



WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION NEWS

July/August 2016

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Levendofsky joins WFU policy team

Wisconsin Farmers Union is pleased to introduce Nick Levendofsky, the newest member of the Wisconsin Farmers Union staff. Nick will join the team in August as the Government Relations Associate, taking over for Zach Herrnstadt, who recently moved to California. Nick will be based in the Madison office. Working closely with Government Relations Director Kara O'Connor, Nick will be communicating WFU policy positions and priorities to legislators and agency officials while keeping WFU members up to speed on state and federal legislative developments.

Nick grew up on a diversified crop and beef cattle farm in north central Kansas where his parents still live and farm. After graduating from Kansas State with a degree in Agricultural Communications & Journalism, Nick worked in a number of sales and marketing roles, as well as governmental relations, communications, and special projects for Kansas Farmers Union. His most rewarding work at KFU was an outreach and education program for beginning farmers who were

veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and playing a key role in stopping the expansion of corporate agriculture during the 2013 Kansas legislative session.

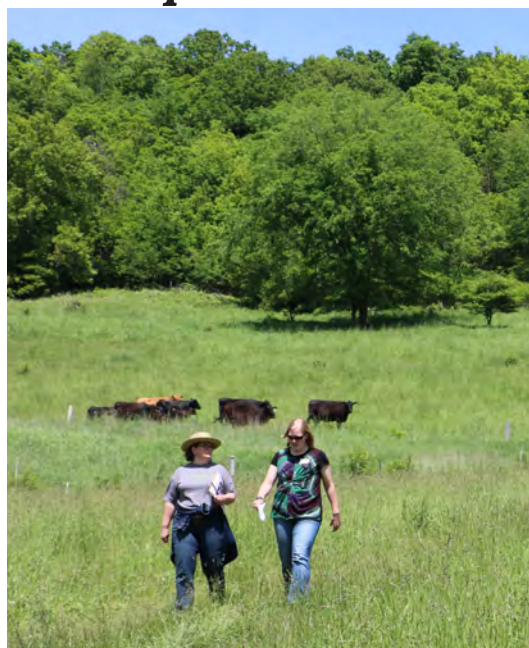
Nick recently served as KFU's Vice President and Republic County President. He is a 2015 National Farmers Union Beginning Farmer Institute graduate and served on the 2016 NFU Policy Committee at the recent Minnesota convention.

"I'm honored to work for an organization that shares my interest in advancing agricultural policies crafted to help family farms and rural communities thrive," Nick said. "I look forward to meeting and learning from WFU members and promoting the issues that matter most to them."

"Nick's wealth of lobbying experience, his warm and outgoing manner, and his passion for sharing rural narratives make him a great fit for this position," said WFU Executive Director Tom Quinn. "We are extremely pleased to welcome him to the WFU family."



WFU partners on workshops for women landowners



Above: WFU Special Projects Coordinator Sarah Lloyd, left, chats conservation at a Women Caring for the Land event held in Richland Center last summer.

Wisconsin Farmers Union will host three Women Caring for the Land workshops around the state Aug. 23-25. The workshops, held in partnership with the Women, Food and Agriculture Network, 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 morning learning circle, followed by a field trip to an area farm in the afternoon. Locations include:

- Aug. 23, The Hungry Turtle, 110 Keller Ave. N., Amery; field trip to Cylon Rolling Acres, 1956 240th St., Deer Park. See how Leslie Svacina is building her herd of Boer-Kiko cross meat goats and improving her pastures using rotational grazing. She also is raising dairy buck kids for meat on pasture. Leslie will share how she's developed her grazing system for goats, including putting in new perimeter fence, using portable electric fence, seasonal water line, pasture shelters and livestock guardian animals.

- Aug. 24, The Ridge Bar & Grill, 623 Main St., Ridgeway; field trip to Cherrie Nolden's operation, 5686 Griffiths Rd., Dodgeville. Cherrie uses pastured pigs and meat goats for brush control on her diversified farm, which is also home to a draft horse herd, **See CARING ► p.2**

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Trade deals not all sunshine and roses



Darin Von Ruden
WFU President

There has been a lot of talk around the country about how the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) is good for our agriculture economy. But I'm not buying it.

Over the last several decades, the story of trade agreements ratified by Congress has been one broken promise after another. Backers of trade agreements such as the North American Free Trade Agreement and the Korea Free Trade Agreement promised U.S. farmers increases in farm income and more rural economic activity. These promises have largely been unfulfilled. In fact, agricultural imports have surged while exports have lagged behind under recent free trade agreements, hurting U.S. farmers.

Now Congress is proposing yet another free trade agreement, the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP). Wisconsin Farmers Union believes that the TPP, a global trade agreement among 12 Pacific Rim countries, poses a serious threat to dairy farmers. Among other concerns, TPP could lead to greater imports of Milk Protein Concentrates (MPC's), which displace demand for milk produced on U.S. farms. New Zealand, the leading exporter of MPC's, is a member of the TPP.

Exchange rates are especially important when it comes to trade in agricultural commodities. When the value of the U.S. dollar is high, U.S. commodities are relatively more expensive to international traders, and they will opt to buy commodities from other countries instead. Since U.S. negotiators failed to secure binding prohibitions on currency manipulation in the TPP, all of the supposed gains to agricultural exports under the TPP could easily be wiped out by currency manipulation.

Currency manipulation could quickly erase supposed gains in agricultural trade. The TPP includes three known currency manipulators: Japan, Singapore, and Malaysia. These countries use state-owned banks to buy up U.S. dollars, so their currencies stay cheap and the U.S. dollar stays expensive. The TPP contains voluntary measures, but no binding provisions, to curtail currency manipulation. Currency manipulation drives up our trade deficit, reduces our Gross Domestic Product by hundreds of billions of dollars, undermines U.S. job growth, and increases the U.S. federal deficit. During trade talks Japanese officials said that they would use this mechanism to protect their industries, especially the auto and banking sectors.

Another possible detriment to the TPP is that

Canada's milk quota system is supposed to be phased out over the next decade. Will they still have the ability to protect their farm structure? And how will that impact our fragile U.S. dairy market?

Meanwhile, the U.S. trade deficit continues to rise. Without some safeguards in place, and a provision to address currency manipulation, TPP is not going to be good for American agriculture.

Under TPP, dairy stands to be at a net loss in both price and farm numbers. Dairy prices will struggle under TPP as the U.S. Department of Agriculture estimates that imports will rise close to 5 billion pounds by 2025 under TPP versus under 4 billion under current trade agreements.

But think of the exports, they say!

We're told exports will save us, but look at what has happened over the last 18 months — exports have fallen by nearly 13 percent in volume and 33 percent in value. That means there is less money coming back to the local economy and more money leaving the U.S. to buy imports.

Dairy farm numbers in the United States have been declining for several decades now. In 1970 there were around 648,000. In 2006 there were 75,000, and today we have less than 58,000 dairy farms across the country. Wisconsin is losing 1 farm a day on average and California is losing 1 to 2 per week as a result of the low price that farmers are receiving for their milk.

So with the above scenario where exports are falling and imports are rising, there will be pressure for prices to remain below farmers' production costs.

We can't risk another economic downturn like those we've experienced under previous trade deals. Wisconsin Farmers Union opposes the Trans Pacific Partnership, and has urged our representatives in Washington to say no to TPP.

And just where do our candidates and elected officials stand? President Obama has gone all in on his support of the TPP. In contrast, presidential candidates Clinton, Sanders and Trump all have come out in opposition to the TPP.

Wisconsin Senate incumbent Ron Johnson says he "has not made up his mind" on TPP, even though the proposal was released in November of last year. Johnson did vote to give the president Trade Promotion Authority in order to "fast track" the TPP. His competitor, Russ Feingold, opposes TPP in no uncertain terms.

While many in our agricultural community would have you believe TPP is all sunshine and roses, past trade deals should give us serious pause.

Don't believe the hype. Standing up for Wisconsin farmers means standing against the Trans-Pacific Partnership.

Celebrate rural life with the Soil Sisters Aug. 5-7

MONROE — For three days and with five unique components and involving more than twenty farms, the Soil Sisters culinary event celebrates family farms and rural life in and around the farming communities of Monroe and Brodhead Aug. 5-7.

Bring your coolers for fresh produce and meats, pull on your farm boots or overalls, wear your sun hat and kick back for a relaxing time on one, or all, of the farms. From heirloom tomatoes to pickles, sheep to solar energy, farmstay bed & breakfasts to beef, the farmers and artisan food producers share a unique diversity of farm experiences showcasing the summer's bounty.

Choose from a variety of activities, including a Dinner on the Farm at the award-winning Sandhill Family Farms, Taste of Place culinary event at Cow & Quince, plentiful on-farm workshops, plus area restaurants featuring "locavore" specials throughout the weekend.

Soil Sisters offers an immersive farming and culinary experience, led by women – the "soil sisters" – committed to a healthy, fresh product or farm-made, artisanal food products and other items. Preserve the harvest, spin some fiber, milk a goat, or just relax in a tree swing. There is something for everyone.

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

Events throughout the weekend include:

- In Her Boots: A day-long program for aspiring women farmers. Facilitated by the Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service; Aug. 5; 10am – 3pm; ticketed.
- Taste of Place local food celebration at Cow & Quince Restaurant; Aug. 5; 6 pm – 8 pm; ticketed.
- Green Acres Workshops: On-farm, hands-on educational workshops; Aug. 6, 9am – 3pm, various times/locations; ticketed.
- Dinner on the Farm at Sandhill Family Farms: Farm-to-table picnic featuring local cuisine and live music; Aug. 6, 4pm – 9pm; \$75 per adult, kids under age 10 eat free; ticketed.
- Tour of Farms: Farmstands open at numerous farms, sharing eggs, fresh produce, cut flowers and hand-crafted items; Tours throughout the day. Aug. 7; 11am – 6pm; free event.
- Dine Fine: Numerous participating restaurants feature local menu specials. Aug. 5-7; specials vary by restaurant.

"Come meet your farmers and learn about local, seasonal food and how we can all transform what's on our plate," explains Lisa Kivirist, coordinator of the SOIL SISTERS weekend, a venture of the Wisconsin Farmers Union Foundation, the Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service and Renewing the Countryside, with funding from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism's Joint Effort Marketing program.

"The opportunity to really take folks from 'field to plate' — from touring our growing fields to sharing a meal together at the Dinner on the Farm event — is something I am definitely looking forward to," adds Peg Sheaffer, co-owner of Sandhill Family Farms and host of the Dinner on the Farm. "The annual SOIL SISTERS weekend gives everyone multiple ways to connect with and get to know their farmer."

For more information, visit www.soilsisterswi.org or call Lisa Kivirist at 608-3297056.

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pastured poultry, livestock protection dogs and dairy goats. Cherrie, who is currently pursuing her PhD at UW-Madison, has been conducting grazing and browsing research and will share how her production practices affect soil health. She will also demonstrate the ease of using electric netting fencing for rotational multi-species grazing.

• Aug. 25, Brattset Family Farm, N2437 Brattset Lane, Jefferson. Three generations of women farmers care for the land on this 290-acre diversified farm, which is home to a grass-fed beef herd and small dairy herd. Conservation highlights will include: learning about a conservation easement on the farm and seeing their rotational grazing system, silviculture planting of fruit and nut trees, Conservation Reserve Program prairie, honeybee hives and ongoing warm season pasture experiments. (Note: The morning session will also be on the farm.)



Registration and networking for each event will begin at 8:30am. Lunch will be provided.

The afternoon field trips will allow participants to observe conservation practices in action. Please wear appropriate clothing and shoes for walking in farm fields or pastures.

Nearly half of all Midwest farmland is currently owned or co-owned by women. Women Caring for the Land is facilitated by women conservationists and offers a peer-to-peer, informal discussion format to allow women landowners to talk about their individual farm management goals.

Attendees will learn to improve the health of their soils through rotational grazing, no-till, and other conservation practices.

Please RSVP by noon on Friday, Aug. 19 to Deb Jakubek at 715-590-2130 or djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com. For more information about this program, visit www.womencaringfortheland.org.

A Celebration of Wisconsin Family Farms & Rural Life

SOIL SISTERS

3 Days • 5 Unique Components • 20+ Farms
Create Your Own Farm and Culinary Adventure

Tour of Farms - Sunday, August 7

Visit numerous women-owned farms in the Monroe and Brodhead areas. Free.

Green Acres Hands-on Workshops - Friday, August 5 and Saturday, August 6

Milk a goat, preserve the harvest, go on a hayride, spin fiber and much more! Ticketed events on various farms.

Taste of Place at Cow & Quince - Friday, August 5

A local food & drink celebration. Ticketed event.

Dinner on the Farm - Saturday, August 6

Farm-to-table picnic featuring local cuisine & live music. Kids under 10 eat free. Ticketed event.

Dine Fine at Restaurants - Friday, August 5 to Sunday, August 7

Sample "locavore" specials throughout the weekend.

Join Us
on the
Farm!

★ MADISON

SOIL SISTERS

August 5-7, 2016

www.soilsisterswi.org



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Summer Conference coming up

The Wisconsin Farmers Union board and staff invite you to join us Friday, Aug. 5 at Summer Conference for a great day of food, networking and presentations at beautiful WFU Kamp Kenwood on Lake Wissota near Chippewa Falls.

Bring a carload from your local chapter and join in the fun! The conference runs from 10am to 2pm. Registration will open at 9am in the lodge. Arrive at Kamp Kenwood early and join in a 9am nature walk.

The theme of the day will be Passports, Pies & Politics. In the morning, hear from Westby dairy farmer and WFU President Darin Von Ruden about his recent trip to Zambia, Africa for the World Farmers' Organization Summit.

Are you a baker? Bring a pie along for the pie contest! (See details in Diane's recipe column on page 14.)

We'll enjoy lunch along the lake before diving into an inspiring afternoon talk on Making the Rural Vote Count with Kara O'Connor, WFU government relations director.

Those interested in staying after the meeting are welcome to explore Kamp Kenwood and enjoy informal networking time around the campfire with Farmers Union friends!

Join us for a fun day of networking, and also meet new WFU Government Relations Associate Nick Levendofsky, who will take over the duties of Zach Herrnstadt, who recently left WFU for a move to California. Levendofsky hails from Kansas, where he has strong Farmers Union roots (read more about him on page 1.)

For questions about Summer Conference or to RSVP, contact Diane Tiry at 715-723-5561 or dtiry@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Have kids? Consider enrolling them in Acorn Day Camp, which coincides with the conference and costs \$15/child. For more details about the day camp, contact Cathy Statz at 715-214-7887. Lunch is free will offering or included in the cost of Acorn Camp fees.



Left: Summer Conference is held at the historic lodge at WFU Kamp Kenwood, built by volunteer Farmers Union members in the early 1950s and cherished still today.

Wisconsin Farmers Union 2016 DAY CAMPS

Leadership Development
Cooperative Learning
& Summer Fun!



DANE COUNTY

July, 19, 10am-1pm, Donald Park, Pop's Knoll, Mount Horeb. Info: Katie Haun, haun.kathryn@gmail.com or 608-444-5673. Lunch provided.

SOUTH CENTRAL

July 21, 10am-1pm, Erica & Scott Roth Home, W898 Bump Rd, Albany. Info: Erica Roth, 414-305-0734 or ericaroth@gmail.com. Bring a sack lunch.

TAYLOR-PRICE COUNTY

July 27, 10am-2pm, Pam & Bill Gebert Home, N4165 Castle Rd, Medford. Info: Pam Gebert, 715-965-6968 or plk22@hotmail.com. Lunch provided.

July 28, 10am-noon, Catawba Park, Catawba. Info: Cathy Peterson, walt_cathy@hotmail.com or 715-474-3477, or Linda Ceylor, hillsidedairyfarm@yahoo.com or 715-567-1010. Lunch provided.

July 28, 1-2:30pm, Hawkins Public Library, Hawkins. Info: Arlene Mabie, hawkinslibrary@gmail.com or 715-585-2311. Snack provided.

WOOD-PORTAGE-WAUPACA COUNTY

July 27, 2-4:30pm, Nelson Park, Amherst. Info: Deb Jakubek, djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 715-590-2130.

July 28, 9:30am-noon, Iverson Park, Stevens Point. Info: Deb Jakubek, djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 715-590-2130.

July 28, 2-4:30pm, Auburndale Park, Auburndale. Info: Deb Jakubek, djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 715-590-2130.

ACORN DAY CAMP

Aug. 5, 10am-2pm (coinciding with WFU Summer Conference) Kamp Kenwood, 19161 79th Ave., Chippewa Falls. Info: Cathy Statz, 715-214-7887 or cstatz@wisconsinfarmersunion.com. Lunch provided.

BUFFALO-PEPIN COUNTY

Aug. 8, 9:30am-noon, Mondovi Tourist Park, South Eau Claire St/County Hwy H, Mondovi (3 blocks south of Hwy 37, on east side of road). Info: Robin Taylor (Buffalo), 715-225-7118 or rtplaris@hotmail.com, or Mary Heck (Pepin) 715-672-8550 or mdheck@nelson-tel.net. Bring a sack lunch.

LA CROSSE-MONROE COUNTY

Aug. 18, 9-noon, People's Food Co-op, La Crosse (co-sponsor). Info: Romi Londre, pattison.romi@gmail.com or 715-495-6190. Light lunch provided.

Why every American should visit Washington, D.C. in their lifetime

Editor's Note: This column is a reprint of a blog I wrote for The Country Today newspaper after traveling to Washington, D.C., in June 2014. I hope it inspires you to think about venturing to our nation's capital. Check out the details at right on scholarships available to the Farmers Union Fly-in this fall, and consider joining me and other Wisconsin farmers in D.C.!

Danielle Endvick
Communications Director

Visiting our nation's capital had never been high on my bucket list.

To be honest, it wasn't on my bucket list at all in the spring of 2014 when my editor at *The Country Today* newspaper inquired if I wanted to tag along to report on the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Young Farmer and Agriculturist lobbying trip that June.

My visions of Washington, D.C., were of stuffy suits, side-stepping politicians and city traffic, so when I told friends about the trip it was with a "Well, I'd certainly never *plan* to go there on vacation, so this might be my only chance to see it."

But, boy, did that trip end up changing my mentality. Now I say, every American should visit Washington, D.C., at least once in their life.

I'd consider myself a fairly proud American and even patriotic, but reading a history book in a Wisconsin classroom is a far different experience than walking the very streets where presidents have trod and the halls where lawmakers have determined the direction of our nation. Knowing a bit about the wars that have shaped American history is nothing compared to seeing ghostly statues of soldiers at the Korean War Veterans Memorial or strolling along the heartbreakingly long list of names at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

As I ran my hand along the polished black granite of the Vietnam Memorial, it struck a chord, seeing the price that had been paid for freedom. Hearing that there were over 58,000 U.S. military casualties, as I'm sure was covered somewhere in my studies, is nothing compared to seeing those etched names and knowing each listed on the nearly 250-foot wall never made it home to their loved ones. My own favorite Vietnam veteran, my grandpa Jerry Kerns, could very well have been among them.

I also tagged along as young farmers lobbied their senators and congressional staff on issues that would impact the future of their farm and future generations of farmers. While a few of the lawmakers did play cat-and-mouse, landing us with more staffers than actual politicians, the idea that we were sitting in their offices and telling the stories of Wisconsin agriculture hit home.

I've spent many a day behind the wheel of a John Deere 4440 cutting hay and pondering the world's problems, but for a few moments — spiffy suit and all — I was part of actually making a difference in what may happen on Capitol Hill. Sharing my story could very well impact my family and fellow farmers who that day were home doing their own fieldwork.

I'm not saying I'm 100 percent sure my comments found their way to each of the legislators we meant for them to or that they were enough to sway a decision. But maybe. And staring up at the faces of the likes of Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln at their respective memorials, it felt good to know that I'd helped, in my own little way, to carry on a part of the dream that was born more than two centuries ago, a dream for a world where we can go take a stand, if we're willing.

Fair warning, there really are stuff suits, but hey, even a country girl likes to play dress-up once in a while.



Above: Danielle in Washington, D.C.

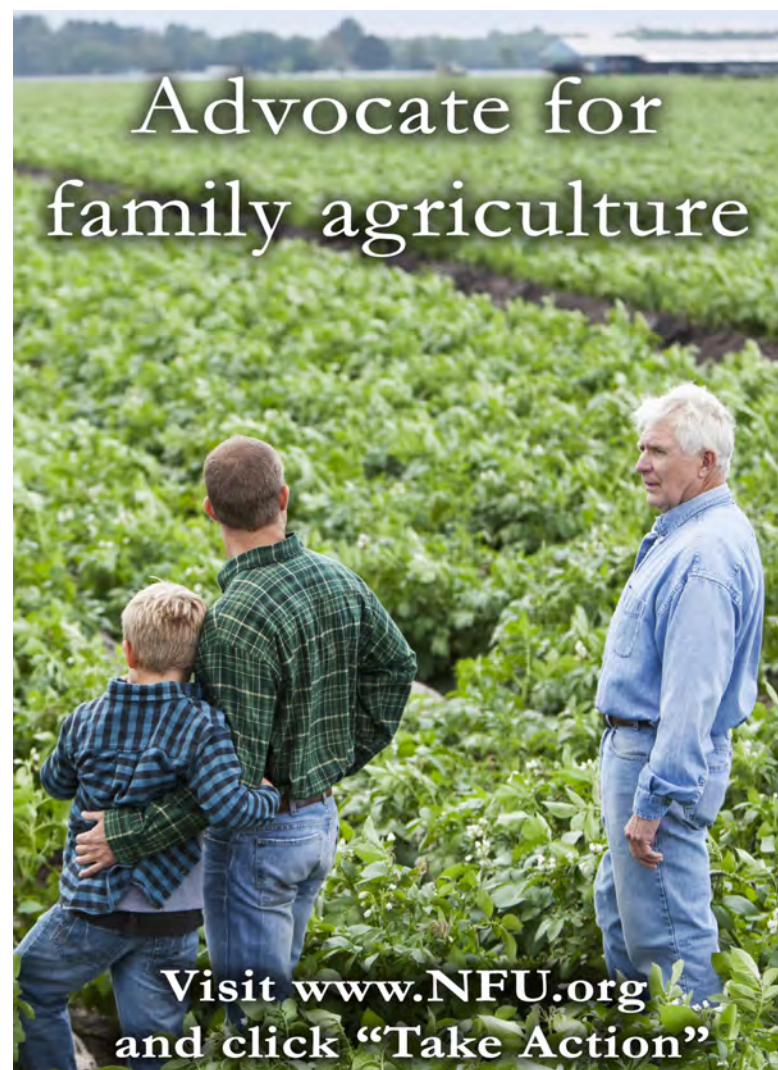
Apply by July 28 for fly-in scholarship

More than 250 National Farmers Union members will gather in Washington, D.C., for the 2016 Fall Legislative Fly-In Sept. 11-14. Are you interested in speaking up for family farms? Any WFU member is welcome to come, and scholarships are available for first-time participants.

Annual fly-ins allow Farmers Union members to help acquaint members of Congress with challenges faced by family farmers and ranchers across rural America. During their time in D.C., members will be hear from U.S. Department of Agriculture officials about current events, opportunities and other work the department is doing on behalf of farmers. They will also receive briefings from White House officials, U.S. Senate and House of Representatives Committees on Agriculture leadership and staff. NFU will also honor members of Congress with one of its highest awards, the Golden Triangle.

The most important agenda items of the fly-in, however, are the meetings on Capitol Hill. Grassroots efforts at their finest, Farmers Union members will highlight the key priorities for the organization, struggles they are facing, and goals for future legislation and the next farm bill.

Scholarship applications are due by July 28. To apply, visit www.WisconsinFarmersUnion.com or call the WFU State Office at 715-723-5561. For general questions about the fly-in, contact WFU Government Relations Director Kara O'Connor at koconnor@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 608-514-4541.



Chapter Chatter *Share it here!*

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



'Soil Sisters' celebrate!

Above: Members of the WFU South Central chapter celebrated receiving a JEM grant check from the Wisconsin Department of Tourism June 29 in Monroe. The grant is for promotion of the Soil Sisters event, a celebration of rural life that the women farmers host on their Brodhead and Monroe area farms. See more details on page 3.

Sauk County chapter sets events

The Sauk County Farmers Union invites you to a Summer Potluck Picnic from 1 to 3:30pm on Sun., Aug. 21 at the Highway 23 Wayside in Reedsburg. Enjoy great food and conversation, hear updates from the WFU Summer Conference, get the policy pulse from state staff, and relax and network with fellow Farmers Union friends. Please bring a dish to share and your own table service and lawn chair. Dress for spending time outside, rain or shine.

Also, save the date for the Sauk County Farmers Union Annual Meeting and Cookie Exchange from noon to 3pm on Sat., Dec. 3 at the Farm Kitchen Restaurant, S5718 State Road 123, Baraboo. We'll share season's highlights, elect officers, craft resolutions, and weigh-in on plans for 2017. Bring a dozen or two of your favorite cookies for a cookie exchange following our meeting.

Families, guests, WFU neighbors – all are welcome! RSVP to either event to Erin Schneider, Sauk Co president, at e.schneider.hilltopfarm@gmail.com.

If you can't make the meetings, have ideas to share, and/or are interested in being a Sauk County Delegate for the WFU State Convention, contact Erin via email or at 608-257-6729.

South Central invites you to farm picnic

The WFU South Central chapter is organizing a potluck picnic Sunday, July 24 at Wegmueller Farms. The event, co-hosted by the Women in Sustainable Agriculture, is co-ed, so bring the whole family and invite your friends! There will be farm tours at 2pm with the meeting and potluck at 4pm. Bring a dish to pass and a chair if you've got one.

FARMERS UNION HAPPENINGS

Farm Technology Days Walworth County, July 19-21, Snudden Farms, www.wifarmtechnologydays.com

South Central Chapter Potluck Picnic, July 24, 2pm farm tour and 4pm meeting, Wegmueller Family Farm, W4358 Montgomery Road, Monroe.

Wisconsin Farmers Union Summer Conference, Aug. 5, 10am to 2pm, WFU Kamp Kenwood, 19161 79th Ave., Chippewa Falls. Info: 715-723-5561.

Dodge-Fond du Lac-Sheboygan-Ozaukee County Farmers Union Brat Fry, Aug. 5-6, 10am to 4pm, Kountry Korner Gas Station, Lomira. Serving brats and burgers. Info: Joe Schaurer, 920-583-2121

Soil Sisters Tour, Aug. 5-7, farms and restaurants around Brodhead and Monroe, www.soilsisterswi.org

Chippewa Valley Antique Engine & Model Club 53rd Annual Pioneer Days, Aug. 12-14, S4964 Porterville Rd. Eau Claire, Pioneer-Days.org

Sauk County Farmers Union Summer Potluck Picnic, Aug. 21, 1-3:30pm, Highway 23 Wayside, Reedsburg. Info: Erin Schneider, e.schneider.hilltopfarm@gmail.com or 608-257-6729.

Bike the Barns, Sept. 18, Dane County, www.csacoalition.com

Wormfarm Institute Fermentation Fest - A Live Culture Convergence, Oct. 1-9, Reedsburg, www.fermentation-fest.com

Farmers Union members are welcome to submit chapter or farm events to Danielle Endvick at dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 715-471-0398.

After dinner, we'll be making homemade ice cream. Feel free to bring any toppings you'd like to share. (The more creative, the better!)

The main events will take place on the dairy, but feel free to stop by and check out the animals and veggie gardens on your way there! The main farm/dairy address is W4358 Montgomery Road in Monroe, and the veggie gardens, horses, and donkeys are at W4581 Montgomery Road.

RSVP to schultz.ashley@gmail.com or 608-558-2505.

Riverway event focuses on water quality

Join Friends of the Lower Wisconsin Riverway from 7-8pm on Tues., July 26 Frank Lloyd Wright Visitors Center at Taliesin in Spring Green for the first of several summer sessions to focus on environmental affairs in Wisconsin and what we can do to keep our riverways clean. Featured panelists will include:

- Stephen Carpenter, Director of the Center of Limnology at UW-Madison, who will share decades of research conducted on Madison lakes.
- Dee Hall, Managing Editor of the Center for Investigative Journalism, whose organization has written extensively on Wisconsin water quality issues.
- Kriss Marion, Wisconsin Farmers Union South Central chapter president and Lafayette County Board Member, who has been advocating for sound farming conservation in her region.
- Jim VandenBrook, executive director of Wisconsin Land and Water, who oversees the county conservation officers who work daily to assist farmers in keeping their land fertile and nearby water clean

The event is free. For details visit www.wisconsinriverfriends.org.

Beginning Farmers Institute cultivates the next generation of farmers

Editor's note: This article originally ran in the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel July 9, 2016 and is reprinted with permission.

By Rick Barrett

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

On a 10-acre farm near New Glarus, Drew and Jaime Baker raise ducks, chickens, turkeys, pigs and sheep. They also grow vegetables for 30 families that are regular customers.

That's a lot for a young couple on a small farm, especially considering they both work off-farm jobs.

"We are pretty new to the farming game," Jaime said, noting that she is from Milwaukee and Drew is from Sturgeon Bay.

Jaime is one of 17 farmers nationwide recently accepted into a program that mentors people on a wide range of agricultural practices. Moreover, six of the 17 participants in the Beginning Farmers Institute 2016 class are Wisconsinites.

The program is sponsored by the National Farmers Union and purposely kept small so that participants can better interact with the instructors and learn from each other.

"This is the biggest class we have ever hosted. We get more applications than we can accept," said Tom Driscoll, the union's director of conservation policy and education.

The program doesn't have a strict definition for "beginning farmer." Instead, the emphasis is on how someone would benefit from the training, what they could offer others in the classes and how they would share what they learned afterward.

The Bakers were in the food service industry before they became farmers. Among other jobs, Jaime was a manager at a Whole Foods store and a Starbucks coffee shop. Drew was a cook for Bartolotta Restaurants.

They wanted careers where they could work from home, have their own business and still be involved with food — now at a grass-roots level on the farm.

Earning a living on a farm is difficult these days, however, given that commodity prices are low and there's intense competition among small farms that provide products direct to the public and local restaurants.

"When we first started, I think our family thought we were nuts. But they really see it and get it now. ... It's always been about our family," Jaime said.

Near Beloit, Dane and Betty Anderson are carving out a living on a 40-acre farm called The Old Smith Place. Betty, a U.S. Navy veteran of 12 years, also is enrolled in the Beginning Farmers Institute.

"This is a wonderful opportunity to connect with people from across the country. It is just a super blessing," Betty said.

The Andersons raise fruit and vegetables for a farmers market. Like the Bakers, they have kept off-farm jobs while they build up their farming business.

"If we don't end up making a living off the farm, we really hope that we will leave the place a little better than when we found it," Betty said.

In Amherst, Tommy and Samantha Enright raise chickens, turkeys, ducks and rabbits on their Black Rabbit Farm. They also grow vegetables, and they sell their goods to restaurants and at a farmers market.

Tommy grew up in De Pere and worked in the music industry in Seattle before he and Samantha returned to Wisconsin in 2013 to become farmers. Tommy, another BFI participant this year, is the production manager at a specialty coffee roaster. Samantha also has an off-farm job as a medical assistant. The young couple have a 1-year-old son and a baby on the way. They're both first-generation farmers.

"We are kind of learning as we go. Between family life, my job and the farm, I am pretty much going nonstop," Tommy said.

*Photo by Mark Hoffman
Jaime and Drew Baker
show off freshly picked
squash blossoms at their
small farm, called Love
Rock Farm, near New
Glarus. Jaime is one of
six WFU farmers recently
accepted into National
Farmers Union's Beginning
Farmers Institute.*



How do farming leaders persuade people to enter the career field at a time when so many have retired or left for another way to make a living?

"That's a huge problem, and it's one that we hope to address through (farm) policy advocacy. We are very lucky in this country that so many people still feel passionately about farming. They cannot imagine themselves doing anything else," said Driscoll with the Farmers Union.

The only cost for participants in the Beginning Farmers Institute is a \$100 registration fee. Other costs, including travel expenses, are covered by the program's sponsors.

In previous years, participants formed lasting relationships and even discussed going into business together. They addressed issues they had in common, such as how to control costs and market their products.

About 10 miles from Stevens Point, Chris Holman's Nami Moon Farms raises poultry, meat, vegetables, mushrooms and honey that's sold to Madison-area restaurants.

Holman completed the Beginning Farmers Institute program in 2014. Holman and Maria Davis run their 41-acre farm that they started while he was preparing for a doctoral degree in Arabic studies. Holman, originally from Oceanside, Calif., was an Arabic linguist in the U.S. Army for six years. He and Davis raised 3,600 chickens in their farm's first year. The catalyst for their business came from a Madison restaurant that wanted poultry raised in a natural way.

Now, in their seventh year, "Our farm is going strong," Holman said. "Instead of trying to grow the farm to be bigger and bigger, we are kind of refining what we do."

Holman said he formed friendships in the Beginning Farmers Institute program that also have sharpened his business skills. "To this day, we still communicate with each other on a regular basis, and we help each other out with our businesses," Holman said.

His class, like the 2016 class, had participants from across the country representing a wide range of agricultural practices, including some larger conventional farms.

Farmers from large and small operations don't always see eye-to-eye on issues.

"We don't agree on everything, but we are a very strong group," Holman said about his Beginning Farmers Institute class. "We have relationships that are hard to find. We can weather disagreements, have difficult conversations and still be friends. We respect each other, and that's the direct result of having had a shared experience."

Other WFU members who applied and were accepted for the BFI this year include: Brittany Ann Bula of Plainfield and Layne Cozzolino and Josh Stolzenburg of Amherst.

Douglas County farmer says Farmers Union has taught him to ‘Stand up and speak up’



Editor's note: This article is part of a series highlighting Wisconsin Farmers Union board members.

SOUTH RANGE — Listening to the sound of the Middle River gently meandering its way over rocks as it winds its way through Riverview Ranch, it is not hard to see why Mark Liebaert's ancestors chose to settle this serene spot in Douglas County more than a century ago.

Today the sixth generation is stewarding the land on the Liebaert family farm. Together with their children and grandchildren, Mark and his wife, Cora, run a direct-market grass-finished beef operation on the 600-acre farm.

The Liebaerts' daughter, Jenny, her husband, Kevin, and their three children are on the original homestead, where the old dairy barn can still be found. Though worn with age, it stands proudly tucked into a hillside, not far from the river. Its wooden beams now shelter only hay and odd n' ends, but once was home to the dairy herd.

Mark began buying some of the family farm land in the 1970s, and he and Cora officially started their chapter there in 1980. Both had off-the-farm jobs — Mark was a City of Superior policeman for 13 years, and Cora continues to drive school bus. They milked cows for a few years before selling out and expanding into purebred Black Angus cattle. The beef herd peaked around 100 head, but the family downsized several years ago, settling around 35 head.

The Liebaerts' story is one closely tied to the land. In 2008, the family was honored to be named the Wisconsin Conservation Farm of the Year.

Mark, who was elected to the Wisconsin Farmers Union board of directors in 2007, was a pioneer of

the rotational grazing movement, having started in 1985. The family has also taken other steps toward being better caretakers of the land, creating waterway and creek crossings in their pastures, fencing the cattle out of the river and maintaining a detailed farm conservation plan.

They are past participants in the Lake Superior Streams Volunteer Monitoring Program and taught others how to do water-quality monitoring. They were also one of the first farms to take part in the Debt for Nature program, a voluntary Farm Service Agency program aimed at protecting sensitive natural areas by restricting development on a property.

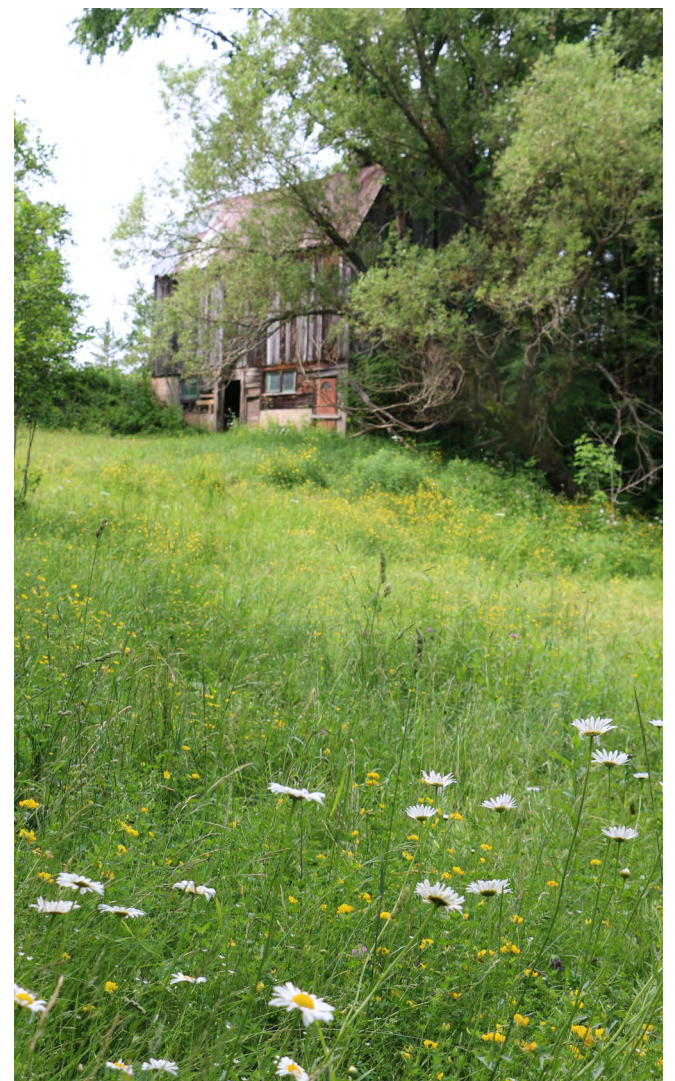
Mark says grazing his cattle not only helps him create a healthful end product, it also makes him a better steward of the land.

"As I farm I realize that everything we do has an impact on the land — our job is to make that impact as low as we can," he said.

The farm is divided into roughly 20 paddocks with about 100 acres in pasture and another 200 for hay harvest. Liebaert said he keeps input costs low by feeding minimal grain and not over-investing in equipment or fencing.

When the Liebaerts were named Conservation Farm of the Year, the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Association noted the family was one of the lowest cost hay producers in the state. They also produce forage that's 20 percent over the state average Relative Feed Value. Mark only adds manure to his fields, no other nutrients.

This year's hay harvest has been a struggle, with record rainfalls preventing the family from getting into the fields. The farm is within the disaster area declared by the governor July 12 after record rains flooded the Northwoods.



Top: Douglas County farmer and WFU board member Mark Liebaert checks on his Black Angus herd. **Above:** Mark's grandchildren mark the sixth generation on the family farm, where the original dairy barn still stands.

Liebaert keeps the beef herd in only a single strand of electric fence, a fact that has raised many an eyebrow at pasture walks on his farm.

“There are two rules to keeping cattle in an electric fence,” Liebaert said. “Rule number one is don’t let them get hungry. And rule number two? Well, don’t let them get hungry.”

He moves the cattle to fresh paddocks every few days — more often when herd numbers are high.

In recent years, he’s moved his calving season up from March into April. As he becomes a more experienced grazer he’s found that choice hasn’t detrimentally impacted weaning weights; in fact, they’ve improved through the years as he’s improved his rotation methods.

Wildlife woes

Though he is an avid outdoorsman and conservationist, there is one form of wildlife Liebaert says he could do without: wolves. The Liebaerts have struggled with wolf depredation on the farm, which is surrounded by Douglas County wilderness and sandwiched between the Middle and Amnicon rivers. In early July, they experienced their second calf kill this year and Mark fears the wolves have only just begun. A neighboring farmer has lost a dozen calves to wolves already this year.

“The administration that allowed wolves to be delisted is not listening to the pleas, the screams even, of the

farmers who are having to deal with these losses,” Liebaert said.

In recent years, the Liebaerts have held back the herd on their winter paddock — up near the house — giving the calves time to grow more agile and acclimate to staying close to their dams.

Mark has shared his stance on the need for wolf management in the state and through Farmers Union’s grass-roots policy debates at convention, he worked for the current policy language, which is against the 2014 relisting of wolves as an endangered species and supports return to state control of wolf management and a target wolf population of 350 in the state.

Taking a stand

A WFU member since the early 1980s, he has also been passionate about farmland preservation and growing family agriculture.

“It’s my belief that the lands of the people are best served by ownership in the hands of family farmers.”

In 2009, Cora and he received the Wisconsin Farmers Union Builders Award.

“What got me into Farmers Union was their willingness to fight not only for survival of family farms but also betterment of those farms,” he said.

Being a member has also ignited his spirit of activism.

“As you become involved in Farmers Union, you see the activism — people lobbying, educating, showing up,” he



Above: Liebaert rotationally grazes his cow-calf herd.

said. “They say if you don’t show up and stand up, you don’t have a voice, and it’s true.”

Liebaert has served on the Douglas County Board since 1999 and this spring was elected as board chairman. He also serves as Amnicon Town Board Supervisor and county supervisor. He presently is chairman of the county Forestry Committee and is former chairman of the Land and Conservation Committee. He also has represented Wisconsin farmers on the Beef Council.

Mark joined Farmers Union early in his farming career, partly because he found the guidance of the older Farmers Union members invaluable. He has served as Douglas County Farmers Union chapter president since 2009.

This year, he retired after 26 years of school bus driving to make time for his new county board chairman duties.

In his spare time, he can be found horseback riding, canoeing, hunting or spending time with his family.

“We’ve got six grandkids within a half-mile of the house and all 10 within 30 miles,” he said. “That’s pretty special.”

The grandkids pitch in around the farm, too, with several helping to grow a pumpkin patch and then sell their harvest in town and another tapping maple syrup.

With any luck, they may be the next generation to raise their families in the peaceful landscape alongside the Middle River.



Left: The Liebaert family were honored to be recognized as the Conservation Farm of the Year in 2008. Mark puts a strong value on stewardship of the family’s land and the Middle River, which runs through it. Above: In his down time, you can find Mark horseback riding around the farm or enjoying other outdoor pursuits.

Story and photos by Danielle Endvick
WFU Communications Director

WFU welcomes visitors to Farmers Union Camp

By Danielle Endvick

WFU Communications Director

For many an eager camper, the time it takes to travel to Farmers Union Camp can seem like an entire cross-country road trip. For two youth who attended Senior Camp at WFU Kamp Kenwood this summer, the trek was just that.

In June, Wisconsin Farmers Union welcomed three West Coast visitors. Brothers Mason and Kolton Dahl of Hines, Oregon, were accompanied by Jake Fagan, Northwest Farmers Union director of membership and development, for a stay at Kamp Kenwood. Located on beautiful Lake Wissota near Chippewa Falls, the scenic site has been home to the Wisconsin Farmers Union Camp program since the 1940s.

The trip was both educational and investigative as NWFU, which is inching closer to its full National Farmers Union (NFU) charter, is considering organizing a camp of its own.

“The idea was to send a few campers to different camps around the nation and see what it’s like, so we could start one back here,” said 17-year-old Mason.

The highlight of Farmers Union Camp for him was learning about Farmers Union’s history and cooperative roots.

“The lessons they taught about cooperative values and how to run a co-op store were woven in with current issues that made it really interesting,” he said. “I was really impressed with the guest speakers, too, and just the aspects of meeting new people, the networking and the camaraderie.”

Fagan noted that the idea to send NWFU youth to Wisconsin for camp was born at the National Farmers Union Convention in Minneapolis, Minn., this past March during a conversation between WFU staff and NWFU President Kent Wright.

“As we plan and create our camp and educational programming, it is our hope to continue to partner with Wisconsin to send youth to their camp, helping us to grow our own future camp staff through the Farmers Union family,” Fagan said.

He noted that education a vital component of the Farmers Union triangle — bolstered by legislation and cooperation — and one he hopes NWFU will continue to focus on as it gains its full charter, secures funding and develops programming.

“Camp and the education programming are at the base of our organization, and we will be working to cultivate those programs as NWFU grows,” he said.

Timing is dependent on funding, but he hopes to begin establishing a camp within the next five years.

“Throughout that time, we will be able to secure



Above: Wisconsin Farmers Union welcomed Northwest Farmers Union members Kolton, 15, and Mason, 17, Dahl to Farmers Union Senior Camp June 12-16.

funding, find our camp site, properly grow our staff, and formulate the NWFU educational curriculum,” he said.

From games to songs, a number of WFU Kamp Kenwood activities would be incorporated into such a camp, particularly the cooperative education programming, Fagan said.

“The way the lessons are executed really gives the students a hands-on education that truly helps them to understand co-ops and the cooperative principles,” Fagan said.

He also hopes to someday be blessed with a camp staff as talented as the counselors he met on this trip.

“The Wisconsin Farmers Union camp staff is the most impressive staff I have ever seen,” he said. “The way they show their love and respect for Farmers Union, and the way they exemplify Farmers Union’s values of inclusion and personal self-worth is beyond compare.”

A Northwoods adventure

For the past three summers, Ben Lehman, 16, has left his family’s Iowa crop farm behind for a few days and also made the journey to Kamp Kenwood.

“We don’t have our own Farmers Union camp here in Iowa, so when I first heard about Kamp Kenwood, I thought it’d be a good chance to meet other Farmers Union members my age,” Ben said.

Now it’s a summer tradition he looks forward to.

“Everyone is really friendly and helped me fit in,” the Alleman, Iowa native said. “A lot of what I like about it is just meeting new people and all of the outdoor activities, like the hiking.”

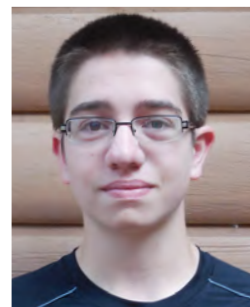
Fifteen out-of-state campers had registered for Farmers Union Camp as of early July, according to WFU Education Director Cathy Statz.

Kamp Kenwood’s western Wisconsin location draws some campers from the cooperative-rich Twin Cities each year, she said, adding, “There are also several out-of-state families of second — even third — generation campers who have made the trek back to Wisconsin for camp.

“Most of the others learned about us through their co-op or from a friend or cousin,” she said. “We also welcome campers who are host siblings through various international exchange programs; we’ve had campers from France, Bolivia and Japan in recent years.”

During their session, Mason and Kolton shared a bit about NWFU and their family’s large cow-calf operation.

“Campers from out of state enrich their own experience by attending, but also enrich that of our traditional Wisconsin campers,” Statz said. “They marvel over variances in scale and types of ag, chuckle over differences in accent and pronunciation, and share laughs and stories around the campfire. It’s a real treat for us to welcome them to the tradition of Farmers Union Camp!”



Lehman

Two WFU members elected to National Youth Advisory Council

Farmers Union youth members from across the country gathered in Bailey, Colo. in late June to attend the 80th annual National Farmers Union (NFU) All-States Leadership Camp. Hosted each June at the NFU Education Center, All-States Camp encourages youth to explore their leadership potential, discuss issues important to their generation and identify ways to effect positive change in their communities.

Throughout the week, 51 campers between the ages of 17 and 20 years old participated in programs emphasizing leadership, teamwork and cooperative education while also enjoying traditional camp activities. New this year to the camp program was a volunteer opportunity at Sprout Urban Farms in Denver.

“This year marked the milestone 80th year of All-States Leadership Camp, a proud Farmers Union tradition, said NFU President Roger Johnson. “It is inspiring to see the youth of our organization – our next generation of leaders – come together to grow their leadership skills and interact with their peers in a week of fun and learning at camp.”

Johnson, a former All-States camper himself, joined Olympic Gold Medalist Rulon Gardner, past NFU Beginning Farmer Institute alumnus Eric Kornacki, and retired CHS, Inc. Vice President William Nelson to share their experiences and personal stories of leadership with this year’s camp class.

Campers also elected their peers to NFU’s National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC), which represents thousands of Farmers Union youth across the country. WFU members Alison Slaughter and Andrew Cotter wrapped up their year on the council, with the culmination being the planning of this milestone All-States. WFU is proud to have two new representatives taking up the torch. Killian Harnish of La Crosse and Miriam Valley of Sun Prairie were elected to serve on the NYAC for the coming year.

As NYAC participants, Harnish and Valley will further hone their leadership skills with a learning session during the NFU Fall Fly-In this September in Washington, D.C., and with presentations at the NFU 115th Anniversary Convention next spring in San Diego, Calif. They will also plan next year’s All-States Camp.

To celebrate the 80th anniversary and the history of All-States Camp, NFU captured camp stories of past attendees from 1937 to present. Many campers attributed their first leadership experiences to the camp or serving on NYAC. The stories are featured on the NFU website at nfu.org/campstories.



Above: The new National Youth Advisory Council includes top row, left to right: Kyle Rosenbrock, Colorado; Killian Harnish, Wisconsin; and Lorenzo Strand, North Dakota. Bottom row, left to right: Summer Steinwand, North Dakota; Miriam Valley, Wisconsin; Samantha Zwirner, North Dakota; with Melissa Miller, NFU Education Coordinator.



Senior Youth Advisory Council named

Four youth were named to the 2016 Senior Youth Advisory Council (SYAC) during the Senior Banquet at Wisconsin Farmers Union Kamp Kenwood June 15. They include, from left, Liam Buche-Pattison, Westby; Trevor Joachim, Lodi; Megan Cotter, Fitchburg; and Kayla Kohler, Medford.

The council is elected each year by their peers during Senior Camp. Their duties include representing Wisconsin Farmers Union youth and assisting the staff and WFU members at annual convention.

The annual senior banquet, where the next year’s SYAC is elected, is a fun Senior Camp tradition. This year’s featured banquet speaker was WFU Board member Chris Holman of Nami Moon Farms in Custer.

Wisconsin Farmers Union would like to extend a sincere thank you to the outgoing Senior Youth Advisory Council, which includes Hannah Cox of Sun Prairie, Cassie Grape of Menomonie, Killian Harnish of La Crosse, and Jessica Jurcek of Jefferson.

The Land of Non



Alan Guebert

For years we Americans have been perfecting the art of non-action action. It began about a generation ago with the non-apology apology: “If I offended you, I apologize.” Later we moved on to the non-committal commitment: “I’ll be there unless I get a better offer.”

Now, courtesy of Congress, our non-legislating legislature, we might soon be buying non-label labeled food.

Congress reached this state of higher nonness by carefully noting what the American public overwhelmingly and repeatedly said it wants—country of origin labeling (COOL) for meat and poultry and the labeling of all food that contains ingredients derived from genetically modified organisms (GMOs)—before voting to do just the opposite.

In 2015, the U.S. House of Representatives tackled the public’s GMO labeling demand by punting; it voted 275-to-150 in favor of voluntary GMO labeling. In the Land of Non, voluntary labeling means, of course, almost everyone will voluntarily not label food that contains GMOs.

Not to be outdone by the non-labeling labelers in the House, the U.S. Senate finally awakened to act on June 29 when it easily approved (68-to-29) a procedural vote to move its complicated GMO labeling bill to a full Senate vote.

Unlike the House’s voluntary non-labeling standard, though, the Senate bill contains a mandatory labeling standard—albeit one with more dodges in it than a used car lot. The shiniest clunker is something the Senate chose to call the “bioengineered food disclosure system.”

The name alone is certain evidence that Big Food’s lawyers and Big Ag’s lobbyists have already washed, rinsed, and waxed the pending bill to ensure it contains the highest possible level of effective ineffectiveness. With this outside help, anti-government government insiders reshaped the Senate bill into pure shapelessness.

For example, under the Senate language, large food companies have three options to label any GMO ingredients contained in their products.

First, explains the National Sustainable Agriculture Coalition, the companies can place a “barcode or QR code”—a quick response code—on its food labels. Those codes, however, “require consumers (to) use a smartphone to find more information about a product.”

So no smart phone, no food info; that’s so dumb it’s clever.

Second, a company can use “a symbol on the package” to denote its contents are GMO. What symbol? The one “to be created by U.S. Department of Agriculture.” That shouldn’t take long, eh?

Or, third, the food company can place “an actual on-package statement that the product contains GMOs.” A simple, uncomplicated label? Brilliant!

Critics of the Senate bill quickly point out, however, that most food companies will choose the first two, less transparent labeling loopholes for non-labeling labels and few, if any, would choose to openly label.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA), also, sees trouble in the Senate bill because it gives new food labeling authority to the U.S. Department of Agriculture “that is otherwise under FDA’s sole regulatory jurisdiction...”

For example, explains a FDA “Technical Assistance memo” that dissects the Senate Bill, “We note that (a) provision to allow information regarding the GE,” or genetically engineered, “content of food to be present only in an elec-

tronically accessible form”—the barcode and QR code exceptions in the bill—“and not on the package label would be in tension with FDA’s statute and regulations, which require disclosures on food labels.”

Tension, indeed.

Also, notes the FDA memo, “The definition of ‘bioengineering’ used in the Senate bill ‘would be somewhat narrow’ and likely mean that many foods from GE sources will not be subject to this bill...”

That’s not an accident. It is, in fact, exactly what you would do if you want to write a non-labeling label law that, first, doesn’t conform to current law and, second, will likely never become law.

But that’s the trick in running a non-legislating legislature, right? If you actually do anything, it must—by definition—end up doing exactly nothing.

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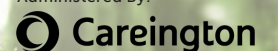
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KAMP KENWOOD CORNER



Brad Henderson
Facilities Manager

It might be the majestic pine trees that rise overhead or maybe the camp history adorning our main lodge bulletin board, but this summer I find myself reflecting on the legends and lore of Kamp Kenwood. Who before us has walked the stony shoreline? Who has slept beneath these cabin roofs and gazed up in wonder from our bunks? Who has left imprints in the sand on the camp beach or stood and stared out in quiet reflection upon the peaceful splendor of Lake Wissota?

In February, I visited the Chippewa Valley Museum with WFU chapter members from Chippewa and Eau Claire counties. We toured the “Farm Life” exhibit and were treated to a display featuring an eight-minute video of activity at Kamp Kenwood in the 1980s. Besides taking notice of hair-dos and clothing choices, I was struck by the math being done in my head – thinking back on the many campers, counselors, cooks and caretakers of WFU Kamp Kenwood through the years. Were you one of them?

In May, I had the pleasure of meeting the family of former WFU President and Kamp



Above: Do you recognize this hose reel? The Chippewa County Historical Society is seeking more details about the reel, which spent some of its lifetime at WFU Kamp Kenwood.

Kenwood founder Ken Hones, when they made a wonderful donation of three cedar benches to the camp. We actually began the discussion about honoring Ken’s memory last summer. The family expressed interest in reconnecting with their past and spent an afternoon reminiscing and sharing stories with WFU Education Director Cathy Statz and me. They recalled spending summer days ‘away from the farm’ at camp.

Perhaps you too looked forward to coming to camp, if for only a short respite from farm work?

Most recently I connected with Tom Larson from the Chippewa County Historical Society. He offered to assist us in restoring the descriptive sign at the entrance to camp, which tells some of its history. This proposal led me to research the history of how this sign came to be and the people that took part in dedicating it to Kamp Kenwood.

During the 1985 dedication ceremony, NFU President, James Patton spoke these words; “Here in these buildings you and I will pass on all we can of our experience and our knowledge, and hand over the torch into the hands of trained, energetic, clear and far-sighted young people from another generation.”

It’s prodigious to think of how many Farmers Union youth have been sheltered – and transformed – beneath the great eaves of the main lodge. From the time junior campers first step foot along the Lake Wissota shoreline until they take part in the Torchbearer ceremony, there is an esteemed change in each of them. They become thoughtful leaders, cooperators, and, not least of all, friends. Kamp Kenwood is a place seeping in history and, even today, we don’t realize we are making it.



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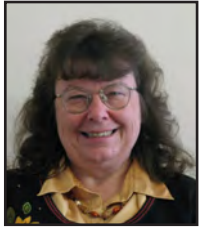
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What's on Your Table? with Diane Tiry

You are a winner with pies!



I want to encourage all of our leaders and members to attend this year's summer conference on Friday, August 5 at WFU Kamp Kenwood. It is going to be the best especially since we are trying something new, a "pie contest"! I can't wait to share my raspberry pie. It doesn't have to be the females making pies either. Chris Holman, District 6 Director, will be bringing one, if not two, of his favorite pies and even WFU Executive Director Tom Quinn has

volunteered to make one.

We encourage you to bring along the recipe so we can produce a small booklet to share it with everyone on our website.

Our guest judges will be using the Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (formerly Future Homemakers of America) bake-off judging sheet for critiquing the pies. Five areas to keep in mind are presentation, texture, taste, consistency, and overall impression. It will be in fun and certificates will be awarded to various pie varieties.

I want to be sure to cover all aspects of pie making starting with the crust and looking at using clear jel instead of cornstarch or flour for thickening and then how to keep the edge of your pie from browning before the center has completed baking.

There are so many different pie crust recipes available that to say one is better than the other is totally in the cook's palette. I have had trouble finding a pie crust recipe that suits me, so I don't declare expert at this but have included a recipe that has been called the no fail pie crust in case you would like to try it.

I wanted to say a word or two about clearjel. Fruit pies generally are made with flour or cornstarch as a thickening agent. Clearjel is a modified food starch, which translates into "way better than corn starch, even though it is made out of corn." It is way better than any other thickener because it will turn your weepy fruit into a majestically sliceable masterpiece. You just stir it in to the fruit with your sugar, wait 20 minutes and spoon your fresh filling into the pie shell. Each fruit pie is different in the amount of Clearjel needed, so a little experimenting may need to occur. So if your pie recipe calls for two tablespoons of flour in the filling you substitute just one tablespoon of Clearjel plus a pinch of citric acid or lemon juice.

Let's get started:

FLAKE VINEGAR EGG PIE CRUST (2-8" pie crusts)

Source: www.food.com/recipe/flaky-vinegar-egg-pie-crust-79943

Ingredients:

- 1 egg
- 3 cups flour
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 1 ½ cups COLD lard OR vegetable shortening OR ¾ cup shortening and ¾ cup butter
- 1 Tablespoon vinegar OR lemon juice
- 5 tablespoons ICED water

Directions:

1. Mix together the salt and flour.
2. With a pastry blender, cut in cold shortening (lard/butter) until the size of peas. Be careful to not overwork the dough.
3. In a small cup, beat egg with a fork, add in vinegar (lemon juice) and water; whisk until well blended.
4. Add the water/egg mixture gradually to the flour mixture.
5. Shape into 2 balls and refrigerate 1 or more hours.
6. Roll out dough on lightly floured pastry cloth or cutting board with a cloth covered rolling pin, use for 2 (8" pie crusts) OR 1 large deep dish pie crust.
7. Put filling in the dough, cover with second pie crust, slit and shape edges.



TRIPLE BERRY PIE RECIPE

Ingredients:

- 6 c. mixed berries (raspberries, blueberries, marionberries or strawberries)
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 Tbsp. ClearJel or Ultra Gel
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- Pinch of salt
- Pinch of Ground Cloves
- 1 Tbsp. cold unsalted butter



Directions

1. Prepare the pastry: roll the pastry and line an 8 or 9 inch pie plate with the bottom crust. Roll out the remaining dough for the top crust. Chill the pastry.
2. Preheat the oven to 400°F.
3. Prepare the fruit, clean or thaw if berries are frozen.
4. In a separate bowl, combine Clearjel, sugar, cinnamon, salt, and cloves. Add them to the berries. Mix gently, be careful not to burst the berries. Let sit for 20 minutes to allow the clearjel to thicken.
5. Scrape the filling into the bottom crust, dot with butter and cover it with the second crust. Trim and crimp the crust; chill the pie for about 10 minutes in the refrigerator. Cut vent slits in the top crust. It is your option to sprinkle the top crust with sugar or brush with an egg white wash.
6. Bake the pie on a baking sheet for 10 minutes at 400° F or until the crust looks dry, blistered, and blonde. Place a 2 inch strip of aluminum foil over the edges of your pie to prevent from over browning or use a pie edge saver. Berry pies can really bubble over so be careful or place a baking sheet on the shelf below the one you are baking the pie on to catch any drips. Turn the oven down to 375° F, and bake for at least 45 minutes more or until the crust is golden brown and visible juices are thickened and may bubble slowly through the slits in the top crust. If using a glass pie pan, check if the bottom crust has darkened, if not, bake a little more and continue covering the top crust, so it does not burn.
7. Cool the pie completely before cutting at least a few hours. Serve it at room temperature. Store the pie uncovered in a cool place up to three days. (In this warm weather, it is best to refrigerate the pie)

If you plan on bringing a pie made with dairy products or a custard pie please transport it safely in a cooler as these types of pies should be kept at 40° or cooler to prevent bacteria from forming.

Hope to see you and your perfect pie on August 5 at the WFU Summer Conference out by the lake!

Happy and healthy eating to all!

Save the Date

**Summer Conference &
County Presidents Meeting**

Friday, August 5th
WFU Kamp Kenwood
19161 79th Ave., Chippewa Falls

**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 ☐ Crops ☐ 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

BITS & PIECES

Farm Service Agency county nominations due Aug. 1

The nomination period for farmers and ranchers to serve on local Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is open until Aug. 1. To be eligible to serve on a FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in an FSA administered program, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the local administrative area where they are nominated.

Farmers and ranchers may nominate themselves or others. The nomination form and other information about FSA county committee elections are posted at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections. Forms must be postmarked or received in the local USDA Service Center by close of business on Aug. 1.

Nationwide, there are approximately 7,800 farmers and ranchers serving on FSA county committees. These individuals make decisions on disaster and conservation programs, emergency programs, commodity price support loan programs, and other agricultural issues. Committees consist of three to 11 members elected by eligible producers, and members serve three-year terms.

To learn more about county committees, contact your local FSA county office or visit <http://offices.usda.gov/> to find a county office near you.

Visit WFU at Farm Technology Days

If you are heading to the Walworth County Farm Technology Days at Snudden Farms in Lake Geneva July 19-21, plan to swing by the Wisconsin Farmers Union booth on lot 588 down on 5th Street (near the Test Plots and Progress Pavilion) to say hello! Come learn what Farmers Union is doing for you! We'll also be giving away prizes with the spinning wheel. If you're interested in volunteering at the booth during the event, contact Deb Jakubek ASAP at djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 715-590-2130.

WFU seeks convention workshop ideas

Wisconsin Farmers Union is seeking presenter proposals for the 86th annual WFU State Convention Jan. 27-29, 2017 at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Proposals are being sought on a variety of workshop topics, including: resiliency in agriculture, conservation, policy issues, beginning or practical farmer knowledge, financial management, farm transition, marketing and more.

A limited number of speakers are needed for hour-long policy breakouts and workshops. Those interested in presenting — or nominating a presenter — are encouraged to submit a proposal form at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com by Sept. 1. For more information contact Diane Tiry at 715-723-5561 or dtiry@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Groups encouraged to apply for watershed protection grant

The application period is open for the next funding round for the Producer-Led Watershed Protection grants. The Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) will award grants to producer-led groups that focus on ways to prevent and reduce runoff from farm fields and farmsteads. Each group is eligible for up to \$20,000 a year.

These grants are intended to help farmers find solutions best suited for their particular watersheds, based on topography, soil type, types of operations and other factors that differ among regions of the state and work to increase farmer participation in these voluntary efforts.

The first 14 grants awarded earlier this year in the new program were included in the 2015-17 budget.

Applicants must be groups of at least five farmers whose farms are in the same watershed and each produced at least \$6,000 in gross farm revenue last year, or \$18,000 over the past three years.

Application materials and more details are available at https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/Programs_Services/ProducerLedProjects. Farmers with questions should contact Rachel Rushmann, rachel.rushmann@wi.gov or 608-224-4622.

Farmer to Farmer offers eye-opening experiences



By Erin Schneider
President, Sauk Cty. Farmers Union

When I first traveled to Senegal in 2012 for a Farmer to Farmer (F2F) volunteer project, it was during the heart

of the rainy season in August. In fact the storm that hit when we arrived in a foot of water at the airport in Dakar, was the one that would eventually become Hurricane Sandy. I always knew that water is an essential element in growing food, though I don't think I fully realized the destructive force that water can be.

My travels to Senegal through the F2F program have reminded me not to take water for granted. One of the impacts of climate change in the region is shifting rain patterns—which can be devastating in terms of planting success, not to mention accessing clean water for basic needs. During all of my F2F assignments we explored low to no-cost methods for water conservation through mulching and designing swales, berms, and raised beds to counter impacts from high salinity. These earthworks can improve soil water infiltration when too much water is present, slow down run-off and improve water storage. The challenge we all need to navigate is ensuring water quality for current and future generations wherever we are in the world.

Water, soil and seeds go hand-in-hand in growing food, a fact reflected in my travels. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization links soils to many different areas of sustainable development – poverty reduction, hunger eradication, economic growth and environmental protection.

What is heartening in all my experiences farming and with the F2F program is that composting is a universal language—it's accessible, uses the resources at hand, involves the entire family (children and elders can help with turning – adding to the piles) and it's a way to feed the earth which has just fed you without having to rely on outside inputs.

The last project I worked with in Senegal was on seed saving. It was very life giving and there is a lot of potential and interest to work on a pilot 'participatory seed system project'. There was also a lot of interest in finding ways to bring farmers from Senegal

to the United States, in order to make it a full circle farmer to farmer exchange.

On our farm we look to other farmers and eaters for perspectives and advice as well as engaging expert knowledge. This is why I am so attracted to the F2F program and why I am a Farmers Union member!

I credit my time volunteering in Senegal not only in opening doors professionally, but also opening my heart. The more I farm, the more I discover that science and technique, while essential to production and business, only gets you so far in growing food sustainably. You need to balance this with love and celebration. It was uplifting to walk through the garden gate at Owayel, Senegal, and be welcomed in song and dance by farmers who have taken the time out of their day to listen, learn, and share with me what's working, what's needed for their farms to thrive.

As I plant my own vegetables, fruits, and flowers for our CSA program this season, I find myself humming a tune to the tomato seeds as I tuck them into their flats. I am grateful for these opportunities that Farmers Union and the Farmer to Farmer Program have provided in growing professionally and personally.

I think we need more farmers who are willing to engage with our hands, hearts and heads to build a better world, one seed at a time. So while you are bent over the bean fields this summer, let your mind wander, hum a tune. Dream of harvests, travels, and that time-honored life giving tradition of sharing seeds and knowledge, celebrating our connection to our food and to the Earth. And pause in between the plantings and milking to think about spending the winter months supporting and learning with other farmers around the world.

For more information about the Farmer to Farmer program and chances to volunteer visit <https://www.usaid.gov/global-waters/november-2014/farmer-to-farmer>.

If interested in volunteering in Senegal, Zambia through NCBA-CLUSA's farmer to farmer program, contact: volunteer@ncba.coop or visit their website: <https://www.ncba.coop/international/volunteer-us-farmer-to-farmer>.

Erin Schneider co-owns and stewards Hilltop Community Farm, a small-scale diversified CSA and orchard where she and her husband Rob McClure specialize in fruits and wedding flowers.

Wisconsin Farmers Union Foundation

Supporting programs that:

- Foster family farming
- Enhance the quality of rural life
- Provide opportunities for public education and dialogue on key issues
- Encourage cooperative economic development.

The Foundation maintains a modest Small Grant Program to provide support to a variety of farm and rural organizations and projects. Grant amounts are generally under \$2,000 and typically \$200 to \$500.

The Foundation Grant Committee meets quarterly to consider applications. Quarterly deadlines are **March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31**. Applicants will be notified by the 15th day of the month after the deadline under which the application was made.

Third Quarter 2016 Grant Awardees:

- Chippewa Valley Farm-City Day
- Market-to-Market Farm Program
- MOSES Organic Farming Conference
- Partnering for Progress: Celebrating Our Communities, Chautauqua Barn Dance
- Together Farms ... Easy Keeping Cows event
- Stevens Point Winter Farmers Market
- Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance Conference
- Around the Farm Table

Requests must meet the WFU Foundation's mission: *The Wisconsin Farmers Union Foundation supports projects and programs for all ages that foster family farming, rural life and public education on the important role of cooperatives and agriculture in society.*

Successful applicants must, within a year of the grant's acceptance, submit a report demonstrating how the funding was used. Small Grant funds are made available from the donations of WFU members and partnering cooperative businesses.

Learn more at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com!