



# WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION NEWS

June 2017

Volume 74 | No. 5



## LEADING THE CHARGE

*Above: Caleb and Lauren Langworthy will take part in the Farmers Union Enterprises Leadership Program in the coming year. The Langworthys farm near Wheeler in Dunn County.*

## Blue Ox farmers step up to FUE Leadership Program

**Danielle Endvick**  
*Communications Director*

**W**HEELER — The spring scenery at Blue Ox Organics is a sight to behold on a warm spring day. Ewes and lambs eagerly rush to fresh pasture. A small herd of Scottish Highland cattle regally amble along the ridge where farmers Caleb and Lauren Langworthy point out the lay of the land and points of interest in the Red Cedar watershed.

For them, the farm is more than just a home and livelihood.

"Blue Ox is more than the acreage and the enterprises that reside here," the Langworthys say. "The farm is our form of positive, direct action in a hurting national food system and a struggling rural economy."

As the pair have worked to find their niche in farming, they've also been stepping up in their community and civic engagement. In the coming year, they'll amp up their leadership skills even more as

they represent Wisconsin Farmers Union in the Farmers Union Enterprises (FUE) Leadership Program.

Organized by the five FUE states of Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin, the program offers participants a chance to hone leadership skills and network with farmers from diverse backgrounds. Activities enhance knowledge of cooperatives and the role of Farmers Union.

In the next year, the Langworthys will attend several gatherings throughout the five-state FUE region, including Farmers Union conventions at the state and national level and the 2018 National Farmers Union Fly-In to Washington, D.C., where they will experience the lobbying process.

### North Woods nod

The 'Blue Ox' name is a nod to North Woods lore of Paul Bunyan and his famous ox, Babe.

Caleb and Lauren describe the farm as **See p.8 ▶ LEADERS**

## Graze River Country WFU to co-host pasture walks

Wisconsin Farmers Union is pleased to be partnering with River Country RC&D to present a summer pasture walk series, Graze River Country.

"Wisconsin Farmers Union recognizes both the conservation benefits and the potential for grazing events to build community among farmers in the region," said WFU Executive Director Tom Quinn. "We're looking forward to getting out on a number of farms across western Wisconsin and seeing some of the innovative practices happening in the grazing network."

### Upcoming pasture walks:

- Wed., June 14, 6:30pm; beef cow calf, pasture renovation and pasture irrigation; John Accola Farm, S363 Cty Rd Y, Mondovi.
- Sat., July 8, 9:30am, pasture layout and land conservation projects to move cattle to grazing acres; Dave and Will Peasley Farm, N7271 State Hwy 12, Black River Falls.
- Date TBD, Ben Mrdutt

**See p.22 ▶ GRAZE**

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# Are we in a farm 'crisis'?



#### Darin Von Ruden

President

In May, National Farmers Union unveiled a compilation of resources, listening sessions and a national campaign to raise awareness of the current farm crisis.

Crisis is a word known to raise the hackles and one that we don't use lightly.

So, are we truly in a farm crisis?

Consider the numbers:

- Net farm income is forecast to decline another 8.7 percent in 2017.
- Median farm income is expected to fall below the cost of production.
- U.S. farms once numbered around 6 million (circa 1945), but in 2015 this number had dropped to just over 2 million — about the same number that existed in the mid-1800s.
- Chapter 12 bankruptcy filings, which apply to farms with less than about \$4 million in debt, rose significantly from 2013 to 2016.
- About 1 in 3 U.S. farms raising grain and other row crops were highly or very highly leveraged in 2015, which means their debts equaled at least 41 percent of their assets.
- In Wisconsin, we've lost an average of about one dairy farm per day over the past year.
- According to the *Star Tribune*, our farm neighbors in Minnesota faced back-to-back losses in 2015 and 2016, with an average loss of \$58 per acre for corn and \$3 per acre on soybeans in 2015. The newspaper noted *"Despite [losses], bankers around the region refinanced farmers' debt and lines of credit on favorable terms. But with a second year of losses ahead for many farms, patience among lenders is running thin. A credit crunch now looms that would mark a decisive turn in the farm economy."*

"We are in the midst of a farm crisis," NFU President Roger Johnson said in a recent statement. "Net farm income has been cut in half over the past four years, and other indicators point to intense, ongoing stress within our rural communities. Importantly, there is no foreseeable end to these tough conditions. Farmers, ranchers, and their communities are bracing for very hard times."

NFU launched the Farm Crisis Center to help farmers find the information and services they need to get through financial and personal emergencies.

Farmers who have a story to share about how the current farm economy has impacted their

farm are encouraged to share their story (anonymously) on the Farm Crisis Center website, <https://farmcrisis.nfu.org/>, so Farmers Union can understand how to best advocate for you.

NFU will bring these stories and information to the halls of Congress, the administration, and across multimedia platforms to raise awareness for the crisis currently confronting farming and rural communities.

At this year's annual National Farmers Union convention, the delegate body passed a special order of business highlighting the challenges farmers are facing. Farmers Union knows that times are tough right now and that all of you are feeling this stress.

President Johnson recently said it, and I'll say it again: As this organization has done on countless occasions over our proud history, we will stand together through these hard times.

At the national level, Farmers Union has been hard at work, providing written and personal congressional testimony, making annual requests for appropriations, leading hundreds of meetings, and requesting emergency assistance on numerous occasions. NFU notes these efforts have begun to yield positive results, as the Fiscal Year 2017 funding package includes an additional \$1.4 billion across the Farm Service Agency's loan portfolio and a \$500,000 increase for the Certified Agricultural Mediation Program.

While this is a start, our work is not complete.

Farmers Union has already been very active in discussions on the upcoming farm bill, providing testimony on topics like access to credit, dairy, row crops and FSA's loan portfolio. NFU staff also hold nearly daily meetings with Congressional offices to find solutions for dairy and cotton farmers and to lay the groundwork for the next farm bill.

"I want you to know that you are not facing these tough times alone. The 200,000 members of National Farmers Union stand with you, and we are working hard to make your voices heard," Johnson said.

A combination of low crop prices, overwhelming farmer debt, poor growing conditions and other economic and political factors point to worsening of what I think we must call a crisis.

As we continue to work toward the next farm bill, we'd be wise to recall a phrase well-known in the early days of Farmers Union, "Let Us Reason Together."

# Chapter Chatter Share it here!

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



**Above:** WFU member Cherrie Nolden (right) shows visitors how to use electric netting fence during a Women Caring for the Land workshop at her farm last summer.

## Women Caring for the Land events planned

**CHIPPEWA FALLS** – Wisconsin Farmers Union will host a series of Women Caring for the Land workshops around the state this summer. The workshops, held in partnership with Pheasants Forever, are geared toward women farmers or landowners who are interested in learning more about conservation and networking with other farm women in their region.

Each event will be from 9am to 3pm and will include a learning circle, networking and farm tour. Locations include:

- July 25, Brooks Farms, N1757 County Road A Waupaca. Join former Alice in Dairyland Zoey Brooks at her family's state-of-the-art dairy farm, where animal comfort and environmental stewardship are at the forefront of day-to-day operations.

- August 2, Autumn Moon Farm, 854 Fritz Rd., Belleville. Come see how Becky Olsen and her husband, Steve, transitioned their dairy operation into a new niche with specialty grains and on-farm processing. The duo have strong conservation roots and Becky will share how a trout easement, cover crops and other conservation efforts on the farm help protect the watershed.

- August 9, Glacial Lake Cranberries, 2480 County Rd D, Wisconsin Rapids. See how conservation is at the heart of this 6,000-acre operation. Cranberries have been produced on the property since 1873.

Each event is free to the public and will include a potluck lunch. Please bring your appetite and a favorite dish to pass!

Registration and networking for each event will begin at 8:30am. Lunch will be provided. These events allow landowners to observe conservation practices in action. Please wear appropriate clothing and shoes for walking in farm fields or pastures.

Please RSVP to Deb Jakubek at [djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com) or 715-590-2130.

The Women Caring for the Land series, including learning circles and the activities used for these workshops, were developed by the Women, Food and Agriculture Network. For more information about this program, visit [www.womencaringfortheland.org](http://www.womencaringfortheland.org).

## FARMERS UNION HAPPENINGS

- JUN 11, Sauk County WFU Seasonal Planning Meeting and Farm Tour, 1–3 pm, Hilltop Community Farm, S850 Heidrich Rd. La Valle. Dress for spending time outside, rain or shine. Info: Erin Schneider, 608-257-6729.
  - JUN 15, June Dairy Days Farmer Appreciation Dinner, 5-8:30pm, Northern Wisconsin State Fairground, Chippewa Falls. Limited number of free tickets available for Farmers Union members — contact the WFU State Office at 715-723-5561 for more details.
  - JUN 17, Tour de Kolacky bicycle ride with Taylor-Price County Farmers Union, 9am, Phillips High School, 900 Flambeau Ave., Phillips, <http://www.thecrazyloon.com/tour-de-kolacky/>
  - JUL 28, WFU Scholarship Deadline for NFU Fall Legislative Fly-In. Apply under events at [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com)
  - AUG 1, WFU State Convention Workshop Proposal Deadline. Submit ideas under the events tab at [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com)
  - AUG 4-6, Soil Sisters: A Celebration of Wisconsin Farms & Rural Life, Brodhead area, <http://soilsisters.wixsite.com/soilsisters>
  - AUG 17, Summer Conference and County Presidents Meeting, WFU Kamp Kenwood, 19161 79th Ave., Chippewa Falls
  - SEPT 10-13, National Farmers Union Fall Fly-In, see scholarship details on page 16 of this newsletter.
  - DEC 7-8, Midwest CSA Conference, Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells, [www.midwestcsa.com](http://www.midwestcsa.com)
  - JAN 14-18, 2018, National Farmers Union Women's Conference, San Diego, CA.
  - FEB 2-4, 2018, 87th annual WFU State Convention, Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells.
- Submit events to Danielle Endvick at 715-471-0398 or [dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com).

## Apply for Farmers Union Fly-In scholarship

Planning to attend Wisconsin Farm Technology Days at Ebert Enterprises in Algoma July 11-13? Visit Wisconsin Farmers Union at our main booth - 642, at the WFU Kamp Kenwood and Wheel of Farming location in the Youth Tent or in the Innovation Square.

New this year, our space in the Innovation Square will focus on informing attendees about Community Shared Agriculture. Through CSAs, consumers support an individual farm by being a member and paying in advance for a season of vegetables. The materials and display will help farmers and consumers understand what sort of economics are involved in a CSA farm. How much could a farmer expect to make in this unique direct market relationship. Come learn What's In a CSA Weekly Box?

## WFU seeks convention workshop ideas

Wisconsin Farmers Union is seeking workshop proposals for the 87th WFU State Convention Feb. 2-4, 2018 at Chula Vista in Wisconsin Dells.

Presenter proposals are being sought on a variety of topics, including but not limited to: Family farm issues, resiliency in agriculture, conservation, policy issues, beginning or practical farmer knowledge, financial management, farm transition, marketing, agritourism and more.

Workshops will be on Sat., Feb. 3. Those interested in presenting or nominating a presenter are encouraged to submit a proposal on the events page at [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com) or call the State Office at 715-723-5561 by Aug. 1.

# Grandpa's letter to Congress as true today as it was in '95

Dear U.S. Senator/Member of Congress,

I'm Francis J. Levendofsky of Belleville, Kansas and I've been farming for 51 years. My wife, Iolene, and I ran a dairy for 30 years until 1988. We have farmed 600-800 acres the last 46 years, and every year we feed 100 head of cattle. We were also in the hog business and have been in the sheep business for a number of years, but, as you can see, enclosed in this letter is a sale bill. My wife and I have decided to retire from farming, before we lose all of our land.

In the 51 years I have been farming, this past year, I had the best crops I ever raised in my life. For example, I had 45-bushel wheat, 100-bushel dry land corn, and 80-100-bushel milo to the acre. We sold our wheat at harvest for \$3.00 per bushel, and some for \$3.40 per bushel.

We took a government loan on our bins of corn and milo. When it was time to pay bills (seed, fertilizer, chemicals, fuel, and repairs) we discovered we didn't have enough money to pay all of our bills.

I'm 69 years old and in good health. I also receive Social Security benefits at \$767 a month, while my wife receives \$297 a month. It takes the \$297 my wife receives just to pay for medicine and medical bills each month. You see, she has Parkinson's disease. At the present time, we owe the bank \$200,000.00, so tell me, how can we stay in business?

The sale will bring in some money, but then we will have to pay taxes on the sale. Next, we will have to sell land, and we'll have to pay capital gains taxes on what we sell. By that time, we will be out of business, and we won't have enough left to live on for the rest of our lives.

The problem with agriculture is we aren't getting enough money for our crops in comparison to the inflated cost of seed, fertilizer, chemicals, fuel,

repairs, and the cost of new machinery. By the way, we have not purchased any new machinery since the mid-1970s.

In 1951, wheat was \$2.40 a bushel. I bought a new Massey Harris combine, 14-foot model, Super 27 for \$4,350. This harvest, wheat was \$3.00 per bushel, and if I wanted to buy a new combine, it would cost \$120,000. It might be a little bigger and more comfortable, but they both do the same job.

Back in 1951, it took 2,000 bushels of wheat to buy a new combine, and in 1995, it would take 40,000 bushels at \$3.00 a bushel. Now, you don't need a college education to figure out why American agriculture is in the shape it's in!

All we need is a price for our crops and livestock. Sure, we need a balanced budget, but our Senators and Representatives need to cut back their salary to what it used to be in the '50s. Then you would be on our level!

If you want to stimulate our economy, get agriculture prices up to standards with the things we have to buy. Then we could make a profit and pay income tax to the government, which would help pay down the national debt.

I believe that if something doesn't happen in the next five years, there will be less than 1/3 of the farmers left in business.

I have a next door neighbor who's 50 years old. He has farmed 1,800 acres for many years. He is completely broke, and will no longer be farming in 1995. Thanks to cheap food policies, American agriculture will be in the same shape: broke.

The politicians and the American people haven't been hungry, yet. If American agriculture doesn't get a price for their products so they can survive, then I'm sure that in the 1996 elections, things will change in our government offices. Then that could affect your income!

I've been a Republican and a Democrat. You, in politics, need to forget your differences and act



**Above:** Francis and Iolene Levendofsky sent nearly 600 letters addressing the farm economy to the President, members of Congress, the Senate and all 50 State Governors in 1995.

on behalf of our country. Please wake up and do something for agriculture, before it is too late.

Yours truly,  
Francis J. Levendofsky

*My late grandfather wrote this letter in March of 1995. He sent it to President Bill Clinton, USDA Secretary Dan Glickman, all 435 members of the United States Congress, all 100 U.S. Senators, and all 50 state Governors. He received many letters of reply back, but very few had ideas on what to do to help the family farmer. Everything on the farm that wasn't bolted down or set in concrete was sold, but all the bills were paid. Grandma and Grandpa did what they had to do to keep from selling any ground, and eventually they rented that ground out to some nearby farmers so they would have retirement income. My father now farms 640 acres of the original 800 they owned through a rental agreement between him and seven of his siblings. Unfortunately, commodity prices are still low, and there is no real relief in sight.*

-Nick Levendofsky  
WFU Gov. Relations Associate

## Auction

As we are retiring we will sell at the place, 7 miles south and 4 1/4 miles west of Chester, Nebraska or 5 miles south, 3 miles east, 2 miles south and 1/2 mile east of Byron, Nebraska, or on Highway 36 from Rydal, Kansas, 6 miles north and 1/2 mile east or from the north edge of Belleville, 4 miles north and 4 1/2 miles west of Belleville, Kansas.

### TUESDAY - MARCH 21, 1995

◆◆◆ Starting at 10:00 A.M. Sharp ◆◆◆

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#### TRACTORS & COMBINE

1973 IHC 1066 diesel tractor, w/adaid hdy., w/3 pt., new batteries, fair rubber, runs good.  
1974 IHC 766 diesel tractor, w/new TA, dual hdy., w/3 pt., new rear & front tires, runs good.  
1983 Chev. C-60 truck, w/3 pt., 34,000 miles, w/16 ft. all metal box & harsh boat, good rubber, very good shape.  
1969 Ford F-600 cab over truck, 361 V8, w/16ft. all metal box & Omaha boat, 5 spd. 2 spd. good rubber, good shape.  
1983 Chev. C-60 truck w/metal box & boat, good rubber, no motor.  
1978 MF 750 Turbo diesel combine, corn & bean special, w/air, heat, chopper, 20ft. header w/home reel, new front tires, good motor, good shape.

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#### STOCKTRAILER, TRUCKS, & VEHICLES

1989 Titan 7x24 ft. goose-neck stocktrailer, 3 compartments, bull package, oil bath bearings, new jack, torsion axle, excellent.  
1981 Chev. Custom Deluxe 30 4X4 pickup 1 ton, flatbed, V8, new engine, 4 spd, new rubber, very good.  
1977 Chev. C-60 truck, V8, 4 spd, 34,000 miles, w/16 ft. all metal box & harsh boat, good rubber, very good shape.  
1969 Ford F-600 cab over truck, 361 V8, w/16ft. all metal box & Omaha boat, 5 spd. 2 spd. good rubber, good shape.  
1983 Chev. C-60 truck w/metal box & boat, good rubber, no motor.  
1981 Buick Le Sabre station wagon, 4 dr. car, V8, auto, maroon color, runs good.

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#### MACHINERY

L.D. 653 row crop beam header 6'x30 in. in very good shape; Bush adapter for MF combine to JD; 1988 Dual 3100 quick tach hdy. front end loader w/8 ft. bucket & grapple fork, IHC backhoe; Dual 7.5 dozer blade (in loader); Dual 5 ft. bucket loader (in 325 loader); Ontar 100L angle dozer blade (in IHC 66 & 56 series); Big K hdy. loader w/5 ft. hdy. bucket; (in 960 Ford); 1987 Krause 4170 hdy. 140 field cultivator w/harrow attach., excellent; Krause 180L hdy. fold wheel disc w/in. spacings, good; JD 1610 double row grain drill, 16x10in. w/fertilizer, seeder, hdy. lift, very nice; JD 38 forage harvester chopper w/2 row arrow head, good; JD 66 mower head for 38 forage harvester; JD 6ft. pickup attach. for 38 forage harvester; JD DFB 16ft in. grain drill w/fertilizer, hdy. lift, on rubber; JD 336 twine tie square baler wedge drop, good; IHC 720 semi mounted 5x18 in. high clearance plow w/break away mold board; IHC 400 Cyclo air planter 6'x30 in. w/mount, w/rover, bean, milo drums; IHC 78 front mount cultivator, 6'x30 in. w/hdy. lift; IHC 470 monitor 3 pt. PTO, w/hdy. lift; IHC 440 lock twin wire tie square baler, good; Gehl 100 granular meter wheel, scales & magnet, 4 screens, very good; Gehl 9000 forage harvester, 12h. hdy. dump 4 wheel wagon, good shape; Big Blue PTO slage unloading wagon w/havy running gear; Lendox 4 wheel slage trailer & boat w/steer floor; Schwartz 3450 PTO walking tandem 18x6 ft. manure spreader, nice; Case PTO 25KW generator on wheels, 110-220 volt; Van Brunt 1500in. grain drill wheeder, on rubber; NH 455 trail type 7ft. sickle mower; IHC 4 row rotary mold board pull type tiller; IHC 4 row front mount cultivator; Set 18.4 x 38 clamp on disc; Set 18.4 x 38 clamp on disc; IHC tractor foot & rear weights; Feetion Roll-Mix PTO 40 ton, roller mill & mixer, on rubber; Pape 170 PTO 2 wheel feed wagon, good; Square baler accumulator hdy. fork lift for loader; Square 8 bale accumulator; Case 2 wheel 300 gal. row tank sprayer w/boom & jet; 2,200 gal. saddle poly tanks w/belly mount frame for tractor; Kent 24ft. springtooth, w/3 rows teeth, harrow attach.; Case 4x16 semi mounted plow; Case 4x16 pull type plow; Case 3x14 pull type plow; 18 ft. 2 wheel trailer frame w/elect. brakes; JD 434 wiwers header 4x36 in. NH 510 PTO manure spreader for parts; NH 16ft. weather head for 1116 NH, not complete; 1985 pull type 2 wheel dirt mover, good; JD 3 pt. 16 ft. springtooth; JD 4 section rotary borer; 3-IHC 4 wheel side rakes on rubber; 2 wheel heavy frame combine trailer; GF 41 ft. 6 in. auger w/3 hp. elect. motor, new motor; 2 hdy. tractor cylinders, 4 wheel elect. running gear wheel; JD 4 section harrow; Dearborn 13-1 field cultivator 2 row; 3 pt. square tubing hitch; 4 Duncan hand banners; 10 ft. hand packer; 6h. 3 pt. reversible blade; MM 6ft. conveyor; IHC 2x14 plow; Farris wheel bala loader; Gehl slage cutter; Charlyn hdy. pump; Kelly Ryan Elevator; Gandy 10 ft. spreader; 2-JD 10 ft. springtooth; Some pieces of iron & other.

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#### LIVESTOCK EQUIPMENT

Un Baler hdy. 3 pt. big bale unroller; Pax 6 ton bulk bin w/hdy. auger, nice; 3 pt. big bale mover; Metal calf creep feeder; Metal big bale sides for truck; 4-metal 12 ft. cattle feed bunk; Slage bunk feeder; 10 tractor tire feeders; 11 tractor metal rim feeders; 4 elevator feed bunk; 2 metal 1x16ft. bag chutes; 30-metal bag wire 16 ft. pasale; 16 clay metal farrowing crates w/wheelers, complete; 24 tender foot pads 2x5 ft.; 2 row apple vater; Metal pig carrier 5x7ft.; 3 sheep tanks; wood nut cattle feeders; used bar wire tank heater; some 5 ft. steel posts; cattle oilers; Several used hog feeders; 16 large gray geese; 6 tame mallard ducks; & other.

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#### HEDGE POSTS, CEDAR LOGS & PIPE

250 large hedge corner posts 9 ft.; 1,000 nice hedge line posts; 1,500 nice medium size line posts; 750 small hedge line posts; 50 Red cedar logs various sizes; 42-ft. x 2 in. lengths pipe; 24-15ft. x 4 in. lengths oil pipe.

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#### BUILDINGS, LUMBER & VINYL SIDING

20x33 ft. school house to be moved or torn down; large barn to be torn down; Lots of 2x4's, 2x6's, 2x8's, 1x6's & other lumber various lengths; some native 4x4 lumber; 7-2x8 ft. plywood; Enough vinyl 8 in. siding to do a 2 story home w. corners, very good.

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#### MISCELLANEOUS

3-500 gal. fuel barrels w/stand; 300 gal. fuel barrel w/stand; 300 & 500 gal. fuel barrels; 300 gal. propane tank; 150 gal. pickup fuel barrel; Metal truck hitch; 3 ton Door Jack; Continental 30 ton hdy. jack; several hdy. jacks; Metal car ramps; Continental 1 ton hdy. shop hoist, like new; Lincoln 225 amp. AC DC arc welder; R.R. Irons Elect. metal band saw model WB 600; Dayson 3/4 hp. bench grinder; well pipe holder; Large pipe threaders & cutters; 12h. x 4 in. auger; 500 ft. new 5/8 in. cable; New Vin. cable; 12 ft. 1 beam; Pipe fittings; 2 & 4 ft. levels; used elect. motors; Metal saw boxes; Adj. pipe stands; bolts; brass & bitz; 5 hp. & 9 hp. Briggs motors; 2 cyl. Wisconsin motor; Set milo guards clamp on; 9-14 ft. Heaton swather sleds; 2 St. John sun silage engager; 2 sets slage truck sleds; 2 truck engager; wood truck sleds; 4 truck tires; Auerer, used tires; IHC planter; Ester Go energy booster fuel conditioner, 14 gal.; 9 cases 14 ounce bottles; 18.4 x 34 tractor chains; 2 pair 8.25 x 20 truck tire chains; 3 rack loads of farm misc. items & hand tools & other.

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#### ANTIQUES

Parlin & Orendorf Co. cast iron imp. seat; blow torch; post drill; well pulley; ice tong; barn wood pulley block & tackle; 300 & 500 lb. platform scales; cross cut saw; wood pulley; wood kitchen bench; last press; Johnson & Johnson first aid metal display shelf; Cast iron boiler; forged hog cabin; several truck jax; several glass cutting jax & other.

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Auctioneers Note: A good line of field ready farm machinery that has been well taken care of.  
Lunch by St. Edwards After Society  
Clear: Peoples National Bank, Belleville, Kansas

**TERMS: CASH** Nothing removed until settled for (Not responsible for accidents)

**OWNER: FRANCIS & IOLENE LEVENDOFSKY**  
913-527-5049

**AUCTIONEERS: NOVAK BROTHERS & GIEBER**

Las Novak Mandan, ND. 913/987-5588 Auctioneer	Roger Novak Mankato, IA. 913/778-2744 Auctioneer & Broker	Butch Gieber Cuba, KS. 913/729-3831 Auctioneer
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## Holman to keynote Energy Fair

Wisconsin Farmers Union District 6 Director Chris Holman will be a keynote at the 28th annual Energy Fair June 16-18 in Custer.

Holman and his partner Maria Davis run Nami Moon Farms, a diversified livestock, poultry, fruit and vegetable farm near Stevens Point. Chris has represented Wisconsin family farmers in advocacy efforts locally and abroad as a member of the National Farmers Union's Next Generation Advisory Council.



Holman

The Energy Fair brings over 13,000 attendees together to learn about clean energy and sustainability, connect with others, and take action towards a sustainable future. The event features over 200 workshops, 200-plus exhibitors

and inspirational keynotes.

Other keynote speakers featured will be JB Straubel, co-founder of Tesla; Erica Mackie, GRID Alternatives; Kari Lydersen, Midwest Energy News; Jason Edens, Rural Renewable Energy Alliance; and Paul Allen Hunton, Documentary Director.

Attendees will also enjoy live music, camping, family fun, great food, and more. Organized by the Midwest Renewable Energy Association, The Energy Fair is the longest-running event of its kind in the nation.

Be sure to stop by the Wisconsin Farmers Union booth at C4 and say hello! Tickets and event information can be found at <http://TheEnergyFair.org>. Through June 18, WFU members can enter the code 'WFU5' at checkout to receive \$5 off total online order.

New this year, consider attending a second Energy Fair in St. Paul, MN on September 9-10, 2017.

*The 28<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL*  
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## Losing one dairy farm a day is not 'normal'



Kara O'Connor  
 Government Relations Director

Headlines from the past month reveal the disappointing truth about the state of Wisconsin's dairy industry. "Dairy industry breathes a sigh of relief," said one headline, celebrating a "return to normal"

now that most of the farmers who were axed by Grassland Dairy Products have found new milk buyers.

And what does "normal" look like? "Dairy farm exits outpaced 10-year trend," read another headline from *Hoard's Dairyman*, noting Wisconsin lost 400 dairy farms in 2016.

There is nothing "normal" about America's Dairyland losing more than a dairy farm per day in 2016. If that is what passes for normal in today's dairy industry, then we need an entirely new normal. One place to start is strengthening Wisconsin's prohibition on corporate farm ownership.

Wisconsin's anti-corporate farming law was written in 1973. Since then, it has been chipped away, creating loopholes that allow even very large corporations to own farmland.

Wis Statutes Section 182.001(1) prohibits corporations with 16 or more shareholders from owning farmland and farming operations, including "the pro-

duction of dairy products not including the processing of such dairy products." This law prevents large publicly-traded corporations — about 1 percent of all U.S. businesses — from owning Wisconsin farms. However, corporations with 15 or fewer shareholders face no such limitations on their ability to own farms or farmland. Grassland Dairy Products, a privately-held family corporation, apparently has fewer than 16 shareholders, so regardless of its size and corporate status it can own unlimited amounts of farmland and farming operations.

Another significant loophole in Wisconsin's anti-corporate farming law is that it allows corporate investors to own unlimited amounts of farmland, as long as the land is in turn rented to a farmer.

Wisconsin Statutes 182.001(2)(e) states: "This section [prohibiting corporate ownership of farmland] does not apply to agricultural land acquired by a corporation or trust for expansion or other corporate or trust business purposes and such land may be used for farming operations if leased to a person not prohibited from engaging in farming operations[.]"

Wisconsin is experiencing a growing trend of investor-ownership of farmland, such as purchases by retirement fund TIAA-CREF, which drive up the cost of farmland and make it harder for beginning farmers to purchase farmland. We should not accept as "normal" a world in which farmers are merely tenants on land owned by an out-of-state corporate investor. When an investment fund like TIAA-CREF owns the land,

there is very little hope that the farmer will ever have the chance to buy it or pass it down to the next generation. This chipping away of farmer ownership of land also has significant implications for conservation. Why should a farmer invest in soil health or conservation practices on land that he or she doesn't own?

If there is one issue where there is almost universal agreement among farmers, it is that there should be limits on corporate ownership of farms. Wisconsin Farmers Union conducted a survey of all Wisconsin dairy farmers last fall, and 88 percent of respondents answered 'yes' to the following question: "Should farm organizations like Wisconsin Farmers Union continue to stand up for laws that limit foreign and corporate ownership of farms?"

It did not go unnoticed by Wisconsin farmers that at the same time Grassland Dairy was dropping dozens of family farms, it was directly engaged in assisting the development of a 5,000-cow CAFO in Dunn County. Grassland is the largest producer of butter in the nation, with a market share of nearly 50 percent. Its effort to consolidate ownership at both the processing and farm level is a perfect example of why we need stronger anti-corporate farming laws. If we fail to put some reasonable limits on corporate farming in Wisconsin, we can expect to see less farmland owned by actual farmers, and more of Wisconsin's family farms getting pink slips from their processors in the years to come. That is not a future that any of us should accept as normal.

# WELCOME TO OUR FARMHOOD

## *Soil Sisters tour celebrates rural life*

**Danielle Endvick**  
Communications Director

Linda Dee remembers toddling along with her mother planting bean seeds in the family garden as a child. With those seeds was planted a love for the land that has continued through the years, evident in the sprawling gardens on her Monticello farm.

As she lifts the gate latch to let me pass by, Dee reminisces, "That was back in the days when you didn't run to town to get things fixed —Dad could fix anything."

Dee took that self-sufficiency to heart and continues to grow much of her own food and spins her own fiber on the farm, with infectious energy and spirit.

"I think I'm a very young 70," Dee says with a sassy grin, revealing that her birthday is coming up. "It's the new 50."

Her cure for staying young is home-grown cooking and tending sheep, she confides, as she spryly switches her flock from one paddock into the next. The flock, a mix of rare heritage sheep, follow loyally at her heels.

### **Create your own adventure**

Dee is one of 20 women farmers who will welcome visitors and host workshops during the 6th annual Soil Sisters tour Aug. 4-6. (Dee's workshop is aptly named "Steeped in Sheep.")

The event, proudly sponsored by the Wisconsin Farmers Union Foundation, along with the Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service and Renewing the Countryside, showcases an incredible community of women farmers around Monroe and Brodhead in southern Wisconsin.

"I always know I can call on the Soil Sisters. We help each other in the network," Dee said, as she gingerly pats a lamb named Basil.

"It hasn't always been this way," said Claudia Dela Ends of Scotch Hill Farm near Brodhead. "You have to find your tribe," she advises others who are working to build community in their own regions.

The Soil Sisters tour was born out of a number of networking events and potlucks held in the area.

"I think as farmers it's easy for us to stay in our own little bubble on our farms," said Katy Dickson, who has established Christensen's Farm, a CSA farm just across the road from the dairy farm where she was raised near Browntown. "Until I starting attending potlucks hosted by our local Women in Sustainable Ag group, I had no idea how many incredible wom-



Photo by John Ivanko

*The Soil Sisters invite you to catch some laughs and take in some workshops, good food and fun during the Soil Sisters tour Aug. 4-6 on farms near Brodhead and Monroe.*

en farmers lived nearby."

She looks forward to hosting an Art in the Outdoors workshop with her sister during Soil Sisters and opening her farm for tours.

"I think getting people out of their usual habitat and showing them where their food comes from is so incredibly important," Dickson said.

With 20 workshops and other activities spread throughout the three days, Soil Sisters tourists can craft their own farm and culinary adventure.

From heirloom tomatoes to pickles, sheep to solar energy, farmstay bed & breakfasts to beef, the farmers and artisan food producers will share a unique diversity of farm experiences that highlight the summer's bounty.

Visitors can choose from a variety of activities, including a Farm to Table Dinner at Dorothy's Range, Taste of Place culinary event at Cow & Quince or a Pizza on the Farm fundraiser.

Area restaurants will feature specials throughout the weekend. For the on-farm workshops, participants can preserve the harvest, make some cheese, paint some barn board art or just relax on a tree swing.

If there's one thing visitors can be sure of, it's that they won't leave the countryside feeling under-nourished. The Soil Sisters' recipe to success for building community is a blend of networking and good food.

Wander in for a session on baking bread or join in



Photo by John Ivanko

*Take in a farm tour, workshops or a picnic on the farm during Soil Sisters.*

the fun on Friday evening and meet the farmers during the Taste of Place event at Cow & Quince. This bold little restaurant, owned by Soil Sister and entrepreneur Lori Stern is known for its use of local ingredients, unique flair and creative menu.

"There's something for everyone," said Soil Sisters organizer and author Lisa Kivirst, who will host Pizza on the Farm at her family's Inn Serendipity in Browntown. She notes each days' activities are family-friendly but also a fun chance for a girls' day or couples retreat.

South Central Wisconsin Farmers Union President Kriss Marion will also host an In Her Boots workshop from 10am to 3pm on Aug. 4 at Circle M Market Farm in Blanchardville. The event will feature Start-up Strategies for Women Farmers, with advice from a team of Soil Sisters.

At the request of the savvy Sisters, Governor Walker has proclaimed the first week of August as Women in Sustainable and Organic Agriculture Week, showcasing the growth of the movement in Wisconsin. Women represent approximately 11 percent of primary operators on all farms in Wisconsin, a higher number than neighboring Midwest states. Wisconsin has 1,180 organic farms, second

only to California.

"Soil Sisters highlights a cross-section of women farmers, representing one of the fastest growing groups of new growers prioritizing small-scale, diversified, community--focused agriculture," says Tom Quinn, Executive Director of the Wisconsin Farmers Union Foundation.

"Come meet your farmers and learn about local, seasonal food and how we can all transform what's on our plate," Kivirst said.

Visit [www.soilsisterswi.org](http://www.soilsisterswi.org) for more details and to find purchase links for ticketed events.

For me, a spring visit to their neck of the woods offered a look into the lives of the Soil Sisters that felt a bit like glimpsing the pulse of the countryside.

Though they share stories, laughter and a love for their rural way of life, no two farms or farmers are exactly alike. Their paths to farming are varied. Woven among them are tales of farm transitions, some heartbreak, leaving the family farm only to find it is where you long to be, or of life in the city left for quieter days working in the soil.

Born out of sweat and love, the farms are tended by this hardy, inspiring and welcoming group that have become the Soil Sisters.



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**Taste of Place at Cow & Quince - Friday, August 4**

A local food & drink celebration in New Glarus. Ticketed event.

**Farm to Table Dinner - Saturday, August 5**

Farm-to-table dinner at Dorothy's Range in Blanchardville featuring heritage meats. Ticketed event.

**Dine Fine - Friday, August 4 to Sunday, August 6**

Sample "locavore" specials at area restaurants throughout the weekend.



August 4-6, 2017

[www.soilsisterswi.org](http://www.soilsisterswi.org)



Photos by Danielle Endvick  
 The Soil Sisters will welcome visitors to their farmhood with fun activities at their farms and local restaurants near Brodhead and Monroe Aug 4-6. Pictured are (from top) Katy Dickson, who will host an art workshop and tours on her CSA farm; Lori Stern, who will welcome the hungry at Cow & Quince Cafe in New Glarus; and Linda Dee, who plans to share all things sheep during a "Steeped in Sheep" workshop on her Monticello farm.



Photo by Danielle Endvick

*Above: Caleb Langworthy offers the eager Blue Ox flock a fresh paddock.*

### **From p.1 ► LEADERS**

being "Where the Driftless Meets the North Woods." The pair have been building a farm business and life on the 153-acre property for the past several years. Their farm endeavors originated as a 2-acre market garden on rented land outside Mondovi. After moving to Wheeler, the farm grew to 5 acres in market garden, a winter CSA, hay, and ruminants on pastures.

The duo have sold their farm's products through farmers markets, food co-ops and wholesale accounts but are focusing more these days on direct-to-consumer. As the farm matures, they are trimming back their vegetable sales to put more energy into rotational grazing of their 100-ewe flock and small beef herd.

"After seeing what regenerative grazing can do, I questioned, 'Why am I tilling the soil?'" Caleb said of their decision to focus more on grazing.

### **Learning as they grow**

Caleb came to farming in an unusual way — his taste buds led him to it. While working in fine dining, he found local, fresh ingredients truly made a difference. His interest in local foods sparked a series of internships and employment on farms that eventually led him to a degree in agriculture.

Lauren serves as Program Director for the Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) She previously worked with Extension as a Community Coordinator leading 4-H and Master Gardener programs.

Neither had experience with livestock growing up, so they've learned and grown their knowledge of animal hus-

bandry along the way.

"Every year we've shown marked improvements in what we produce here," Caleb said proudly, glancing out over the grazing flock. "Hopefully this year will continue that trend."

### **Stepping up**

The Langworthys joined Wisconsin Farmers Union in 2013.

"I like the Democratic nature of Farmers Union and how the organization takes nods from their membership," Caleb said.

"There's a lot of focus not only on what you can do to help you and your farm, but also what we can do to help each other as farmers," Lauren added.

The pair have been reaching out to other beginning farmers in their neighborhood, working to build a sense of community.

"We were realizing we can't wait for someone to show up and get all the beginning farmers together," Lauren said.

The Langworthys said they're looking forward to building those organizing skills and meeting farmers from other states and different types of farms through the FUE Leadership Program.

"I think it will be interesting to meet other farmers who might be outside our normal bubble of interaction and to learn about their farms and gain a better understanding of different farming practices," Caleb said.

They plan to put that knowledge to work back in their neighborhood.

"We're hoping we can bring back what we learn and apply it in our neck of the woods," Lauren said. "All of us together need to work so we're strong as a rural community."



Photo by Danielle Endvick

*Above: A small herd of Scottish Highland cattle are helping the Langworthys with remediation of wooded pasture land.*

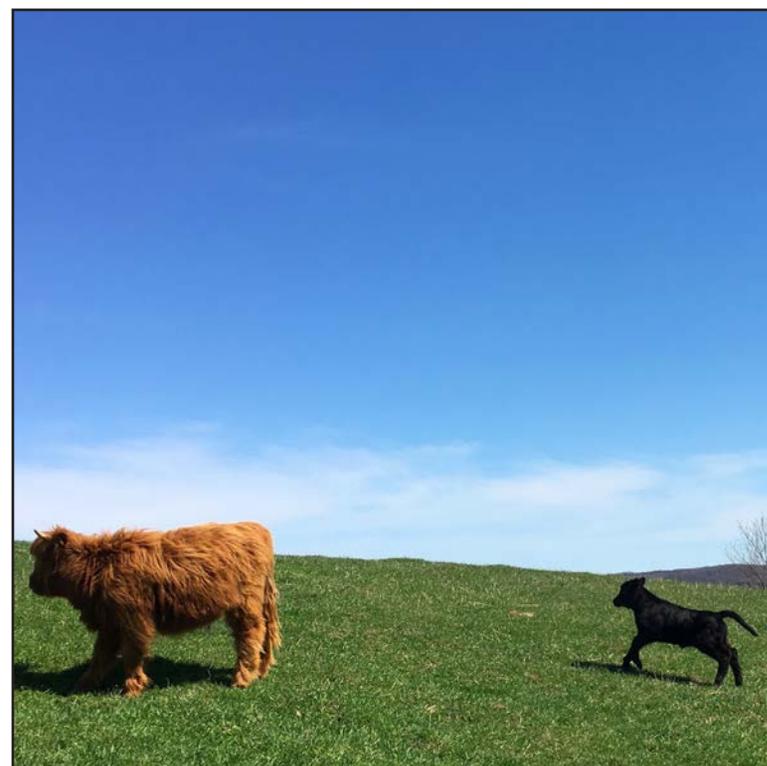


Photo by Lauren Langworthy

*Above: Spring brings new life to Blue Ox Organics.*

# Rough road ahead

## Wisconsin faces transportation funding woes



**Nicholas Levendofsky**  
Government Relations Associate

Wisconsin Farmers Union staffers do a lot of driving for our jobs. Wisconsin is a big state, and we have meetings and events that take us to nearly every corner and county. We do so much driving, in fact, we often rent cars because it is much cheaper to pay the rental company for a vehicle and reimburse staff for the fuel purchased. I'm glad for that, because my car has taken quite a beating since moving up here from Kansas in late July. Just crossing the state line from Iowa into Wisconsin is enough to make you wake up to the reality of the condition Wisconsin roads are in, and something needs to be done before it gets much worse.

The Wisconsin Assembly GOP has a plan, though. Some have recently embraced a plan to apply new taxes on fuel, cut a required markup on gas and raise registration fees for hybrid vehicles to help pay for roads. This plan has another caveat, though, one that scales back income taxes over the next 12 years.

The plan would trim income taxes next year and slash them over the decade after that, eventually cutting liabilities for taxpayers and revenue for the state by more than \$2 billion a year. That's about 40% of what taxpayers spend each year on funding K-12 public education.

It would reduce the number of tax brackets from four to one while making changes that could squeeze middle-income taxpayers. The proposal would also eliminate the married couple tax credit, the renters tax credit, and a property tax credit aimed at helping working and middle-class homeowners.

In dollar terms, the biggest tax cuts by far would go to the taxpayers with the highest incomes. Taxpayers with incomes of \$1 million and up would receive an average annual tax cut of \$75,584 when changes included in the tax package are completely implemented in 2029. In contrast, taxpayers who earn between \$50,000 and \$100,000, an amount typical for a Wisconsin family, would receive an average income tax cut of \$829, about 1/90 the size of the average tax cut for millionaires.

Some taxpayers with the lowest incomes would actually pay more in income taxes under this proposal. Taxpayers with incomes of under \$25,000 would pay \$9 a year more in taxes on average when changes included in the tax package are completely phased in in 2029. More importantly, any income tax cut for low or moderate income Wisconsinites could be more than offset if the sharp reduction in state income tax revenue causes other taxes and fees to increase.

Wisconsin Farmers Union policy reaffirms the general principle of progressive taxation, with the wealthy paying a higher percentage of their income in taxes than the poor. The income tax is a more progressive tax than the sales tax or property tax. Wisconsin Farmers Union urges the heaviest reliance on the income tax in funding essential government programs such as transportation funding.

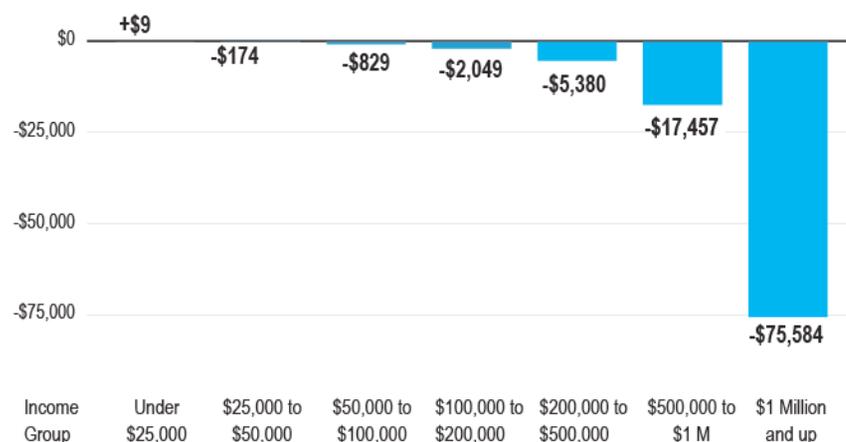
Drivers would pay 7.2 cents more per gallon of gas when prices are at \$2.40 per gallon, according to the Legislature's nonpartisan budget office. Backers of the plan argue the changes to the state's minimum markup law would counteract that increase.

The proposal would also end the \$30-wheel tax Milwaukee County recently enacted. The other 19 communities that already have wheel

### "Flat Tax" Proposal for Wisconsin Would Result in Very Large Tax Cuts for Wealthiest

Wisconsin Assembly Republicans have proposed a "flat tax," in which all taxpayers pay the same income tax rate. Under the current system, taxpayers with higher incomes pay higher income tax rates. The flat tax would be phased in over ten years; this chart shows the average tax change by income group for the year 2029 once the flat tax and other changes in the proposal are fully implemented. Tax change amounts include filers with a tax decrease as well as those with a tax increase.

AVERAGE TAX CHANGE BY INCOME GROUP, 2029



Source: Legislative Fiscal Bureau

WISCONSIN BUDGET PROJECT

taxes would be able to keep them, but any new wheel taxes would have to be approved by referendum.

The plan includes a mass of other elements, such as clearing the way for tolls, putting limits on building roundabouts, and allowing local governments to temporarily increase the sales tax.

The legislative package, put together by Rep. Dale Kooyenga (R-Brookfield), would cut the 32.9-cent-per-gallon gas tax by 4.8 cents, but then apply the state's 5% sales tax to gas. That would increase the total amount in taxes the state collects on gas, but Kooyenga insists it doesn't amount to a tax increase.

Governor Walker is on record saying he opposes raising taxes on gasoline and has expressed skepticism of moving toward a flat income tax at this time

Wisconsin Farmers Union supports the following options for increasing funding for road projects: general fund/income tax, gas tax, vehicle registration fees based on gross vehicle weight, local sales taxes, new vehicle tax, and local wheel taxes. We are putting everything out on the table, because we know it's going to take ideas from both sides of the aisle to fix this problem. The transportation funding proposal on its own has some merit, but not as long as it is tied to income tax breaks for the wealthy.

The grassroots membership of WFU does not support this shortsighted plan to reduce income taxes for the wealthy, raise taxes on lower income workers, and put a Band-Aid on the bullet wound that is transportation funding in Wisconsin. If anything, the two proposals should be separated, and run them on their own individual merits. It's time for legislators to go back to the drawing board and develop a transportation funding plan that is fair for all Wisconsinites.

# Summit addresses hunger



**Tommy Enright**  
Communications  
Associate

In early May, Feeding Wisconsin hosted the second annual Hunger and Health Summit in Wisconsin Rapids. The summit was a two-day gathering of roughly 200 direct service providers, state agencies, healthcare providers, insurance providers, anti-hunger and food system advocates, and other stakeholders interested in fighting hunger and improving health.

“Hunger and health are intimately connected,” said David Lee, the executive director at Feeding Wisconsin. “Hunger leads to poor health, which can keep people out of the workforce, reduce children’s ability to learn, and increase public healthcare costs. Our intent with the conference is to help hunger fighters, health promoters and other stakeholders throughout the state to network and learn from each other in order to cross-pollinate and accel-

erate our progress toward a healthy and hunger-free Wisconsin. Given the challenges our friends and neighbors are facing with rising healthcare costs and increased barriers to nutrition assistance, this work now seems more important than ever.”

The summit had three general sessions and four different tracks for attendees to follow: hunger and health partnerships, policy and research, Foodshare outreach, and a healthy emergency food system. Each of the tracks featured a handful of plenary sessions related to their respective topics. Presenters came from across the state to espouse their knowledge.

Among the plenary session presenters was Wisconsin Farmers Union Government Relations Associate Nick Levendofsky, who spoke about the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) program and its relation to the Farm Bill.

“The Health & Hunger Summit was a wonderful opportunity for Wisconsin Farmers Union to put our policy on keeping SNAP programs in the Farm Bill in front of people we might not otherwise interact with,”



Photo by Tommy Enright

**Above:** Wisconsin Farmers Union Government Relations Associate Nick Levendofsky spoke about the importance of the SNAP Program and its relation to the Farm Bill during the Wisconsin Hunger & Health Summit.

Levendofsky said. “Finding and forming coalitions to preserve these vital programs are important, and the Summit helps to introduce and foster those coalitions.”

The summit’s keynote speaker was Commissioner Bevan Baker from the City of Milwaukee Health

Department, who gave a moving account of his personal history and path to fighting hunger.

One quote that stuck with me was when he shared the inscription on his mother’s grave, “I don’t have money, but I can feed you.”

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# ‘I felt the walls move’

## *Barron County farm family huddles in corner as twister destroys dairy barn*

*Editor's Note: Cory and Janelle Picknell are long-time Farmers Union members and the son-in-law and daughter of previous Wisconsin Farmers Union board member Janet Nelson. Our thoughts are with the family and others impacted by this powerful storm.*

**Heidi Clausen**

*Regional Editor | The Country Today*

Cory Picknell and his three sons were feeding haylage and getting stalls ready to bring in the cows for milking on the evening of May 16 when the western sky suddenly and ominously darkened. There was no time to run to the house for shelter, so they huddled together in a corner of the barn and hoped for the best.

“There wasn’t much wind. It was brief,” Picknell said. “There was a big gust of wind. I saw trees snapping off across the road, and the power went out.”

Above them, the barn roof was ripped away and, Picknell said, he “felt the walls move” as the barn collapsed around them. He remembers wishing that, whatever the outcome, it would be over soon.

While many families in his rural Prairie Farm neighborhood sustained heavy damage, Picknell’s dairy operation bore the brunt of the EF2 tornado that swept through Barron and Rusk counties late that day, wiping out a mobile home park in Chetek, killing one person and injuring a couple dozen others.

The strong storm system, with winds up to 130 miles per hour, also damaged or destroyed six turkey barns owned by Jennie-O Turkey Store just off County Road SS across the road from the trailer court. Torrential rainfall — in excess of 5 inches in places — caused severe damage to roads and farm fields throughout west-central and northwestern Wisconsin.

While he’s still assessing his losses, Picknell said he’s also counting his blessings as no one in his family was

injured in the storm, and, other than a couple of unaccounted-for barn cats, no animals were lost.

“You got to keep your sense of humor,” he said. “You got to always look forward and not back.”

He’s grateful to the dozens of people who have showed up at the farm every day since the storm to ask what they can do to help him and his family pick up the pieces. The milking process must go on, and 53 of his cows are being cared for at his father-in-law’s place, while another seven-plus dry cows have been moved to a neighbor’s farm.

Fence already was repaired at his farm last week so the heifers could go back outside, he said, and a new barn roof already was being erected after the old rafters were removed.

Along with damaging the barn, the storm took a pole shed and garage and tore off the top halves of two of Picknell’s silos. The house may not be salvageable as the roof was blown away and it may have shifted on the foundation.

“There’s not much left,” he said.

Picknell said his cattle, who were about 15 minutes away from entering the barn that evening, suffered little more than a few scrapes and cuts from flying debris.

In a nod to President Donald Trump’s campaign chant, he said people need look no further than what’s been happening in his farming community after the storm to see firsthand “what makes America great,” as neighbors lovingly rally around those affected by the violent weather.

“Seeing a farm my dad built from nothing to what it is today ... taken away all in a matter of minutes is heart-breaking,” Picknell’s son, Seth, wrote in a Facebook post last week. “The silver lining to all of this is while the barn came down around us, we were all unharmed. Others in the area were not so lucky and lives were lost. We can rebuild, but you can’t get those people back.”



Submitted photo

*The Cory and Janelle Picknell dairy farm near Prairie Farm sustained heavy losses in last week’s storm. Cory and his sons waited out the storm from a corner of their dairy barn, which lost its roof.*

Not far from the Picknell farm, Dean and Leslie Frisler reported damage to a youngstock barn. Throughout the valley, small buildings were leveled and trees decimated.

Barbara Young of Dority Valley Dairy, about 1½ miles from the Picknell farm, said they were setting up their generator when they saw the storm clouds roll through and ran to the house.

### **Planting delays expected**

Katie Stariha, director for the Farm Service Agency in Barron, Rusk and Sawyer counties, said her office has been “in assessment mode” this past week, working with farmers to take stock of the damage and assist with claims.

More specifics will be known in the coming days, Stariha said, but they have been hearing of structural damage to barns and sheds — mainly in the Prairie Farm and Conrath areas — as well as soil erosion in fields from the heavy rain.

Along with the hundreds of turkeys killed in the Jennie-O barns leveled near Chetek, she has heard of some beef and dairy cattle mortalities, but losses were “minimal.”

It’s too early to tell if there was damage to crops, she said, but the main concerns will be delayed planting of fields and storm debris strewn about hay fields affecting the first cutting of alfalfa.

Stariha said most of the corn has been planted in Barron County, and optimum soybean planting is approaching. Timely planting may be more difficult in Rusk and Sawyer counties, where there’s more standing water in fields. Some recently planted fields may not yield a crop at all this season because of all the moisture.

“There’s no way to assess that yet,” she said. “We’ll know more in a couple weeks,” after plants begin emerging from the soil.

Stariha urges affected farmers to reach out to their local FSA, UW-Extension and Land and Water Conservation offices for assistance and to let officials know as soon as possible if they lost livestock, but she added, “Take care of home first.”

After surveying last week’s storm damage, Gov. Scott Walker declared a State of Emergency for Barron, Jackson and Rusk counties. He directed state agencies to help those affected by the storms and called the Wisconsin National Guard to state active duty to assist local authorities in the recovery efforts. The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Wisconsin Department of Administration, Wisconsin Department of Health Services, Wisconsin State Patrol and Wisconsin Emergency Management have been assisting with response and recovery efforts.

Wisconsin Farmers Union and friends salute family farmers during

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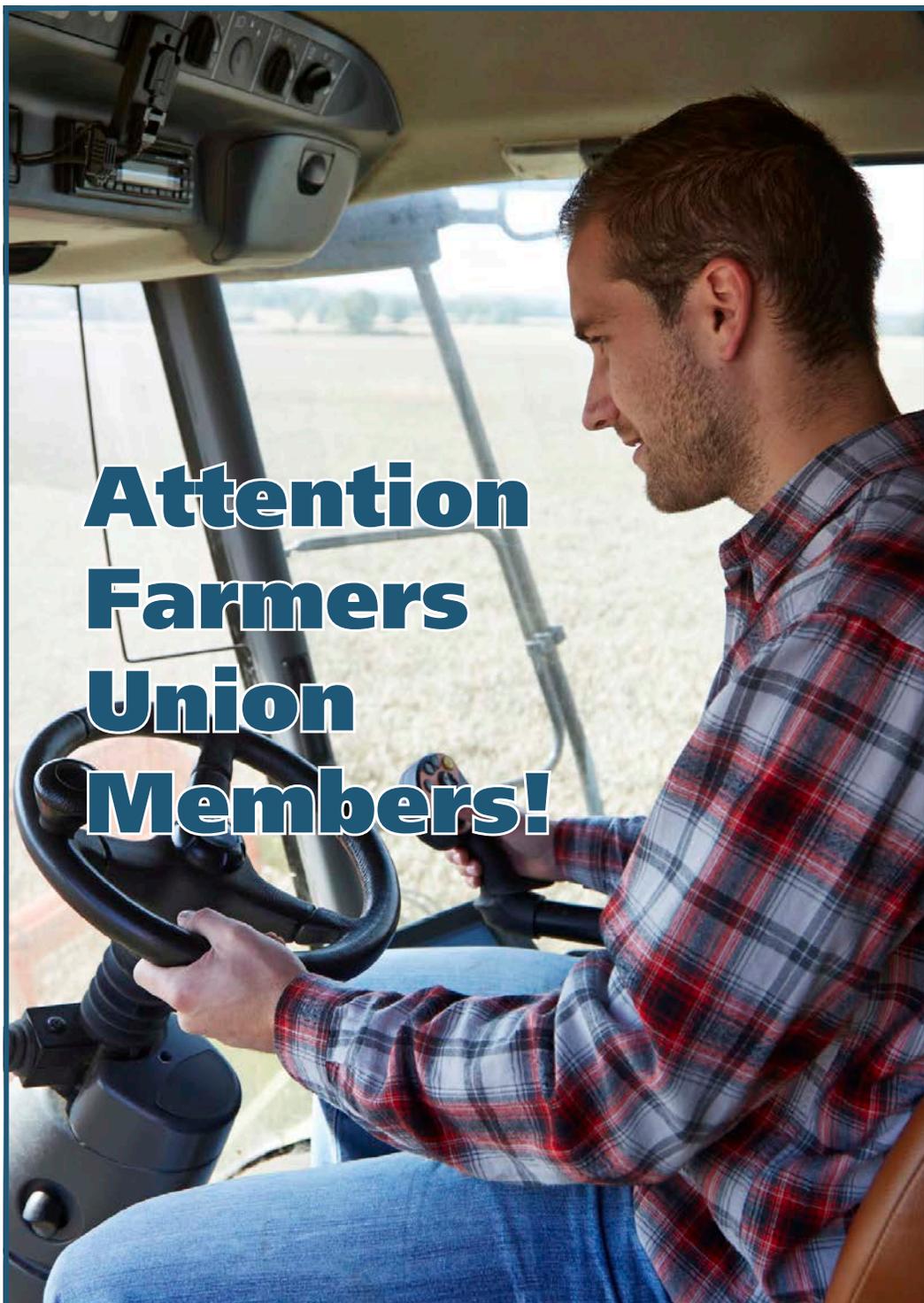
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### Household Type:

Farm    Rural    Small Town    Urban

### Type of Farm: *Check all that apply.*

Dairy    Poultry    Vegetables or Fruit

Beef    Crops    Organic

Hogs    Horses    Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Membership:** *Fee includes family unless student or organization is checked.*

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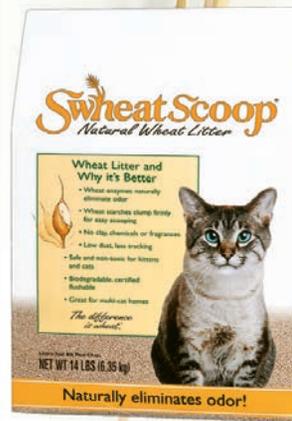
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# Five Reasons to Attend the Farmers Union Fly-In

## Scholarship applications for first-time attendees due July 28

**Tommy Enright**  
Communications Associate

Every year, hundreds of farmers from around the country converge on Washington, D.C. to attend National Farmers Union's Fall Legislative Fly-In. During the fly-in, groups of members from each state meet with their Members of Congress and Senators to discuss issues that are affecting family farmers.

This year, Wisconsin Farmers Union is offering four scholarships for WFU members interested in attending the NFU Fly-In. Applications are due July 28 and can be found on [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com) under our Upcoming Events or Legislation tabs. Why should you attend?

**1. Meet people from other National Farmers Union states.** Fly-in is a great opportunity to connect with members from other state Farmers Union organizations. Broaden your horizons and get to know the rest of the Farmers Union family.



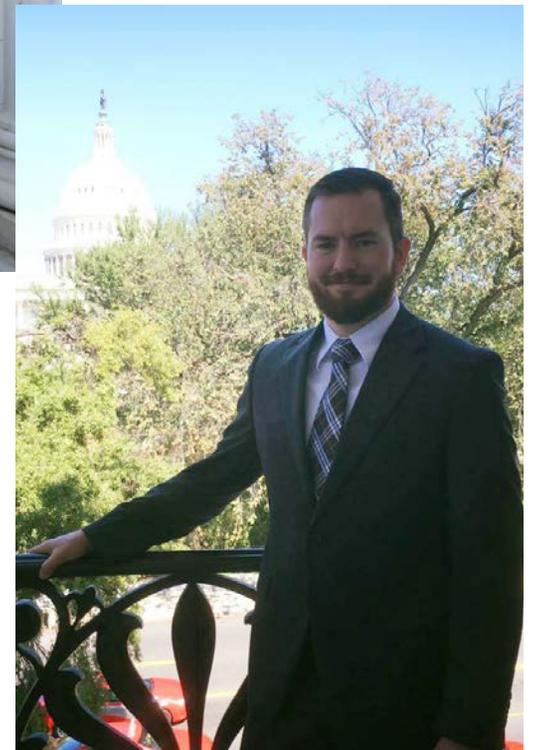
*Left: Wisconsin Farmers Union was well-represented at the 2016 National Farmers Union Fly-In. Below: Tommy experiences his first NFU Fly-In.*

**2. Explore the Capitol.** There are many sightseeing opportunities in Washington, D.C. Visit the monuments, see the White House, marvel at the Library of Congress, or, my personal favorite, eat at one of Farmers Union's three area restaurants.

**3. Meet Your Legislators.** The fly-in is a rare opportunity to sit down and have a face-to-face conversation with your legislators and their legislative assistants. Often, hearing stories from real, unpaid people is what influences their perspectives.

**4. Learn About Our Legislative Process.** Before attending fly-in, I had a limited scope of how our legislative process worked. Attending the fly-in taught me that the way democracy works is a bit more nuanced than what we see on the news.

**5. Be a Voice for Family Farmers.** Part of the reason we're Farmers Union members is to be a voice for family farmers and rural communities. Participating in the NFU Fly-In (not unlike WFU's Farm & Rural



Lobby Day) means you're taking an active part in our democratic process and shining a light on the issues that need to be addressed in Wisconsin and nationwide.

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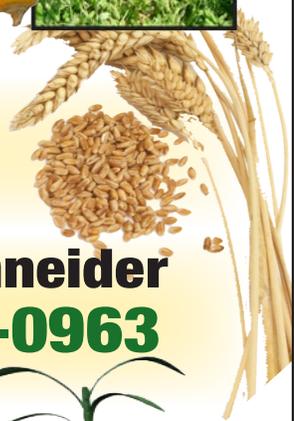


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NFU has long emphasized the importance of science-based research to fight climate change. This past month, the organization participated in two events in support of the cause, the March for Science and the People's Climate March, at which NFU addressed the challenges climate change places on agriculture and the threat it poses to national food security. Unfortunately, climate change is not the only potential hazard family farmers and ranchers face. Access to affordable and effective health care has consistently been a concern of farmers and rural communities. After the House of Representatives passed a bill to repeal and replace the Affordable Care Act, it appears the issue won't be fixed any time soon. Fortunately, family farmers and rancher finally have representation in D.C. following Sonny Perdue's confirmation as Secretary of Agriculture; he wasted no time getting to work on behalf of food producers and rural communities.

### NFU CALLS ON SENATE TO REJECT AHCA

In late March, the U.S. House of Representatives was scheduled to vote on the American Health Care Act (AHCA), a bill intended to replace Obama's signature legislation, the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Prior to the vote, NFU came out in strong opposition to the bill. President Roger Johnson sent a letter to the House to urge them to vote against the proposed

legislation, highlighting NFU's concerns with the inclusion of a cap on Medicaid, reforms to the healthcare marketplace, and the proposed system of basing premium subsidies on a person's age rather than their income. Lacking the necessary support to pass the bill, Congressional leadership withdrew the bill shortly before the scheduled vote.



More than a month later, the House proposed and passed of a new version of AHCA, which had been amended to garner the approval of Republican members of Congress who had opposed the previous iteration of the bill.

The issues from the original legislation persist, but the amended bill is even more troubling. It now provides even fewer protections for family farmers and rural Americans, especially those with preexisting conditions. A new provision, known as the MacArthur Amendment, allows states to opt not to cover essential health benefits, such as

mental health and maternity care, and to change the community rating provision, thus allowing insurers to charge higher premiums to those with preexisting conditions who let their coverage lapse. This would force many farmers into high-risk pools and leave individuals with preexisting conditions to contend with increased premiums, higher deductibles, and longer waiting periods for coverage. The amended AHCA would also disproportionately affect rural hospitals that are more dependent on Medicare and Medicaid payments than their urban counterparts.

NFU has long advocated for the right to affordable, high-quality health care for all Americans. Because the AHCA would both hinder access to health insurance for millions of people as well as drastically impair the effectiveness and affordability of rural healthcare, NFU was dismayed by the passage of this bill and urged members of the Senate to defeat the flawed legislation.

### NFU ADVOCATES FOR SCIENCE-BASED POLICY

On Earth Day, April 22, National Farmers Union joined the first-ever March for Science, organized to celebrate science, call for science that upholds the common good, and demand evidence-based policies in the public interest. NFU President Roger Johnson addressed the crowd at the flagship event in Washington, D.C., emphasizing

the importance of science-based policy for the success of America's farmers and ranchers. He also voiced support for publicly funded, independent, and peer-reviewed research to inform both farmers and policymakers. Johnson was joined by farmers and agricultural leaders, both in D.C. and at satellite marches across the country.



The following weekend, Tom Driscoll, NFU's Director of Conservation Policy, spoke at a climate science and solutions forum hosted by Senator Edward Markey of Massachusetts. Driscoll discussed why farmers care about climate change, and presented many practices that farmers can implement to both mitigate and adapt to its effects.

One day later, on President Trump's 100th day in office, NFU joined 200,000 people at the People's Climate March in the nation's capital to demonstrate the importance of addressing climate change for our nation's family farmers and food security.

**SONNY PERDUE CONFIRMED AS AG SECRETARY**

After significant delay, the U.S. Senate voted to confirm former Georgia Governor Sonny Perdue as the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture (USDA).

The absence of agricultural leadership in Washington concerned and dismayed farmers and ranchers, who have endured months of the current farm crisis and drastic policy changes in Washington without representation in the Trump administration. NFU expressed relief and optimism about the U.S. Department of Agriculture's new leader, and urged him to work immediately to address the depressed farm economy, assist struggling dairy producers, and review and approve the Farmer Fair Practices Rules.

Perdue did not waste any time diving into his new role. In the weeks since his swearing in ceremony, he has already taken the lead on a rural task force and has visited several major agricultural states, including Iowa, Kansas, and Arkansas. Additionally, Perdue announced plans to reorganize the USDA, a move that would create a position for an undersecretary for trade and foreign agricultural affairs and eliminate the undersecretary for rural development. Instead, the Rural Development division will report directly to the Secretary.



**FTC APPROVES CHEMCHINA ACQUISITION OF SYNGENTA**

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC), which, along with the U.S. Justice Department, is responsible for eliminating and preventing

anticompetitive business practices, approved ChemChina's \$43 billion acquisition of Syngenta in early April. The approval is contingent upon ChemChina divesting production of three pesticides. In the following days, the merger received the green light from the European Commission, the Comisión Federal de Competencia Económica in Mexico, and China's Ministry of Commerce. Brazil's Administrative Council for Economic Defense and Canada's Competition Bureau had previously approved the deal, leaving India as the only holdout as of early May.



Continuing NFU's long tradition of advocating for competitive marketplaces for family farmers and ranchers, President Roger Johnson submitted public comments to FTC Secretary Donald S. Clark, asserting that the deal further consolidates the highly globalized agricultural inputs sector. The resulting reduction in competition would decrease innovation, increase input costs, and limit choice for farmers. Johnson also expressed concern that the deal would give the resulting conglomerate an unfair advantage in accessing Chinese markets, as ChemChina is owned by the Chinese government.

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

# Seven things you learn from attending WFU Kamp Kenwood



**Kirsten Slaughter**  
Programs &  
Membership Organizer

## 1. You learn that Lake Wissota is both for swimming and where you send scary villains.

Theme nights transform camp into outer space galaxies, underwater escapes, or medieval castles, and where you and your fellow campers are charged with traveling through time and space to figure out who is causing some new mayhem. Some of your most vivid memories of camp will be watching counselors at the end of a night standing on the dock confronting the “villain” who was trying to take over camp and then bravely pushing them into the lake saving us all.

## 2. You learn public speaking without realizing you are learning public speaking.

Looking back after years of attending WFU Kamp Kenwood you realize that you have learned how to speak in front of a group of people. Somewhere between running for the co-op store board, explaining to your peers why you would be a good fit for the governing board, or planning and performing a skit about a truly epic quest you learn how to speak calmly and confidently to a group and have fun while you do it.

## 3. You learn that getting up early to go for a nature walk or to jump in the lake really is worth it.

Kamp Kenwood is full of many moments where you will run around and sing as loud as you possibly can, but camp will also create a space where you learn that taking a quiet moment for yourself and enjoying nature is a good thing. While you may grumble about waking up early, you will learn that nothing compares to the quiet moments early in the morning at Kamp Kenwood. Deciding to wake up and walk through the state park woods just as the fog is lifting or at senior camp to go to the lake for quick plunge into calm and somehow warm water will teach you to appreciate every moment of the camp experience.



## 4. You learn the secret of cooperatives.

After you attend WFU Kamp Kenwood you will realize that you are now part of group of people who understand and value the concept of cooperation and cooperatives. Between countless cooperative games like rubber chicken toss or lessons on the seven co-op principles, cooperatives around the world or how to start a co-op in your community you know that cooperatives are pretty amazing - and you aren't afraid of telling that to everyone you meet.

## 5. You learn that a little bit of orange facepaint makes every capture the flag game even more intense.

Orange, blue, or even purple facepaint means it is time to put on your running shoes and get ready for an all camp game. It means quick dashes to the other side of camp looking for a brightly colored pool noodle or linking arms with your teammates and singing Puff the Magic Dragon as loud as you can to get out of jail. Of course, it also means that it is time for really great group cabin pictures that you can look back at when you are missing your camp friends in the middle of the school year.

## 6. You learn about issues that are bigger than you.

While there is no lack of fun and games at WFU Kamp Kenwood you also have the opportunity to learn about important local and international issues that are happening in your world. You learn how to respectfully discuss and debate issues and to think outside the box. You get to leave each summer a more informed citizen having talked about things like immigration, water quality and quantity, fair trade, or renewable resources.

## 7. You will meet some of your closest friends at a place that accepts you for who you are.

Even years later you will find that driving down the curving road to camp fills you with same feelings of excitement and homecoming that you felt when you were a junior camper and you will always know that you have a home at Wisconsin Farmers Union Kamp Kenwood.

## From p.1 ► GRAZE

farm, E3861 1220th Ave, Boyceville.

- Fri. Aug. 11, grazing system establishment and dealing with excess flooding, establishing waterways, Randy and Liz Mittag N6834 County Road E, River Falls.

- Sat., Aug. 19, 10am, lane improvements, Brad Midtling, Townside Jerseys, 2891 US Highway 12, Wilson.

- Date TBD, Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship opportunity and pasture layout improvements, Joe and Kristy (Rosemary) Lulich, Mason.

- Date TBD, Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program, transitioning the farm, Charles Flodquist/John Richmond, 12454 20th St., Colfax.

- Date TBD, 9:30am, River Country RCD Summer

Picnic, outwintering site renovation with no till drill, Scott and Marie Belz-1063 230th St, Baldwin.

- Date TBD, fall cover crops and how they fit in with a grazing operation, Brad Melissa Larson, N10688 County Rd M, Colfax.

This effort is funded in part through a grant from Farmers Union Enterprises and will serve as a pilot project. Farmers Union hopes to expand our partnerships with other RC&Ds and other grazing groups across the state in the future.

Schedule is subject to change. Visit the events page at [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com) for the latest event information.

For details or to RSVP, contact Deb at [djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com) or 715-590-2130.



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MADE IN MINNESOTA

# WHAT'S ON YOUR TABLE?



with Diane Tiry

## Dairy Days of Summer

Some of our very best dairy products are produced right in our own backyard.

What better way to enjoy June Dairy Month than to include local dairy products and what better dairy products than sour cream, frozen yogurt and milk?

Sour cream originated in Eastern Europe around the 19th century and is obtained by fermenting regular cream with certain kinds of lactic acid bacteria. The bacterial culture, which is introduced either deliberately or naturally, sours and thickens the cream. Instead of buying it in a store, one can make their own homemade sour cream or Crème Fraîche either by adding fruit vinegar or yogurt to milk, cream or buttermilk; check it out on Google for details.

I decided to include rhubarb this month as it is readily available. Make sure your rhubarb is clean and cut off at least 2 inches below where the leaf starts forming and a good inch at the base so as to get the best of the rhubarb.

### SOUR CREAM RHUBARB COOKIES

Source: [www.today.com](http://www.today.com)



**Yield:** Approximately 40 cookies

#### Ingredients:

- 1 ½ cups unbleached flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup butter
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 egg
- ¾ cup sour cream
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2 cups rhubarb, diced (1/4-1/3")

#### Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F.
2. Line two baking sheets with parchment paper
3. In a medium bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt.

4. In a large bowl, beat the butter and sugar together with an electric mixer at medium speed until light and fluffy.
5. Add the egg and beat to combine. Beat in the sour cream and vanilla, making sure all the ingredients are well combined.
6. Add 1/3 of the flour mixture and beat until combined. Add another 1/3 of the flour mixture and repeat until all the ingredients are combined. Stir in the rhubarb.
7. Drop rough tablespoons of batter onto the prepared baking sheets, spacing them about 2 inches apart.
8. **BAKE:** 10 to 12 minutes, until the edges of the cookies start to brown and the tops of the cookies get a little color.
9. Let cool slightly, then remove to a rack to cool completely.

As summertime approaches the kids and grandkids are always looking for something to help them cool down on a hot summer day. The next recipes are fun activities to do with the kids and just by their name "Milksicles," you know they are dairy delicious.

### DOUBLE STRAWBERRY MILKSICLES

Source: "The Dairy Good Cookbook"

#### Ingredients:

- 1 (10 ounce) package frozen strawberry halves in syrup (Substitute fresh strawberries with a tablespoon of sugar, let the bowl set for 30 minutes to create the syrup)
- 1 cup milk
- ½ cup strawberry frozen yogurt
- 12 (3-ounce) plastic or paper cups and 12 wooden craft sticks or 12 (2-ounce) freezer pop molds

#### Directions:

1. Partially thaw strawberries by leaving at room temperature for 10 minutes or microwaving the unopened plastic pouch on high for 10 seconds.
2. Place the partially frozen berries with their liquid in a blender.
3. Add the milk and frozen yogurt. Cover and blend until smooth.
4. Divide among twelve cups or freezer pop molds.
5. Place the cups in a 9 by 13-inch baking pan. Cover each cup with aluminum foil. Push a craft stick through the center of the foil to hold the stick in place while freezing.
6. Freeze until firm, 3-4 hours.

#### Variations:

1. Double Blueberry Milksicles: Substitute one (10-ounce) package frozen blueberries in syrup and blueberry frozen yogurt.



2. Creamy Vanilla Milksicles: Omit the fruit. Increase the milk to 1 ½ cups. Substitute 1 cup vanilla frozen yogurt for the ½ cup strawberry frozen yogurt. Add 1 teaspoon vanilla extract.

### CARAMELICIOUS MILKSICLES

Source: *The Dairy Good Cookbook*

#### Ingredients:

- 1/3 cup sugar
- 2 Tablespoons cornstarch
- 1 ½ cups milk
- 1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
- 1/3 cup caramel topping, at room temperature
- 6 (3-ounce) plastic or paper cups and 6 wooden craft sticks or 6 (2-ounce) freezer pop molds

#### Directions:

1. Combine the sugar and cornstarch in a medium saucepan. Gradually whisk in the milk. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, whisking constantly; lower the heat and simmer until thickened, about 2 minutes, continue whisking.
2. Remove from the heat; stir in the vanilla extract. Transfer to a large shallow bowl. Chill in the refrigerator for 40 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Drop heaping teaspoons of the caramel topping randomly over the chilled milk mixture. Lightly swirl the caramel into the milk mixture.
4. Spoon the mixture into six cups or freezer pop molds. Place the cups in an 8 by 8-inch baking pan or pie pan. Cover each cup with foil. Push a craft stick through the center of the foil to hold the stick in place while freezing. Freeze until firm, 3-4 hours.

#### Shortcut Method:

Substitute instant vanilla pudding mix for the sugar, cornstarch, milk and vanilla in the main recipe. Make the pudding according to the package directions, swirling the caramel topping into the finished pudding. Proceed with the freezing instructions. Makes 6 servings.

Enjoy the cool treats and yummy cookies under the shade of your favorite tree and tell stories of the good ole days to your kids and grandkids to keep the family memories growing and possibly get a few good laughs in between the licks on the milksicles.

*Happy and healthy eating to all!*

# Sonny's big adventure



**Alan Guebert**

Those Wisconsin dairy cows at the center of another trade kettle now boiling between the United States and Canada, a friend suggests, aren't really black-and-white Holsteins.

They're tiny, yellow canaries, he opines, and their tweets—not President Donald J. Trump's—are a warning that America's reign as the world's ag export superpower is fading and U.S. farmers and ranchers are ill-prepared for what comes next.

"This (was) the first time milk was left and not picked up at any price," explains the friend, after more than 60 Wisconsin dairy farms were notified by their Canada-based milk buyer that they would be dropped.

That shocking news meant "We better make some decisions on the future of dairying real quick (because) every farm is expanding . . . to leverage survival." Grain farmers, too, plow "every acre to plant more corn and beans to be sold below the cost of production."

And, he adds, "This is insane."

He's right. More importantly, he isn't the only one to hear canaries when he looks at the longer-term American ag picture. On April 21, a front-page story in the Wall Street Journal gave facts, figures, and dates on how and why America's dominance in global ag export markets is not just slipping but flagging.

"With 43% of the [soy] export market," explained the Journal, "up from just 12% 30 years ago, Brazil can sway global prices. . ." Additionally, "It's projected to be the second-largest corn exporter, on the heels of the U.S. this season."

But it's just not big, growing Brazil, continued the Journal. "As of the last crop year, Russia now beats America in shipments of wheat."

That trend likely will continue. On April 13, the U.S. Department of Agriculture reported that 2016/17 total U.S. wheat acres would fall to 46.1 million, the lowest since 1919, only because that's "when U.S. wheat production records began."

Into this ongoing global ag realignment comes the almost perfectly paradoxical farm team of President Donald J. Trump and Sonny Perdue, his long-in-waiting secretary of agriculture. A more polar opposite pair would be hard to find.

Like a rooster, Trump sends Twitter threats to America's biggest trading partners—Canada is our largest ag customer—with each sunrise.

Worse, he's not kidding. In stone-faced silence American farmers watched as Trump withdrew the U.S. from the nearly completed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), a multinational trade deal, shortly after taking office. He now plans to redo—or withdraw: who knows?—the long-standing, "very unfair" North American Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA.

The other half of the team, Secretary Perdue, is a full-throated ag trade evangelist who, after his first White House meeting April 25, happily announced that American ag trade is "going to be my task, to go around the world with Commerce Secretary Wilbur Ross, with our U.S. trade representative and our undersecretary for trade to make sure American products are on tables all over this world."

The secretary should pack a very big suitcase because he will be on the road a long time given America's slipping hold on the global farm trade and his boss's very clear, very tough anti-trade stances on Canadian lumber, imported steel, exported milk, the TPP, NAFTA, the European Union, China, and Mexico.

Of course, there is one sure way to better compete in the race-to-the-bottom global commodity biz—cheaper prices—and Perdue appeared to commit to that path in a press release USDA sent right after his first White House meeting.

"It used to be that people in agriculture feared disease and drought as the greatest threat to their livelihoods. . ." said the new secretary. "While those hazards remain, too often now it is the government—through interference and regulation—that poses the most existential threat to American farming. We aim to put a stop to that."

Which is exactly what canaries did when the hazard they were guarding against became existential; they stopped.

Breathing, that is.

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## Farm Bill to be a focus of Summer Conference

The Wisconsin Farmers Union board and staff invite you to join us Thurs., Aug 17 at the WFU Summer Conference for a great day of food and networking at beautiful WFU Kamp Kenwood on Lake Wissota near Chippewa Falls! The more, the merrier — consider bringing a carload of members from your local chapter.

This annual event offers a chance to network with Farmers Union friends, and this year will feature a focus on the Farm Bill. Learn about Farmers Union priorities for this important piece of legislation and how you can speak up for family farm agriculture.

Those interested in staying after the meeting are welcome to explore Kamp Kenwood and enjoy informal networking time around the campfire.

To RSVP to Summer Conference contact Diane Tiry at 715-723-5561 or [dtiry@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:dtiry@wisconsinfarmersunion.com).

Have kids? Consider enrolling them in Acorn Day Camp, which coincides with the conference and costs \$15/child.



Let's talk about the Farm Bill!

WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION  
SUMMER CONFERENCE

Thursday, August 17 • 10am to 2pm

WFU Kamp Kenwood, 19161 79th Ave., Chippewa Falls, WI

RSVP to the WFU State Office at 715-723-5561