



WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION NEWS

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Photo by Danielle Endvick

Twenty Wisconsin farmers and advocates boarded a bus and headed cross-country to Albany, New York in August to attend a Dairy Summit that pulled together hundreds of dairy industry stakeholders from across the country. Learn more on page 10.

Conference stresses need to amplify ...

Rural Voices

Tommy Enright
Communications Associate

On Aug. 17, over 100 farmers and advocates converged at Wisconsin Farmers Union Kamp Kenwood for the 2018 WFU Summer Conference. The morning kicked off with a County Presidents meeting, President's Address from WFU President Darin Von Ruden, a Dairy Together campaign update from Government Relations Associate Bobbi Wilson, and an update from National

Farmers Union Vice-President Patty Edelburg on Governor Scott Walker's Dairy Task Force 2.0.

After these updates participants rolled up their sleeves and dove into a workshop as part of the WFU Rural Voices Project, which aims to train and mobilize Farmers Union members to be strategic messengers around core WFU values and policy issues.

With a goal of focusing efforts to strategically amplify rural voices, **See p.3 ► VOICES**

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New Ashland-Bayfield chapter unites farmers, foodies

WASHBURN — More than 50 farmers and family farm allies were on-hand July 26 for the charter meeting of the Ashland-Bayfield Farmers Union.

John Adams, one of the chapter's founding members and organizers, hosted the meeting on his Yoman

Farm, just outside of Washburn. Adams said he was drawn to Farmers Union because of its long history of standing up for rural people, farmers or not. "They understand farming does not happen in a vacuum; it affects our towns and landscapes," he said.

WFU Executive Director Julie

Bomar attended the meeting and was inspired by the group's energy. "Folks along the Chequamegon Bay know how to work together to get results. Enthusiasm and leadership like this is infectious, and we expect this chapter will thrive and help grow the entire WFU organization in positive ways."



WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION NEWS

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From the Director's Desk

Wisconsin Farmers Union Notes & Updates



Dear Friends,

Like most folks, it is really important to me that my values align with my work. After just two months on the job, I find confirmation every day that the mission and work of this organization are worthwhile. I am at home with the Wisconsin Farmers Union family. As part of this organization, I am dedicating my time and energy to good causes with open-minded, ethical people. Let me share a few thoughts about how values take life under the big tent of Wisconsin Farmers Union.

One of those most sacred values that I see practiced is respect for others. We share an inclusive approach in WFU, and we promote civil dialogue and engagement amongst people who care about farming, food and the land. This community is growing more diverse and unified and that is important and powerful.

WFU values your perspective, and we follow a democratic process whereby your voice can be heard and deliberated.

Our membership represents farmers and eaters; Republicans, Libertarians, Socialists and Democrats; legacy farmers and brand new farmers; free traders and protectionists; new and established immigrants; affluent and economically insecure; men and women; young and old.

Under this big tent, people discuss ideas and solutions and practice democratic decision-making. This honorable grassroots process is appealing to members and partners alike.

Despite our reputation for working it out, our history hasn't always been calm. In the 1950's, under the dark skies of McCarthyism, the National Farmers Union (NFU) president and leaders in state organizations carried on a wicked internal

fight. Farmers Union in general was critical of Truman's foreign policy and U.S. involvement in Korea, but a schism developed and Iowa's more left-leaning Farmers Union president, Fred Stover, was labeled a Communist and targeted in several orchestrated ouster campaigns. Eventually Iowa's organization charter was revoked by NFU, but not before Stover wrote a piece in their state publication entitled, "Come, Let Us Reason Together." The trend of labeling and dividing in rural America certainly is nothing new.

If there's one thing history should have taught us, it's that conveniently and callously pitting one against one another for the sake of political gain is a fool's errand. Likewise, putting one kind of farmer out of business to advance another, whether in this country or in a foreign country, isn't what we are about. Let's not take the bait.

Our Farmers Union stands to unify diverse perspectives at a time when our country and our democracy need it. Others notice the varied collection of people under our tent all pulling together and taking action. At Summer Conference our make-up was so striking that one visiting reporter even penned a

“Our Farmers Union stands to unify diverse perspectives at a time when our country and democracy need it. Others notice the varied collection of people under our tent all pulling together and taking action.”

- Julie Keown-Bomar
WFU Executive Director

column about our conference and how Wisconsin's diverse farmers are key players in our nation's progressive movement (<https://progressive.org/dispatches/-meet-the-new-progressive-farmers-18-08-19/>).

We are in a good position to attract others who are also tired of the division and want to pull together to grow family farms, support sustainable agriculture, build strong communities and create opportunities for living close to the land for the next generation.

Get the word out to people who share similar values and want to heal the divide. No matter their background, political affiliation, identity or experience, we possess a big tent that will accommodate.

Enjoy your late summer,

Julie Keown-Bomar

Julie Bomar
WFU Executive Director

Energy is building in our rural places



Darin Von Ruden
WFU President

Energy. That is the word that comes to mind when I think back over this summer.

There is an energy building within Farmers Union that cannot be denied. It's different than anything I've seen before in my decades of involvement with this organization.

We're experiencing some exciting growth here in Wisconsin with three new chapters forming across the state this year, the Outagamie-Winnebago and Lake to Bay chapters on the eastern side of the state and Ashland-Bayfield launching in the Northwoods. It's great to see new people getting involved in Farmers Union, and we look forward to seeing these fledgling chapters continue to grow and add to the strength of our voice for family farm agriculture.

We also have seen a change in leadership this year, with Julie Bomar taking over the executive director reins



Over 100 Farmers Union members gathered at WFU Kamp Kenwood Aug. 16 for the annual Summer Conference.

Photo by Danielle Endvick

from Tom Quinn. Julie brings to the table a lot of connections across the state from her background in UW-Extension and 4-H, and she has been a positive addition to the WFU team. Be sure to pop by and say hello as you see her out and about.

The WFU staff and leadership have

been hard at work on a number of issues impacting family farms across the state. One that has gained a lot of media attention and has been building momentum among members is the Dairy Together effort to rebuild a viable dairy economy. In the Letters to the Editor section (page 14) you'll see a

few first-hand accounts from some of the 20 members who traveled to Albany, New York to join hundreds of other dairy farmers and allies for a Dairy Summit that highlighted proposals for improving dairy prices. Thanks to all of the folks who took time away from their farms to be a part of that effort.

About 20 WFU members will be among the several hundred Farmers Union members who will meet in Washington, D.C. in mid-September for the National Farmers Union Fly-In. They'll advocate on issues like passing a strong farm bill, protecting farmers from trade war fallout, and transitioning to home-grown energy.

We're not slowing down anytime soon, either — there are still plenty of pasture walks and Women Caring for the Land events on the schedule and issues we'll be hard at work on at the Capitol. Save the date for State Convention Jan. 25-27, 2019 in Appleton.

In the coming months, I'll be traveling the state for annual meeting season, and I look forward to seeing many of you in person. Let's carry this energy onward!

From p.1 ► VOICES

the project has identified the following set of guiding frames for WFU members to build messages around:

- Building economic prosperity that supports family farmers and rural communities through fair prices paid to farmers, public education, access to affordable health care, and rural broadband.
- Caring for the land and water, protecting water quality and quantity and engaging farmers as key change makers in this work.
- Restoring democracy through campaign finance reform, fair elections, and support for local control.

The Rural Voices project was able to bring in Mike Brunlieb and Emily Ritger from 4+8, a media company from Milwaukee, as well as marketing professional Phil Chard of Out of My Mind and Allie Tempest from The Progressive Media Project to help with the workshop. All of these guests helped facilitate breakout workshops, with topics including making short videos for social media platforms like Facebook, writing Op-Eds and Letters to the Editor, and radio scripts/talking points for engaging people face-to-face.

The project is now moving on to the next action phase and we want to invite you to take part! As we discussed up at the Summer Conference, we are building a catalog of messages in the forms listed above. The plan is to activate and amplify our priority rural issues into conversations around the November election.

Host a Rural Voices Training!

Would you host a Rural Voices Strategic Messaging training at your local Farmers Union chapter meeting? Or perhaps you'd like to gather some friends and neighbors to work on some messaging on issues that matter in your community?

WFU Director of Special Projects Sarah Lloyd and Communications Associate Tommy Enright are ready to help set up meetings and gatherings as well as assist with invitations to WFU members, neighbors, and friends. Staff is willing to help you set up and facilitate the meeting, and provide you with any materials or support that you need. We want people to have productive gatherings, where they can build their messaging skills and have some fun.

We are looking to set up at least 10 gatherings between mid-September and the end of the first week of October, so we can gather all the messages and help get them out to newspapers, post them on Facebook and other social media, and make a plan for engaging with community members through face-to-face conversations.

Please help us shine a light on the issues effecting rural Wisconsin. Contact Sarah or Tommy to set up Rural Voices Strategic Messaging workshop at your chapter meeting, house party, or local gathering!

Sarah Lloyd, 608-844-3758, slloyd@wisconsinfarmersunion.com
Tommy Enright, 715-563-2169, tenright@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Cardinal-Hickory Creek line a threat to Driftless region



Bobbi Wilson
Gov. Relations Associate

At the 2013 state convention, WFU delegates declared the proposed Badger-Coulee Transmission Line a special order of business. The then-proposed route would cut through 180 miles of forests, valleys, and rich farmland in the Driftless region, running from La Crosse to Madison. Concern over the immediate threat to wildlife, water resources, and the scenic agricultural landscape were cited as reasons to evaluate non-transmission alternatives, in addition to the negative economic impact and lack of energy demand in Wisconsin. Nevertheless, the Badger-Coulee project broke ground last month and is scheduled for completion by the end of the year.

American Transmission Company (ATC) wasted no time proposing an extension of the Badger-Coulee project to run from Madison to Dubuque, Iowa, adding another 120 miles of high-voltage transmission lines to the Driftless region.

The Cardinal-Hickory Creek (CHC) project poses as much of a threat as its predecessor. If completed, it will slice through the most ecologically sensitive region in the Midwest, diminishing property values and hiking utility rates along the way.

ATC has failed to demonstrate a need for importing out-of-state energy. Energy demand has stagnated in Wisconsin. If energy demand were on the rise, those needs could be more easily met with aggressive energy efficiency and distributed energy generation, solutions that are becoming more critical as we shift to a clean energy economy. ATC has a long row to hoe before the Cardinal-Hickory Creek application is approved by the Public Service Commission, giving those who oppose the project time to weigh in.

The Driftless Area Land Conservancy is leading the charge in opposing the CHC transmission line to prevent further damage to Wisconsin's Driftless Region. They are partnering with Driftless Defenders and the Environmental Law and Policy Center, along with a number of nonprofit organizations and municipalities who have passed opposition resolutions. To broaden their coalition, Driftless Area Land Conservancy is reaching out to farmers to

make their voices heard on this issue.

In addition to submitting public comments to the Public Service Commission, farmers and rural residents can weigh in with the USDA's Rural Utility Service to voice their concerns. The RUS is reviewing a loan application submitted by Dairyland Power Co-op, a developer that is partnering with ATC on the Cardinal-Hickory Creek line. If they deny the loan, it could stop the project in its tracks. Driftless Area Land Conservancy is arranging meetings with three Wisconsin Members of Congress who have some sway with the RUS to voice their opposition. They have invited Wisconsin Farmers Union members to participate in these meetings to represent a united front against the Cardinal-Hickory Creek transmission line.

Wisconsin Farmers Union has taken a firm stance on the need to rapidly transition to a clean energy economy, incentivize locally-owned distributed energy generation, and protect the natural and agricultural landscape. If you are concerned about the threat the Cardinal-Hickory Creek transmission line poses to the Driftless region, please contact Bobbi Wilson to find out how you can get involved: 608 234-3741/ bwilson@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Jurcek receives National Farmers Union Seymour Scholarship

Danielle Endvick
Communications Director

Wisconsin Farmers Union member Jessica Jurcek has been selected to receive the 2018 Hubert K. and JoAnn Seymour Scholarship.

The \$2,000 scholarship, presented annually by National Farmers Union, was established to support the next generation of agricultural and rural leaders.

"Jessica was selected because of her dedication to service, leadership and agriculture," said National Farmers Union Education Coordinator Emma Lindberg.

Jurcek is the daughter of Pat and Kirsten Jurcek. This spring, she graduated as salutatorian from Jefferson High

School, where she was a standout in cross-country and track, a member of the Rotary Interact, National Honor Society, Student Ambassadors, and Student Council. Last year she represented her class at Badger Girls' State.

An active member of the Kenosha/Jefferson/Racine/Walworth Farmers Union, Jurcek has served as the group's youth leader. She was elected to the 2017-2018 National Farmers Union National Youth Advisory Council and through that experience attended a fly-in to Washington, D.C. last fall and the National Farmers Union Convention in Kansas City this spring.

Jurcek plays an integral role on Brattset Family Farm, where her family raises



Jurcek

grassfed beef. She also volunteers with the Racer Placers equine adoption program.

She is attending the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities to study biology with hopes of a career in biomedical research.

The Seymour Scholarship is named in honor of Hubert

and JoAnn Seymour. Hubert was a leader in Farmers Union throughout his life at both the state and national levels. He served the Illinois Farmers Union as secretary-treasurer for eight years and vice president for 12 years before he resigned in 1990. At the national level, he served and participated in a variety of ways. Hubert traveled each year to the National Farmers Union Convention to hear the premier agricultural speakers, voice his concerns, and offer solutions to the challenges family farmers faced.

Hubert was actively involved in the politics of agriculture and dedicated to the fight for parity. In addition to the leadership provided within Farmers Union, he served

on numerous agricultural advisory boards within the state of Illinois and on an advisory committee under former President Jimmy Carter's Administration. Throughout his service as a leader, he did much to promote and protect the rights of family farmers throughout the United States.

Hubert and JoAnn farmed full-time until Hubert became ill and died in 1994 at the age of 72. They are remembered with great affection and this scholarship is a living tribute to the pair's dedication, hard work, and commitment to Farmers Union and the family farmer.

Applications for the 2019 NFU scholarship awards will be available in December. Learn more at www.nfu.org/education/scholarships.



WFU offers scholarships for Nov. 2-3 WFAN Conference

Wisconsin Farmers Union will be offering scholarships to help offset costs for members to attend the Women, Food and Agriculture Network Conference Nov. 2-3 in Des Moines. The WFU Board of Directors has set aside four scholarships. Applicants must be Farmers Union members. Priority will be given to first-time attendees and an effort will be made to distribute scholarships regionally across the state.

"Wisconsin Farmers Union really appreciates the important work WFAN is doing to engage women in building an ecological and just food and agricultural system through individual and community power," said Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden. "We wanted to present these scholarships in support of that work and also as an added benefit for Farmers Union members."

Each scholarship recipient will be reimbursed up to a \$500 limit to help offset the cost of registration, travel and lodging to attend this event. Recipients may be asked to give a report of the experience to the convention, a local chapter meeting, and/or in writing (WFU blog post, newsletter article, etc.).

The scholarship application is available at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events. Apply by Sept. 12, 2018.

This year's WFAN Conference will be at the Holiday Inn Downtown in Des Moines. The theme is Stepping Into Action: Changing Foodscapes through Individual and Community Power.

The full agenda will be released in September, but some highlights are:

- Storytelling for Individual and Community Empowerment
- Growing Organics in Iowa: Cultivating success through collaboration
- Relying on Each Other: Collective and co-operative land ownership, management, and marketing

Workshop presenters will come from more than five states and both coasts, and the keynote speaker is returning generation farmer Aleya Fraser. She has been farming for the last 5 years on the ancestral lands of Harriet Tubman on the Eastern Shore of Maryland where she grew a variety of fruits and vegetables for market and saved seeds for future generations on the farm that she co-founded named Black Dirt Farm.

The conference will feature women in the network through regional field tours featuring diverse ag businesses and urban ag projects; day-long Plate to Politics intensives for potential candidates and campaign organizers; a farm-to-table dinner at the Des Moines Art Center; art and story gallery featuring women farmers; creative community building; and workshops.

Learn more about the event at <http://www.wfan.org/2018-wfan-annual-conference/>.

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:

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Op-Ed writing workshops set

Personal stories make powerful op-eds. So ask yourself, what would you like to tell America in 500 words?

The Progressive Media Project, with the support of the BRICO Fund, invites you to participate in one of our six free day-long writing workshops this Fall in Wisconsin:

- Friday, Sept. 21- Madison, Madison Public Library.
- Friday, Oct. 5- Janesville, Basics Cooperative Natural Foods
- Friday, Oct. 12- Shawano, Shawano Community Education
- Friday, Nov. 2- La Crosse, Ho-Chunk Nation Three Rivers House
- Friday, Nov. 9- Stevens Point, Portage County Public Library
- Friday, Dec. 7- Milwaukee, Wisconsin Voices

The Progressive Media Project was founded in 1993 to diversify and democratize our nation's op-ed pages. The project trains activists and non-profit staff on how to write powerful op-eds. They also solicit op-eds from activists every week, and distribute them via our wire service to newspapers around the country. Our goal is to support voices that are underrepresented in the mainstream media.

Questions? Contact Progressive Media Project Coordinator Jess Pernsteiner at 608-257-4626 or jess@progressive.org.

Bike the Barns ride coming up

Join FairShare CSA Coalition for Bike the Barns on Sept. 16. Enjoy a beautiful day of biking, farm tours and live music — all fueled by gourmet, local meals! The ride starts and ends in Reedsburg.

Funds raised by this event help FairShare's mission to make healthy food accessible for all. Wisconsin Farmers Union is a proud sponsor of the event. To register — the deadline is Sept. 6 — and find out more about this fun event, visit csacoalition.org/bike-the-barns.



Labeling unfair to U.S. beef farmers

Farmers Union urges stricter use of 'Product of the USA'



Photo by Danielle Endvick

Above: Beef cattle curiously eye passersby at the Mrdutt farm near Boyceville. Current standards allow foreign interests to take advantage of the 'Product of the U.S.A.' label that Farmers Union feels should only be allowed on truly U.S.A.-raised animals, such as these.

WASHINGTON — Current federal meat labeling standards are disadvantaging U.S. family beef producers by allowing products born, raised, or slaughtered outside of the United States to carry the “Product of the U.S.A.” label. National Farmers Union is among groups pushing for these standards to be changed immediately.

On Aug. 16, National Farmers Union (NFU) wrote to USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) in support of a petition by the Organization for Competitive Markets and American Grassfed Association that FSIS should change current regulations to require that beef be of domestic origin to be eligible for the “Product of the U.S.A.” label.

“Any product that is simply processed in the U.S. can be labeled ‘Product of U.S.A.,’ wrote NFU President Roger Johnson. “This standard allows beef that is born, raised and slaughtered in another country to then be labeled ‘Product of U.S.A.,’ provided it passes through a USDA-inspected plant. This permits product labeling that misleads consumers and places U.S. ranchers at a market disadvantage.”

The current standards allow foreign interests and multi-national corporations to take advantage of market opportunities that should be reserved for U.S. family farmers and ranchers, according to NFU. “This financially harms

U.S. beef producers who currently find themselves in a highly consolidated marketplace,” said Johnson. “Today, four companies — Cargill, Tyson, JBS and National Beef — control over 80 percent of the beef market. All four of these multinational corporations depend on imported meat and meat products.”

NFU has long been a proponent of mandatory country-of-origin labeling (COOL) for agricultural products as a means to ensure consistent labeling for the benefit of American family farmers and consumers. Yet COOL was repealed in 2015, and the voluntary “Product of U.S.A.” labels do not provide consumers with accurate country-of-origin labeling. That, coupled with extreme consolidation in the beef industry, has significantly disadvantaged American beef producers.

Cattle producers have seen their retail earnings decline by 50 percent since 2014. Today, U.S. cattle producers receive only \$0.22 of the retail food dollar.

“FSIS must amend its labeling standards to restrict use of the ‘Product of U.S.A.’ label exclusively for meat and meat products that derive from animals born, raised, slaughtered and processed in the United States,” Johnson said.

The USDA is accepting comments on the ‘Product of the U.S.A.’ labeling through Sept. 17. To comment or to view the petition and comments, visit: <https://www.regulations.gov/docket?D=FSIS-2018-0024>.



Johnson

WOMEN CARING FOR THE LAND



SEPT 6 | GREEN BRIAR FARM 8:30AM-3PM | W936 CTY. RD. N, COLBY

Deb Esselman and her husband raise grass-fed British Park White beef and horses on her 80 acre farm. Deb is a former dairy farmer and has been involved in agriculture all her life. She has worked with the Farm Service Agency for the past 40 years.



SEPT 12 | BOSSIE COW FARM 8:30AM-3PM | W6174 CTY. RD. SS, RANDOM LAKE

Join Thelma Heidel-Baker, organic dairy farmer and insect conservation specialist for the Xerces Society as she highlights pastured grazing for cows, pollinators and other wildlife, and how conservation can tie a family together through a farm transition.



SEPT 18 | FENN'S FOLLY 8:30AM-3PM | 12041 SEVERSON, RD., FERRYVILLE

Amy Fenn left her Madison library job in favor of tromping around a 40-acre hilltop trying to turn a depleted hayfield and unmanaged woods into a savanna/silvopasture. This is her 2nd year of grazing, fencing and building an off-grid home.



SEPT 27 | LONG WINTER FARM 8:30AM-3PM | W1446 LAWLOR RD., EAST TROY

Rachel Anderson's 1500-acre farm utilizes no-till, strip-till, GNSS-based application, advanced cover crop systems, and water quality monitoring. Wildlife refuge is maintained through wetland, prairie, and oak savanna restorations. Rachel and her mother are starting a new farm adventure with a brand-new cut-flower business.

Please bring a potluck dish to pass! RSVP at wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events or 715-723-5561

The Women Caring for the Land series was developed by the Women, Food and Agriculture Network.

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Chapter Chatter

Share it here!

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



Photo by Stacy Steinke

Lane, son of Chippewa County Farmers Union members Ashly and Stacy Steinke of Sedge Wood Farms near Cornell, sports his "Who's Your Farmer" Farmers Union shirt during a blueberry picking adventure this summer.

FARMERS UNION HAPPENINGS

SEPT 6, Women Caring for the Land: Green Briar Farm, Deb Esselman, 8:30am-3pm, W936 Cty. Rd. N, Colby. RSVP at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events or to 715-723-5561.

SEPT 12, Women Caring for the Land: Bossie Cow Farm, Thelma Heidel-Baker, 8:30am-3pm, W6174 County Road SS, Random Lake. RSVP at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events or to 715-723-5561.

SEPT 15, Graze River Country Pasture Walk: Scott and Marie Belz, 3pm, 1063 230th St, Baldwin. RSVP to Kevin at 715-314-0338.

SEPT 18, Women Caring for the Land: Fenn's Folly, Amy Fenn, 8:30am-3pm, 12041 Severson Rd., Ferryville. RSVP at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events or to 715-723-5561.

SEPT 20, Dairy Pasture Walk, 12:30-3pm, Ceylor's Hillside Dairy Farm, Catawba. Info: 715-767-5958.

SEPT 22, Graze River Country Pasture Walk: Todd and Tonia Wright, 1pm, W7091 Gaarder Rd. RSVP to Kevin at 715-314-0338.

SEPT 27, Women Caring for the Land: Long Winter Farm, Rachel Anderson, 8:30am-3pm, W1446 Lawlor Rd., East Troy. RSVP at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events or to 715-723-5561.

OCT 22, Graze River Country Pasture Walk: Ken and Laurie Schmitt farm, 3900 Highway 40, Colfax. RSVP to Kevin at 715-314-0338.



Photo by Brandi Bonde.

'In Her Boots' kicks off Soil Sisters

Above: The Soil Sisters weekend, proudly sponsored by Wisconsin Farmers Union, kicked off Aug. 3 with over 80 attendees at the MOSES In Her Boots women farmer workshop at Raleigh's Hillside Farm in Brodhead that had a special focus on tractors, ergonomics and machinery use. The Soil Sisters weekend continued with over 25 on-farm workshops, culinary events and farm tours led by women farmers in the South Central Farmers Union chapter.

Chaseburg Local leaders honored

Right: Vernon County and Chaseburg Local Farmers Union chapters recently recognized Jim and Gloria Servais for over 30 years of service to the Wisconsin Farmers Union.

Last year, Jim retired from serving as the Chaseburg Local president. Their fellow Farmers Union members are grateful for all that the Servais family has done and continues to do for the local farming community.



Annual meeting season approaches

In the coming months, WFU staff will be out on the road, meeting with membership at annual meetings across the state. Officers, be sure to notify WFU Membership Director Deb Jakubek at 715-590-2130 or djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com when your meeting details are set, so we can help promote and get a staff member scheduled to attend.

Annual meetings must be held by Dec. 1, when bylaw changes and resolutions are due. View upcoming meetings at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events.

Ceylors to host pasture walk on Catawba dairy

WFU District 1 Director Linda Ceylor and her husband, Jerry, will host a pasture walk on their Catawba dairy farm Sept. 20. The event is part of a series hosted by Taylor-Price Farmers Union with funding from a Wisconsin Farmers Union Local Initiatives grant.

The walk will include guest speaker Dr. Silvia Able-Caines, Ruminant Nutritionist with Organic Valley, who will address the challenges of a no-grain diet and parasite control in organic cattle. We will tour the facilities and see the Ceylor's rotational grazing system. The Ceylors began farming in Washington in 1990 but due to urbanization moved to Catawba in 1997. They currently milk 40 crossbred dairy cows and raise replacement heifers on an all-forage, no-grain diet, and are on the Organic Valley all-grass milk route. Their facilities include a coverall free stall barn and a double 4 herringbone milking parlor. The Ceylors manage 400 acres which includes 115 acres of pasture.

The farm address is N3689 Riley Rd., Catawba. To RSVP, please contact Jane Hansen at autumnlarch@gmail.com or 715-767-5958.

Delegate gift items sought for Convention

Wisconsin Farmers Union is seeking delegate gift items for the 2019 Wisconsin Farmers Union State Convention. Do you grow, create, bake or sell an item that might be a special gift from Farmers Union to our 2019 delegates? Over the past few years we have had jams and jellies from the Austins in Vernon County, honey from the Wilsons in Polk County, popcorn from Tessy's in Chippewa County. We like to keep our costs around \$5/item, and we would love to feature another WFU member's product as our 2019 gift.

Please contact the WFU State Office at 715-723-5561 if you would love to have your product featured this time around. We are looking at purchasing around 180 individual items.

Farmers for America showing in Sauk County

We face a unique moment in America's agriculture. The average age of the U.S. farmer is 60. Half of our farmland is going to change hands in the next 12 years. To continue to feed ourselves in the years ahead, we need a new generation of people to step forward.

Join us for a community kick-off event for the Hill & Valley Exploration Tour. The Farmers for America documentary film will be viewed Saturday, Sept. 29 at 10:30am at the Reedsburg Public Library Community Room. Following will be a discussion of local food and farming facilitated by Randy Zogbaum, Madison College ag instructor.

A Farm to Table luncheon will be served by participating farmers for the Hill and Valley Exploration Tour. Registration is requested — to reserve your spot, contact the Reedsburg Chamber of Commerce, 608-524-2850. Sauk County Farmers Union is a co-sponsor of the event. Visit www.explorehillandvalley.com to learn more.

Get your #DairyTogether yard sign!

With Wisconsin on track to lose another 500 dairy farms this year, it's more important than ever to call attention to the need for dairy pricing reform and a viable future for family farms. Join other farmers around the state in an act of solidarity to help increase the issue's visibility.

Contact Deb at 715-590-2130 or djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com to get your sign, or they'll also be available at upcoming Farmers Union events.

AVAILABLE FOR SUGGESTED DONATION

Farmer Price - \$5/sign Consumer Price - \$10/sign

Learn more at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com

UNITED TO GROW FAMILY AGRICULTURE

The Farmer's Share

Did you know that farmers and ranchers receive only 15.6* cents of every food dollar that consumers spend? According to the USDA, off farm costs including marketing, processing, wholesaling, distribution and retailing account for more than 80 cents of every food dollar spent in the United States.

Bacon 1 lb.  Retail: \$5.33 Farmer: \$0.81	Top Sirloin Steak 1 lb.  Retail: \$8.99 Farmer: \$1.80	Bread 2 lbs.  Retail: \$3.49 Farmer: \$0.12	Fresh Carrots 5 lbs.  Retail: \$4.49 Farmer: \$1.34	Wheat Bagel 1 - 4 oz. bagel  Retail: \$0.78 Farmer: \$0.01
Cereal 18 oz. box  Retail: \$4.49 Farmer: \$0.05	Tomatoes 1 lb.  Retail: \$4.49 Farmer: \$0.28	Eggs 1 dozen  Retail: \$2.19 Farmer: \$1.03	Flour King Arthur, 5 lbs.  Retail: \$3.79 Farmer: \$0.43	Boneless Ham 1 lb.  Retail: \$3.99 Farmer: \$0.81
Lettuce 1 lb.  Retail: \$2.79 Farmer: \$0.26	Milk 1 gallon, fat free  Retail: \$4.49 Farmer: \$1.40	Fresh Apples Granny Smith, 1 lb.  Retail: \$2.49 Farmer: \$0.29	Fresh Potatoes Russet, 5 lbs.  Retail: \$4.49 Farmer: \$0.59	Soda 2 liters  Retail: \$2.19 Farmer: \$0.05

Farmer's share derived from USDA, NASS "Agricultural Prices," 2018. | Prices based on June 2018 data. Retail prices based on Safeway (SE) brand except where noted. | *Figure according to U.S. Department of Agriculture Economic Research Service

Dairy farmers return from New York energized

Danielle Endvick
Communications Director

Wisconsin farmers who traveled cross-country to take part in a Dairy Summit in New York in mid-August say they've come away from the event feeling energized and ready to push for dairy pricing solutions. Twenty Wisconsin farmers and farm allies took part in the Aug. 13 meeting in Albany, which drew hundreds of dairy farmers, processors, cooperatives, policymakers and media from across the country. The event was organized by Agri-Mark cooperative, one of New England's largest suppliers of farm fresh milk.

"The bottom line is that the system is broken," Agri-Mark dairy economist Bob Wellington stressed. "When prices are low and a farmer expands, they're doing what is right for their farm. But figuring out a system where doing what is right for the farm is also right for the economy and the market price, that is the challenge before us today."

The meeting featured about a dozen proposals addressing the low prices, which can be viewed and commented on at <https://dairyproposals2018.com/view-proposals/>. Groups bringing forth ideas included Agri-Mark, Farmers Union, Holstein Association USA, the National Family Farm Coalition, LandStream, Larkin Farm Ration-all Decisions and Organic Pastures Dairy Company. Many of the approaches hinged on an inventory management element to stabilize prices.

Attendees also learned about how other commodities across the country manage inventory, and the group discussed the factors that are contributing to depressed prices. The conversation quickly turned to corporate consolidation and the loss of dairy farms.

"We as farmers have become so efficient through the years, but we cannot keep absorbing what that has done to the markets," said Karyn Schauf of Barron. "Any solution has to involve our co-ops, our private processors and other entities." Schauf and her family sold their world-renowned Indianhead Holsteins herd in 2017.



Left: Before returning home from their farms, the Dairy Together road trip participants met with members of the media at Hinchley's Dairy Farm in Cambridge. Front left, Eleva dairy farmer Paul Adams chats with Agri-View reporter Lynn Grooms.

Below: The Dairy Together crew outside the New York Capitol in Albany.



Schauf said she left the meeting feeling hopeful, after seeing the interest from coast-to-coast in working toward a supply management program.

"You could feel the passion in the room," said WFU Membership Coordinator Deb Jakubek. "It radiated from the people who had traveled from all over the country looking for answers."

"I was encouraged to hear a call for co-ops to return to what they were designed to do," said Montford farmer Jerry Volenec. "If co-ops functioned as co-ops are supposed to function, we wouldn't be having these conversations."

"It was very emotional seeing what other farmers are going through," said Marathon farmer Keith Kreager. "All the plans came down to the same two things — we have this problem of oversupply and prices that are not sustaining farmers."

Al Sigurdson of Barron was hit by a feeling of complacency as the scope of the dairy crisis settled in. "If we want to salvage the dairy industry, now is the time. This may be our last stand."

One slide shown at the meeting depicted how steadily U.S. dairy farm numbers have dropped: from 216,130 in 1988 to 40,219 in 2018. In Wisconsin, we'd lost 382 dairy herds so far this year (as of Aug. 1), according to the National Agricultural Statistic Service.

"Farmers across the country are hurting — there's a real sense of urgency," said Larry Wilkinson of North Free-

dom. "Long-term it's going to take a collaboration among dairy folks and a commitment from consumers who really want to preserve the family dairy farm."

Fifteen-year-old Justin Briggs of Stratford was the youngest Wisconsin dairy farmer joining in the Dairy Together road trip. "We need to get something done because there are a lot of farmers who won't last another year or two in this market," Briggs said. "Short-term, we need to start planning other events like this in Midwest and get more farmers talking and reaching a consensus. Long-term, we need to get whole milk back into schools. We need to educate students, consumers, and legislators so the public knows what's happening and knows why they need to support family farms."

Fremont farmer Josh Nett agreed with the need to incorporate some education. "That hurt is real out there in the industry," Nett said. "Short-term I

think we need to keep educating the public and contacting our state officials, holding town meetings — whatever we can to keep the conversation and momentum going."

Michigan Farmers Union President Bob Thompson, who joined the Wisconsin contingent on the cross-country journey, agreed, noting, "One thing that struck me today is that this is a beginning, it's not the end or even the middle. We all need to be more proactive. The passion, the emotion of the people involved today was striking, and we need to do more to amplify that and to continue to work toward a common end."

Priorities the group agreed on were:

- Immediate measures must be taken to stabilize the dairy markets. WFU backed an updated version of the Dairy Price Stabilization Program but also acknowledges elements of other proposals could be incorporated.

See p.13 ► TOGETHER

Time to 'Pull Together' around dairy crisis

Editor's Note: The following is adapted from a speech given by WFU Government Relations Director Kara O'Connor at the Dairy Summit in Albany, NY.

Kara O'Connor
Gov. Relations Director

In 2016, Wisconsin Farmers Union sent a survey to every single dairy farmer in the state of Wisconsin. Over a thousand responded. At that time farmers told us that they were losing an average of \$1 per hundredweight, or about 8 cents per gallon, every time they sold milk — in other words, they were paying to produce milk, rather than getting paid. They also said that the stress of dairy farming was affecting their physical and mental health and relationships with their family.

Farmers also told us about their values in the survey. They said things like:

I'm farming because it's a legacy that I want to pass on to my children.

I don't want to see my neighbors go out of business any more than I want to go out of business myself.

I value the independence that I get from farming.

I feel betrayed by my government and my cooperatives.

To be sure, there were some outliers — like the guy who said, "I love low milk prices. They drive my neighbors out of business, and then I can buy their land for cheap."

That's about the clearest articulation I could imagine of one of the forces that we are up against: greed decoupled from care for one's neighbor.

The flip side of self-interest decoupled from neighborliness is altruism decoupled from self-preservation. How many of us have heard dairy farm-

ers insist, "Produce more! We need to feed the world!" even as they are struggling to feed their own families or keep their own farm in business?

Altruism decoupled from self-preservation will destroy your farm just as surely as greed decoupled from neighborliness will destroy your soul.

Back in June a prominent Wisconsin dairy farmer told me, "I'm skeptical about supply management, because I've always considered the measure of my success to be whether I'm making more milk this year than I did last year."

I looked at him sort of dumbfounded and said, "How about measuring your success by improved profitability?"

We need to counter the false notion of productivism at every turn, and instead say that the measure of our success in farming, just like in any other field of enterprise, is whether we're profitable, in a way that does not impoverish other humans, animals, or the environment.

That bears repeating: our goal as farmers is not to make more milk. It is to be profitable, in a way that does not impoverish others.

And then there is another obstacle to having a dairy system that reflects our shared values: apathy. We received a thousand survey responses back in 2016, which was fantastic, because that's a thousand dairy farmers who know and believe that their voice matters. But we sent out 9,000 surveys; 8,000 farmers didn't respond.

I don't need to tell you that there is a lot of despair in farm country, and despair leads to a sense of inaction and paralyzation. But I also want to tell you that something else is happening. The pendulum is swinging from, "I'm afraid I'll

lose everything" to "I'm going to lose everything." Eventually that pendulum hits the apex and people say to themselves, "Heck — I've got nothing to lose." And that's when the pendulum starts to swing back and people start speaking up.

This past March, Wisconsin Farmers Union invited a couple of our dairy farmer neighbors from Canada to come talk about their system for balancing supply and demand. Hundreds — literally hundreds — of people showed up and stayed for hours asking questions. People stayed for hours because they were hearing about a dairy economy that matched their values. They heard farmers talking about a dairy economy that embodied:

- The ability to pass a farm to one's children.
- Succeeding alongside one's neighbors, rather than at their expense.
- A willingness to sacrifice some measure of independence and autonomy in exchange for a lot more stability and ability to plan for the future.
- A spirit of collaboration rather than animosity toward processors and the govern-

ment.

Now I'll be the first to acknowledge that the Canadian system is not perfect. Most significantly, it is very, very expensive to get started in the Canadian system. And this is a real problem if you value, as I do, having more farmers rather than fewer, and the opportunity for new farmers to get started.

The key lesson from Canada is not that we should do exactly what they're doing. Rather, the lesson is that it is possible to have a dairy economy that aligns better with our values than the one we have now. We should work toward that vision.

I'd like to share one other trend from our 2016 dairy survey. A lot of people told us things like, "I want supply management, but I don't trust the government to be involved."

Well, there is a fundamental dilemma there — in order for supply management, or any other comprehensive federal dairy reform, to work, it needs to be universal, and in order to be universal, you have to get the federal government involved in some fashion.

The important take-home

here is that farmers' willingness to consider supply management is linked to their faith in democracy. Our key task is as much about restoring farmers' fundamental faith in democracy as it is about devising the perfect supply management system. If people do not believe in democracy, they will not get behind supply management — or any other federal dairy reform.

That is why meetings like the Agri-Mark Cooperative meeting recently held in New York are powerful — because one of the key ingredients for democracy to thrive is a well-informed citizenry. The meeting was a great opportunity to become more informed. Few participants walked out of this meeting being certain about which plan was best. But everyone walked out of the meeting more informed than they were when they walked in the door. I invite everyone to learn what we did. Go to www.DairyTogether.com and watch the two videos of the Albany Agri-Mark meeting, and sign up to be a part of the Dairy Together movement. The pendulum is swinging — now is the time.



Above: Twenty Wisconsin farmers and farm allies boarded a bus in Madison and traveled to Albany New York for the Aug. 13 Dairy Summit, picking up other farmers en route.



Summer fun at Farmers Union Camp!

Hundreds of youth ventured out to the shores of Lake Wissota for Farmers Union Camps at WFU Kamp Kenwood this summer. Thanks to all of the wonderful families who have made camp a summer tradition!

Fifty family campers and 380 youth campers participated at the camp. Another 259 youth enjoyed Farmers Union Day Camps held around the state. Registration for 2019 camps will go live around the New Year. Pop over to www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/youth-camp to learn more today!



Thank you, Summer Staff!

Special thanks go out to the Wisconsin Farmers Union Summer Staff for all of their hard work helping at camp and events around the state this summer. The 2018 staff included, from left to right (standing) Trevor Joachim, Rachael Norman, Andrew Ihm, Sam Kuehn, Jon Readinger, Whitney Baehr, Carter Billen, Ali Andruskiewicz; (seated) Camryn Billen, Rachel Hamele, Andrew Cotter, Ali Barrie, Kirsten Slaughter, Lizzy Buck, Cathy Statz.

From p.10 ► TOGETHER

- Any solution to the dairy crisis will require balancing the dairy supply through collaborative efforts by cooperatives, processors, farmers, etc.
- Antitrust regulations must be updated and enforced to address the growing influences of corporate and industrial agriculture, particularly outside and foreign-owned entities.
- Safeguards should be put in place to protect dairy farmers against being suddenly dropped from their milk processor without fair warning.
- The dairy industry must work to educate consumers and legislators on the need for fair prices and the value of family farms. Farmers would prefer fair prices over government handouts.
- Non-dairy imitator products such as soy or coconut milk and other non-lactate products should be restricted from using “milk” on labeling.
- State and federal policies encouraging dairy farm expansion must be reconsidered/repealed.
- Whole milk options should be restored in public schools.

The trip to Albany was organized by Wisconsin Farmers Union, as part of the ongoing Dairy Together movement. Farm Aid graciously donated funds to help cover travel expenses.

Farm Aid Executive Director Carolyn Mugar pointed out some clear solutions to the unfair pricing system dairy farmers have been enduring, starting with fair prices, a plan to manage supply, and antitrust enforcement. “If U.S. farm policies were driven by the simple truth that the people who grow our food deserve to make a fair living, they’d look a lot different than they do today,” she said. “It’s time for change.”

Farmers and allies on the Dairy Together bus included Josh Nett, Fremont; Keith and Juli Kreager, Marathon; Jerry and Jennifer Volenec, Montford; Justin Briggs, Stratford; Larry Wilkinson, Loganville; Dale and Dorothea Von Ruden, Westby; Al Sigurdson and Karyn Schauf, Barron; Stacy Boettcher, Fremont; Otto Wiegand, Spooner; Chip Yost, Centerville; Paul Adams, Eleva; Deb and McKenna Jakubek, Amherst Junction; Bobbi Jo Bergum, Monroe; and Bobbi Wilson and Kara O’Connor, Madison. They were joined along the way by Ohio Farmers Union President Joe Logan, Michigan Farmers Union President Bob Thompson and Michigan farmers Jackie McAlvey, Wayne Prichard, Eric Marshall and Kristine Ranger.

Those interested in learning more are encouraged to visit www.DairyTogether.com. The farmer-led movement seeks to rebuild a viable dairy industry for family farms. It is bringing together farmers from across the country, from varied farm organizations and farms both large and small, all who are concerned about the future of the American dairy industry.

Checkbooks, guns, and baloney



Alan Guebert

The day U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue announced the White House plan to spread \$12 billion of taxpayer salve on its festering tariff wound, November soybean futures ended their day completely unimpressed — down a sleepy 2.5 cents.

Farmers echoed the market reaction; they, too, were unimpressed with the bailout. “Trade, not aid,” was their polite, but pointed take on the handout.

Less than a week later, however, November soybean futures closed a sparkling 28-cents higher “after Bloomberg News reported officials from the U.S. and China were having private talks in hopes of resolving trade disputes.”

Hmm. Sec. Sonny throws 12 billion borrowed bucks — and who knows how much of it from China — at U.S. farmers to bandage a trade cut and the market barely burps while a single rumor of undefined “talks” sends it skyward like a bottle rocket.

There’s a lesson here for big-tweeting, gunslinger toe shooters in the White House and its worshipful Cabinet: Holster your checkbooks, guns, and baloney and whip out your smiles, manners, and facts if you want to regain the trade ground lost since you “free traders” took over.

That’s especially important now as Congress marries the Senate and House Farm Bills for a hoped-for September vote. Each has two hinged parts—crop insurance and trade. The former won’t work without the latter and the latter is — has been — the market-driving center of

U.S. farm policy for decades.

Was it — is it — wise to put our eggs in that global basket? Should we continue to, basically, export our vital natural resources at ever-cheapening world commodity prices? Should we look to a longer-term, more resource-accountable farm policy?

All are important questions. Congress, however, is a politically pragmatic body that reacts to constituents — at least the ones with political muscle and moolah. If farmers want an export-directed, risk-averse Farm Bill that’s short on rules and long on promises, Congress figures out how to deliver it, not whether it’s right or fair.

But that process leaves American farmers and ranchers at the mercy of today’s White House trade strategy: Exit nearly completed multilateral agreements like the Trans-Pacific Partnership (with Pacific Rim nations) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (with most of Europe), demand renegotiation of current agreements (NAFTA), and slap tariffs on imports from anyone (China, Mexico, Canada, the European Union) who questions anything.

It’s hard to recall a time when American farmers had more riding on such an incoherent, uncoordinated approach to trade. It isn’t hard, however, to remember a time when the U.S. was more disingenuous in its approach to trade: never.

Worse, our trading partners know it.

China, for example, alerted the Trump Administration it no longer trusts U.S. Secretary of Commerce Wilbur Ross to act as a liason should bilateral trade talks resume. Why? Presumably because of a mid-May speech to the National Press Club in which Ross claimed that “China, the world’s largest car market, is

effectively closed to our exporters.”

While that sounds good in Washington, it simply isn’t true. Indeed, General Motors announced in early 2018 that it “and its joint ventures sold more than 4 million vehicles in China for the first time in 2017.” And, it added, “China was GM’s largest retail market for the sixth consecutive year.”


Ross isn’t alone in creating facts to fit his fancy. Recently the President announced “a breakthrough agreement” on trade with the European Union after a White House meeting with Jean-Claude Juncker, president of the European Commission.

“While Mr. Trump told an Iowa crowd Thursday [July 26] that ‘we just opened up Europe for you farmers,’” the *Wall Street Journal* reported the next day, “officials in Brussels later said he did no such thing... ‘Agriculture is out of the scope of these discussions,’ ” a European Commission spokeswoman told reporters.

On Aug. 3, the *Financial Times*, the London-based business newspaper, confirmed that it was Trump himself who approved excluding agriculture from any upcoming E.U./U.S. trade talks: “But EU officials also insist that Mr. Trump specifically agreed to leave agriculture out of wider talks during the White House negotiations that preceded last month’s announcement,” noted the *FT*.

Which raises the simple point that if the Trump Administration can’t shoot straight with either you or your trading partners, maybe “aid, not trade” is more of a policy reality than some clever rural rhyme.

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

From the Field

Letters to the Editor

Time for farmers to rally

Could you take a 30 percent cut in pay? Dairy farmers have taken that cut but still work hard to put wholesome food on our tables. Milk prices are very low, leaving dairy farmers facing things such as not being able to pay the mortgage, pay monthly bills, or even feed their own families. That price has been declining for four years and economists are predicting another two years in this cycle.

Meanwhile, the cost of production keeps rising. Input does not match output on the farm. The same is true for dairy inventories, which exceed demand and contribute to low prices. As a former farmer — one who hopes to see the next generation on my farm succeed — I believe we need to stabilize production to improve prices.

On Aug. 13, Agri-Mark hosted a Dairy Summit in Albany, NY. More than 300 dairy farmers and other industry stakeholders came from across the United States and Canada. My husband, Dale, and I were among a group of 20 farmers and allies who attended from Wisconsin. Clad in “Pull Together” shirts, we boarded a bus in Madison and picked up more farmers in Indiana and Ohio.

Among the meeting presenters were lawyers and economists who talked about supply management lessons from other commodities. An overview of Canada's quota system was presented. This system took many years to implement, but stable prices afford Canadian dairymen the ability to pay their bills, feed their families, and have the next generation join their farms.

Nearly a dozen proposals to address the dairy crisis were presented, including ones from California, the Holstein Association, and Wisconsin Farmers Union. All had

wording regarding supply management, quotas, or base plans. Several encouraged bringing whole milk back to school lunch programs. Also discussed was the Dairy Pride Act, which would force nut growers to rename their product. Trees do not lactate, so why should “milk” be a part of their product name?

We are in danger of losing many more family farmers. We lost 500 dairy herds last year in Wisconsin. Several farmers stated they may have no choice but to sell out, and more stated that their wives, often an integral part of the farm, are taking another job in order to make ends meet.

Any efforts moving forward will take a lot of discussion, education, legislation, and willingness to work together. We need the lenders, cooperatives, processors, and legislators to assist with this movement. When farmers do well, so do their small towns, communities, and their families.

Visit www.dairytogether.com to learn about efforts underway to rebuild a viable dairy economy. You can view proposals from the Summit at www.dairyproposals2018.com.

Thank you to Wisconsin Farmers Union for organizing the trip and to Farm Aid for their contribution toward travel expenses.

I have faith that together we can “Pull Together” and change the course of the dairy industry, ensuring family farms are on the land for future generations.

*Thea Von Ruden
Westby, WI*

Farmers need fair prices

In mid-August, I traveled to New York with 25 other farmers and farm advocates from the Midwest to learn about

ways to improve the dairy economy. The trip helped me to envision a dairy economy where small and mid-sized farmers can achieve fair prices and continue their way of life.

That's really different than what I see now, which is farmers selling out left and right because of unfair prices that do not cover the costs of producing milk. I have seen multiple neighbors sell out or consider selling because they are not earning enough to break even.

In order to achieve a more promising dairy future, we need to implement a supply management program that allows farmers to prevent an oversupply of milk and have some influence in our dairy imports and export, so that we can receive stable prices that cover a reasonable cost of production. Supply management will also discourage farmers from growing fast by providing penalties for rapidly expanding milk production.

I urge dairy farmers to join the movement for fair dairy prices. Do not give up! Join the Dairy Together movement (www.DairyTogether.com) to connect with like-minded farmers and learn about upcoming events. I also urge elected officials to learn about and promote analysis of supply management programs. Finally, I urge the public to learn why dairy farms are so important to the economy. If family farms go away, so will many of the other businesses in rural communities.

*Justin Briggs, 15-year-old dairy farmer,
Stratford, WI*

Grazing: Best kept secret

When I sold my cows as part of the whole-herd buyout in 1987,

I felt like I was a victim. Then I became part of the problem, working on Wisconsin 20-20 projects to help dairy farmers expand.

But during the last 13 years of my career with Extension, I coordinated a grazing network and strongly felt that I was part of a solution.

Managed rotational grazing, for beginning farmers or those who can make the switch, has huge advantages. Start-up costs are lower. You need contiguous land, a milking facility, a tractor with a loader and spreader, a four-wheeler and a pickup truck. You need fencing, and you might only need 50 cows.

Managed graziers get about half of the milk production per cow, but cows last longer. Cull rates drop to 10-15 percent. Many graziers hardly ever see veterinarians. Because operational costs are lower, graziers can net close to \$1,000 per cow, when confinement dairies are happy with \$200-500.

What the graziers lack in milk production goes towards boosting organic matter, capturing rain, preventing erosion and supporting wildlife. Graziers don't deal much or at all with the bane of conventional farming, liquid manure, and they have virtually no problems with neighbors or animal rights people.

Graziers have wide enough margins that they can experiment, make mistakes and still be around the next year.

Every time I attend a grazing conference, I come out thinking that managed grazing is still somehow the best kept secret around.

*Otto Wiegand
Spooner, WI*



Photos by Danielle Endvick

Top: During an Aug. 22 walk, Caleb Langworthy opens a new paddock for the beef herd on the Dunn County farm he runs with his wife, Lauren. **Above:** The Langworthys are breeding Scottish Highlander cattle with Herefords for a hardy cross that can be used to help manage brushy areas on the farm.



Photo by Diane Mayerfeld
Visitors to an Aug. 2 pasture walk at Steve Rosenow's farm in New London saw early efforts at converting 30 acres of a 20-year-old spruce and pine plantation into silvopasture.

Wisconsin Farmers Union is pleased to be partnering with grazing networks across the state to promote grazing at events continuing throughout fall. Meet other farmers in your region, learn from experienced graziers and explore how grazing might fit into your enterprise at the following events:

BALDWIN — BELZ

Sept. 15, 3pm
Scott & Marie Belz Farm
1063 230th St.
Grazing beef, handling facility & River Country RC&D Annual Picnic

HOLMEN — WRIGHT

Sept. 22, 1pm,
Todd & Tonia Wright Farm
W7091 Gaarder Rd.
Working with a journeyman

GILMAN — MAHALKO

Oct. 11

Kevin Mahalko Farm
34717 Highway 64
Grazing for grass milk

COLFAX — SCHMITT

Oct. 22, 12:30pm
Ken & Laurie Schmitt
3900 Highway 40
Rotational grazing with beef, affordable chute and alley "Bud Box" demo

COLFAX — LARSON

Oct. TBD
Brad & Melissa Larson
N10688 Cty. M
Fall cover crops & how they fit on a grazing farm

Please RSVP to Kevin Mahalko at 715-314-0338 at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/events



Photo by Danielle Endvick

Over 50 people turned out for a July 24 pasture walk at Leslie Svacina's Cylon Rolling Acres in Deer Park to learn about grazing goats for meat production.



Photo by Danielle Endvick

Visitors to the Langworthys' Blue Ox Farm pasture walk Aug. 22 enjoyed getting an up-close look at the beef herd and sheep flock as they learned about managed grazing.



Photo by Danielle Endvick

Pasture walks tend to be family-friendly and offer a chance for aspiring farmers of all ages to make fast friends.

Wisconsin campers attend Farmers Union All-States Camp

Chippewa Falls native Camryn Billen elected to National Youth Advisory Council

BAILEY, CO — Farmers Union youth from across the country gathered in Bailey, Colo. in June for the 82nd annual National Farmers Union All-States Leadership Camp. Hosted at the NFU Education Center, the camp encourages youth to explore their leadership potential, discuss issues important to their generation, learn more about the power of cooperatives and identify ways to affect positive change in their communities.

Among the WFU group were Jessica Jurcek, Jefferson; Collin Danielson, Eau Claire; Marsha Heck, Durand; Rachel Hamele, Fort Atkinson; Camryn Billen, Chippewa Falls; Liam Buche Pattison, Westby; Xavier and Isaac Hanson, both of Wabasha, Minn.; and Ben Lehman, Polk City, Iowa. WFU Education Director Cathy Statz helped lead and organize All-States; also attending was camp staff alumnus Kate Buche-Pattison.

"For 82 years now, All-States Camp has been the place where our young members can come to learn more about the organization, the cooperative model, and leadership," said National Farmers Union President Roger John-

son. "I'm encouraged by the enthusiasm and high regard that our young members have for attending the camp."

This year's camp theme was "Looking Forward to the Future." Olympic Gold Medalist Rulon Gardner, a camp regular, spoke about overcoming the odds to become an unlikely wrestling hero. Former camper and now Senior Director of Communications at Farm Credit Brittany Jablonsky shared how embracing her roots as a North Dakota farm girl has helped her succeed in an agricultural career off the farm. Rocky Mountain Farmers Union staffer Aubriel Jones discussed leadership, sharing tools to create collegiate Farmers Union chapters. And NFU intern Kiana Brockel, with the help of RMFU's Director of External Affairs Nick Levendofsky, walked campers through NFU's grassroots policy process and a mock policy debate.

In addition to the programming and traditional camp activities the campers, ages 17 to 20, gained hands-on experience volunteering at Sprout City Farms, an urban farm in Denver.

This year's All-States com-

pleted Jurcek's year-long stint on the National Youth Advisory Council (NYAC). She passed the torch to Billen, who was one of six campers elected to the 2018-2019 council. The council members represent thousands of Farmers Union youth across the country. They will further hone their leadership skills at a session in Washington, D.C., through presentations at NFU's 117th Anniversary Convention, and by planning next year's All-States Camp.

Joining Billen on this year's NYAC are Jim Brockel, Justin Goetz and Caleb Nugteren, all of South Dakota; Riley Lebahn, North Dakota; and Jade Person, Minnesota.

"NYAC builds leaders in the agriculture industry and ensures the voice of younger generations is heard and respected in our organization," Johnson said. "Over the course of the next year, these six youth will serve as representatives of their peers, learn about the legislative process and present in front of hundreds of members and press at the NFU convention. I'm confident they will be strong advocates for both the organization and young people in agriculture."



Above: Chippewa Falls native Camryn Billen, front right, was elected by her peers to serve on the National Farmers Union National Youth Advisory Council at this year's All-States Camp in Bailey, Colo. in July.



Above: Campers gathered at the flag pole at All-States Camp. **Left:** The WFU crew showed some Wisconsin "W" pride on a hike overlooking the camp. They included, from left, WFU Education Director Cathy Statz, Chippewa Falls; Liam Buche-Pattison, Kate Buche-Pattison and Alexis Dunnum, all of Westby; Collin Danielson, Eau Claire; Jessica Jurcek, Jefferson; Isaac Hanson, Wabasha, Minnesota; Ben Lehman, Polk City, Iowa.