the solution. As such, NFU is supportive of incentives for farmers to implement conservation practices for soil carbon sequestration and to install on-farm renewable energy systems. NFU also continues to be strong advocate for the expanded use of biofuels to reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. time of significant financial strife.”

### SOTU NEGLECTS DIRE ECONOMIC CONDITIONS

In early February, President Donald Trump gave his second annual State of the Union Address. In the

82-minute-long speech, he touted his administration's work on a broad range of issues that affect agricultural and rural communities, including tax reform, the farm bill, trade negotiations, opioid misuse, and infrastructure. On most of these issues, his comments were overwhelmingly positive.



In particular, he boasted about his ongoing crusade to overhaul international trade relationships. "After years of targeting our industries and stealing our intellectual property, the theft of American jobs and wealth has come to an end," he said, adding that tariffs on Chinese imports have brought in "billions and billions of dollars" in revenue.

He also praised the U.S.-Mexico-Canada Agreement (USMCA), which is intended to replace the North Atlantic Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), saying it will "deliver for American workers like they haven't had delivered to for a long time." He urged Congress to quickly pass USMCA "so that we can bring back our manufacturing jobs in even greater numbers, expand American agriculture, protect intellectual property, and ensure that more cars are proudly stamped with our four beautiful words: 'Made in the USA.'"

However, these glowing remarks largely ignore the reality that most

American farmers and ranchers face on a daily basis. "The reality is that the downward trend in the farm economy has only worsened over the last two years, leaving many farmers and ranchers in significant financial stress," said National Farmers Union Vice President of Public Policy and Communications Rob Larew in a statement. He added that most of the difficulties that farmers are enduring have been exacerbated by President Trump's international trade war. "To tout progress with China or USMCA as a win is misleading - you can't dig a ten-foot hole, fill it up with a foot of dirt and call that a win."

To improve conditions in agricultural communities, Larew urged President Trump to "restore our reputation around the world as a reliable trading partner." In particular, Larew recommended that he "reassert American leadership in the international trade arena" and "back up his calls for bipartisanship by working with Congress to ensure farm families can succeed with fair and stable markets for their goods."

### **NFU BOARD URGES ADMINISTRATION TO STRENGTHEN THE FAMILY FARM SAFETY NET**

Due to depressed commodity prices and oversupply, both of which have been exacerbated by trade barriers, the National Farmers Union Board of Directors is calling on the administration and Congress to strengthen the farm safety net.

In a resolution written during the quarterly board meeting in San Diego, California, the Board emphasized the economic difficulties family farmers and ranchers have been enduring for several years. "Net farm income in 2018 is estimated

to be nearly 50 percent less than 2013 levels. Median farm income is estimated to be -\$1,548, meaning a majority of farms-farms of all sizes-lost money this past year," the resolution states. "Despite their best efforts, many farmers are struggling to stay afloat."

The Board expressed appreciation for recent efforts to provide greater assistance to struggling farmers and ranchers, including improvements in the 2018 Farm Bill and trade assistance provided through the Market Facilitation Program. However, these efforts only provide marginal, short-term aid for significant, long-term problems. "In neither case do the changes reflect the severity of existing market challenges and the immediacy of the financial crisis facing family farmers and ranchers," the Board said.



To address these problems, the NFU Board urged lawmakers to pursue "significant, long-term solutions to strengthen the farm safety net." Additionally, they recommended that Congress "examine options to meaningfully address chronic oversupply in the marketplace," which has been particularly damaging to U.S. dairy and grains sectors.

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The Washington Corner can also be found at [www.nfu.org/corner](http://www.nfu.org/corner).





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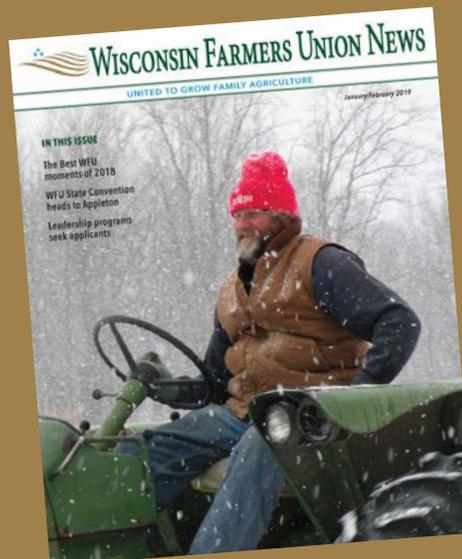
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## Is your photo the next cover of the *WFU News*?

If your photo is chosen for the cover of the next *Wisconsin Farmers Union News*, you could win a Farmers Union hat! Email your photo to WFU Communications Director Danielle Endvick at [dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com) for a chance to win!

### On the cover this month:

Submitted by Anastasia Wolf-Flasch, Outreach and Education with Riemer Family Farm in Brodhead, WI. "It was the perfect mix of frost and mist this Wisconsin winter morning, cast against the brilliant sunrise with some handsome cattle in the foreground. I couldn't resist running out in my jammies and boots quick to catch it."



**Win a Farmers Union  
trucker hat!**