



WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION NEWS

November 2018

Volume 75 | No. 9

At a Crossroads

Free UW-Madison event to address consolidation in food and farming

MADISON — The American Antitrust Institute and the University of Wisconsin Law School are pleased to present Food and Agriculture at a Crossroads: Setting Competition Priorities to Protect Producers, Consumers, and the Supply Chain. This free event will be from 9am-5pm Fri., Dec. 7 at the UW Law School in Madison.

Experts in antitrust and regulation from government, industry, university, and advocacy perspectives, including our own National Farmers Union President Roger Johnson, will examine market competition issues that affect farmers, the agricultural industry, and consumers.

The morning and afternoon discussions will each close with a roundtable session that will give participants the opportunity to react and candidly discuss themes, issues, and policy recommendations regarding competition enforcement.

See p.11 ► ANTITRUST



Photo by
Danielle Endvick
Left: The fall colors were on full display for an Oct. 11 Graze River Country pasture walk at Mahalko Dairy Farm in Gilman. Thanks to all of this year's on-farm hosts!

Local Initiative Grant deadline approaches

Farmers Union chapters that are planning events for early 2019 are encouraged to submit Local Initiative Grant proposals by Nov. 15 to meet the quarterly deadline.

Supported by the WFU Foundation, these grants aim to increase Farmers Union visibility,

provide education on farm/rural issues, and develop partnerships with other organizations. Other quarterly deadlines are Feb. 15, May 15, and Aug. 15. Learn more at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/chapter-resources or by calling the WFU State Office at 715-723-5561.

Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative receives USDA grant to boost regional food distribution

WAUPACA — The Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative was recently awarded a USDA grant that will result in more local produce in grocery stores, restaurants and cafeterias, while helping Wisconsin farmers access markets in Madison, Milwaukee, Chicago and the Twin Cities.

The cooperative received a USDA Local Food Promotion Program grant in September to further work on building a regional food distribution system. Project partners include the UW-Madison Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, Willy Street Co-op, Epic Systems and Second Harvest Food Bank, among others.

"We are thrilled to receive this support from the USDA to strengthen the food system relationships in the region," said Tara Turner, Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative General Manager and founding member **See p.5 ► HUB**



Above: Tara Turner, founding farmer and General Manager of the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative, prepares a load of fresh produce for shipping at the cooperative's Waupaca warehouse.

NON-PROFIT
U.S. Postage
Paid
Permit No. 203
Eau Claire, WI

FARMERS EDUCATIONAL & COOPERATIVE
UNION OF AMERICA - WISCONSIN
117 W. Spring St.
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
Return Service Requested

WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION NEWS

A publication of
Wisconsin Farmers Union
117 W. Spring St.
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
715-723-5561 • 800-272-5531
www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com

WFU BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Darin Von Ruden
President
District 5
608-634-4695

Craig Myhre
Vice President
District 4
715-983-2167

Ed Gorell
Treasurer
District 3
715-287-3383

Chris Holman
Secretary
District 6
715-498-3276

Linda Ceylor
District 1
715-567-1010

Lauren Langworthy
District 2
715-503-0096

Tina Hinchley
District 7
608-764-5090

Rick Adamski
District 8
920-373-7105

Mark Liebaert
At-Large
715-398-5234

WFU STATE OFFICE STAFF

Julie Bomar

Executive Director

715-723-5561 • bomar@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Diane Tiry

Administrative Assistant

715-723-5561 • dtiry@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Lynn Kiefer-Bowe

Office Assistant

715-723-5561 • lbowe@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Cathy Statz

Education Director

715-723-5561 • cstatz@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Sharon Herman

Accounting

715-231-2005 • bookkeeper@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Danielle Endvick

Communications Director

715-471-0398 • dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Tommy Enright

Communications Associate

715-563-2169 • tenright@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Sarah Lloyd

Special Projects Director

608-844-3758 • slloyd@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Deb Jakubek

Membership Coordinator

715-590-2130 • djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Kirsten Slaughter

Membership & Education Organizer

608-514-2031 • kslaughter@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Kara O'Connor

Government Relations Director

608-514-4541 • koconnor@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Bobbi Wilson

Government Relations Associate

608-234-3741 • bwilson@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Brad Henderson

Facilities Manager, WFU Kamp Kenwood

715-214-7244 • bhenderson@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Newsletter Editor, Layout & Design: Danielle Endvick
Printed by: Leader Printing, Eau Claire, WI
Bulk Rate postage paid in Eau Claire, WI

From the Director's Desk

Wisconsin Farmers Union Updates



Hello Friend,

Non-profits can and do utilize a variety of sources of funding to help them fulfill their missions and Wisconsin Farmers Union, a 501(c)(5), and Wisconsin Farmers Union Foundation, a 501(c)(3) are no different. We have diverse income streams including: membership dues, grants, interest from investments, donations, contributions from corporations and co-ops, and rental fees. However, the majority of our revenue comes from our 20 percent share of Farmers Union Enterprises, a majority shareholder of Farmers Union Industries (FUI). Providing specialized products like cat litter, pet food, processed pork, and recycled restaurant grease, a total of seven companies form the manufacturing arms of FUI. The company headquarters is located in Redwood Falls, Minnesota and the staff there provide marketing, sales and executive leadership for the entire fleet of companies. Recently, five WFU Board members, our Investment Committee Chair and I took a trip to Minnesota, South Dakota and Iowa to visit four companies and ask questions about our core source of funding, Farmers Union Industries.

On our tour, we were able to see four operations: Performance Pet Products, Redwood Farms Meat Processors, Artex and Pet Care Systems. Meeting with management and staff and touring each facility, we were able to see how dog and cat food is canned; the full production process for manure spreaders and silage trailers; pork processing; and production of cat litter from wheat. We didn't have the time to visit the other three companies including: Central Bi-Projects (three rendering plants), Northland Choice (three pet food ingredient manufacturing plants) and Midwest grease, a company that collects, cleans and recycles restaurant grease into livestock feed ingredients and biofuels. The WFU representatives on the tour plan to return and visit these facilities at a later date.

After seeing these industries first-hand and interacting with management and staff, I thought a lot about all that I had seen and how Wisconsin Farmers Union fits into the agricultural production matrix. I was pleased that the CEO and managers of the companies we visit-

ed were so focused on quality improvement, including work environments, efficiencies and productivity. We asked a lot of important questions and the managers displayed competence and accountability. We learned livable wages and benefits were provided to FUI employees. Employee turnover is generally low except in the pork processing facility, but that number had been reduced by 20 percent with wage increases. Shop conditions were generally good and where the environment seemed crowded or in need of update, management appeared to have plans for improvement. For example, in the pork processing plant, construction of a new employee rest area and locker rooms were underway and the cut-room had been recently modernized with digital saws and substantial lighting.

FUI takes what could be waste in livestock and agriculture production and turns it into something others can use. I think most folks would be glad these bi-products don't end up in their local landfills and that nothing is left to waste. There are noteworthy efficiencies and synergies gained as one might imagine between meat packing, pet food and rendering.

Each member of the Board of Governors farms as their primary business and FUI's 90-year history is rooted in agriculture. These elements of their business culture contribute to smart, resonant marketing. For example, Artex manufactures "the world's toughest line of manure spreaders, silage trailers and truck boxes" and their branding is "Artex: Almost as Tough as Farming." In the pork processing company, Redwood Farms, they accept the hogs the big processors don't take, those animals that might be a bit below or above the desired standard size. Then those larger cuts of meat like boned or deboned hams, ribs and other large parts move on for further, specialized butchering. This exception in the world of pork processing means those animals that don't fit exactly into the cookie cutter world of the highly vertically integrated hog industry can still bring value to the farmer.

I'm eager to see the rest of the industries and will gladly give you a report after. If you should have any questions about the main revenue provider for Wisconsin Farmers Union, please talk to a member of the Board of Directors or me.

Best Harvest Wishes,

Julie Bomar

WFU Executive Director



Left: Wisconsin Farmers Union leaders recently took a trip to Minnesota, South Dakota and Iowa to visit four Farmers Union Industries companies.

Vote like your future depends on it



Darin Von Ruden
President

If your mailbox is anything like mine, it's probably been chock full of political ads in these past few weeks, many of them making sensational claims about candidates. Do you ever pause to wonder where these ads originate? You'd do well to take a moment to read the tiny print and be mindful of what group is behind the line "Not endorsed by any candidate or candidate's committee."

The Supreme Court's 2010 decision in *Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission* triggered unprecedented amounts of outside spending in elections when it allowed the creation of super PACs that can accept unlimited contributions from corporate and union treasuries, as well as individuals. The result has been a boom in tax-exempt "dark money" organizations that don't have to disclose their donors.

The result? Millions of dollars of dark money are being channeled into election ads that confuse voters and make it nearly impossible to discern fact from fiction. Farmers Union found itself in the focus of some of these falsehoods in October (read more about that at right).

What you should know is that while Farmers Union advocates and educates on rural issues — with policies rooted in our values and set annually by our grassroots membership — we're not playing politics. Since our founding in the 1930s, WFU has prided itself on being a nonpartisan organization, meaning we don't endorse candidates. We've always felt it is important to maintain that balance and be able to work with elected officials of all parties.

Politics in this nation have become incredibly divisive. We can't continue to allow dark money to have this influence over us. We need to be vigilant, educated voters. We need to think beyond the party lines and really learn what our candidates stand for, beyond the fables fabricated on ads overflowing our mailboxes.

Take, for example, a race here in my home 96th District, where the NRA and Firearms Association of Wisconsin have taken out ads claiming Assembly candidate Paul Buhr is out to take away the right to bear arms. Buhr, a Viroqua dairy farmer who I've known for many years, is an outdoorsman who hunts with his family and has no such notion.

Think about how United States citizens could benefit if this dark money was instead used for good. Instead of pouring millions of dollars into political campaign ads, what if those people backing the ads instead invested in a solution to our health care struggles in this country? Or into infrastructure, as rural residents across Wisconsin are seeing roads crumble and are still waiting for quality broadband to reach their rural communities? What if those donors instead saw the value in spending their money on stable regional food systems that actually support family farmers and offer access to healthful foods for all?

Instead, we're seeing millions of dollars tossed down the drain, funding ink and paper destined for garbage cans, and millions more invested in radio ads and television, with those sound waves fading away into nothing tangible after the election.

Take some time to learn about the good work being done by our friends at Wisconsin United to Amend, which has helped citizens in 129 communities all over the state to pass referenda supporting a Constitutional amendment saying that Corporations and Unions Are Not People, and Money Is Not Speech. Such an amendment would pave the way for reversing the *Citizens United* decision, so we can rein in campaign spending and swing the pendulum back toward government for the people, rather than big-money interests. Ask yourself whether your community should join that list.

So friends, as the election nears, take a moment's pause to think about where the information you're hearing and seeing about candidates is really coming from. Take some time to learn about the people who are running to represent you. Vote like your future depends on it — because it does.

Erroneous attack ads slander Farmers Union, divide rural towns



Kara O'Connor
Gov. Relations Dir.

This fall, campaign ads attacking Wisconsin Farmers Union went from false and sarcastic to downright

bizarre — attacking state senate candidate Kriss Marion for positions Farmers Union took before she was even a member or positions WFU never took at all.

Take a look at the fine print, and you'll notice the ads are funded by the Wisconsin Alliance for Reform, a group backed by undisclosed donors. The attack ads against Marion are essentially identical to ads that attempted to ridicule Farmers Union member and State Representative candidate Jeff Peck for his ties to the family farm organization back in 2014.

These attacks diminish the dignity of democracy and are out of step with Wisconsin values like honesty and civility. They are also not in keeping with the collaboration that we aspire to in our rural communities. Just recently, in fact, Wisconsin Farmers Union collaborated with DATCP, Farm Bureau, DBA, PDPW, and Dairy Girl Network to host a session at the World Dairy Expo about Wisconsin Farm Employment.

So what is Wisconsin Farmers Union? We're an organization of farmers and rural residents from all over the state who believe in a fair farm economy and thriving rural communities. In the face of negativity in our political system and in the farm economy, we persist in our belief in democracy and in the ingenuity of farmers and rural entrepreneurs. We think that the best government is the one that is closest to the people. We believe that rural residents have the same right to clean water, decent health care, and fast internet as our urban counterparts do.

There are times when Wisconsin Farmers Union politely disagrees with politicians of both parties. At the end of the day, our loyalties lie with our members and rural communities, not with any party or politician. In 2012, for example, we were the only major ag organization that questioned Governor Walker's Dairy 30x20 plan to increase milk production in the state, believing that ramping up milk

production, without having anywhere to sell it, was short-sighted. The current flood of milk on the market and resulting low prices have sadly demonstrated the wisdom of that position.

Instead of slogans or quick fixes to the dairy economy, Farmers Union is bringing together farmers from every organization (or sometimes no organization at all) through the Dairy Together campaign to work together for comprehensive dairy policy reform that balances supply and demand. We form cooperatives like the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative, launched in 2012, to help farmers access new markets and build the regional food economy. We hosted and co-sponsored over 30 pasture walks and on-farm events this year to help farmers share best practices for conserving soil and protecting water resources.

Wisconsin Farmers Union does not endorse candidates or make campaign donations. We do advocate for policy positions — that are established by our grassroots membership — and stand by our values. Political attack ads violate our values of honesty, collaboration, and civility. That's one of the reasons that we have long advocated for reining in campaign spending, so that races are decided on the issues, rather than on sensational claims by dark money groups with undisclosed donors.

In 2015, Governor Walker and the legislature made significant changes to state law pertaining to campaign finance and elections fairness. For example, AB388/SB294 dismantled the nonpartisan Government Accountability Board, and replaced it with Ethics and Elections boards comprised of political appointees.

Another bill, AB387/SB292, doubled the limits on direct contributions to candidates, allowed unlimited donations from individuals to political parties, and permitted corporations, for the first time in more than 100 years in Wisconsin, to give directly to political parties. It also allowed candidates to coordinate directly with outside "issue ad" groups to run attack ads against their opponents.

Wisconsin Farmers Union urges all voters to ask the candidates about their voting record on campaign spending laws and what they will do to put a stop to the mudslinging and bring some dignity back to our democracy.

WFU hiring Accounting Manager

Wisconsin Farmers Union is seeking an Accounting Manager. This is a core administrative support position for WFU. The primary responsibility for this position is fulfilling bookkeeping and financial management functions of the organization, including: maintain Quickbooks system, provide for accounts receivable/accounts payable, manage payroll and fringe, provide financial reports and budgets for grants and investments, maintain employee files, support annual audit process, and other tasks as determined. The person in this role will also assist with some IT, HR and event operations.

Preferred qualifications include an Associates degree in Accounting or Business with three or more years of professional experience working in financial management (business, education or non-profit setting).

This position will be for 30-40 hours per week. See the full position description online at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com or inquire to WFU Executive Director Julie Bomar at jbomar@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 715-723-5561.

OUR FAMILY FARM

EVERYONE WORKS ON A FAMILY FARM

From our friends at the North Dakota Farmers Union comes a fun new children's book about family farming. *Just in time for the holidays!*

\$15

Available at the Farmers Union offices:

117 W. Spring St.
Chippewa Falls

108 S. Webster St., Suite 201
Madison



**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

From p.1 ► HUB

of the cooperative. "We look forward to working with supply chain partners on creating an efficient distribution system that will provide a great boost for Wisconsin farmers."

Founded in 2012, the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative is a farmer-led business owned by its farmer-members and the Wisconsin Farmers Union. The cooperative is currently working closely with the City of Madison to create infrastructure for moving local food into the region, increasing returns to farmers and buyers through more cost-effective distribution.

"Locally grown or made products are about one-third of everything we sell, so local food is extremely important to our 35,000 co-op owners," said Brendon Smith, Communications Director at the Willy Street Co-op.

Once the domain of farmers markets and other types of direct marketing, local food has become a multi-billion dollar industry. In recent years, wholesale transactions of locally and regionally grown food have begun to outpace farm-direct sales.

"This new grant will enhance Wisconsin's national leadership in the work to build a local food system that works for farmers, distributors, retailers, institutions, restaurants and ultimately consumers," said Turner.

Using operations data from regional food distributors, haulers and buyers,

the project partners will develop better systems for linking rural and urban food freight while coordinating local food demand for Madison-area buyers, including grocery stores and restaurants.

"I'm excited about this project's potential to help smaller groceries purchase affordable fresh product. That's a critical first step to improving healthy food access for Madison residents," said Lindsey Day Farnsworth, postdoctoral researcher at the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems and Madison Food Policy Council member.

"This is a win-win project for both consumers and small businesses in the Upper Midwest," added Michelle Miller, Associate Director of the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems. "And it has potential to improve food access for Wisconsin's small towns, too, by supporting independent food businesses throughout the Upper Midwest."

The Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative, incorporated in 2012, is a farmer-led cooperative of fresh vegetable & fruit growers and value-added producers owned by the farmers and the Wisconsin Farmers Union. The WFHC works to build a sustainable local and regional foodsystem by creating market access for small- and medium-scale producers and making it easy for retail, institutional, and foodservice buyers to access local food. For more information on the WFHC visit www.wifoodhub.com.

Op-Ed writing workshops coming up

The Progressive Media Project, with the support of the BRICO Fund, invites you to participate in upcoming free op-ed writing workshops:

- November 2 - La Crosse - Ho-Chunk Nation - Three Rivers House
- November 9 - Stevens Point - Portage County Public Library
- December 7 - Milwaukee - Wisconsin Voices

Each workshop begins with a "lede writing exercise" that teaches participants how to write their crucial first sentence in eighteen words or fewer. Participants also learn about the four kinds of op-eds and receive concrete writing tips, including on how to overcome writer's block, how to construct an argument, and how to write conclusions. In the afternoon, each participant writes an op-ed in a two-hour period.

Since 1993, The Progressive Media Project has worked tirelessly to amplify underrepresented voices in mainstream media to end discrimination, advance social justice, and democratize perspectives on current events locally, statewide, and nationally. Op-eds are often sent out through a distribution network to newspapers across Wisconsin, and the United States. By participating in a Progressive Media Project workshop, you will learn how to effectively communicate your ideas as an op-ed writer, Understand how to use social media to get your published op-ed in front of a larger audience, and receive editorial and op-ed placement support. For more details, contact Jess at: jess@progressive.org or call 608-257-4626 or visit <http://progressive.org/op-eds/OpEd-Writing-clinics>

Farmers Union gatherings being held across the state

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:

• **ASHLAND-BAYFIELD** — Thurs., Nov. 1, 6-8pm, Chequamegon Food Co-op, 700 Main St., W., Ashland. Potluck - bring a dish to pass. Info: ashbayfarmers@gmail.com.

• **BUFFALO COUNTY** — Fri., Nov. 9, 6pm, Roger Marten Community Center, 120 S. Franklin St., Mondovi. Info: John Gehrke, gehrkefloral@yahoo.com or 715-926-4931.

• **COLUMBIA** — Sun., Nov 4, 2-4:30pm, Borchardt family's Five Green Acres, 605 McMillan Rd., Poynette. Potluck - bring a dish to pass. Info: Mary Jo Borchardt, 608-335-9444 or fivegreenacres@gmail.com.

• **CHIPPEWA COUNTY** — Sun., Nov. 11, noon, Goetz Town Hall, 8985 257th St., Cadott. Info: Danielle Endvick, 715-471-0398 or chipcountyfu@gmail.com.

• **LA CROSSE-MONROE COUNTY** — Sun., Nov. 11, 1-3pm, Sparta Family Restaurant, 741 Avon Road, Sparta. Complimentary meal. RSVP: Stephen Honish, 608-378-4553.

• **PEPIN-PIERCE** — Sun., Nov. 11, 3pm, Community of Christ Church, N6378 County Rd D, Arkansaw. A potluck meal will follow the meeting. Info: Dan Richardson, 715-495-8598.

• **SOUTH CENTRAL** — Tues., Nov. 13, 6pm potluck and 6:30-8:30pm meeting, Monticello House/TnD's Bar & Grill, 149 N. Main St., Monticello. Agenda: Officer election, policy resolutions, convention delegate nominations, Golden Cupcake Leadership Recognition, WFU Year in Review/Dairy Together/Rural Voices update and more. Info: Pat Skogen, pskogen@live.com or 608-393-6109.

• **DUNN** — Mon., Nov. 19, 6-8pm, Menomonie Public Library, 600 Wolske Bay Road, Menomonie. There will be a potluck, so please bring a dish to pass. Featured speaker: KT Gallagher, Dunn County Health Officer/Director. Info: Caleb Langworthy, Info or agenda additions: dunncountyfarmersunion@gmail.com

• **WOOD PORTAGE WAUPACA** — Mon., Nov. 19, 6-8pm, Central Rivers Farmshed, 1220 Briggs Ct., Stevens Point. Chili potluck - bring a dish to pass. Info: Alicia Razvi, 715-544-4777.

• **DANE** — Sun., Dec 9, 1:00pm, Daniel & Lori Kvalheim's, 2256 Cty. Rd. T, Sun Prairie. Potluck - please bring a dish to pass. Info: Krist Kvalheim, 608-658-9106.

County leaders, please submit any policy resolutions or proposed bylaw changes resulting from your annual meetings to the WFU State Office at 117 W. Spring St., Chippewa Falls, WI 54729 by Dec. 1st for consideration by the Policy & Bylaws Committees.



88th Annual **State Convention**
January 25-27, 2019

Red Lion Hotel Paper Valley
 Appleton, WI

FRIDAY January 25th

GROUNDSWELL pre-convention event

Featuring: Paul Cienfuegos, Community Rights U.S.

WFU members and friends are invited to an empowering session about Protecting the Rights of People and Nature from the Local Up. This year we will highlight how we can organize to reclaim power and protect what matters most to all of us: clean air and water, safe food, renewable energy, living wages, and the right to thrive.

Noon to 4:30pm. Lunch is provided. Cost is \$65 for non-members (includes a family membership) or \$35 for members. Two scholarships are available per Farmers Union chapter - contact your local leadership for details.

WFU FOUNDATION FUNDRAISER

Join us for a fun evening of networking, food, and a chance to win great prizes! Ticketed event. Register: www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 715-723-5561. Want to donate an auction item? Contact Kirsten at kslaughter@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 608-514-2031.

SATURDAY January 26th

KEYNOTE *Eric Holt-Giménez*

Eric Holt-Giménez, author and executive director of Food First, grew up milking cows and pitching hay in Point Reyes, California. He'll share how farmers and consumers can transform our food system to restore justice to American agriculture.

WORKSHOPS

Starting a Cooperative Kelly Maynard, UW Center for Cooperatives

Farming Against Climate Change Tom Driscoll, Farmers Union

Strategies for Resilience WFU & Michael Slattery, Maribel farmer

Rural Mental Health Rick Adamski & Christine Hamele, WFU members

POLICY DISCUSSION kicks off Saturday this year!

Join in thoughtful discourse on the future of agriculture and help guide WFU's work in the year ahead.

SUNDAY January 27th

INTERFAITH SERVICE highlighting faith & farming

POLICY DISCUSSION by the grassroots membership

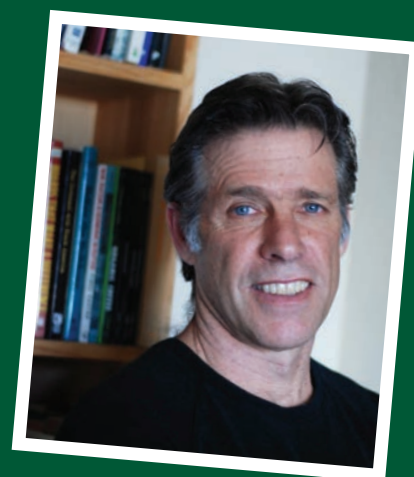


NETWORKING with fellow family farmers & rural allies

KEYNOTE

Eric Holt-Giménez
Food First
Executive Director

*Transforming Our
 Food Systems &
 Restoring Justice
 to Agriculture*



Family-friendly concurrent YOUTH CO-OP CONVENTION

**\$75 registration
 valued at \$200
 Register today!**

**Early Bird
 Rates End
 Jan. 10th!**

Registration available online at:
www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/convention
 Questions? Call 715-723-5561

Registration and payment must be mailed by **Thursday, Jan. 10, 2019** to receive the early bird rate.

All delegates and voting individuals are required to purchase a convention registration package, which include Saturday and Sunday meals. Delegates who are also youth/youth leaders must purchase a delegate registration and meal package.

Indicate names with your package and/or individual meal orders so we can prepare tickets in advance for ease during registration. Registration table opens at 4:30pm on Friday, Feb. 2 and will continue on Saturday, Feb. 3 at 7:30am. Convention officially opens at 9am Saturday.

LODGING

Red Lion Hotel Paper Valley
333 W. College Avenue
Appleton, WI 54911

To make a reservation refer to discount code **0119WFUS** while booking at www.redlion.com/appleton or via phone at 920-733-8000. **The room block deadline is Thursday, Dec. 27.**

Any cancellation inside the 72-hour cancellation period will forfeit the full deposit amount. There is also an early check out fee of one night's room and tax for departing before arranged departure date. Check-in is 3pm and check-out is by 11am.

Parking is available for \$5/day at the nearby Appleton City Parking Ramp.

YOUTH OPTIONS

WFU holds concurrent youth activities during select times of Convention weekend: Youth Co-op Convention and child care (infant-K). **A \$40 per youth registration fee covers meals and programming/child care for all youth.** For more details about youth activities and child care, contact WFU Education Director Cathy Statz at 715-723-5561 or cstatz@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Cancellation Policy:

Any cancellations must be reported to the WFU State Office by noon on Thurs., Jan. 17 in order to receive a refund. Please call Diane at 800-272-5531 with cancellations or questions.

Learn more or register today at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/convention.



88th Annual State Convention

January 25-27, 2019
Red Lion Hotel Paper Valley
Appleton, WI

ATTENDEE REGISTRATION FORM

Please PRINT CLEARLY all information as you would like it to appear on name badge(s).

REGISTRATION ALSO AVAILABLE ONLINE:
www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/convention

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

REGISTRATION & MEAL PACKAGE PLEASE NOTE THAT PACKAGE RATES INCLUDE ALL MEALS: Saturday lunch and banquet, Sunday breakfast and lunch. Use Separate Meal Tickets area below for non-delegate guests who need an individual meal only.

Type of Registrant	Early Bird Price before 1/10/19	Price after 1/10/19	# of Packages	Total
DELEGATE Member	\$75	\$95		\$
ADULT Member	\$75	\$95		\$
NON-Member	\$95	\$115		\$
CHILD CARE, YOUTH or YOUTH LEADER (Please fill out youth chart below.)	\$40	\$60		\$
Annual Membership (I wish to join WFU)	\$30	\$30		\$

PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOP

	Nonmember	Member	Total
'Groundswell' Workshop Registration (Noon to 4:30pm on Friday, includes lunch)	\$65 x # _____ (includes membership)	\$35 x # _____	\$

SEPARATE MEAL TICKETS Tickets available for non-delegate individuals who want to join us for meals only — includes programs.

Meal (List attendee name after each meal)	Early Bird on or before 1/10/19	Price after 1/10/19	NON-MEMBER Rate ONLY	# of Tickets	Total
Saturday Lunch	\$22	\$25	\$30		\$
Saturday Banquet	\$35	\$38	\$43		\$
Sunday Breakfast	\$20	\$22	\$27		\$
Sunday Lunch	\$20	\$22	\$27		\$

FRIDAY NIGHT FUNDRAISER Funds benefit the WFU Foundation and ticket costs may be claimed as a charitable donation.

The fundraiser kicks off at 6pm Friday and includes food, networking, and prizes.	Ticket Cost	# of Tickets	Total
Adult Fundraiser Ticket	\$20		
Youth Fundraiser Ticket (Ages 18 & under)	\$10		
REGISTRATION TOTAL:			\$

CONVENTION YOUTH ATTENDEE INFORMATION

First & Last Name	Youth Activity	Birthdate MM/DD/YY	Grade	Dietary Needs
	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Co-op Convention <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare			<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian <input type="checkbox"/> Vegan <input type="checkbox"/> Gluten-free <input type="checkbox"/> Allergies (we'll contact you)
	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Co-op Convention <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare			<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian <input type="checkbox"/> Vegan <input type="checkbox"/> Gluten-free <input type="checkbox"/> Allergies (we'll contact you)

Please use this space to list additional adult attendees:

Mail registration form with check payable to:

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

Busting the myths behind dairy supply management

Bobbi Wilson

Government Relations Associate

Through our Dairy Together organizing, we have encountered just about every concern you can think of about supply management. Many of them point to Canada as an example of why we should not adopt a supply management system in the U.S. There is plenty of misinformation out there, but a lot of these concerns are perfectly valid and deserve an honest and thoughtful response. I hope you will use this as a guide to help you engage in respectful discussions with people who disagree with you on supply management.

Concern: Supply management will never work in the United States.

- Is the system we have now working?
- We are in the fourth year of milk prices below the cost of production.
- Farmers should not be forced to sell a product for less than cost of production.
- Family dairy farmers are working 12-20 hours/day, 365 days/year and the majority are still losing money. No one should have to pay to go to work every day.
- It is possible to have dairy policy that works better for farmers.

Concern: The Canadian government subsidizes its dairy industry to uphold supply management.

- The Canadian government upholds their supply management through trade agreements, but they do not spend taxpayer money to support dairy farmers.
- In the U.S we subsidize our dairy industry through programs like the Margin Protection Program, for example.

Concern: Canadian supply management and Class 7 pricing are causing the challenges U.S dairy farmers are facing.

- Supply management has been in place in Canada since 1967 and therefore is difficult to blame for the recent dramatic downturn in U.S dairy prices.
- The dairy crisis is caused by massive overproduction due in large part to the rapid expansion of mega-dairies that are flooding the market and depressing milk prices.
- Accessing Canadian markets is not the silver bullet. It will not solve the underlying problem of overproduction, and damages Canadian dairy farmers in the process.

Example: The market access gained by the USMCA trade deal will allow an additional \$560 million worth of dairy exports to Canada, equal to about 1.5% of the total value of U.S dairy.

Concern: It is too expensive for new dairy farmers to get started in Canada.

- Many Canadian dairy farmers agree that one downside of their system is the difficulty for new farmers to get started, which is why they have a beginning farmer entry program.
- It is extremely difficult for a farmer to get started in the U.S because of low and volatile milk prices, and it is hard to find a processor to accept your milk.

Concern: Supply management doesn't work because they are still losing dairy farms in Canada.

- That is true, there has been a dramatic loss of dairy farms in Canada even under supply management.
- Factors like new technologies and urbanization have resulted in fewer dairy farms in Canada as well as the United States, and the farms have gotten larger.
- We need to take a closer look at the causes for farm loss in Canada. At least in recent years, they are not being forced out due to low prices and farm bankruptcies like they are in the United States.



Photo by Brittany Olson | Berglane Photography

Above: From left, Farmers Union members Justin, Jim and Jenny Briggs, Stratford dairy farmers, have been among those speaking up about the need for dairy farmers to band together and push for a solution to the dairy crisis.

Concern: Supply management violates trade agreements under the World Trade Organization.

- A quota system like Canada's would require a re-negotiation of trade agreements, but the types of supply management programs that are most likely to be considered in the U.S are WTO-compliant.
- Policy proposals like the Dairy Market Stabilization Program and the Foundation for the Future program that became the MPP, would not have gotten as much traction in congress if they violated the WTO.

Concern: Under supply management, the federal government would control the dairy industry

- The government is already heavily involved in the dairy industry with the federal Margin Protection program and the Federal Milk Marketing Orders.
- If one co-op or one region were to implement supply management outside of federal policy, dairy producers elsewhere would make up the difference in any supply reduction. WFU believes this needs to be a nationwide effort.
- If co-ops work together to create a supply management program, they could get sued for price fixing. Having supply management run through the federal government is one way to work around this issue.
- Ideally the program would be run by farmer-owned cooperatives or dairy farmer boards, similar to the National and Provincial dairy boards in Canada.
- For supply management to work, it has to be mandatory and it has to apply to everyone, and to make that happen we need to change federal policy.

Concern: Farmers can't expand their herds under supply management so profits are stagnant.

- You can still expand your herd under supply management, but in a way that is coordinated with anticipated market growth.
- Example: The proposed Dairy Market Stabilization Program would allow for continued growth year after year, but huge expansions like doubling your herd size or adding 1,000 cows would require a market access fee for the first year of expansion.
- Would you rather milk more cows each year or make more profit each year? With a higher milk price, you could make more money milking fewer cows.

Concern: Dairy product prices will increase for consumers.

- Canadian consumers pay only slightly more for dairy products than we do in the U.S.
- Impact on retail prices would differ depending on the supply management program, and would be analyzed before implementation.

Concern: Europe and Australia got rid of their supply management programs because dairy farmers didn't like the quota system.

- Europe got rid of dairy quotas in 2015 and dairy prices have since fallen below cost of production.
- Australia also eliminated their quota system in 2000. In 2017 net income for Australian dairy farmers was zero.

Concern: Supply management is not politically feasible; members of congress have no appetite for it.

- There are still some mixed opinions about supply management, but we are seeing growing support in the countryside, especially in light of the current dairy crisis.
- There is certainly more support for supply management now than there was in 2014 when the last farm bill passed. If National Milk supported supply management then, they can support it now, and that would go a long way in getting congress to take action.
- We need to communicate our support for supply management to our cooperatives and our members of congress to drive the political will to reform federal dairy policy. #



Photo by Deb Jakubek

Above: In mid-October, central Wisconsin farmers gathered for an interview with ABC Nightline about the dairy crisis and Dairy Together. Check it out soon at <https://abcnews.go.com/Nightline> (air date not available as of press time.)

Dairy Together

Where it has taken us ... and where we go from here

Bobbi Wilson
Government Relations Associate

In August, Wisconsin Farmers Union, along with 26 Dairy Together advocates, took a bus to New York for a dairy summit hosted by AgriMark co-op. The summit highlighted various policy proposals to stabilize prices for dairy farmers, most of them containing some mechanism to balance supply with profitable demand.

The bus trip generated a lot of media attention, and was featured on the front page of three Wisconsin newspapers in one week. But what progress have we made since then, and where do we go from here?

One of the greatest successes of the bus trip was the opportunity to connect with like-minded farmers and farm organizations that are pushing for solutions to the dairy crisis. We built our Dairy Together network and returned to Wisconsin stronger than when we left.

Farm Aid, whose generous support funded our bus trip, was among the groups we connected with during the meeting. In September, they invited us to attend their annual benefit concert in Hartford, Connecticut to showcase our work. Sarah Lloyd, Director of Special Projects, spoke on a panel during the pre-concert gathering titled "On the Road to Resilience: Moving from Individual Crisis to Collective Power." National Farmers Union Vice President Patty Edelburg spoke during a film screening of a new documentary called Forgotten Farms.

At the Farm Aid concert, Sarah connected with Nathaniel Rateliff, lead singer of Nathaniel Rateliff and the Night Sweats, who invited us to table for Dairy Together at their concert in Madison. We raised money to support our work and spread the Dairy Together message to consumers who were unaware of the dairy crisis happening throughout rural America. Nathaniel even gave a Dairy Together shout out from the stage!

In September, we had the opportunity to advocate for dairy supply management to our members of Congress at the annual National Farmers Union Fly-In to Washington D.C. We heard from several members of Congress that the dialogue on supply management is shifting, and the need for a stable dairy economy is

growing more apparent as dairy farmers struggle through yet another year of prices below the cost of production.

Senator Sanders' office and the State of Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets has convened a task force to review the proposals that were presented at the AgriMark meeting and select three for further review. The Holstein Plan, which was considered in the lead-up to the 2014 Farm Bill and presented at the summit by WFU's Kara O'Connor, is among them. Kara is an active member on the task force and is weighing in on their policy recommendations.

The next big step is conducting an economic analysis that compares a few supply management proposals and demonstrates what dairy prices would have been from 2014 until now if a policy had been in place. We are in the process of commissioning such a study and look forward to sharing more details soon.

We kicked off the month of October with our booth at the 52nd annual World Dairy Expo in Madison, an event that drew over 70,000 people from across the globe. WFU staff and volunteers had great conversations with convention-goers, sharing our support for fair prices, family farms, and vibrant communities.

Unfortunately, October also brought the news that the trade agreement reached by the U.S, Mexico, and Canada contains major concessions on Canada's dairy industry. Touted as a major win for American dairy farmers, the USMCA eliminates the controversial Class 7 pricing and opens an additional 3.59 percent of their market to U.S dairy exports. While Trump claims victory, others aren't so sure. "This small increase in sales to Canada may not even offset our own domestic production increase this year, not to mention where we'll be at 2 or 3 or 10 years down the road," said Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden. "We need to exercise some discipline on our own side of the border rather than looking for salvation outside our borders."

The bus trip to New York kick-started a flurry of activity for Dairy Together, and has resulted in tremendous networking, educational, and advocacy opportunities. We continue to hold our bi-weekly conference calls with a core group of members to keep the conversation going and build on that momentum. Onward!

Learn more at www.DairyTogether.com

Chapter Chatter

Share it here!

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



*Photos by Lauren Langworthy
The final Graze River
Country pasture walk
of the season drew a
crowd to Ken and Laurie
Schmitt's Colfax dairy
farm, where attendees
enjoyed a potluck and
a look at the Schmitt's
cattle handling set-up.*

Strengthening Rural Economies

On Monday, Nov. 12, Minneapolis food systems expert Ken Meter of Crossroads Resource Center will discuss opportunities for strengthening rural economies and communities in the face of policies that systematically drain our wealth. Drawing from his work in 40 states, Ken will highlight promising initiatives, the potential for cooperatives, and the role of community-based food systems.

The event, hosted by Dunn County Farmers Union and sponsored through a Wisconsin Farmers Union Local Initiatives Grant, will run from 6 to 8:45pm at the Menomonie Public Library, 600 Wolske Bay Road. The presentation will begin at 6:45pm with a light dinner served beforehand.

No registration is required. For more information, contact Dunn County Farmers Union President Caleb Langworthy at dunncountyfarmersunion@gmail.com.

Dunn County Farmers Union launches book club

Dunn County Farmers Union is seeking members who are interested in taking part in a book club. Contact Dunn County Farmers Union President Caleb Langworthy at dunncountyfarmersunion@gmail.com for more details about how to get connected.

Farmers Union Camp dates announced

Dates for 2019 Farmers Union Camps at WFU Kamp Kenwood have been set. Registration opens January 1st. Stay tuned for details at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com. Camp dates include:

Junior (Age 8-12)
June 16-19
Aug. 7-10
Aug. 11-14
Aug. 18-21

Jr High (Age 12-14)
June 10-14

Junior/Jr High (Age 8-14)
Aug. 4-7

Senior (Age 14-18)
July 28-Aug. 1

Family Camps (All Ages)
July 26-27 • Aug 2-3

Acorn Day Camp (7+)
Aug. 15

*Day camp dates
coming soon!*

FARMERS UNION HAPPENINGS

DANE COUNTY FARMERS UNION POTLUCK & YOUTH AWARDS, Sun., Oct. 28, 1pm, Hinchley's Dairy Farm, 2844 Highway 73, Cambridge. Info: Tina Hinchley, 608-770-3891, or Teresa Johnson, 608-212-7253 or bbtj@charter.net. Youth awards, pumpkin picking, floral arrangements, hayride, potluck and meeting.

STRENGTHENING RURAL ECONOMIES WITH KEN METER, Nov. 12, 6-8:45, 6pm dinner and 6:45pm presentation, Menomonie Public Library, 600 Wolske Bay Road, Menomonie. Info: dunncountyfarmersunion@gmail.com

HOLIDAY COOKING WITH INGA WITSCHER, Nov. 13, 6pm, Chippewa Falls Public Library, 105 W. Central St., Chippewa Falls.

POLICY RESOLUTIONS & BY-LAW CHANGES DUE, Dec. 1, must be sent to the WFU State Office at 117 W. Spring St., Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

GROWING FOR THE FUTURE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE, Dec. 3-6, <https://nfu.org/growing-for-the-future/>

CONVENTION HOTEL REGISTRATION BLOCK DEADLINE, Dec. 27, Details on page 6-7.

CONVENTION REGISTRATION EARLY BIRD DEADLINE, Jan. 10, register at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/convention

NATIONAL FARMERS UNION WOMEN'S CONFERENCE, Jan. 13-17, Catamaran Resort, Wisconsin Dells. Scholarships available. Event info: <https://nfu.org/education/womensconference/>

88TH ANNUAL WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION STATE CONVENTION, Jan. 25-27, Red Lion Hotel Paper Valley, Appleton. Info: www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events or pages 6-7.

117th NATIONAL FARMERS UNION CONVENTION, March 3-5, Bellevue, Washington. Info: www.nfu.org

Virtual conference eyes future of agriculture

Calling all beginning farmers and ranchers: do you want to know more about cooperative development, farm technology, drought management, food safety, and accessing new markets?



Growing for the Future, a FREE online conference Dec. 3-6, offers all that and more. Register today for access to farmer-to-farmer webinars, live Q&A session, an online resource center, and free giveaways: <https://nfu.org/growing-for-the-future/>

Convention sponsors and exhibitors sought

Sponsor and exhibitor registration is open for the 88th WFU State Convention Jan. 25-27 at Red Lion Hotel Paper Valley in Appleton. Cooperatives, farm organizations, and agribusinesses are encouraged to take part in the exhibit hall, which runs throughout the weekend. Or consider sponsoring a meal or break, donating to the silent auction, or investing in an ad in the convention program.

Some local food items are also needed. Farms or businesses interested in selling or donating local food for the weekend's menu or snacks for break times are asked to contact the WFU State Office at 715-723-5561

Find sponsorship opportunities online at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/convention or contact Tommy Enright at 715-563-2169 or tenright@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Convention fundraiser donations sought

Wisconsin Farmers Union invites you to join us for the WFU Foundation Fundraiser from 6-9pm on Friday, Jan. 25, kicking off convention weekend at Red Lion Hotel Paper Valley in Appleton. Enjoy a taco bar, raffle and prizes, and networking with Farmers Union friends! See more info on pages 6-7.

Individuals and WFU chapters are encouraged to donate items for the silent auction. Donations can be dropped off at the WFU Office (117 W. Spring St., Chippewa Falls or 108 S. Webster St., Ste. 201, Madison) or brought to the County President's Meeting Jan. 5 in Tomah. Contact Kirsten Slaughter at kslaughter@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 608-514-2031 for more details.

Scholarships offered for NFU women's event

SAN DIEGO — National Farmers Union's Women's Conference will prepare attendees and their operations for their own future in many areas, including business and succession planning, running for local office, networking, innovative marketing, and more. WFU is offering four \$1,000 scholarships for first-time attendees to attend the conference Jan. 13-17 at Catamaran Resort in San Diego. Apply for a scholarship by Dec. 1. Find the application at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com or call 715-723-5561 for details. Find more about the event at <https://nfu.org/education/womensconference/>.

WFU awards WFAN Conference scholarships

Wisconsin Farmers Union was pleased to award three scholarships to members planning to attend the Women, Food and Agriculture Network Conference Nov. 2-3 in Des Moines, Iowa. Recipients included April Prussia, Betty Anderson, Bethany Storm, all of the South Central Farmers Union chapter. Learn more about the event at www.wfan.org.

From p.1 ► ANTITRUST

Topics will include:

- Squeezed From Both Ends: Protecting Agricultural Producers in the Context of Seller and Buyer Market Power
- Consumer Food Sovereignty: Rising Concentration and Its Effects on Food Prices, Choice, and Quality
- Food Supply Chains: Integration, Globalization, and What It Means for Competition and Stability

Registration is free, but space is limited! If you plan to attend, register as soon as possible at <https://www.antitrustinstitute.org/event/2018foodagrountable/>

If you plan to attend, please also call or email Kara O'Connor, WFU Government Relations Director: koconnor@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 608-514-4541. Wisconsin Farmers Union hopes to receive grant funds to defray travel expenses for farmers to attend the meeting. We may also host a reception the night before for farmers and members of the press, and want to be sure to invite you! Bring some friends, and we'll see you in Madison on Dec. 7th!

Welcome New Wisconsin Farmers Union Members!

New Membership

Barbara & Rob McIlrath, Pepin
Betty Lou & Jeffrey Imler, Durand
Jeff & Nancy Riedeman, Rosendale
Jim Bryan, Bayfield
Madeline & Thomas Hart, Bayfield
Rudy Goldstein & Ivy Berg, Washburn
Scott Griffiths & Kellie Pederson, Ashland
Susan Hedman, Bayfield

Recruited by

Robbi Bannen
Jerry Thompson Insurance Agency
Nolan Insurance Agency
Bill Bailey
Mary Dougherty
John Adams
John Adams
Mary Dougherty

CHIPPEWA FALLS PUBLIC LIBRARY PRESENTS

INGA WITSCHER

AROUND THE FARM TABLE

HOLIDAY COOKING DEMONSTRATION

A passionate dairy farmer, Inga owns and operates a small organic dairy farm near Osseo, Wisconsin. When she's not setting up pastures for their cows to graze, milking the 15 Jerseys, making cheese with her father, or indulging her passions for gardening and cooking, Inga collaborates with her team to develop narratives for Around the Farm Table on Wisconsin Public Television.

TUESDAY NOV. 13TH 6PM

Chippewa Falls Public Library
105 W Central St.
Free and open to the public

The Value of Labor in Farming

Editor's Note: Names of the immigrant workers have been changed to protect their identity.



W. Michael Slattery
WFU member & farmer

When one thinks about farming, pictures of crops, livestock, and tractors come to mind. These are the images that appear in farm groups' literature and in barnyard storybooks. These visuals that come to mind are the production and capital of farming, but often overlooked is the labor that makes these inputs come to life.

Jose, an acquaintance of mine, has lived undocumented in the United States for 27 years and during that time has worked continuously full-time on at least four Wisconsin dairy farms of various sizes (100 to 2,400-cow operations).

Jose is expected to work at least 75 hours per week, with two days off per month. It is common for him to work 160 hours for 13 days straight without days off. (Another acquaintance once worked for six months straight without a day off.) Despite his two decades of experience working on dairy farms, Jose's jobs have paid only \$10-15/hr.

For the past five years Jose has worked on a 500-cow farm, where he feeds the cattle, does veterinary work, field work, cleans barns, repairs machinery, and milks when one of the seven employees is missing, even the night shift for a third milking despite having already worked a 13-hour day. He also acts as trainer and mentor for all employees and translates for the farm owner family. If problems occur at the night milking, Jose is on-call to fix the problem. Twice he has been picked up for driving without a valid license, and he and his wife and four children at home live in fear.

Jose's biggest fear and concern, in addition to deportation by Immigra-



Above: Labor is often the most undervalued input on the farm.

tions and Custom Enforcement (ICE), is injury or illness on the job.

No work means no pay. He never goes to a doctor or hospital no matter the injury at work. He wishes that medical assistance and paid time-off, at least for vacation, would be provided.

His wife, Maria, born and raised in the U.S., milks the cows several times monthly when milkers are absent because, if she were not to do so, Jose would have to work longer than 13-hour days by filling in for them. She is never paid, despite the owners being cognizant of her labor.

Changing the narrative

Consideration of labor almost always pictures the farm owner and his family. For most farms of average or smaller size, that may be an accurate representation. Employees on those farms, and even on the largest farms where manual labor is not dominant, are few in number because of the amount of mechanization in farming.

“...if we do not demand from the market and pay a living wage to either ourselves or our workers, we ourselves are part of the cause of exploiting our labor(ers).”

- W. Michael Slattery
Maribel farmer

Farms focused on large-scale fruit, vegetable, or dairy production, though, require much time and many hands engaged in manual labor to generate their product. And it is on some

of these farms that workers like Jose live in the shadows.

Putting value on labor

Sometimes we farmers devalue the investment of labor. We often are self-sacrificing, but labor is primary in the undertaking of the business of farming. Whether the labor is one's own, a spouse, offspring or an immigrant laborer, it is a vitally important part of the farming operation.

Farming is at the bottom of the industrial chain, leaving farmers squeezed by purchasing our inputs in a retail market over which we have no control. On our output side, we are again throttled, selling into monopolistic or oligopolistic markets that extract the maximum profit from

farmers while improving their shareholders' bottom line. That leaves the farmer pinched by high expenses and low revenue, leaving us in a very weak position that leads us to fail to demand justifiable reward for our labor. Consequently, we have little incentive to reward not only ourselves, but also our employees, with a living wage.

Society today demeans physical labor. The work ethic compared to years past has significantly eroded. We are hard-pressed to find even part-time or seasonal workers from traditional labor pools. Working in dusty, hot, confined, and sometimes dangerous environments, often in repetitive procedures, turns most U.S. citizens off, particularly if the work is back-breaking. They would prefer to pay to work out at the athletic center. This has resulted in farmers and farm industries resorting to hire immigrant workers, even undocumented persons.

The Trump Administration and its support base, along with many legislators, have sought to attack the status of both documented and undocumented immigrants, terrorizing hard-working families. These politicians wrongly claim that immigrants are accepting lower wage rates and undermining the labor market, compared to what traditional white employees previously accepted. This is simply not the case. Paying a higher wage just does not attract our historically traditional laborer.

Undocumented workers and their families have proven to be reliable, conscientious, and hard-working because often they are providing for their families both here and often in their country of origin.

Small and mid-size farms often protest that undocumented persons should be arrested and deported because they have broken U.S. immigration law. Much of this thinking relates also to the fact that economically large dairies employ undocumented labor and are squeezing out of busi-

ness smaller operators, who seem to hire traditional local neighbors. Surveys indicate, though, that the larger the operation, the higher the wage paid (to undocumented labor), which now averages above \$14/hr, more than what smaller dairy owners are willing or capable of paying.

Neither most U.S. politicians nor citizens acknowledge that undocumented persons are working here because of the following U.S. policies and markets:

- NAFTA and CAFTA undermined both agrarian and industrial economies in Mexico and Central America and forced Latin American farmers off their lands,
- U.S. imperialist policies beginning with FDR and continuing through the Reagan and Obama administrations destabilized Central American societies, several of which were developing democratic rule, however rudimentary and flawed, and as a result fostered continuous authoritarian rule,
- The U.S. demand for narcotics created traffic routes and stimulated organized crime throughout Central America that forced families to flee for their lives to raise their children out of harms' way, and
- The continual failure of Congress to pass a comprehensive and inclusive immigration law.

Criticism of undocumented citizens working to provide for their families in a safe environment lacks merit and fails to recognize the primacy of human rights over capital. Human rights in the case of economic and political refugees supersede even the law. Acceptance of these refugees becomes mandated by moral law. U.S. and international society gives preference to wealth and power, and exploits and subjugates poorer and labor classes. For politicians who falsely purport to be "pro-family," their raids on working families are tearing apart hard-working families, many with members who have U.S. citizenship. If businessmen/women with capital can readily cross borders with just a passport, why can't poorer individuals and laborers do the same?

Compensating labor

To which extent and how should labor be compensated? The United Way has conducted a well-researched study on household financial stability, for what is required as minimum stable income (above the federal poverty level), and produced the ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed) report. The U.S. Labor Department pegs poverty for a family/household of one or four persons at \$12,060 and \$24,600, respectively. In Manitowoc County, for example, the ALICE report indicates that four-person households would need to earn income not less than \$34,234 to sustain a basic cost of living, but still lacking in reserves for emergencies.

This should be considered the minimal, but not acceptable, remuneration that is barely necessary for stable households. Are we as farmers paying that level?

One recommended approach to encourage good labor morale, fair wages, and positive labor involvement is to give our laborers access to profit sharing, to the extent that farmers are profitable. Other means of inducing positive labor contribution to the farming enterprise, such as some level of healthcare coverage and savings plan, should also be explored. Farmers may find this difficult when markets are depressed, but, if we do not demand from the market and pay a living wage to either ourselves or our workers, we ourselves are part of the cause of exploiting our labor(ers).

Labor is the core and most important input of our farming enterprises, not the capital that we the owners have invested. We need a change in our thinking to respect both ourselves and our helpers.

Driftless Poultry Processing Cooperative forms, earns grant

Group seeks input on farmers' needs

The Driftless Poultry Processing Cooperative (DPCC) was recently awarded a USDA Value Added Producer Grant for the purpose of studying the demand for a USDA inspected poultry processing plant located in southwestern Wisconsin. Federal inspection would allow farmers' product to be legally sold across state lines to restaurants and outlets in Chicago, Minneapolis, Dubuque, Rockford, etc.

The group is currently seeking responses to a survey that will be used to determine the interest, services and potential volume of product that could move through a federally inspected plant and whether these numbers justify the investment. Particularly of interest are responses from food producers in Green, Lafayette, Iowa, Grant, Crawford, Richland and Sauk counties.

The group is defining poultry loosely to include chickens, turkeys, waterfowl, guinea hens and rabbits since they would all use similar equipment.

The Survey will be open until Nov. 30, 2018 and can be accessed at https://uwex.col.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_869HwkGmqz1vD3D.

For those without internet access, request a paper copy of the survey from UW-Extension in Iowa County, 303 W. Chapel Street, Dodgeville, WI or call (608)930-9850.

While the survey is underway, co-op members are looking at similar facilities across the Midwest and learning from their experiences to avoid mistakes where possible. With this information, they will then pursue a business feasibility process and evaluate if the volume and numbers are adequate to support such a facility.

To learn more contact driftlesspoultrycooperative@gmail.com or find them on Facebook



Every session since 2011, bills have been introduced to create an Iowa-style nonpartisan redistricting process, to prevent gerrymandering. The legislature has repeatedly failed to advance these bills.

It's time for a change.

Citizens should choose their representatives, not the other way around.

Fall ushers in Farmers Union youth year

Cathy Statz

Education Director

As we heralded the change in the leaves this fall, we also celebrated October Co-op Month, a time to reflect on our cooperative heritage and thank our many cooperative partners for working with us to improve family farms, strengthen rural communities and build a more democratic economy for all. We were glad to be a part of a number of cooperative events in Eau Claire, Madison and Menomonie during October, and we hope you reached out to say “thanks” to the employees and leaders of the cooperatives and credit unions in your communities.

Youth Program Kickoff

The official start of the Farmers Union Youth year was Oct. 1, so now is a great time to sign up your children or grandchildren. The Farmers Union Youth Program teaches youth about cooperative principles and careers while also building leadership skills and educating kids about Farmers Union and the important issues affecting family farms and rural communities. Kids can earn camp scholarships and trips, as well as being eligible to run for the Senior Youth Advisory Council (SYAC). Contact your local or



Above: WFU Education Director Cathy Statz served as on-site facilitator for the Cooperative Leaders and Scholars Institute during the National Cooperative Business Association (NCBA CLUSA) Co-op Impact Conference, October 2-5. The Institute's 19 emerging leaders from around the country joined more than 300 cooperators in Washington, DC, to network, share their expertise, and learn more about the broad spectrum of cooperative sectors that are working to build on and amplify the economic impact co-ops have in the U.S. and internationally.

county Youth Leader or the WFU state office to learn more: 800-272-5531 or cstatz@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Focused on cooperation

Cooperation is a big part of the educational summer camp program at

WFU Kamp Kenwood. Kids ages 8-18 learned cooperative principles, history and philosophy through lessons and activities this summer, just as they have since the 1930s. Campers at each session establish their own cooperative store to provide themselves with ice cream treats, beverages and Farmers Union Camp merchandise. Campers elect a board of directors, purchase shares to become members of the co-op and volunteer for the Co-op Store Advertising Committee to promote their co-op.

When the camp session wraps up on the final day, campers receive a dividend, or patronage refund based on their use of the store (usually 5 cents back on every dollar spent). Campers then vote on the distribution of any remaining profits to a cause, project or charity of the camper members' choice, selected during the final meeting of the co-op on the last day of camp. Organizations like the American Cancer Society, Gabe's My Heart/ChemoDuck, and the Chippewa County Humane Association were selected by camp co-op store members to receive donations from some of the camp sessions; campers also made contributions to their internal campaign for camp improvements.

Co-op and credit unions support Farmers Union Camps

Each year, co-ops and credit unions around the state generously support the camp program by sponsoring campers and/or donating products or funds. Special thanks to the following co-op and credit union sponsors:

- **CHS Foundation** for supporting the overall camp program through a generous cooperative education grant
- Madison area cooperatives **Summit Credit Union, Willy Street Co-op, Heartland Credit Union, Union Cab, Isthmus Engineering; as well as ProVizion Partners** for contributing to WFU or the WFU Foundation on behalf of the camp program
- **Organic Valley/CROPP Cooperative** for donating over \$500 worth of organic food
- **Chippewa Valley Energy (Eau Claire Co-op Oil)** for donating 1,000 gallons of LP
- **CoVantage Credit Union, Dunn Energy Co-op, Eau Claire Energy Co-op, FarmFirst Dairy Co-op, Pierce Pepin Cooperatives Services, River Country Co-op, and Synergy Co-op** for supporting camper registration fees
- **Westby Co-op Creamery** for donating 2 cases of butter
- **Cooperative Partners Warehouse, Lakewinds Food Co-op, Mississippi Market Food Co-op, Seward Co-op, Viroqua Food Co-op and Willy Street Co-op** for donating food products/vouchers
- Hundreds of co-ops and credit unions statewide and beyond for promoting the camp program by sharing promotional materials or inviting us to have a booth at events

Please reach out and give a special thank you all those co-ops and credit unions that support us in our work to teach young people about cooperatives, family farms and leadership all year long through our youth education programs. We are so grateful to our cooperative partners for helping us educate the next generation of cooperative members, employees and leaders!

Youth Co-op Convention is just around the corner

Youth should plan now to attend the Youth Co-op Convention, held in conjunction with the WFU State Convention, Jan. 25-27, 2019 in Appleton.

Youth programming officially begins on Saturday morning, with volunteer activities for collegiate youth on Friday afternoon and evening. The Senior Youth Co-op Convention is open to 7th-12th youth and their guests as well as youth leaders. It features guest speakers, fun activities and fellowship with Farmers Union friends. Upper elementary-aged youth are welcome to attend the Senior Youth Co-op Convention, ideally if accompanied by an adult or older youth sibling. The program will feature some free time on Saturday afternoon for youth to spend time with friends and family, including the option to participate in the WFU annual meeting. Infants through younger elementary children may be registered for Child Care (limited hours).

All youth are invited to attend the Convention Banquet on Saturday night. The banquet will close with the Torchbearer Ceremony, a special recognition of those Farmers Union youth who have completed five years of Senior Youth activity. A youth dance and social will follow.

Youth activities continue on Sunday morning with an ecumenical service, breakfast and the continuation of the Youth Convention Co-op Program. The youth activities conclude with the Sunday lunch.

A registration fee of \$40 (early bird rate) covers all meals, materials and activities for youth of all ages, including those registered for child-care. A late fee will apply for registrations received after Jan. 10.

Torchbearer and SYAC rooms and meals will be reserved and paid by WFU. Collegiate volunteers are also welcome and will have their shared rooms and meals covered. All other youth sleeping rooms are the responsibility of the family or county/local Farmers Union organization; those arrangements need to be made directly with the hotel; see the convention information for details. Reserve rooms by Dec. 27th for guaranteed room block. Check with your County Youth Leader or Treasurer to see if youth rooms will be subsidized by your county's organization.

I can help interested youth make arrangements for roommates or carpooling for youth who are not attending with a county group; contact me at cstatz@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or at 715-723-5561.

Have a wonderful holiday season and thanks to the WFU Youth Leaders for your volunteer efforts. See you this winter at Convention!

Meet National Youth Advisory Council member: Camryn Billen



This summer during National Farmers Union All-States Camp in Bailey, Colo., Wisconsin Farmers Union member Camryn Billen was chosen by her peers to serve on the National Youth Advisory Council. This Q&A will give you some insight into her background in Farmers Union and experience on the council so far.

Tell us a bit about yourself.

I grew up in Chippewa Falls, and am now in my second year of college at UW-Eau Claire studying English Education and Special Education. In my free time (ha!) I like to be outside as much as possible, which means hammocking with a book during the summer. Otherwise, give me a cup of tea and I'm happy.

What made you want to serve on NYAC?

I've been going to Kamp Kenwood since I was 14, and I loved it more and more every year. Even now, I work there on summer staff during the summers. Being an advocate is what I really enjoy doing, and NYAC gave me the opportunity to combine the two!

How has the NYAC experience been so far?

I've had so much fun! It's awesome to be able to meet people from different states but to be able to lead with them? Even cooler. Specifically in D.C., I worked with my peers to plan next summer's All-States Camp, and worked with WFU during the lobbying portion.

Can you talk a bit about how long you've been involved with Farmers Union camps and/or the youth program?

I've been going to camp since I was 14, so about five years now. Last year at Farmers Union Camp at WFU Kamp Kenwood I was elected to SYAC (Senior Youth Advisory Council), where I helped plan last year's Senior Camp, and represented the Farmers Union youth at State Convention. I was also honored with the Torchbearer award, which is given after exemplary completion of the youth program.

What is it about Farmers Union that appeals to you?

I love being an advocate and activist. Being part of Farmers Union has made me more conscious of how my choices can affect farmers, which then leads to me supporting those farmers directly. Even my roommates are getting sick of hearing me talk about co-ops! But most importantly, I love seeing the passion everyone has for this organization. We have so much heart.

Where does NYAC head next?

In March, we go to Bellevue, Washington for National Convention, and then Bailey, Colorado for All-States in June.

What are your hopes for the rest of your time on NYAC?

I'm the oldest member of NYAC, and a big part of my goal is to not only watch Farmers Union become stronger as they see the great advocates of agricultural that are coming into the organization, but also for my fellow NYAC to grow as people. We have so many great ideas and great minds, and I want us to have the individual strength as well as the strength of the group. A big focus for us is creating change, and it all starts with the person.



A cautionary note from Sand County



Alan Guebert
Farm & Food File

February is one of the finest essays in *Sand County Almanac*, the 1949 book of superlative essays on nature and mankind's

role in it, by forester and conservationist Aldo Leopold. In it, Leopold, the father of wildlife ecology, tells the history of his Wisconsin "sand farm" and its natural "community" as he and a friend crosscut-saw through the story-holding rings of a still-standing, 80-year-old oak tree killed by lightning.

"It took only a dozen pulls of the saw to transect the few years of our ownership," Leopold writes, before the saw "...began to cut the years of our predecessor the bootlegger, who hated this farm, skinned it of residual fertility..."

A few dozen more pulls and "We cut 1908, a dry year when the forests burned fiercely, and Wisconsin parted with its last cougar."

As the pair's saw bites deeper into the towering oak, Leopold's prose bites deeper into man's historical, even pathological, exploitation of the natural world surrounding it. Every stroke delivers both sawdust and examples of man's misuse of either soil, water or wildlife.

"We cut 1899, when the last passenger pigeon collided with a charge of shot near Babcock, two counties to the north..." reads one. "On 10 September 1877, two brothers, shooting in Muskego Lake, bagged 210 blue-winged teal in one day," reads another.

The tree-cutting allegory ends when "...all hands cry 'Timber!'" and the mighty oak, like all trees and most civilizations before it, "...leans, groans, and crashes with earth-shaking thunder..."

Although Leopold died the year before that essay (and, in fact, *Sand County Almanac*) was published, his enduring words and lesson, like his saw, remain sharp two weeks after the United Nations released its equally sharp report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC).

Unlike Leopold, however, the IPCC report is the saw, not the sawyer; it cuts through ring after ring—decades—of climate change deference and denial to deliver its lesson: The world has less than 15 years to slash carbon

use before "even half a degree" of climbing temperatures "significantly worsen the risks of droughts, floods, extreme heat and poverty for hundreds of millions of people," explains the Guardian on Oct. 8.

It's even more bleak than that, notes the newspaper. "'It's a line in the sand and what it says to our species is that this is the moment and we must act now,'" said Debra Roberts, a co-chair of the [IPCC's] working group on impacts."

Will we act now?

Early reviews of the report, compiled by 91 scientists from 40 nations who cited more than 6,000 climate-related studies, suggest more denial, inaction, and delay. The White House openly dismissed it; Congress has no hearings scheduled to review it; and few farm and commodity groups even noted its publication.

That's just dumb because no socio-economic group anywhere has been or will be affected more by climate change than the world's farmers and ranchers. Climate is as key an element to their prosperity or failure as land and water, and nothing has more impact on either than the weather.

Just ask the ranchers of the Canadian Prairies stung by this year's punishing drought, the Southeast U.S. farmers hammered by Hurricanes Florence and Michael, or the North and South Dakota farmers now sweeping October snow off their combines before going back to a soggy, muddy harvest.

It will get far worse and doing nothing, the UN report forecasts, will carry the unfathomable cost of "as much as \$54 trillion" by 2040. For comparison, that's nearly three times the size of today's U.S. economy.

Now add two billion more people (the estimated growth in global population by 2050) and farming and ranching's—mankind's—future in today's era of swift climate change looks as stark as Leopold's lightning-struck, Sand County oak tree.

The biggest difference between his tree and ours is equally stark: his tree didn't have a choice; we do.

© 2018 ag comm

The Farm and Food File is published weekly through the U.S. and Canada. Past columns, events and contact information are posted at www.farmandfoodfile.com.

USDA offers loans for farmers impacted by natural disasters

MADISON — Wisconsin agricultural producers who lost property due to recent natural disasters may be eligible for U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) physical loss loans. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) offers these low-interest loans to agricultural producers in 13 Wisconsin counties, the primary damaged area, who incurred losses caused by excessive rain, high winds, straight-line winds, tornadoes and hail that occurred on Aug. 20 through Sept. 20, 2018.

Approval is limited to applicants who suffered severe physical losses only, including the loss of buildings and livestock. Applications are due June 17, 2019.

The counties in the primary damaged area are Adams, Crawford, Dane, Dodge, Fond Du Lac, Iowa, Juneau, La Crosse, Marquette, Monroe, Richland, Sauk and Vernon.

"Wisconsin's hardworking ag producers feed our neighbors, the nation and the world," said State Executive Director Sandy Chalmers. "When they suffer losses because of extreme weather, helping them get back on their feet is important. We encourage those affected to reach out to their local USDA Service Center to apply for these emergency loans."

Producers in the contiguous counties of Calumet, Columbia, Grant, Green, Green Lake, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Portage, Rock, Sheboygan, Trempealeau, Washington, Waukesha, Waushara, Winnebago and Wood in Wisconsin, along with Allamakee and Clayton counties in Iowa, and Houston and Winona counties in Minnesota, are also eligible to apply for emergency loans.

Physical loss loans can help producers repair or replace damaged or destroyed physical property essential to the success of the agricultural operation, including livestock losses. Examples of property commonly affected include essential farm buildings, fixtures to real estate, equipment, livestock, perennial crops, fruit and nut bearing trees, and harvested or stored crops and hay.

For more information on FSA disaster assistance programs or to find your local USDA Service Center visit <https://www.farmers.gov/recover>.