



WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION NEWS

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Tough times in farm country *Farmers stress need for strong farm bill*

Danielle Endvick
Communications Director

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Amidst historic ag trade disruptions and deeply declining net farm income, 350 family farmers and ranchers gathered in Washington, D.C. in September to meet with members of Congress and weigh in on legislative priorities for farm country.

Nineteen Wisconsin Farmers Union members were among those taking part in the National Farmers Union Fly-In Sept. 11-14. Participants visited the U.S. Department of Agriculture, where they heard from U.S. Secretary

“ **Net farm income has plummeted by nearly 50 percent over the past five years, leaving the majority of family farmers earning negative income and many of them in severe financial strain.** ”

- Roger Johnson

National Farmers Union President

of Agriculture Sonny Perdue, other top USDA officials and the office of the U.S. Trade Representative. The farmers also took part in a Farm Bill Forum on Capitol Hill.

Throughout the fly-in, the farmers visited all 535 congressional offices to share their personal stories on how federal level policies impact their families and **See p.4 ► FLY-IN**



Above: The Wisconsin fly-in group included, left to right, (front) Keith Kreager, Marathon; Virginia Drath, Emerald; Alicia Razvi, Stevens Point; Justin Briggs, Stratford; Sarah Lloyd, Wisconsin Dells; Jesse and Danielle Endvick, Holcombe; (middle) Lauren Langworthy, Wheeler; Camryn Billen, Chippewa Falls; Sarah Heck, Durand; Bobbi Wilson, Madison; National Farmers Union Vice President Patty Edelburg, Scandinavia; Rick Adamski, Seymour; (back) Matt Sheaffer, Brodhead; Kara O'Connor, Madison; Caleb Langworthy, Wheeler; Dennis Rosen, Emerald; Chris Holman, Custer; and WFU President Darin Von Ruden, Westby.

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Tariffs the wrong approach to resolving trade imbalances



W. Michael Slattery
WFU Grain Committee

Trade tariffs in the long run are detrimental to economic development and foster inefficiencies for perceived short-term gains.

Historically, tariffs destabilize domestic and international markets and burden consumers who must pay higher costs for products. Trade wars undermine producers of products targeted

by tariffs and make it difficult to recapture lost markets.

As evidenced by the \$12 billion trade aid package for farmers impacted by the tariffs, trade wars are an expensive game to dabble in — and farmers across the U.S. are paying the price.

The USDA announced that the first portion, \$4.7 billion, will be paid only after the 2018 fall grain harvest and based on half of individual farmer 2018 grain yields. The amounts allocated for soybeans, wheat, and corn — the latter

two of which face no retaliatory tariffs — are reported to amount roughly to \$3.4 billion, \$131 million, and \$48 million, respectively based on allocation rates of \$1.65, \$0.14, and \$0.01 per bushel, respectively. For soybeans and corn, having experienced losses of more than \$9.4 billion from lost exports of 2017 crops and drops in market prices since mid-March, these compensation payments barely cover one-third of the losses experienced by U.S. farmers to date. **See p.7 ► TARIFFS**

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From the Director's Desk

Wisconsin Farmers Union Updates



Julie Bomar

WFU Executive Director

Hello Friend,

If you haven't already discovered the compassion, intelligence, creativity and tireless energy present in our membership, you are in for a treat. Last evening, I had the pleasure of this company as I dined, rallied and conversed with friends at a gathering of the new Ashland-Bayfield Farmers Union. As we are prone to experience at WFU events, the conversation was warm, engaging and thought-provoking.

As I stood in line with John Adams, chapter president, we talked about what drew us to the Farmers Union. Jeffersonian democracy came to the forefront of the conversation as John explained how he was influenced by Thomas Jefferson's principles, especially the belief that small farms operated by yeomen are the cornerstone of a healthy democracy. His operation, Yoman Farm, embodies these values.

Yeomen were family farmers who held and cultivated their own small estates, and they stood in contrast to landed gentry, aristocrats and slave owners. Jefferson idolized yeoman as demonstrating civic virtue and economic independence. In other usage, "yeoman's work" refers to very good, hard and valuable work that someone does to support a cause, to help a team, etc.

Our democracy took root in a nation of farmers, but what does it mean for our democracy if only a small percentage of people are cultivating the land? Is democracy compromised if monopolies control agriculture and have unfair influence in our democratic system? We may need a new version of yeoman democracy to revive our most basic relationships — to the land, to each other and to our community at large.

Is there anything like a modern equivalent? Well,

maybe so. Within Farmers Union, we belong to a community of people who are tied to the land and each other through their values and their economic and civic actions. In fact, I see many Jeffersonian democratic ideas in the historical and present Farmers Union agenda:

- Fighting against monopolistic practices
- Fighting for the plain folk
- Demanding fair and quality public education for all
- Advancing liberty and equality (noting that our notion of equality has certainly expanded since Jefferson's day)

Jeffersonian democracy means different things to different people then and now. Certainly not all groups had the right to vote, land and liberty. Fierce opposing ideologies existed among those who were privileged to draw up the constitution and yet they compromised. Revisiting those ideals which have served the test of time may help us come together and protect democracy.

I think that a realistic yeoman's democracy for today must unite those small and medium sized landowners with suburban and urban reformers who share similar values. For 243 years, a viable democracy has depended on people having access to quality public education and being literate, engaging in civic life and also having the means to achieve economic security. These elements are necessary to nourish a healthy democracy and are the best hope for the growth of individual freedom regardless of your land holdings.

We see these groups uniting in our Farmers Union as I so appreciatively witnessed last night — farmers of all stripes and ages, conscious eaters, artisans, teachers and public servants doing yeomen's work. Join an event near you and invite a yeoman or two. Conversations are infectious, so be prepared to be inspired!

Julie Bomar

WFU Executive Director



Left: Ashland-Bayfield Farmers Union pulled off an epic harvest dinner Sept. 20, feeding 120 people at Wild Rice Retreat in Bayfield. The cost of admission was a food item to contribute to the feast, which ended up included 20 chickens, 150 meatballs, piles of zucchini, polenta cakes, venison stew, tomatoes galore, ratatouille and more.

Lots of ways to engage this fall



Darin Von Ruden
President

The pace isn't slowing down anytime soon in Farmers Union's work on behalf of family farmers and rural communities. In September, I had the honor of being among 19 members who attended

the National Farmers Union Fly-In to Washington, D.C. Hearing their stories as they met with legislators was incredibly powerful. The big picture: farmers are hurting across the countryside. Tariff impacts are adding to the pain of already low prices.

But even amid this bleak outlook, there are flickers of hope, evidenced by the farmers who took time off their land during harvest to come and speak up for their fellow farmers. WFU will continue to speak up for a viable farm economy and fair prices for all farmers.

Ag merger moratorium

The words of members at fly-in were bolstered by an agribusiness merger moratorium bill presented by Rep. Pocan while we were on Capitol Hill. This legislation seeks to slow the unprecedented number of mergers that have led to an increasingly vertically integrated agriculture industry.

WFU supports this legislation and believes it's

past time to take a hard look at antitrust enforcement in the United States. We are losing farmers at an alarming rate, a trend that is accelerated by an industry that has leaned heavily toward consolidation — with fewer choices and higher input costs for farmers.

Save the Date for Convention

Consolidation in agriculture will be among the topics we address at the WFU State Convention Jan. 25-27, 2019 in Appleton. We're locking in speakers and setting the agenda this month — watch next month's *WFU News* for more details! Convention registration is up at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com. This is a family-friendly event with the Youth Co-op Convention and childcare options available, so consider bringing the whole family. We hope to see you there!

World Dairy Expo

WFU will be raising awareness about the dairy crisis and the need for dairy inventory management at World Dairy Expo Oct. 2-6 in Madison. We could use more farmer volunteers to help at the booth and share your stories. Contact WFU Membership Coordinator Deb Jakubek at 715-590-2130 or djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com to sign up for a shift and get a free Dairy Together t-shirt! Just passing by? Plan to visit us at booth MC 68tt.

Wishing you a successful fall harvest. I hope to see you around at annual meetings and other happenings in the coming month.

Farmers Union supports merger moratorium bill

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Wisconsin Farmers Union is among a diverse coalition of agricultural groups that have stepped forward in support of a bill that seeks to halt the mega-mergers that are sweeping the agribusiness, food manufacturing and grocery industries

Rep. Mark Pocan (D-WI) introduced the agribusiness merger moratorium bill Sept. 14. This legislation is the House companion to The Food and Agribusiness Merger Moratorium and Antitrust Review Act of 2018 (S-3404) introduced in late August by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ).

The bill calls for an 18-month moratorium on food and agribusiness mergers and the establishment of a federal commission to study ways to strengthen antitrust oversight in agricultural sectors.

In the past few years, chemical and seed company acquisitions and mergers have allowed just three companies to control two-thirds of the crop seed and nearly 70 percent of agriculture chemical markets.

"It is time to hit pause on these mega-mergers and the growing trend of vertical integration in U.S. agriculture," said Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden. "The U.S. is losing farmers at an alarming rate, and we're seeing a lack of competitive markets in seed, agro-chemical and many other ag sectors, thanks in no small part to an unprecedented number of mergers that have swept across the nation's food and agriculture industry."

Von Ruden stressed the urgency of addressing consolidation in agriculture. "These mergers hurt farmers who are facing fewer options and rising input costs amid declining farm incomes," he said. "Net income for U.S. farmers has dropped by nearly 50 percent since 2013."

Hyper consolidation hasn't been limited to seed and agrochemical sectors. America's meatpacking industry is also deeply concerning, Von Ruden pointed out, noting four firms now control 71 percent of hog slaughter and 85 percent of cattle slaughter.

"This growing vertical integration is decimating family farms and allowing buyers and processors to impose unfair conditions on farmers," Von Ruden added. "The farmer's share of retail sales of agricultural goods has plummeted to just 15 cents on the dollar."

WFU members who were in Washington, D.C. Sept. 11-14 for the National Farmers Union Fly-In recognized Rep. Pocan for his efforts. "This bill is a key example of the kind of advocacy that has made Rep. Pocan a friend of family farm agriculture and a fitting recipient for the Golden Triangle Award, Farmers Union's highest legislative honor," Von Ruden said.

National Farmers Union has endorsed the bill along with 16 state Farmers Union organizations and an array of other food and agricultural groups.

NRCS announces storm relief signup

MADISON — The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) announced Sept. 19 that funding is available to producers in select Wisconsin counties who experienced forest and agricultural land damage due to recent severe weather within the last two months.

Angela Biggs, NRCS State Conservationist, announced farmers and forest landowners interested in the special Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) signup need to apply by Nov. 16 for funding consideration. Applications are being taken at select USDA Service Centers in the storm-affected counties below.

Storm Relief funds will help producers repair damage to existing EQIP practices and allow producers to apply for new EQIP practices to address damage as a result of extreme rain, floods, and wind in select counties including Adams, Brown, Calumet, Columbia, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Grant, Green, Green Lake, Iowa, Jefferson, Juneau,

La Crosse, Lafayette, Manitowoc, Marquette, Monroe, Oconto, Ozaukee, Richland, Rock, Sauk, Sheboygan, Vernon, Washington, Waushara, and Winnebago Counties.

"NRCS can help farmers and woodland owners recover from these storms," said Biggs. "We have EQIP practices to address storm damage, for example, soil erosion caused by flooded crop fields and wind damaged forests caused by recent tornados."

All applications received by the Nov. 16 deadline will be evaluated, prioritized and ranked for funding. Applicants may contact their local USDA Service Center to get started on producer eligibility and planning. Biggs reminds farmers who are interested in practices that may require permits to begin planning and seeking permits as soon as possible.

Landowners interested in applying for EQIP funding should contact their local NRCS office at the USDA Service Center in their county. For more information, visit www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov.

From p.1 ► FLY-IN

communities. NFU also honored congressional champions for family agriculture with the organization's highest legislative honor, the Golden Triangle Award. Sen. Tammy Baldwin and Rep. Mark Pocan were among this year's recipients.

"With farmers hurting across the countryside, the fly-in is a key opportunity for lawmakers to put a face to the issues impacting rural America and to help them understand the importance of passing a strong farm bill," said WFU President Darin Von Ruden.

"Net farm income has plummeted by nearly 50 percent over the past five years, leaving a majority of family farmers earning negative farm income and many of them in severe financial strain," said NFU President Roger Johnson. "At the same time, farmers are seeing commodity prices drop even further due to an escalating trade war with China and other top trading partners. Important markets are being lost indefinitely, and therefore long-term demand for U.S. farm products."

Farmers Union members pushed for passage of a farm bill that supports family agriculture, strong protections from international trade market disruptions, and expansion of the American-grown biofuel market. The Wisconsin delegation also expressed the direness of the dairy crisis and the need for the industry to pull together and explore options like inventory management.

WFU President Darin Von Ruden, Westby, and National Farmers Union



NFU National Youth Advisory Council, a position she was elected to by her peers during Farmers Union All-States Camp this summer in Bailey, Colo. For Caleb and Lauren Langworthy of Blue Ox Farm near Wheeler, the journey marked the conclusion of a year-long participation in the Farmer Union Enterprise Program, which engages young leaders from a five-state region in interactive leadership development activities.

Left: The Wisconsin Farmers Union delegation gathered outside the U.S. Department of Agriculture building.

Below: "What future are we leaving for the next generation?" long-time Wisconsin Farmers Union member Dennis Rosen of Emerald asked during a Q&A with USDA officials Sept. 12 during the National Farmers Union Fly-In. Rosen's concerns hinged on continuing consolidation in ag sectors.

Vice President Patty Edelburg, Scandinavia, were joined by board, staff and members at the fly-in, including: Chris Holman, Custer; Rick Adamski, Seymour; Matt Sheaffer, Brodhead; Keith Kreager, Marathon; Justin Briggs, Stratford; Sarah Lloyd, Wisconsin Dells; Sarah Heck, Durand; Alicia Razvi, Stevens Point; Kara O'Connor, Madison; Virginia Drath, Emerald; Bobbi Wilson, Madison; Danielle and Jesse Endvick, Holcombe; Dennis Rosen, Emerald; Caleb and Lauren Langworthy, Wheeler; and Camryn Billen, Chippewa Falls.

The trip to D.C. kicked off what will be a year-long experience in the NFU Beginning Farmers Institute for Jesse and Danielle Endvick, who raise beef cattle on their Chippewa County farm. For Billen, it was the first step in her role of representing youth from across the nation as a member of the



Left to right: Wood-Portage-Waupaca Alicia Razvi speaks up during a Plate to Politics women's leadership event held in conjunction with the fly-in; WFU President Darin Von Ruden explains the work farmers and farm allies have been doing around the Dairy Together campaign; and WFU District 8 Director Rick Adamski presents a question to members of Congress during a Farm Bill Forum at the fly-in.

Family farm champions recognized with Golden Triangle

Danielle Endvick
Communications Director

WASHINGTON, D.C. — During the National Farmers Union Fly-In in mid-September, 26 U.S. Senators and Representatives were recognized for demonstrating leadership and support at the federal policymaking level for family farmers, ranchers and their rural communities.

The Golden Triangle Award, the family farm organization's highest legislative honor, was presented to Sen. Baldwin and Rep. Pocan by the Wisconsin Farmers Union delegation Sept. 13.

"We are proud of the work Senator Baldwin and Representative Pocan have done on behalf of family farmers," said WFU President Von Ruden. "They recognize the importance of our agricultural community in Wisconsin and work hard to elevate the issues impacting family farms and rural Wisconsin."

Sen. Baldwin has been a champion of agriculture in her role on the Senate Appropriations Committee. She championed the Dairy Standards of Identity Protection and the bipartisan Dairy Business Innovation Act, which would promote dairy product innovation and provide technical assistance and grants to dairy businesses. She also sponsored the FARMERS FIRST Act (Farm and Ranch Stress Assistance Network.)

Rep. Pocan, who serves as Anti-Trust Caucus Co-chair, sponsored the Food and Agribusiness Merger Moratorium and Antitrust Review Act, which would shield family farmers from exorbitant input costs by placing a temporary moratorium on agribusiness mergers and proposed strengthening antitrust enforcement in the ag industry. He also has worked to improve dairy programs through the Appropriations Committee

"The Golden Triangle Award recognizes farm and food champions in Congress that display outstanding leadership on the issues that are important to both our industry and our organization. We're appreciative of their insight and devotion to securing the nation's food supply for the good of both American family farmers and consumers," said NFU President Roger Johnson.

Contributed photos
Wisconsin Farmers Union members presented the Golden Triangle Award to Sen. Tammy Baldwin (top right) and Rep. Mark Pocan (below).

The Golden Triangle, first presented in 1988, symbolizes the core principles of the Farmers Union organization: education, cooperation, and legislation.

Other 2018 recipients include:

- Sen. Michael Bennet, CO
- Sen. Sherrod Brown, OH
- Sen. Bob Casey, PA
- Sen. Steve Daines, MT
- Sen. Joe Donnelly, IN
- Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand, NY
- Sen. Heidi Heitkamp, ND
- Sen. Amy Klobuchar, MN
- Sen. Tina Smith, MN
- Sen. Debbie Stabenow, MI
- Sen. Jon Tester, MT
- Sen. John Thune, SD
- Rep. Cheri Bustos, IL
- Rep. Tom Emmer, MN
- Rep. Marcy Kaptur, OH
- Rep. Ann Kuster, NH
- Rep. Dave Loebsack, IA
- Rep. Frank Lucas, OK
- Rep. Michelle Lujan Grisham, NM
- Rep. Rick Nolan, MN
- Rep. Nancy Pelosi, CA
- Rep. Collin Peterson, MN
- Rep. Chellie Pingree, ME
- Rep. Tim Walz, MN



Annual meeting season is underway

Farmers Union annual meeting season is upon us! Annual meetings are an important step in the grassroots policy process that guides the work of Wisconsin Farmers Union throughout the year. Besides offering networking with other farmers in your region, your local chapter's annual meeting is also where policy resolutions are brought forth for issues impacting our family farms and communities. Upcoming meetings include:

• **BUFFALO COUNTY** — Nov. 11, 2pm, Roger Marten Community Center, 120 S. Franklin St., Mondovi. Info: John Gehrke.

• **LA CROSSE-MONROE COUNTY** — Sun., Nov. 11, 1-3pm, Sparta Family Restaurant, 741 Avon Road, Sparta. Complimentary meal. Info: Stephen Honish, 608-387-2870 or honishherd@hotmail.com.

• **PEPIN-PIERCE** — Sun., Nov. 11, 3pm, location TBA. A potluck meal will follow the meeting. Info: Faye Jones 715-495-2064.

County leaders, please let the WFU State Office know when you're holding your annual meeting. Policy resolutions are due by Dec. 1st. Meeting announcements submitted by Oct. 15th will be included in the November *Wisconsin Farmers Union News*.



Above: The 2018-2019 Beginning Farmer Institute kicked things off Sept. 9-11 in Washington, D.C.

Shifting winds

Beginning Farmers Institute looks at how new farmers can reshape future of ag

Danielle Endvick
Communications Director

The Big Tent. It's part of what drew me to Farmers Union — the thoughtful, grassroots and welcoming nature that makes farmers of all sizes and varieties feel welcome. That 'all-are-welcome' philosophy was clear to see as the 20 up-and-coming farmers chosen for the 2018-2019 National Farmers Union Beginning Farmers Institute

settled in around the table at our group's kickoff session in Washington, D.C. in September. At the table were farmers from New York to Hawaii to Alaska representing an incredible range of enterprises: beef, market and wholesale vegetables, hemp, sheep, pork, wholesale cut flowers, goats, laying hens, grain, pinto beans, sugar beats, hops, wine grapes, culinary gardens, and more.

Despite the diversity of our

farms, the challenges we face are strikingly similar: tough market prices, access to land and capital, generational farm transition, climate change, lack of affordable health care, poor rural broadband, lack of consumer education, and growing corporate consolidation in agriculture.

According to National Farmers Union Foundation Director Tom Driscoll, who helps guide education programming, the intent of BFI is to "give exposure to resources and assist beginning farmers in establishing a successful and long-running farm business."

NFU Government Relations Representative Matt Perdue talked about how the organization is helping family farmers have a voice in Farm Bill proceedings and is striving to help beginning farmers gain better access to land, capital, markets and efficiencies. He stressed that Farmers Union grew from the grassroots — formed by a handful of farmers in Point, Texas in

1902 — and continues to develop its policy and programming through that bottom-up approach.

The group heard directly from USDA staff about cost-shares, grants and other programs available through the Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service to help implement conservation practices or diversify and add new enterprises on our farms.

Dr. Frayne Olson, crop economist and marketing specialist at North Dakota State University, stressed the importance of understanding and utilizing market futures, contracts and direct marketing. "We all are looking into a crystal ball and trying to predict the future," Olson said, stressing, "Weather and politics are the two most common factors that cause chaos in the marketplace. Really, in the marketing world, farmers are playing the odds."

Olson encouraged the young farmers in the room to set price objectives, mon-

itor market conditions and, perhaps most importantly, actually know their cost of production for each enterprise on their farm. "You need to know your break even and budget in your labor," he said. "No one wants to work for free."

He also urged farmers to consider cooperatives as a pathway to hedging risk, noting the democratic nature of cooperatives has been a historic tool farmers have been able to leverage in the past and one we should look to in the future.

Wisconsin Farmers Union Special Projects Director Sarah Lloyd led a lively discussion on growing corporate consolidation and outside investment in agriculture — and how beginning farmers can reshape regional food systems. She shared how the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative has grown from just a few farmers to 40-plus collaborating members who will sell close to \$3 million in produce this year.

The need to keep good financial records and have

See p.12 ► BFI



Above: Chippewa County Farmers Union members Danielle and Jesse Endvick are taking part in this year's Beginning Farmer Institute.



Above: Beginning Farmer Institute participants learn through a balance of networking time, informative speakers and on-farm tours.

From p.1 ► **TARIFFS**

Projected losses for the 2018 crops still have no coverage.

Compensation for dairy losses will be based on individual dairy farmer production, the highest yielding year between 2010 and 2013 adjusting for increases thereafter, and pay \$0.12 per cwt. Hog farmers will be compensated at \$8/hog based on their numbers as of August 1, 2018. No compensation will be paid for losses experienced by ginseng or cranberry farmers even though they are severely adversely affected by retaliatory tariffs imposed by China and the EU/UK, respectively.

Lost markets

Too often, the only trade war winners are those who stay out of the conflict. In the case of U.S. grain exports, the winners will surely be Argentina, Brazil, Australia, Ukraine and Russia.

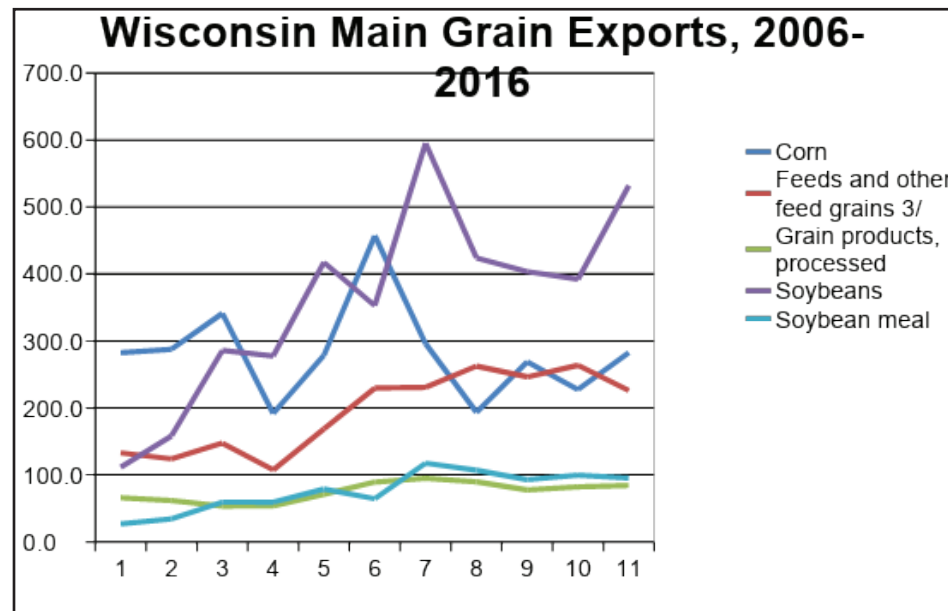
Politicians claim that, of the 21 percent lost sales to China, new sales to Egypt, Netherlands (EU), and Taiwan have occurred, but they fail to acknowledge that has left more than five percent of the U.S. supply unsold, which is dragging down grain prices.

The Trump Administration has undermined the leadership role the U.S. historically played in establishing model terms of trade. The U.S. had established itself as the dominant force and leader in trade practices and stabilized markets but the engagement in a trade war has proven irresponsibly reckless.

Tariffs on steel and aluminum imports from Canada, Mexico, Europe, and China have caused retaliation on U.S. exports, and the impact on agricultural markets is far-reaching.

With the Administration threatening to withdraw from the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) if U.S. demands are not met, the threat of a trade war is not just with China but also Canada and Mexico. For U.S. agricultural exports alone, 43 percent are destined for these three countries.

The tentative bilateral trade deal between the U.S. and Mexico announced Aug. 27 seems to indicate possible agreement, but several key points remain unsettled, mostly related to terms for automobile production and sales. The U.S. is rushing to conclude this agreement before the Pena Nieto administration leaves office Dec. 1 and Lopez Obrador, who holds positions less favorable to U.S. interests, is inaugurated. Further, Canada has not



The chart above shows U.S. major grain exports (in units of U.S. \$1 million over 11 years, between 2006 and 2016). Soybean exports are predominant. No other grain or related product, other than feed (inclusive of DDGs) and other feed grains seems to have significantly increased export sales.

conceded its terms, particularly those related to automobiles and restricting agricultural supply management.

Is the U.S. a trade loser?

Although some seek to portray the U.S. as the loser in bilateral trade relationships, this is far from the truth. Since FY2014, U.S. agricultural trade annually runs surpluses between \$17 billion and \$43 billion.

Even though Canada in 2017 put up barriers to importing ultra-filtered milk from the U.S., we exported \$792 million in dairy products to Canada while importing only \$149 million of Canadian dairy products, according to the Brookings Institution. U.S. agricultural trade with Canada in 2016 resulted in a net surplus of U.S. \$2.2 billion; Wisconsin alone had a net agricultural trade surplus of \$636 million. The U.S. ran an agricultural trade surplus with Mexico from 1989 until 2014.

China, on the other hand, since 2013 regularly exports goods to the U.S. valued between \$440 billion and \$500 billion, but only imports \$120 billion to \$130 billion of U.S. goods, for a net surplus exceeding \$300 billion. China has taken advantage of U.S.-originated terms of trade to the benefit of Chinese companies and U.S. multinationals.

If the Trump Administration continues to threaten and engage in retaliatory reactions by bullying trade partners, China will undoubtedly engage in a trade war with no end in sight, given its intent to be a dominant military and economic power. This threat has significantly unsettled grain markets.

China has been a top importer for U.S. soybeans. Brazil, which has out-produced and out-exported soybeans vis-à-vis the U.S. over the past five years, is eager to step into that market share and has the potential to dominate, particularly in light of their longer growing season and investment in infrastructure. Argentina's export of soybean meal is another major competitor.

Meanwhile, U.S. expansion of foreign markets seems to have plateaued, making a tariff threat hazardous at best.

U.S. soybean exports to China were down 21 percent in June, compared to the previous year, and exports to all countries were down 6.4 percent. Exports of soybean oil, which in 2017 accounted for 15 percent of total U.S. soybean oil exports, dropped 99 percent. Sales of soybean meal are non-existent. Likewise, sales of pork to China, which in 2017 accounted for 8 percent of U.S. pork exports, have dropped year-on-year (beginning Jan. 1, 2018) by 58.1 percent.

China's tariffs of 25 percent on soybeans have weakened all grain markets. U.S. corn exports declined only marginally by 4.1 percent, since China has not imposed tariffs on that commodity. Mexico, our largest importer, has not imposed tariffs on corn and actually increased purchases by 7.9 percent.

U.S. domestic market prices on the Chicago Board of Trade Futures have seen significant drops for all grains, especially soybeans. A University of Illinois model forecasted 2018 soybean prices at \$8.85/bu moving to \$9.00 for

2019, based on USDA-forecasted prices before tariffs. The futures market for new crop soybeans, however, has now dropped already to \$8.23/bu. In eastern Wisconsin, with an \$1.10 basis, new crop soybeans can only be sold for \$7.13, well below the cost of production for most growers. With futures' new crop corn having a \$0.60 basis in eastern Wisconsin and a market price of \$2.84/bu, virtually all farmers are significantly under water, and even low-cost farmers can expect to lose as much as \$50/acre, or more.

Impact on Wisconsin

Wisconsin is not immune from these threats. Forty-six percent of Wisconsin's total exports (that support 463,000 jobs) are destined for Canada and Mexico. In 2016, Canada and Mexico imported \$1.76 billion in agricultural products (\$1.4 billion and \$360 million for Canada and Mexico, respectively) of Wisconsin's \$9.5 billion in exports.

Mexico imports the second most soybeans from the U.S. and is Wisconsin's biggest export market for soybeans and oilseeds (\$279.7 million in 2016). Wisconsin's soybean exports to Mexico grew from nothing in 1996 to \$176.3 million in 2017 (oilseed exports grew from \$2.9 million to \$103.4 million for the same period.) Mexico is the largest importer of U.S. corn and a major importer of wheat and cheese.

Wisconsin cranberries and ginseng are also adversely impacted. Cranberry products have tariffs of 25, 20, 40, and 10 percent by the EU, Mexico, China, and Canada, respectively. Ginseng is taxed at 40 percent by China, where most U.S. ginseng is exported.

Wisconsin Farmers Union opposes the use of tariffs to address trade imbalances. Existing trade agreements need only limited amendment and should not be terminated.

The potential for a long-term trade war with respective retaliatory tariffs is probable given the belligerent approach adopted by the Administration. Farmers and the agricultural industry will once again be the goat and the dupe, as they are already, in these trade disputes. Crop insurance will only partially cover losses for a limited period. The \$12 billion allotted as aid to farmers impacted by the tariffs is a short-term fix to a long-term problem. These tariffs will only exacerbate already weak markets and reduce the number of farms and farmers on the American landscape.

*Submit letters no longer than 500 words to WFU Communications Director
Danielle Endvick | dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com | 715-471-0398*

From the Field

Letters to the Editor

Dairy Together offers glimpse of hope

We are family dairy farmers and we read many papers and magazines and follow TV programs on all issues as much as possible to try to keep informed on all issues, especially dealing with agriculture. We are truly saddened and, yes, angry when we see how our U.S. Department of Agriculture, our milk boards, our Secretary of Agriculture, our dairy co-ops, our professional dairy organizations, our Farm Bureau, and our President Trump would solve this oversupply of milk — What is their solution? Free trade! Get bigger! Tighten your belt! Maintain a positive attitude or GET OUT! And this isn't the worst — they are trying their best to bust the Canadian system of dairy — a supply management dairy system in which each farmer follows a quota on their farm, thus supplying the needed milk for the consumer at a reasonable price and maintaining a fair sustainable price for the farmer. This system makes good sense to us, and no subsidy needs to be paid by the government.

We did see a glimpse of hope by reading that a group of Wisconsin Farmers Union farmers and leaders traveled to Washington D.C. in September to discuss such a plan. Wouldn't it be wonderful if all of these groups could work together — instead of trying to tear down a Canadian system that seems to be working?

The Canadian dairy folks are receiving twice as much for their milk as we are in Wisconsin. Upon listening last week to the early morning TV program "This Week in Agribusiness," we were appalled to not hear one mention of the plight of our family dairy dilemma — our Wisconsin elder statesman of agriculture Orion Samuelson not even mentioning dairy nor the solution which Wisconsin Farmers Union has been preparing. We are losing too many family dairy farms, 500 each year in Wisconsin. And to this bloodbath we want to encourage young farmers to follow such a vocation? How many more dairy farmers must either quit, go bankrupt, or commit suicide before our people who have political power use it wisely to help the family dairy farmer? We believe they must work with the Farmers Union and other such groups to have a truly sustainable system. We hope soon — otherwise family dairies, farms as we know them, will be a "memory!"

*Donald P. and Anita Nelson
Wisconsin Dells*

Been here before: Lessons for dairy

It seems to be a law of farming: whenever it seems things can't get worse, they do. The extremes of weather and rain, prices for crops, cattle and milk, relentless increases in the cost of practically all inputs, shortage of labor, insurance, building and equipment maintenance, property taxes — there seems to be no end of headaches and obstacles to making a living by farming. But farmers just keep trying.

There is a constant, steady and seemingly inevitable decline in the number of farms. When I came back to my family farm north of Withee in the fall of 1976, there were roughly 45,000 dairy farms in Wisconsin, and farming was going good. Under President Jimmy Carter the milk support price was automatically adjusted upward by 50 cents/cwt every six months, as I recall, and farmers were looking for more cows, breaking out more acres, building new and bigger barns and milking parlors, and buying bigger and better machinery. We were doing everything we could to increase production to capture those prices. And our bankers and co-ops and most farm business advisors were urging

us on. But then Ronald Reagan became president, the raise in the support prices ended, and by 1982 we could see we were going to be in trouble. By the time I left the farm in 1995, the number of Wisconsin dairy farms was around 15,000. The decade of the '80s became the Farm Crisis decade — one of the many recurring crises in agriculture. They are a part of American history and often said to be an inevitable part of farming, even held up as a good thing because these crises clear out marginal and inefficient farmers, leaving the market to the innovators, the expanders, to those who, it is said, consider farming a business and not a way of life. Get with the program or get out.

But now, as farmers did in the 1980s, as farmers did in previous decades and centuries, another generation of farmers is beginning to fight back. These farmers are doing their own research into the basics of agricultural economics, food production and marketing. They are beginning to see that, while there is little one can do about the weather, there is nothing inevitable or in the laws of nature that demands this continual bleeding of farmers across the land. There is something farmers themselves can do about it, as the Dairy Together movement (www.dairytogether.com) the last few months shows.

I would like to share what those of us who went through the farm crisis of the 80's learned about trying to organize farmers and trying to change the course of farming in this country. We accomplished much but failed to achieve our major and essential goal: a nation-wide system of supply management in all commodities that are part of a federal program, including milk.

The single most relevant economic fact in the production of food and fiber in this country is that year after year, decade after decade, generation after generation, farmers simply out-produce themselves out of business. And while producing themselves out of business they enable the ever greater concentrations of agricultural wealth and power in the hands of those whose prime purpose is to keep the supply of cheap commodities constantly growing. What keeps them profitable is what puts the family farmer out of business: undisciplined excess production for a market unable to utilize it.

So the first thing to learn is that not everybody involved in your business is your friend — especially those who loudly claim to be, not even some other farmers. So what else did we learn that today's Dairy Together farmers need to keep in mind?

The leaders of this movement will have to spend long and often frustrating hours, days, weeks and months, working with one another to get their policies, programs and goals nailed down, and then advocating for them, selling them to other farmers and eventually to the legislators, without getting sidetracked or intimidated by accusations of pushing for a "socialist" or "government takeover" of farming. Hypocritically, those who are the loudest with this criticism are those who benefit the most from government ag programs.

Therefore, build as strong a base as possible with as many farmers as possible, and let them know they need to support their leaders in this movement for supply management. Because the work can wear you down. It may even have a negative impact on your own day-to-day farm management.

Going to meetings such as in Albany, New York last month to meet, talk and share with other farmers from around the country, is exciting and inspirational and creates hope. But this is just the beginning. Keep these contacts and communications going, but remember that the now comes the hard work of organizing, strategizing, advocating, persuading and convincing.

Be sure to stay in touch with the Canadians, knowing that they are not the enemy. Learn from them and let the politicians know that you are not being fooled by their scapegoating of Canada's dairy supply management sys- **See p.9 ► LETTERS**

From p.8 ► LETTERS

tem.

Always sound reasonable, practical and ready to negotiate, but stay tough, resolute and focused. Decide together early on what is essential and non-negotiable versus what can be given up. That is, always keep some give-aways handy that can be given away only when negotiations stalemate and you need to show willingness to compromise, but never give up what is essential.

Don't let farmers from various parts of the country or federal orders be played against each other. Remember, we're all in this together, whether you want to admit it or not. Don't put all your eggs into one political party's basket, but do recognize those who help move your legislation and give credit where credit is due.

Try to get local banks and businesses and people to support you, but don't depend on them. Wherever and whenever possible and desirable, form alliances with other groups and organizations. Get as much media attention as possible, just make sure it's your story that gets told.

Find out which of all the university experts have a clear understanding of actual agricultural economics and involve them as much as possible, but watch out for those who lecture you about free trade, free enterprise and modern farming efficiency. Figure out which of them are running academic research programs funded by agribusiness corporations and listen to their advice with a good share of skepticism. Be skeptical also of the politically motivated projects like "Dairy 20-20" and the proposals they come up with.

Be ready to refute the demand for so-called free trade that blames farmers in other countries for our problems. The bottom line has to be our ability to manage the total supply of milk, equitably distributed across the whole nation. Ask those who reject the right of producers to control and manage their gross production, if they are willing and ready to pay for production in excess of what the market can bear. Remember, one way or another, farmers have always paid for their excess production of any commodity and will continue doing so until a rational, sensible, workable and fair supply management system is put in place.

*Curt Rohland
Chippewa Falls, WI*

Kamp Kenwood shines bright



Brad Henderson
WFU Facilities Manager

Sometimes when trying to find your way through the dark, it helps if someone turns on the lights. This year at Wisconsin Farmers Union Kamp Kenwood we did just that. Thanks to The Big Share and our member fundraising efforts, this year we completed an electrical upgrade that put new lights on the outside of our cabins, replaced

ancient fluorescent fixtures inside and added security lighting for our grounds.

The youth cabins received most of the work. Gone are the days of turning on the light switch to get one-half of the room to respond with "flicker-flicker-buzzz." Throughout camp, 28 light fixtures were replaced with efficient LEDs and 32 outlets were rewired. On the outside of each cabin entrance, a fixture was placed above the door to illuminate campers travelling to their cabin after a campfire.

This was a large step toward making the camp energy efficient. Installing LED (light-emitting diode) fixtures gives us the most efficient lighting choice, using only a third of the energy of fluorescent lights and potentially reducing our lights' energy consumption by up to 80 percent. Their warm glow is also an improvement over the cool white light cast by the old fluorescent tubes.

On the grounds, mercury vapor fixtures were replaced with four LED security lights. These dusk-dawn luminaires include a "full-cutoff" design for Dark-Sky compliance. Two of these were placed on new utility poles which will effectively light our entry way and our ball-field/parking space.

These improvements help make Kamp Kenwood safer and more energy efficient and are greatly appreciated by staff and campers alike — thanks to all who helped make them happen!

**Give a Stronger Voice to Rural America
Join Wisconsin Farmers Union and
help preserve the economic health and
sustainability of our rural communities.**

Membership Application

Name: _____

Spouse's Name: _____

of Children under 21: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Household Type:

☐ Farm ☐ Rural ☐ Small Town ☐ Urban

Type of Farm: Check all that apply.

☐ Dairy ☐ Poultry ☐ Vegetables or Fruit

☐ Beef ☐ Cropso Organic

☐ Hogs ☐ Horses ☐ Other _____

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

☐ New Member ☐ Renewing Member

☐ 1 Year (\$30) ☐ 2 Years (\$55)

☐ 4 Years (\$100) ☐ Lifetime (\$2000)

☐ Student (\$15) ☐ Organization (\$50)

Join us today!

Mail this card to:

Wisconsin Farmers Union
117 W. Spring St. • Chippewa Falls, WI • 54729

Or sign up online:

www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com

For more information, call 800-272-5531

Chapter Chatter

Share it here!

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



Submitted photo

Wisconsin Farmers Union Special Projects Director Sarah Lloyd (holding sign) educated Farm Aid concert-goers about the ongoing dairy crisis Sept. 22 during the day-long celebration of family farmers in Hartford, Connecticut. She's joined by members of Wisconsin, Minnesota and Pennsylvania Farmers Unions.

#DairyTogether heads to Farm Aid

On Sept. 22, Farm Aid held its 33rd annual concert in Hartford, Connecticut. Over 24,000 farmers and farm advocates attended, learning about issues plaguing rural America and family farms.

Leading up to the concert, Farm Aid hosted a full-day seminar that explored strategies to address the current farm crisis. Wisconsin Farmers Union Director of Special Projects Sarah Lloyd spoke on a panel with other farm advocates about the state of the dairy industry and how the Dairy Together movement is working to save family dairy farms. That evening, after a screening of the film *Forgotten Farms*, National Farmers Union Vice President Patty Edelburg spoke about the causes of the dairy crisis, how it is affecting family dairy farmers, and potential long-term solutions. The day before the concert, Farm Aid hosted three full-day farm tours, featuring a local orchard, community food systems, and a fishery.

The day of the concert kicked off with a press conference that featured family farmers, Farm Aid staff, musicians, and the Farm Aid board, including of Willie Nelson, John Mellencamp, Neil Young, and Dave

Mathews. The panel discussed issues facing America's farmers, including crashing commodity prices, trade disputes, labor shortages, health care costs and natural disasters.

"No matter what's thrown at them, family farmers persevere," Farm Aid co-founder, Willie Nelson said. "They've hung in there for generations, growing good food for all of us. Now we're the ones who've got to dig in and fight for their survival."

Concert-goers had the opportunity to walk through the Homegrown Village, where many food, farm, and agriculture groups hosted booths and activities. National Farmers Union organized an interactive soil health table. Tim Velde of Minnesota Farmers Union, joined by Micah Nelson, Willie Nelson's son, and Joe Schroeder, Farm Aid's farm advocate, spoke about how trade uncertainty has affected farmers' economic and mental well-being.

Since it began in 1985, Farm Aid has raised more than \$53 million to promote a strong and resilient family farm system of agriculture, committed to keeping family farmers on the land.

FARMERS UNION HAPPENINGS

DANE COUNTY POTLUCK PICNIC

— Sept. 30, 1pm, Kevin Shelley and Sandry Whitney home, 1764 Hwy. 12 & 18, Deerfield. Info: Teresa Johnson, 608-212-7253 or bbtj@charter.net. Bring a dish to pass.

ST. CROIX COUNTY FARMERS UNION PICNIC

— Sept. 30, 1-4pm, Threshing Table Farm, Jody and Mike Lenz, 2249 150th St., Star Prairie. Info: Jerry or Char Croes, 715-338-6647.

BARRON COUNTY FARMERS UNION ANNUAL MEETING

— Sept. 30, 4:30pm, Barron Electric Co-op Building Conference Room, 1434 WI-25, Barron. Agenda: Approval of 2019 Budget, Improvements to Fair Food Stand, State Convention Plans, Election of Officers. Refreshments served.

CHIPPEWA COUNTY FARMERS UNION POTLUCK

— Sat., Oct. 13, noon, Ashly and Stacy Steinke's Sedge Wood Farms, 30101 190th Ave., Cornell. Info: Danielle Endvick, 715-471-0398.

LA CROSSE-MONROE COUNTY FARMERS UNION ANNUAL MEETING

— Sun., Nov. 11, 1-3pm, Sparta Family Restaurant, 741 Avon Road, Sparta. Agenda: Year in Review, Elections, Complimentary meal. Info: Stephen Honish, 608-387-2870 or honishherd@hotmail.com.

BUFFALO COUNTY FARMERS UNION ANNUAL MEETING

— Nov. 11, 2pm, Roger Marten Community Center, 120 S. Franklin St., Mondovi. Info: John Gehrke, 715-926-3790.

Pepin-Pierce sets event

Pepin-Pierce Farmer Union invites you to a gathering on Oct. 21 at 1pm. WFU Director of Special Projects will lead a workshop on effective ways to write to our elected officials, how to submit op-ed articles and about writing our farm story. There will be a discussion about policy resolutions for the upcoming WFU annual convention as well as time for sharing with each other. The location is N6378 County Rd D, Arkansaw, WI 54721 at the Community of Christ Church. Refreshments will be served. Children's play space and supervision provided.

Questions? Contact the chapter email at wfupepinpierce@gmail.com or visit our website at <https://wfupepinpierce.wordpress.com>.

Pasture walks coming up

Autumn is the perfect time to get out and enjoy some pasture walks. Here are the final walks on this year's schedule of events hosted by our grazing network friends, with support from Wisconsin Farmers Union:

RANDOM LAKE — Tues., Oct. 2, 1-3pm, Bossie Cow Farm, Ricky and Thelma Heidel-Baker, W6174 Cty. Rd. SS, Random Lake

At this event, hosted by Wisconsin Farmers Union, Glacierland RC&D, Organic Valley and the Heidel-Baker family, hear how these beginning dairy farmers practice managed intensive rotational grazing as a 100 percent grass based dairy!

As we tour this well-established dairy grazing farm, we will discuss pasture species diversity and grass-based diets for all species. We'll also discuss family farm transitions and Ricky's experiences with the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program.

This event is open to the public and free of charge. Contact Kirsten Jurcek, Glacierland RC&D grazing educator, at 920-342-9504 or kjurcek1@centurytel.net with any questions.

GILMAN — Oct. 11, noon, (11am early start for those specifically interested in the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship) Mahalko Family Farm, 34717 Highway 64

River Country RC&D Grazing Educator Kevin Mahalko farms in partnership with his parents, milking 40 Holsteins on average with about 120 total head grazing including youngstock and grassfed steers. They market Grassmilk to Organic Valley. Kevin is a graduate of UW-Stevens Point and puts that conservation and natural resources background to good use on the farm. Kevin promotes vibrant grazing systems because of the many benefits of biodiversity, soil health, disease resistance, healthy genetics, healthy food, and positive environmental impact. Kevin also serves on the GrassWorks board.

RSVP to Kevin Mahalko at 715-314-0338 or under the corresponding event at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events.

GAYS MILLS — Oct. 16, 10:30am, Don Boland Farm, 18732 Highway 27

Learn about using EQIP for a new access road and remote deep bury water sites. Extending the grazing season with stockpile. Don is a Master Grazer with the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program and has successfully graduated several Dairy Grazing Apprentices. Come and share in the celebration for Kelsey (Weibel) Vance, who apprenticed with Don and Todd and Tonia Wright in Holmen. Kelsey completed her program requirements in July and is now a Journeyman Dairy grazer.

From Seneca, go 3 miles N on 27. The farm is on the right. If issues, call 608-734-3570.

COLFAX - Schmitt, Oct. 21, 12:30pm, Ken & Laurie Schmitt, 3900 Highway 40

Ken and Laurie Schmitt raise about 60 grass-fed cow/calf pairs with 200 acres using rotational grazing. Come learn more about their farm and cattle handling. See their "Bud Box" design and affordable chute and alley system that make it easy to work cattle.

Join us for a light potluck lunch starting around 12:30. Please bring a dish to pass, tableware, and your own beverage.

Directions: The farm is located on the first big curve east of Colfax on State Hwy 40 by the Howard Town Hall. RSVP at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events.

SAVE THE DATE - West Central Wisconsin Grazing Conference, March 22, Grand Occasions Ballroom, Osseo.



Submitted photo

Left: The Heidel-Baker family will host a pasture walk on their Bossie Cow Farm Oct. 2.



Soil studies

Photos by Danielle Endvick

Above: Landowners and agency staff gathered for a rainfall simulation during a Women Caring for the Land event at Deb Esselman's Green Briar Farm near Colby Sept. 6. The event was organized by Wisconsin Farmers Union and Pheasants Forever.

Right: Esselman raises and direct markets British White Park cattle.



Congrats Caleb & Lauren!

Submitted photo

Caleb and Lauren Langworthy of Wheeler were among farmers on the National Farmers Union Fly-In to Washington, D.C. Sept. 11-14. The event marked the conclusion of the Langworthys' year-long participation in the Farmers Union Enterprises Leadership Program.

Farmers Union seeks committee volunteers for Annual Convention

The 2019 WFU Annual Convention is right around the corner and the WFU Board of Directors is looking for member volunteers. There are five very important committees that perform critical duties to have the convention come together. The board selects candidates that have shown leadership this past year or over the years and would appreciate hearing from members interested in serving on these committees. A letter of invitation will be sent after committee final selection is made.

Resolutions Review Committee

The Resolutions Review Committee, often referred to as the policy committee, has one member from each of the in-state districts. This committee meets the first Thursday in December, and their main duty is to review the current year's policy booklet and new resolutions submitted by Dec. 1 to the state office, which have been approved by county, county-local and local unions at their annual meetings. Commitments include attending the all-day December review meeting held near Chippewa Falls, along with the county presidents' meeting the first Saturday in January, generally in Tomah, as well as the annual convention's Saturday meeting at 7:30 a.m. and then take part in the policy discussion section of convention both Saturday and Sunday. Mileage is reimbursed for the December and early January meetings.

Bylaws Review Committee

The Bylaws Review Committee is made up of 5-7 members from any part of the state, preferably having knowledge of both Farmers Union history and Roberts Rules of Order. Experience working with bylaws for a non-profit organization is a plus. The duties and responsibilities include evening meetings over a teleconference call and/or a face-to-face meeting in November/early December to review WFU's Articles and Bylaws including bylaw changes proposed by county, county-local or local unions submitted to the state office by Dec. 1. All draft revisions are presented as a group at the county presidents' meeting for further review. Committee members are expected to attend the county presidents' meeting in Tomah, the first Saturday in January, as well as serve as a delegate and bring forth bylaw revisions at convention. Mileage is reimbursed for any face-to-face committee meetings and the early January meeting only.

The Credentials Committee, made up of 3-5 members from any part of the state, is responsible for overseeing the proper distribution of information to delegates, in accordance with the WFU Articles & Bylaws, the authorized number of delegates to county, county-local and local unions and then credential the eligibility of delegates as members in good standing. They also oversee that registrations materials are

properly arranged and received. They will meet the second week of January via a teleconference call as well as at 8:15 a.m. Saturday morning of the annual convention. The Credentials Committee chair will present a report on the counted number of eligible delegates at the general opening session. Most of the clerical duties are developed into a routine process preserved in the WFU State Office, but the authority and responsibility for general direction of this work remain with the Credentials Committee. A member isn't expected to be a delegate, but is required to be at the state annual convention on both Saturday and Sunday for overseeing registration.

Elections Committee

The Elections Committee, made up of 12 members from any part of the state, is responsible to act as tellers to distribute, collect and count ballots for any motion by ballot, the bylaw revisions, NFU convention delegate and district director voting, overseeing recording of roll call votes, or any other necessary weighted votes. The election committee chair reports the vote results to the convention chair. Six of the 12 will need to be tallying paper ballots on Sunday morning of convention from 7:00 -10:15 a.m. beginning with their registration plated breakfast. The other six will be in the delegate meeting room and available for any roll call voting or ballot voting process. A member isn't expected to be a delegate, but is required to be present during the bylaw and policy debate on both Saturday and Sunday of the state convention and purchase a member registration or meal ticket. A teleconference call will be scheduled in mid-January for review of procedures. Having an intermediate skill level for Microsoft Excel is a plus.

Rules Committee

The Rules Committee, made up of 3-5 members from any part of the state, is responsible for reviewing the standing rules of the WFU Annual State Convention, making any appropriate changes necessary and overseeing the distribution of them to all delegates. The Rules Committee Chair presents and moves for adoption of the rules during the opening session. During the bylaws and policy debate and election process, the rules committee should be present making sure the standing rules are being followed. A member isn't expected to be a delegate, but should be present during the bylaw and policy debate on both Saturday and Sunday of the state convention. Members of the Rules Committee will meet prior to the delegate mailing in January via an evening teleconference call.

Time is of the essence, so If you are interested in helping on any of these 5 convention committees, please contact Diane Tiry at the WFU State Office, 715-723-5561 or 800-272-5531 by Oct. 10, 2018.

From p.6 ► BFI

self-discipline in money keeping were the key takeaway from a session led by Gary Matteson of Farm Credit. "Define your 'success' in a way that ensures your farm is in the right spot," Matteson said. He defined success as "Enough net profit to meet your goals for your family and your business," a meaning that may flex and need to be reassessed as the farm grows.

Matteson noted that the basic business skills of farming are 1) Financial 2) Production and 3) Marketing. "Chances are you're really good at and enjoy spending time on one of these skill sets," he said. "But the one you should actually be focusing on is the one you're worst at."

Though he acknowledged that these are tough economic times for farmers, Matteson also urged the group to set aside money — any little bit they can each month — into an emergency savings and to carry life insurance to help safeguard their farm and family.

Perhaps the toughest advice Matteson gave was to be continually reassessing farm enterprises and thinking about new ways to have a better cash flow. As he said, "Stop doing things that you lose money at!"

In these times when farming can be a disheartening profession for any farmer, let alone those just starting out, BFI is a breath of fresh air, showing that there is yet hope across the countryside that family farms can persevere and that we can rebuild local food systems that trend away from vertical integration and back to the land and buying local.

The BFI class will meet again in November in Salinas, California and in March at the NFU National Convention in Bellevue, Washington.

"As the farm population continues to age, we are looking to the next generation of farmers and ranchers to continue to produce food, fiber and fuel. But farming can be an overwhelming business to get started if you don't have the right tools," said NFU president Roger Johnson. "The Beginning Farmer Institute has empowered new farmers across the country."

Learn more about the Beginning Farmer Institute at <https://nfu.org/education/beginning-farmer-institute/>. Applications for the next BFI class will be available online in early 2019.

WHAT'S ON YOUR TABLE? *with Diane Tiry*

Last Bounties from the Garden!

Farmers' markets and road side stands are offering fewer choices during these fall days, but there are still a variety of menu options. I am excited to share with you two recipes below, with the first one coming from a friend that can easily turn into a family favorite.

If you can still find fresh green beans, I suggest trying this green bean crumble recipe. It is a great way to use up some of those green beans still on the vine or even try your frozen ones.

Another vegetable that still calls to me to try is Kale. I like variety in a salad and found a recipe with dried cranberries that sounds delicious. The recipe below has you massaging the kale with olive oil by using your fingers for one minute. This recipe also gives you the choice of topping with blue cheese or goat cheese. Kale is a green, leafy, winter vegetable that is high in fiber, antioxidants, calcium and vitamin K along with a potassium content that may help reduce the risk of heart disease. It is also a good source of vitamin C, B6 and iron.

Let me know how you like it.

GREEN BEAN CRUMBLE

Source: Bob Schmick, Chippewa Falls

Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp. Bread Crumbs
- 2 Tbsp. Olive Oil
- 2 Tbsp. Parmesan Cheese
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 1 pound green beans

Directions:

- Mix all the first 4 ingredients together.
- Wash and cut beans or leave whole and put in casserole dish.
- Add the mixture to the beans and coat.
- Bake in preheated oven at 400° F. for 10 minutes without covering. Turn the beans over and bake another 10 minutes. Less time is needed for frozen beans.
- Serve.



KALE SALAD WITH WARM CRANBERRY ALMOND VINAIGRETTE

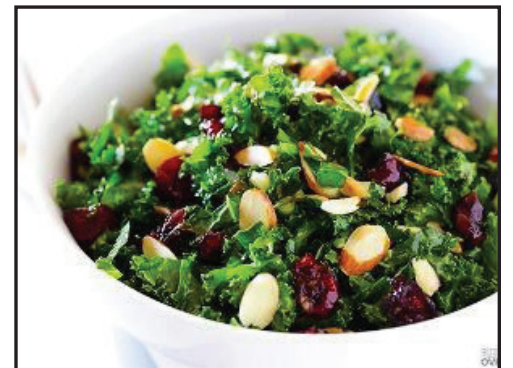
Source: <https://www.gimmesomeoven.com/kale-salad-warm-cranberry-vinaigrette-recipe/>

Ingredients:

- 3 Tbsp. olive oil, divided
- 1 shallot, peeled and thinly sliced (can substitute 2 Tbsp. chopped onion)
- 3 cloves garlic, coarsely chopped
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- 2 Tbsp. red wine vinegar
- 2 teaspoons honey
- Juice and zest of half a lemon
- 1/8 tsp. salt
- 1/8 tsp. black pepper
- 1 bunch kale, very thinly sliced
- ¼ cup sliced almonds
- Optional=1/4 cup crumbled blue cheese or goat cheese

Directions:

- Heat 2 Tbsp. oil in a large saute pan over medium-high heat.
- Add shallot and saute for at least 5 minutes or until tender.
- Add garlic and saute for 1 minute. • Add cranberries, red wine vinegar, honey and lemon juice and zest, and stir to combine.
- Season with salt and pepper.
- In a large bowl, toss the kale with olive oil and an extra pinch of salt, and massage kale with your fingers for 1 minute until tender.
- Add in the cranberry/shallot mixture and almonds, and toss to combine. Serve topped with crumbled cheese, if desired.



*Happy and Healthy eating to all,
Diane Tiry*

Welcome new Wisconsin Farmers Union members!

New Memberships

Toby Griggs & Pamela Linden-Griggs, Ashland
 Gayle Chatfield & Bill Bailey, Bayfield
 Sara Tedeschi, Ferryville
 Laura Purdy & John Binkley, Waunakee
 Lester and Lee Ann Wiese, Brule
 John and Catherine Schwoerer, Valders
 Rudy Goldstein & Ivy Berg, Washburn
 Jim Bryan, Bayfield
 Anthony Mellethin, Menomonie
 Gary & Lori Gruber, Mondovi
 SunFarm, Port Wing

Recruited by

Tom Cogger
 John Adams
 Dylan Bruce
 Kriss Marion
 Mark Liebaert
 Family Insurance Center
 John Adams
 Bill Bailey
 Jerry Thompson Insurance Agency
 Jerry Thompson Insurance
 John Adams



Celebrate October Co-op Month!

The following co-ops and businesses join us in celebrating October Co-op Month!

Barron Electric Cooperative
Serving the rural area for over 80 years

Community Shares of Wisconsin
www.communityshares.com

Dunn Energy Cooperative
Energy Through Excellence

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative
www.ecec.com

Jump River Electric
Serving the area for more than 79 years

Middleton Farmers Cooperative
www.middletoncoop.com

Pierce Pepin Cooperative Services
Live Better

St. Croix Electric Co-op
715-796-7000 | www.scecnet.net

Vernon Electric Cooperative
Your Touchstone Energy Cooperative

Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative
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WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2018

5:00 PM Registration
6:00 PM Welcome Reception

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2018

7:00 AM Registration & Breakfast
8:30 AM Farmer Cooperatives: Policy Update
10:30 AM Leveraging Sustainability for
Competitive Advantage
12:00 PM Networking Lunch
1:15 PM Governance Spotlight

2:30 PM Engaging External Expertise in the
Board Room
4:00 PM Strategic Growth: Options Beyond
Mergers and Consolidation
5:00 PM Cocktail Reception

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 9, 2018

7:00 AM Registration & Breakfast
8:30 AM CEO Succession Planning
9:30 AM Defined Benefit Retirement Plans
10:45 AM Talent Retention in Your Co-op
12:00 PM Adjourn

For more information, please visit: www.farmercoops.uwcc.wisc.edu

PRESENTED BY:



If you have questions or would like to request additional information about this conference, please contact :
Megan Webster (mawebster@wisc.edu)