



**Wisconsin  
Farmers  
Union**

UNITED TO GROW FAMILY AGRICULTURE

Gabe Brown to  
highlight Red  
Cedar event

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WFU members take to the sea  
at Women's Conference

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# WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION NEWS

February/March 2016

Volume 73 | No. 2

## Tighten your belt (again)

*Prices forecasted to squeeze farmers in 2016*



**Darin Von Ruden**  
WFU President

"You'll just have  
to tighten your  
belt."

Is anyone else  
getting tired of  
that phrase?

On my family dairy farm in Vernon County, I know we are. And, based on what I've heard from other farmers in my travels, we're not alone.

Lately, media headlines and farm meetings have been filled with forecasts of lower prices — across the board — for farmers as we head into the New Year.

Meanwhile, input prices have soared. Land rent averages are at historic highs. Through and through, it's just a tough time to be a farmer.

And the impact shows across the land. I've seen it in my neighborhood, as I'm sure you have. Barns standing empty. Families exiting a farming legacy that often spans generations.

In my travels in the past year, which led me to Europe as well as throughout the U.S., it seemed many of the concerns Wisconsin Farmers Union has are shared by farmers the world over. We share many of the same struggles, from increasing land costs to water quality concerns to growing instability in ag markets.

In 2015, Pope Francis released *Laudato Si: Care for Our Common Home*, an environmental encyclical. No matter your faith, I encourage you to read this important work.

In the encyclical, he calls for an "ecological conversion" from a world of materialism and wastefulness to one in which humanity takes responsibility for sound stewardship. He points to growing evidence for global warming, as well as other natural phenomenon around the globe. The charge he gives is clear: "Humanity is called to recognize the need for changes of lifestyle, production, and consumption, in order to combat this warming."

For us farmers, this call to action is of utmost importance. I believe it means taking a hard look at the structure of our agricultural economy



## Farm & Rural Lobby Day set

Farmers from throughout the state will gather in Madison on March 15 for the Wisconsin Farmers Union Farm & Rural Lobby Day. This is a day when farmers and rural residents will have an opportunity to talk with their legislators about important issues in their communities.

"There are a number of critical farm and rural issues that we expect to see before the legislature in this session," said WFU President Darin Von Ruden. "I encourage farmers and rural residents to join us for the Farm and Rural Lobby Day and have their voices heard."

Topics on the agenda include protecting groundwater access for current and future generations, standing up for County Extension, supporting government reforms such as nonpartisan redistricting, and improving rural high-speed internet access.

Registration will begin at 10:30am,

with issue briefings following at 11am at the Madison College downtown campus, 211 North Carroll Street, near capitol square. Speakers will provide background information on pending legislation of interest to farmers and rural residents and help participants prepare for their meetings with legislators.

Following lunch, participants will head to the capitol to meet with their senators and representatives. The day will conclude around 4pm.

There is no cost to participate in Farm & Rural Lobby Day, and all are welcome. Carpooling routes are being considered. Those interested in transportation are asked to email info@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Please pre-register so we can have appropriate legislative visits scheduled.

To register, call 715-723-5561 or fill out the form available online at [www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com).

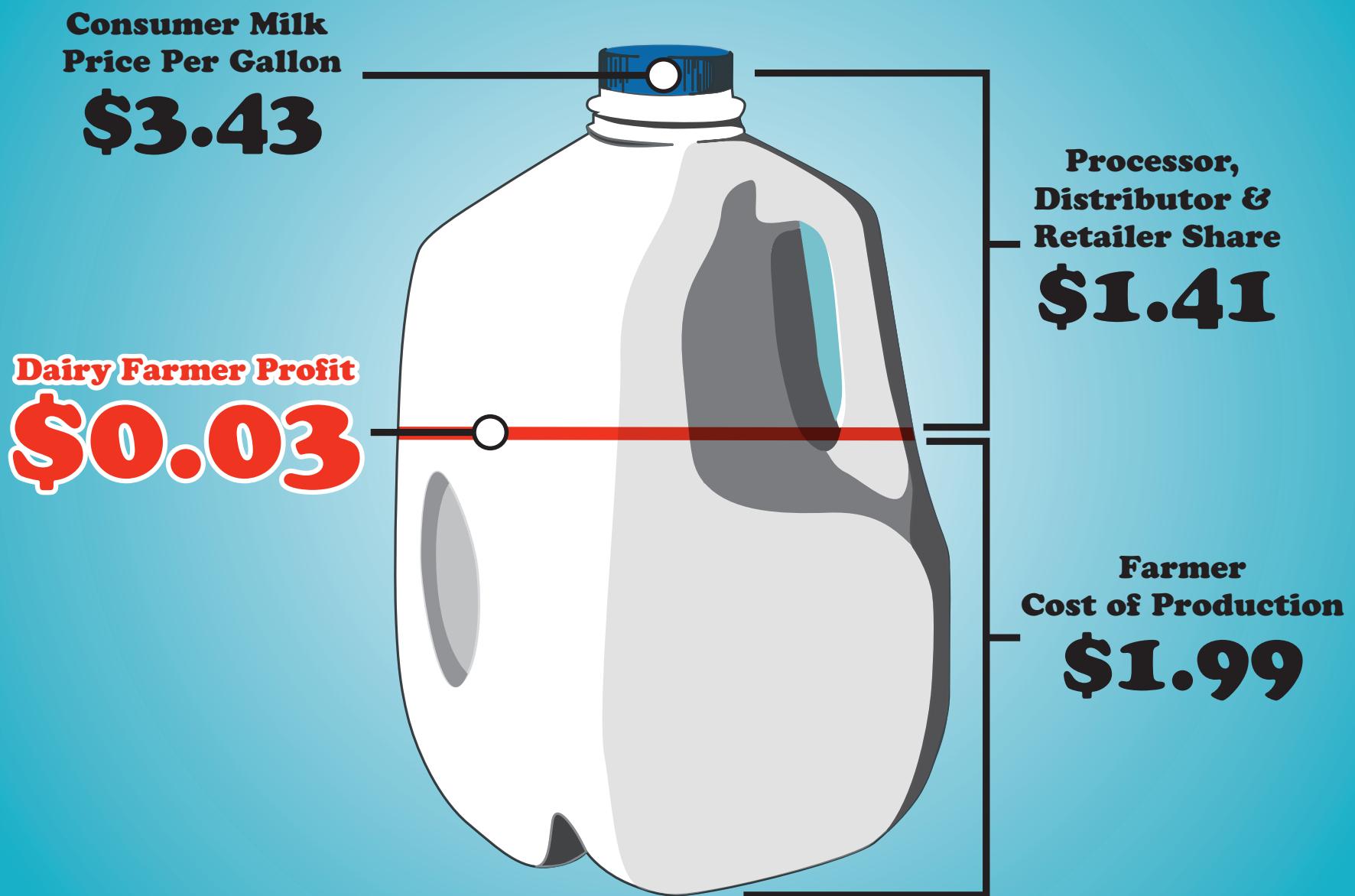
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**See FAIR PRICES ▶ p.3**

# THEY'RE SOMETHING WRONG *With This Picture*

FOR EVERY GALLON OF MILK SOLD...



- IT'S TIME FOR A CHANGE -

Consumer Milk Price Per Gallon is based on an average of monthly Bureau of Labor Statistics Consumer Price Index for the years 2009-2014.  
Farmer cost of production is calculated on the same 6-year average using Agriculture Financial Advisor (AGFa) data from Wisconsin farms from the University of Wisconsin Center for Dairy Profitability.

## WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION NEWS

A publication of  
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### From p. 1 ► FAIR PRICES

today. That decline of the family farm in Wisconsin is undeniable. Latest records show the number of dairy farms in the state has fallen below 10,000. At its peak in 1940, there were 173,000 farms, and as late as 1990, we still had 34,000 dairy farms remaining.

If my travels taught me one thing, it's that we're not alone in this struggle. The question of how to balance sustainability with production while safeguarding the family farm was on the minds of representatives from around the globe last summer when I represented Farmers Union at the World Farming Organization General Assembly.

To me, it seems the problem is that too often management decisions and discussions about agricultural policy have become limited to seeing agriculture solely in economic terms. Wisconsin Farmers Union believes there are values and connections that are deeper than the bottom line. I believe that is probably why you're a member.

During our annual State Convention last month, one session focused on "How to Speak Our Shared Values." There are many opinions and complex issues in agriculture today. There are also many dominant narratives, predominantly a "Feed the World" mentality. It seems that farmers and agriculturalists are increasingly justifying decisions with this concept, that it's okay to make certain management decisions because we, as farmers, have a responsibility to feed the world – to provide cheap food.

Cheap food. Is there such a thing?

When we are seeing 20,000-hog operations proposed, such as was the case last year near Ashland, as well as – according to DNR permit records – a quadrupling in CAFOs statewide since 2000, are we fulfilling this important duty of creating cheap food?

At what cost?

When major farm groups create a public outcry because the Environmental Protection Agency has set rules to protect wetlands, are those criticisms on their efforts to conserve America's resources made for the sake of the world?

At what cost?

If we forsake science, our own health or the stewardship of our land, is it because we have to feed the world?

This isn't an issue of big farm versus small farm or organic versus conventional. There are bad actors in each of those sectors – and not a single one can be put upon a pedestal.

What I want is for us all to take a step back and ask, what is our responsibility?

To our land? To our animals? To consumers? To the next generation of farmers?

I think that if we all could just pause for a moment – drown out all the narratives Big Ag often feeds us – and think about those questions

... we might all make a few different decisions. We might all find some shared values.

One of the things I've come to treasure the most about Farmers Union are the common core values I see in our membership. In the past year, your policy was hard at work, as WFU brought your beliefs to Madison and Washington, D.C., showing our legislators just what it is our grass-roots membership believes in:

We believe in working for sound policy that protects water quality and quantity. We believe in fair funding for rural schools. We believe in the importance of conservation. We believe family farms and rural residents need and have a right to broadband access. We believe in the entrepreneurial spirit of beginning and established farmers alike should be supported with fair cottage food laws and other opportunities that support diverse farm systems.

And finally, and maybe most importantly in the year ahead, we believe in fair prices for family farmers. According to economists at the Ag Outlook Forum recently held in Madison, 2016 will be a challenging year for farmers. Forecasts show we can expect a significant period of low prices for many commodities. Recent trade agreements – and even the Trans-Pacific Partnership, which is inching closer to reality – stack the decks against family farmers. We need to continue to fight for fair, profitable trade agreements. Current farm policy is based on exporting most of what we grow. With the trade agreements currently on the table, we're losing more control.

In the coming year, WFU will be working for you, for our shared values. We'll be fighting for fair prices. We'll be fighting against excessive profit-taking by manufacturers of farm inputs, so farmers are not forced to continue to transfer wealth off our farms by paying exorbitant rates on our inputs. If profits are not raised for farmers, we all recognize there will be more farms lost and an increasing concentration of farm production.

The 2018 Farm Bill is our next good chance to find some footing. We need a different kind of farm policy. One that addresses these issues and brings some ethics back into agriculture. With the election year upon us, now is the time to act. I urge you to join us in Madison for our Farm & Rural Lobby Day on March 15th. (Details on pg. 1.)

At last month's 85th annual State Convention we set about "Remembering Our Roots," but what is the future for Farmers Union and family farms in Wisconsin? What shape will we be in 85 years from now?

The future of agriculture is one of endless possibilities in terms of technology, renewable energy, and value-added ideas. It's up to us, both as individuals and in our united efforts, to steer it onto a course that is responsible, sound and viable for the next generation of farmers.

# WFU members designate Special Orders of Business

**A**PPLETON – At the 85th annual Wisconsin Farmers Union State Convention Jan. 29-31 in Appleton, delegates from across the state adopted resolutions reflecting WFU's views on key issues.

"One of WFU's strengths as an organization is that we represent a wide variety of farmers coming from diverse backgrounds," said WFU President Darin Von Ruden. "Their ability to respectfully discuss and come to a consensus on difficult policy issues gives me hope that members of both political parties can do the same and enact sensible legislation that truly addresses the needs of family farmers."

The following were among the Special Orders of Business that reflect WFU's top policy priorities for the coming year:

## NONPARTISAN REDISTRICTING

In order to end gerrymandering, restore competition to electoral races, and ensure that voters are electing their representatives, rather than the other way around, WFU supports the creation of a nonpartisan entity to perform all future legislative redistricting for city, county, state and federal offices in the state of Wisconsin.

## CAMPAIGN FINANCE REFORM

In the wake of the Citizens United Supreme Court decision that opened the floodgates to unlimited campaign spending, WFU calls upon the State Legislature to pass an advisory referendum to be placed on the ballot allowing voters to reaffirm their view that corporations are not people, and money is not speech.

## FAIR COMPETITION IN THE AGRIBUSINESS SECTOR

In 2015, a number of major agri-business mergers exacerbated concentration in the already over-consolidated food and agriculture sectors. JBS SA acquired Cargill Inc.'s pork unit, creating the second largest pork processing company in the U.S. Dow and DuPont agreed to merge, creating the world's second largest chemical business and reducing competition in the agricultural chemicals market. In light of these developments, WFU calls for a Congressional investigation of monopolistic business practices and growing concentration of ownership in the agricultural sector as well as Department of Justice follow-through on the anti-trust investigations it has already commenced. In addition, WFU members called for state policies to limit corporate farming and vertical integration and for preservation of the Dodd-Frank "Wall Street Reform and Consumer Protection Act" provisions related to swaps, futures, options, and other instruments regulated by the Securities and Exchange Commission as they pertain to commodity financing and hedging.



**Above:** Wisconsin Farmers Union members had the chance to voice opinions during the policy session at the WFU State Convention in Appleton. Pictured at the microphone is Dela Ends, who farms near Brodhead and is a member of the South Central chapter.

## HIGH CAPACITY WELLS

WFU supports the consideration of cumulative impacts in high capacity well permit applications. WFU believes that no new permit should be needed for the replacement or repair of a high capacity well and that a high capacity well permit should transfer with the sale of the land, provided that the DNR conducts a periodic review of all high capacity well permits and withdrawals.

### Passionate debate

WFU policy delegates also discussed a variety of other topics. One of the more spirited debates focused on a proposal to express opposition to state funds going to independent charter schools. The discussion on this point highlighted the benefits that public charter schools managed by a school district can offer to rural communities, in contrast with independent charter schools that are not accountable to taxpayers or the elected school board. After discussion, WFU delegates voted to oppose public school funding to independent charter schools.

Another topic that ignited considerable passion was the package of changes to the CHS Cooperative bylaws that were proposed in late 2015. WFU delegates raised strong concerns about these proposed changes, noting that they represent a departure from the cooperative ideals on which the CHS cooperative was founded. Several members stepped to the microphone to decry the chipping-away of ownership and control by member/patron users, and the "corporatization and managerialization" of CHS and other cooperatives. See page 10 for more about the proposed changes.

Delegates reaffirmed WFU's standing policy that "Core cooperative principles require that directors of co-ops are the 'producers at risk,' and the managers serve an advisory role. Grassroots control of cooperatives is lost when non-producers serve as directors. The direction and purpose of cooperatives can be changed considerably when 'at risk' members no longer guide the co-op. Wisconsin Farmers Union opposes proposals to allow local or regional managers or other non-producers to become voting directors."

### Other language adopted included:

- Support for the Ag Producer Security Fund in its current form and opposition to changes that would be harmful to farmers.
- Support for public-private efforts to extend affordable high-speed internet service to all households and small businesses.
- Opposition to privatization of drinking water and wastewater treatment facilities.
- With regard to herbicides and pesticides, requiring applicators to disclose information about agri-chemical applications to adjacent landowners if neighbors request that information, and labeling of foods produced using neonicotinoids.
- A call for a clear, consistent and stable state framework for supporting increased investments in distributed renewable generation.
- Reaffirmation of the importance of the UW-Extension to farmers and rural communities and a call for restored funding in the next state budget.

# Remembering Judy

The staff and board of Wisconsin Farmers Union would like to pay tribute to former WFU State Youth Leader Judith Whelan, who passed away Dec. 30, 2015.

Judith was born February 27, 1931 to Rufus and Emma (Johnson) Machmeier. She will be remembered as a passionately kind, caring, and loving mother and grandmother. Her caring and kindness touched many people in her lifetime.

Judy grew up on a farm near Mondovi and attended the one-room rural Harvey School. Her family had an early involvement in the formation of Farmers Union in Buffalo County.

She graduated from Mondovi High School and UW-Eau Claire with a Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. After her college graduation, she attended the Encampment for Citizenship in New York. At the Encampment for Citizenship Judy was inspired by participants like Eleanor Roosevelt, Martin Luther King, Pete Seeger and many others. She also worked as a staff member for two summers. The experience left a lifelong impact on Judy. She decided not to teach but work toward making life better for others.

Judy subsequently began her work for WFU as the State Youth Leader, going into rural communities and teaching young people to advocate and improve their lives with the help of Farmers Union. Her dedication to the future of rural life doubled Farmer's Union youth membership during her tenure. Judy also played a part in the development of WFU Kamp Kenwood youth and leadership — working with early leaders like Jean Long. She set up workshops and retreats throughout Wisconsin to educate others about making a difference.

Cooperatives and Farmers Union activities were very important to Judy. This came from her lifelong history of caring for her community. Seven of Judy's grandchildren attended Farmers Union Camp at WFU Kamp Kenwood. She also played a significant role (along with Lorna Miller and Flo Danielson) in



*Above: Farmers Union pioneer Judith Whelan, left, paused over memories with former WFU president Gil Rohde and State Education Director Jean Long, who was clearly a big influence in Judy's life.*

helping WFU prepare archival materials (identifying photos, for example) for the 75th Annual State Convention.

Judy also served as a board member on the Buffalo Electric Board and was active with the Zion Lutheran Church. She was also a teacher, military spouse, past director of the Buffalo County Historical Society, Western Dairyland outreach worker, and creator of The Area Thrift Store in Mondovi and Ye Old Schoolhouse Shop in Buffalo City. She was also instrumental in forming the Mondovi Area Food Pantry.

In keeping with Judy's love for community and life of service, remembrance donations can be made to the Mondovi Area Food Pantry.



***It's back! On March 1st, the Wisconsin Farmers Union Foundation will again take part in The Big Share, an online day of giving dedicated to nonprofits.***

**This year, we hope you'll help us make a big splash — funds raised will go to obtaining watercraft and revitalizing the beach at camp!**



Wisconsin Farmers Union  
KAMP KENWOOD

Plan to give on March 1st or pledge today at [thebigshare.org!](http://thebigshare.org)

# REMEMBERING OUR ROOTS

85th Wisconsin Farmers Union State Convention • Jan. 29-31, 2016 • Appleton, WI



**Above:** Torchbearers recognized at the 2016 Convention Banquet included, from left, Seamus Cox, Anna Hinchley, Catherine Hinchley, Courtney Joachim, Brad Johnson, and Cassie Grape. Not pictured: Jesse Kohler & Kimberly Helm-Quest.

**Right:** Dela Ends, who farms near Brodhead and is a member of the South Central chapter, took part in the grassroots policy making process.



**Above:** WFU was proud to partner with the Wisconsin Agricultural Tourism Association to present the pre-convention workshop, Beyond Traditional Agritourism: Cultivating Community on Our Farms. Fifty-plus participants explored how agritourism can diversify opportunities for family farms. Pictured: Brenda Thyssen of Triple B Produce, New London; Kriss Marion of Circle M Market Farm, Blanchardville; and David Meuer of Meuer Farms, Chilton served on a panel exploring agritourism.



**Above:** Thanks to all who took part in the WFU Foundation Fundraiser and silent auction during convention. Altogether, over \$8,000 was raised for WFU Kamp Kenwood. The highest-selling item at the Jan. 29 fundraiser was this beautiful quilt, created by long-time WFU member Janet Nelson of Prairie Farm (right) and bought by Michael and Nancy Slattery of Maribel.



**Above:** The 2016 WFU Board of Directors includes: (front row) Vice President Craig Myhre, Osseo; President Darin Von Ruden, Westby; Janet Nelson, Prairie Farm; Ed Gorell, Eleva; (back row) Rick Adamski, Seymour; Chris Holman, Custer; Secretary Dennis Rosen, Emerald; Tina Hinchley, Cambridge; and Treasurer Mark Liebaert, South Range.

# Farmers Union members honored for dedication

Several Wisconsin Farmers Union members were honored with Builders Awards, one of the organization's highest honors, at the 85th annual WFU State Convention Jan. 29-31 in Appleton. Receiving the award were Barb and Gerald Jaeger of Lomira, Marvin and Ruth Kruse of Reedsburg, and Kriss Marion of Blanchardville. The award recognizes outstanding commitment to building the Farmers Union organization through county involvement, leadership development and member recruitment.

"We are very proud to recognize these members' enthusiasm and commitment to Farmers Union," said WFU President Darin Von Ruden. "They each have made considerable commitments in time and passion to the organization and each has a sincere commitment to the values of family farms."

Three Wisconsin Farmers Union chapters also received recognition for excelling in membership growth in 2015. They included the Marathon County, South Central and Wood-Portage-Waupaca chapters.

"Active local, county and district units are vital to Farmers Union's grassroots structure," Von Ruden said. "It's thrilling to see these chapters' eagerness to speak up on the issues that really matter to family farmers and our rural communities."

The chapters will be recognized at the National Farmers Union Convention March 5-8 in Minneapolis, Minn.

Also earning a nod was Erica Roth of Albany, who was recognized for her work in developing a youth group for the South Central chapter.



**Above:** WFU Membership Coordinator Deb Jakubek, far left, presented Leadership Awards to, from left, members of South Central (Kriss Marion and Dela Ends), Wood-Portage-Waupaca (Tommy Enright and Lisa Shirek) and Marathon County (Tony Schultz), with WFU President Darin Von Ruden, right.



**Clockwise, from top left:** Erica Roth, left, receives a Go-Getter Award, for her dedication to the youth program, from WFU Education Director Cathy Statz and WFU President Darin Von Ruden; Michael Slattery, left, helps Von Ruden present a Builders Award to Barb and Gerald Jaeger; Kriss Marion, center, beams over her Builders Award with husband Shannon; Marvin and Ruth Kruse accept their Builders Award.



# Project grants now available for Farmer-Led Watershed Projects

In 2016, Farmers will have an opportunity to apply for DATCP grants to help establish informal farmer-led watershed groups around the state. The goal is to support voluntary, producer-led activities to reduce nonpoint source pollution and improve water quality and soil health in the producers' watersheds. The maximum grant award per group will be \$20,000.

The project is designed to support groups of farmers who share a small watershed and want to work together to learn how to both protect water quality and enhance profitable conservation on their farms. Farmer-led groups can be fairly informal but must meet several criteria:

- Include at least five eligible farmers who form a collaborative group with DATCP, the Department of Natural Resources, a county conservation committee, the University of Wisconsin-Extension, UW-Discovery Farms, or a nonprofit conservation organization.
- Help other farmers in the watershed voluntarily work to reduce nonpoint source pollution.
- Contribute at least 50 percent of the costs that are eligible for grant funds.

Project grants can cover costs for a variety of activities identified and monitored by the group, including:

- Start-up planning and discussion meetings
- Field days and demonstrations, speakers and presentations
- Innovative practices in nutrient management, no-till, cover crops, etc.
- Manure composting, buffer-strips,
- Monitoring and evaluating impacts on water quality, soil health

Interested in starting a Farmer-Led Council? Wisconsin Farmers Union can help with planning and grant writing. WFU has supported several of the initial farmer-led councils in west central Wisconsin over the past three years, and our staff is happy to work with members and local chapters who want to explore applying for a grant to start a project in their area. Talk with WFU Executive Director Tom Quinn at the Chippewa Falls office, 715-308-3742 or tquinn@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.



**Above:** Consider pursuing a Farmer-Led Watershed Project Grant today!



## Join Wisconsin Farmers Union at the Red Cedar Watershed Conference

**Thursday, March 10 • 8:30am to 4:15pm**

Memorial Student Center • UW-Stout, Menomonie

*Whether you farm, live along the water or in town, the health of our watersheds impacts us all. Join us for a day of exploring solutions to watershed issues.*

### 9am Keynote: Gabe Brown

#### Healthy Soils - Regenerating Our Farms and Communities

North Dakota farmer Gabe Brown is a pioneer of the emerging soil health movement that focuses on regenerating our resources. Gabe's family runs a diversified 5,000-acre ranch near Bismarck. The Browns integrate grazing into a no-till system, which includes a variety of cash crops, multi-species cover crops and grass-fed beef, poultry and sheep. This unique operation has drawn visitors from all 50 states and 16 foreign countries — come hear why!



#### Catch these great sessions and more:

Soil Health Demonstration Plot: A Community Partnership  
Farmers Share Experiences with Cover Crops  
Farmer-led Watershed Updates

#### Registration is FREE for WFU members.

To register, call the WFU State Office at 715-723-5561 or enter promo code 'Union' at [www.uwstout.edu/profed/redcedar](http://www.uwstout.edu/profed/redcedar)

# 'Friends of the Family Farmer' recognized

Wisconsin Farmers Union recognized three deserving recipients with the Friend of the Family Farmer award Jan. 30 at the 85th WFU State Convention in Appleton.

First given in 2013, the Friend of the Family Farmer award is meant to honor individuals for their actions on issues that impact farmers and rural residents throughout the state.

"Wisconsin Farmers Union instituted the Friend of the Family Farmer award to recognize the exceptional contributions of individuals who go above and beyond in tackling the tough topics facing rural Wisconsin," said WFU President Darin Von Ruden. "We would like to thank each of these Friends of the Family Farmer for making sure the voices of Wisconsin's farmers and rural residents are heard in Madison."

This year's recipients included Senator Dave Hansen (D-Green Bay), who was first elected to serve the 30th Senate District in 2000. He currently serves as Senate Assistant Democratic Leader and ranking Democratic member of the Senate Committee on Energy, Consumer Protection and Government Reform.



*Above: Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden and Government Relations Director Kara O'Connor presented a Friend of the Family Farmer Award to Sen. Dave Hansen (left). Jerry Fiene and Kim Kaukl of the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance also received the award.*

"WFU is honoring Sen. Hansen this year for giving voice to the fundamental democratic principles that are top priorities for Farmers Union members and that underlie all the other work of the organization: affirming that corporations are not people, that money is not speech, and that voters should be choosing their representatives, rather than the other way around," said WFU Government Relations Director Kara O'Connor.

Also recognized with Friend of the Family Farm awards this year were Jerry Fiene & Kim Kaukl of the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance (WiRSA). WiRSA is a statewide organization representing administrators, community leaders, board of education members, teachers and interested citizens. Since its formation in 2009, membership has grown steadily, and the organization has worked tirelessly on behalf of rural schools.

During his tenure as WiRSA Executive Director, Jerry Fiene consulted extensively with the Assembly Rural Schools Task Force, and their combined efforts resulted in a number of recommendations for strengthening rural schools that have since become law.

When schools came under attack in the last state budget, Fiene mobilized rural school districts and partner groups, including Farmers Union, to join the fight for funding and a better future. Fiene has worked on behalf of rural schools for 46 years as a teacher, principal, superintendent, and CESA administrator.

After Fiene's retirement last year, Kim Kaukl succeeded him at the helm of WiRSA. Having worked 34 years in public education, Kaukl brings to WiRSA a passion for serving rural schools and a desire to continue to advocate for their interests.

"WFU appreciates the hard work of the Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance on behalf of rural schools and communities," Von Ruden said. "We look forward to continuing to collaborate with WiRSA to advocate for our rural schools."

## FUE leadership program applications due March 31

The Farmers Union Enterprise (FUE) states of Minnesota, Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota and Wisconsin have been involved in a leadership program over the past eight years to identify and empower future Farmers Union leaders in the five-state region. WFU has had eight couples participate in this program and is now accepting applicants for the 2016-2017 individual or couple.

Participants will experience activities throughout the region that will enhance knowledge of cooperatives and the role of Farmers Union. They will receive training and hands-on experiences enabling them to become greater leaders as well as the know-how to manage and coordinate meetings. They will also attend a fly-in to Washington, D.C., to observe and experience the lobbying process. Participants will also build many relationships with local, state, and national Farmers Union leaders by attending the National Farmers Union Convention and a State Convention in one of the five FUE states.

This program offers a balance of hard work and good times, with the end vision being that participants take on leadership roles in their communities, farm organizations and local, regional and state Farmers Union affiliates. The training will help participants become better communicators in order to share their experiences and encourage members and the general public to be involved in the Farmers Union policy process.

FUE's overall goal is for participants to become active members of

Farmers Union and care about the future of the organization. This program requires a one-year commitment with attendance at five or six events. Generally the first and last event is a group gathering in June or July, including immediate family members. The next is attending a State Convention anywhere from November to January depending upon the FUE host state. Wisconsin Farmers Union expects the participant(s) to attend the WFU State Convention Jan. 27-29, 2017 to be introduced to our members. The next leg on this journey is to attend the annual National Farmers Union Convention in March of 2017 in San Diego, California. Past participants can attest to the knowledge gained at the legislative fly-in, generally held during the second week in September in Washington, D.C. Lastly, the participant(s) will be expected to give a brief final report to our membership at the 2018 WFU State Convention.

Applicants must write a one to two-page essay including the following information: a description of their farm, brief resume of each candidate and an explanation of why you would like to be considered for this leadership program.

Essays are being accepted until **March 31, 2016** via email at info@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or by mail to the WFU State Office, 117 W. Spring Street, Chippewa Falls, WI. For more details please call 800-272-5531. A final decision will be made by the WFU Board of Directors in April 2016.

# Stay informed on proposed CHS bylaw changes

In late 2015, the Board of Directors of CHS, Inc. proposed a number of changes to the cooperative's Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. Given Farmers Union's deep ties with CHS, the proposal raised questions among WFU members. After a robust discussion at our annual convention, delegates asked WFU staff to send a letter to the managers of CHS coops in Wisconsin expressing concern over the proposed CHS bylaw changes, which would allow the CHS Board to grant membership status and patronage rights to non-farmers. WFU's letter stated in part: "Wisconsin Farmers Union believes that control of our agricultural cooperatives must remain in the hands of the farmers who have 'skin in the game.' The direction and purpose of cooperatives can be changed considerably when agricultural producers no longer guide the co-op. The changes that CHS is proposing would diminish farmer control of the cooperative, and so we urge you to oppose these changes."

CHS reached out to WFU after our letter was circulated and asked for the opportunity to respond with the CHS Board's point of view. Due to a lack of space, we are unable to print CHS's entire letter here, but it states in part:

"The proposed changes to the Articles and Bylaws do not diminish farmer control of CHS. CHS is an agricultural producer-focused and controlled cooperative and the CHS Board of Directors is committed to maintaining that agricultural control and focus. We believe these proposed changes represent good governance and are the right thing to do. As CHS, our member cooperatives, producer-members and other customers continue to grow and evolve, as a board we're committed to proactively maintaining a governance structure that reflects our members' changing needs while preserving our unwavering commitment to remaining a farmer- and member co-op-owned cooperative."

In order to facilitate a fully-informed discussion on this issue, WFU will re-circulate our "Question and Answer" document to members via email, along with the CHS viewpoint on each question. We encourage members to examine the information and make their own determination as to how the proposed bylaw changes will affect CHS governance.

Please contact the WFU office at 715-723-5561 with any questions or if you would like a hard copy of the question and answer section with the CHS response. (This would also be a great opportunity to give us your email address if we do not already have it!)



# FARMERS UNION HAPPENINGS

**The Future of Rural Schools forum,** Feb. 25, 4-6pm, Augusta Senior Center, 611 Main St., Augusta. Co-hosted by Eau Claire County Farmers Union. Info: Deb Jakubek, djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 715-590-2130.

**MOSES Organic Farming Conference,** Feb. 25-27, La Crosse Center. Info: www.mosesorganic.org

**Winter Grazing Workshop** featuring Ray Archuleta, March 1, 10am to 3pm, Camp Y-Koda, Sheybogan Falls. \$20 fee. Registration: Kirsten Jurcek, 920-342-9504 or kjurcek1@centurytel.net

**Wisconsin Leadership Development (WILD) Training,** March 3-5, Green Lake. Info: Deb Jakubek, 715-590-2130 or djakubek@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

**National Farmers Union Convention,** March 5-8, Radisson Blu, Minneapolis, Minn., www.nfu.org

**Eau Claire Farm Show,** March 8-9, Menards Conference Center, 5150 Old Mill Plaza, Eau Claire. Info: www.northcountryenterprises.com

**Red Cedar Watershed Conference,** March 10, 8:30am to 4:15pm, Memorial Student Center, UW-Stout, Menomonie.

**Horse Creek Watershed Farmer-Led Watershed Council event featuring Gabe Brown,** March 11, 10am, Carlson Farm, 134 220th St., Star Prairie.

**North Central Graziers Conference,** March 12, 10am to 3:30pm, Meadowview Golf Course, 800 W. 3rd Street, Owen. Info: Taylor County Land Conservation Dept., 715-748-1469.

**Green County Women in Ag Potluck,** March 20, 4pm, Peg Sheaffer's Sandhill Family Farms, Brodhead.

**WPS Farm Show,** March 29-31, EAA Grounds, 1001 Waukau Ave., Oshkosh. Info: www.wisconsinplicservice.com

**The Energy Fair,** June 17-19, 7558 Deer Road, Custer. Info: 715-592-6595 or www.theenergyfair.org

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

# Summer Youth Camp Registration Open

## Junior Camp 1/Junior High Camp 1 (Jr 1/JH 1)

**COMBINED SESSION** • June 7-10 (Tues-Fri)  
Ages 8-14 . . . \$90.00

**Junior Camp 2 (Jr 2)** • June 28-July 1 (Tues-Fri)

**Junior Camp 3 (Jr 3)** • August 9-12 (Tues-Fri)

**Junior Camp 4 (Jr 4)** • August 14-17 (Sun-Wed)

**Junior Camp 5 (Jr 5)** • August 21-24 (Sun-Wed)

Ages 8-12 . . . \$90.00

## Junior High Camp 2 (JH 2) • July 31-Aug. 4 (Sun-Thurs)

Ages 12-14 . . . \$95.00

**Senior Camp (SEN)** • June 12-16 (Sun-Thurs)  
Ages 14-18 . . . \$100.00

For younger children & families:

**Acorn Day Camp (ACORN)** • August 6 (Sat)  
Ages 7 and up . . . \$15

## Family Camp (FAM) • July 29-30 (Fri-Sat)

All Ages - \$65 for 1 adult and up to 2 children  
\$25 each add'l adult; \$15 each add'l child



### NOTES

- Mail form(s) with payment to: Wisconsin Farmers Union Camp Programs, 117 West Spring Street, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
- **Annual WFU family membership (required except for raffle/auction/drawing winners) is \$30.** Multi-year membership discounts available.
- To secure registration, a payment of  $\frac{1}{2}$  the total camp fee (**plus full amount of WFU family membership for non-members**) is required.
- NON-MEMBERS WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO REGISTER UNTIL WFU MEMBERSHIP FEE IS RECEIVED IN FULL.
- For more information, contact us at 1-800-272-5531 or cst@wisconsinfarmersunion.com, or print copies at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com
- WFU Kamp Kenwood is located near Lake Wissota State Park at 19161 79<sup>th</sup> Ave, Chippewa Falls, WI.
- Contact your county/local FU secretary/treasurer, local co-op or the WFU state office regarding eligibility for full or partial sponsorship.
- Camp fees refunded **only if we are notified in writing (mail/fax/email) three days prior to session start date;** written notification is also required in cases of emergency/illness. Camper substitutions are welcome. **WFU membership is non-refundable.**
- Rules for acceptance & participation are the same for everyone without regard to race/color, sex/gender, age, ability or national origin. Staff/camper ratio is 1/7. **SPACE IS LIMITED. PLEASE REGISTER EARLY.**
- **Sponsored in part by the CHS FOUNDATION COOPERATIVE EDUCATION GRANTS PROGRAM**

----- cut here for mailing • save top portion for your reference -----

## 2016 WFU CAMPS AT KAMP KENWOOD • REGISTRATION FORM (make copies as needed)

\*\*\*\*\*

Camper Name \_\_\_\_\_ Camp Session: Jr 1/JH 1 Jr 2 Jr 3 Jr 4 Jr 5 JH 2 SEN ACORN FAM

(Circle one) **M or F** Age as of camp start date \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Expected High School Grad Year \_\_\_\_\_

Camper Email (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Cabin Buddy (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Email \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Eve Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Address/City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Circle to indicate: *Vegetarian Vegan Other Allergy/Accomm (please contact us)* Describe your household: *Farm Rural Small Town Urban*

Other than WFU, please list any co-op and/or credit union memberships you hold: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about us? \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed (include at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  of camp fee, **PLUS WFU family membership (\$30) paid in full for non-members**): \$\_\_\_\_\_

Remainder to be paid by ():  Parent (Before or At Camp)  County FU  Co-op (provide name) \_\_\_\_\_



**2016 WFU CAMPS AT KAMP KENWOOD • REGISTRATION FORM (for friend/family member)**

\*\*\*\*\*

Camper Name \_\_\_\_\_ Camp Session: Jr 1/JH 1 Jr 2 Jr 3 Jr 4 Jr 5 JH 2 SEN ACORN FAM

(Circle one) **M or F** Age as of camp start date \_\_\_\_\_ Birthdate \_\_\_\_\_ Expected High School Grad Year \_\_\_\_\_

Camper Email (optional) \_\_\_\_\_ Cabin Buddy (optional): \_\_\_\_\_

Parent(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Parent Email \_\_\_\_\_

Day Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Eve Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Cell \_\_\_\_\_

Address/City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Circle to indicate: *Vegetarian Vegan Other Allergy/Accomm (please contact us)* Describe your household: *Farm Rural Small Town Urban*

Other than WFU, please list any co-op and/or credit union memberships you hold: \_\_\_\_\_

How did you learn about us? \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Enclosed (include at least  $\frac{1}{2}$  of camp fee, **PLUS WFU family membership (\$30) paid in full for non-members**): \$\_\_\_\_\_

Remainder to be paid by ():  Parent (Before or At Camp)  County FU  Co-op (provide name) \_\_\_\_\_

# 'Women Making Moves' WFU well-represented in Florida

**By Jane Mulroy**

WFU Member

"Who and what is a Farmer?" Paul Harvey voiced a moving tribute in the popular male-dominated truck commercials, but as his trademark tagline proclaims "And now for the rest of the story..."

More than 50 women recently came together to show and tell their version of farming at the National Farmers Union Women's Conference Jan. 23-27 in Clearwater Beach, Florida. The theme of this year's conference was Women Making Moves: Managing Transitions On The Farm. The five-day conference addressed the ever-evolving future of agriculture as it applies to farm women from across the USA.

Representing Wisconsin Farmers Union at the event were Kriss Marion, Jen Riemer and Peg Sheaffer (South Central chapter) and Naomi Dvorachek, Lisa Shirek and myself (Wood-Portage-Waupaca chapter).

This wonderfully enlightening event could have been sub-titled Women Making Moves: Managing Transmissions, as we also focused on the technology behind websites, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, blogs and other social media. Such outlets compete daily for attention and delivery of our messages and marketing. NFU Communications Director Andrew Jerome shared Social Media to Help Market Your Farm. Our fellow Midwesterner Bridget Holcomb, executive director of the Women, Food and Agriculture Network, offered succinct wisdom on effective communication and self-presentation.

We also heard about unpredictable environmental conditions — and the conservation programs that can protect your farm from them — in a presentation by Walter Albaran of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. NRCS is the primary federal agency helping America's farmers, ranchers and forest landowners conserve the nation's soil, water, air and other natural resources. Albaran stressed all programs are voluntary and offer science-based solutions that benefit both the landowner and environment.



**Right:** Young WFU members Jada (left) and Isis, the daughters of Mike Beacom and Lisa Shirek, joined in the field trip fun during the Women's Conference.

**Right:** In a pause from workshops, NFU Women's Conference attendees and their families set sail on a pirate's ship for a networking cruise.

Next, we flowed into the political arena. Sessions shined a bright light through the simplicity of passionate discourse in Grassroots Organizing and Coalition Building, led by a shining star of activism herself, Kriss Marion, president of WFU's South Central chapter. Bridget Holcomb's direct observation in Getting From Plates To Politics was informational and intuitive. We as women have proven to be expert unifiers of both meal times and real lines of communication at and beyond the dinner table. Each presenter showed how and why it is so crucial to feed minds, souls and stomachs with our passions and platforms. And just like a great dessert, it can yield sweet rewards.

NFU Education Coordinator Melissa Miller led an introspective and enlivening seminar workshop entitled Know Your Leadership Style, in which we delved into our own belief systems, goals and missions. This was followed up with an interactive session on Work-Life Balance, where we looked at how to find harmony in our personal and professional lives.

Keynote speaker Lilia McFarland, USDA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program coordinator, seamlessly wove historical and current day applications of building a strong, sustainable small-scale family farm based agrarian system into our local, nationwide and global economies. Participants also took part in a poignant, heartfelt conversation on the role of female farmers as our sector continues to grow in the farming community. Not only is each and every one of us important and crucial to organizing and further developing such interests, but we are the hearts, minds and backbones of seeing it grow into fruition alongside our own viable creations.

Spotlighting these many different aspects, ideas and answers was Lisa Shirek, WFU member and founder of Painted Rock Farms, Amherst Junction. She shared candidly trials and triumphs of managing a collective of 22 women-owned meat producers.

Other topics throughout the conference were updates to the Food Safety Modernization Act; the power of CSAs, food hubs, collectives and cooperatives in marketing; financial planning and basic business tools; transformative thinking; business success and estate planning.

During a festive field trip, we caught a firsthand look at local enterprises that care, share and ware their endeavors energetically and enthusiastically with their visitors. At Dancing Goat Farm we were greeted by the resident goats, chickens, ducks, peacocks, quail, ponies, cats, and dog. Keel and Curley Winery & Brewery wet our whistles with delicious beverages from locally sourced fruit orchards, on-site grape vineyards and blueberry groves. It was picturesque and pitcher best all at once. Our last



stop was a stroll through the enchanted gardens of Sweet Water Organic Farm. This community supported and volunteer-run three-plus acre tract supports a seasonal CSA, weekly farm market, educational center, intern housing, and demonstration plantings for school children.

These ingenious entrepreneurs were rivaled by the homegrown talent of our hosting NFU staff committee, including Sarah Campbell, Melissa Miller, Andrew Jerome and Daniela Silva and photo documentarian Jennifer Jacqueline Stratton. Throughout this entire conference we were challenged with not only looking but seeing ourselves as intricate parts of a thriving whole. "We are only as strong as our weakest link." The gathering forged new bonds to strengthen our claims and chains.

Part of that bond comes from knowing that we are not limited by our gender. From driving cars, trucks, tractors to operating heavy machinery and light weight garden tools, women farmers are the heads and hands of the seeding, harvesting, selling, raising, nourishing and nurturing of flora, fauna and human species entrusted to our care. Added to these many layered job requirements is the profound dedication and pride we exemplify to ourselves and the world as splendid women, mothers, grandmothers, daughters, sisters, FARMERS. Any and all words are quite apropos and deserving of us for those who have shown up, spoke up, stood up and continue to stand-up for farm life and family farm livelihoods.

It was through the meeting, discussing, sharing, and laughing with so many other talented, smart and enthusiastic women we discovered that time, space and place binds us all in our various fields of work. In order for all of us in the farming community to not only 'Survive but Thrive' we need to be united — as Farmers Union continues to make happen.

# Chapter Chatter Share it here!

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

## Eau Claire County Farmers Union co-hosts rural schools forum

The Eau Claire County Farmers Union is co-hosting a Rural Issues Forum to discuss The Future of Rural Schools from 4-6pm, Thurs., Feb. 25 at the Augusta Senior Center, 601 Main St. Featured speakers will be Wisconsin Rural Schools Alliance Executive Director Kim Kaukl and Augusta Superintendent of Schools Ryan Nelson.

Join us to learn about local and national issues affecting education — and how you can join the fight for our rural schools! This meeting will be replicated in other counties. If interested in bringing this meeting to your area, contact Deb Jakubek at 715-590-2130.

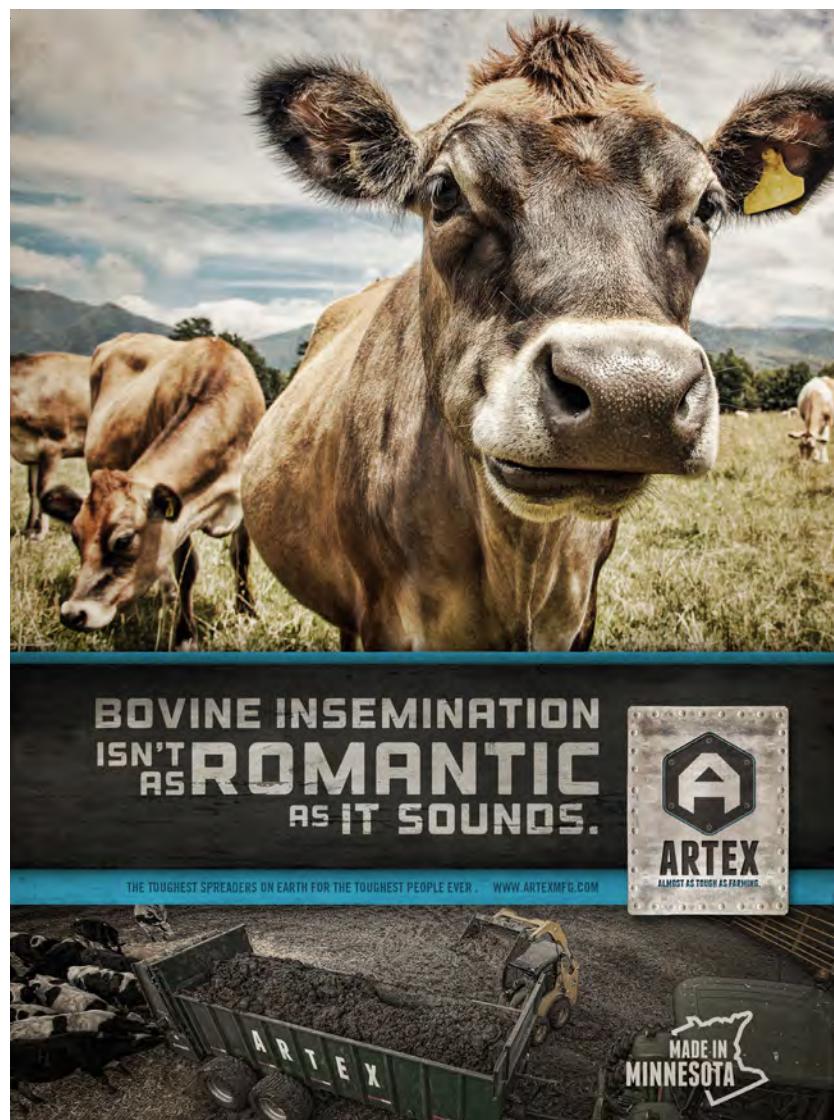
## WFU seeks photos for website project

Wisconsin Farmers Union will be rehauling its website in the coming months, and we're kicking stock photos to the curb! You, our members, are the lifeblood of this organization, and we would love to feature photos of your family farm or Farmers Union events. Photos can be sent to WFU Communications Director Danielle Endvick at [dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com).



### Barron County represents!

**Above:** Members of the Barron County Farmers Union chapter caught a break during the policy session at this year's convention. Pictured are, Jim Hare, Mike and Patty Racette, Kristi Schuebel, Janet Nelson, Don Schuebel, Carolyn and Verl Verhulst.



## Welcome Lorelei D'Huyvetter



Wisconsin Farmers Union has been pleased to have some extra help as we plan our 2016 Farm & Rural Lobby Day, coming up in Madison on March 15. (See details on page 1.)

Policy Intern Lorelei D'Huyvetter has been assisting with logistics and communications for the Lobby Day. Lorelei is a senior at UW-Madison and will graduate the spring with Horticulture degree. Lorelei grew up on an organic dairy and crop farm in Midwestern Wisconsin and loves helping out on the farm (especially feeding cute calves).

Be sure to say hello and thank her for her work if you see her at the Lobby Day!

# Whole Farm Revenue Protection program can help farmers diversify



**Margaret Krome**  
Michael Fields  
Agricultural Institute

For years, many farmers have been the first to say that it makes sense to diversify the crops and livestock they produce. It's the old wisdom of not putting all your eggs in one basket. With flooding, early killing frosts, hail, drought, and other weather-related losses being increasingly common, not to mention market variability, farmers who grow a more diverse mix of crops, with or without livestock, have less at risk if one enterprise has a poor year. Also, more diverse farms help suppress insect pests, weeds, and simultaneously create healthier soil that better absorb water and resist droughts.

But there have been and continue to be understandable reasons that farmers choose to grow only a very few crops; among them federal commodity policy, farmers' investments in equipment suited for current crops, familiarity with certain crops and enterprises and marketing channels for them, lenders' reluctance to support loans for new or unfamiliar enterprises, and federal crop insurance policy — all contribute to farmers' ambivalence to diversify. But when prices for existing crops fall and extreme weather threatens, farmers begin to think about new options.

One obstacle to diversification has begun to be made easier. Under previous crop insurance policies, farmers could buy insurance for major commodity crops, but non-commodity crops or those that weren't commonly grown in their area offer lacked insurance coverage.

Several years ago, the U.S. Department of Agriculture began experimenting with more flexible crop insurance programs; after the Farm Bill passed two years ago, USDA launched a program that not

only provides crop insurance for diversified operations but actually decreases the federal crop insurance premium the more enterprises a farm has. This Whole Farm Revenue Protection Program, available in every county of the nation, now offers crop insurance for a farm's entire revenue source, rather than on a commodity-by-commodity basis, based on the farm's tax filings over the previous five years. Because it insures revenue, rather than specific crops, farmers are free to expand the types of crop and livestock enterprises on their farms.

The program has relevance for a wide range of farm types. Direct-marketing fresh fruit and vegetable farms, who have rarely qualified for crop insurance, not only can be eligible, but the Department created more flexible record-keeping requirements this year for such farmers. Similarly, many specialty crop growers who've struggled to get coverage on all the crops they grow, may find this program suited to their needs. Conventional farmers of all types can benefit, and livestock farmers also can qualify, except for people raising animals for pets. The program offers protection against marketing as well as weather-related losses, unless they were the result of negligence or human error.

Sign-up isn't difficult, with much of the information required coming straight off a farm's tax records for the past five years. But the deadline for Wisconsin farmers to sign up for Whole Farm Revenue Protection is **March 15**, so farmers should contact their crop insurance agent immediately. Because it's a new program, if your crop insurance agent isn't familiar with the program, you can find one at <http://www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html>. For more information about this program, USDA has several fact sheets and lists of frequently asked questions on their website: <http://www.rma.usda.gov/policies/wfrp.html>.

**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.*

<input type="checkbox"/> Dairy	<input type="checkbox"/> Poultry	<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetables or Fruit
<input type="checkbox"/> Beef	<input type="checkbox"/> Crops	<input type="checkbox"/> Organic
<input type="checkbox"/> Hogs	<input type="checkbox"/> Horses	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____

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

<input type="checkbox"/> New Member	<input type="checkbox"/> Renewing Member
<input type="checkbox"/> 1 Year (\$30)	<input type="checkbox"/> 2 Years (\$55)
<input type="checkbox"/> 4 Years (\$100)	<input type="checkbox"/> Lifetime (\$2000)
<input type="checkbox"/> Student (\$15)	<input type="checkbox"/> 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](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com)

**For more information, call 800-272-5531**

# What's on Your Table? with Diane Tirry

## Meet the Razvi Family



From time to time I enjoy featuring recipes from WFU members along with some tidbits about their family and farm. While working at the 85th annual convention in Appleton, I met Alicia Razvi, the Wood-Portage-Waupaca County Farmers Union secretary/treasurer, who also served on the WFU Elections Committee. I asked if she wouldn't mind sharing about herself and family. Alicia, along with her husband, Shabbar, has three young kids and enjoys life on their two-acre AG zoned place in Stevens Point.

The Razvis joined Farmers Union in 2013 for a few reasons. The Razvi children are homeschooled. The Farmers Union youth program and WFU Kamp Kenwood helped them better know their land, their farmers and their food. Also, they are a Muslim family who follows halal eating practices. Halal is similar to Kosher and becomes important in animal slaughter. Since the nearest markets for halal goods are Madison and Chicago, Alicia and Shabbar decided to work with local farmers and arrange purchase of their own beef and lamb. The experience of knowing their cow was very positive!

Finally and most significant, in 2012, Shabbar battled and beat Leukemia. He needed a bone marrow transplant to survive and has been in remission for four years! But his Leukemia was an environmental cancer, so the Razvis became quickly aware of what they were eating and drinking. The past two years have been a happy adventure of growing their own chickens and ducks for meat and eggs, finishing and harvesting turkeys, arranging a grass-fed cow for their extended family and growing as many vegetables as possible. Alicia said WFU has brought so much positive to their lives, and they love the relationships they are building in their community and the strides made to be closer to the land.

Alicia shared two family recipes below: The Spicy tandoori chicken recipe comes from Shabbar's Indian family background, and the other, Grandma's Meatloaf, is an American comfort food recipe from Alicia's family.



## CHICKEN TANDOORI MASALA (INDIAN SPICE RUB)

*The Razvi Family*

### Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon salt
- 2 tablespoons coriander powder
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 3 teaspoon Tandoori powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin powder
- 1 tablespoon ginger paste
- 1 tablespoon garlic paste
- Juice of one lemon
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1-2 pounds of chicken pieces. We love wings.

Mix dry ingredients, then add wet ingredients to form a paste. Toss chicken to coat. Marinate chicken pieces in paste for at least one hour, but at most one day. Fry, roast or grill chicken as your preferred method. We prefer grilling. We eat this meal with naan, an Indian flat bread or corn on the cob and a salad.

This is hands down our favorite meal in the summer time. And if we are sharing a meal or potluck, it is often what we bring to the group. The spice in the recipe comes from the tandoori powder you add. So add less if you like it mild. And consider dipping your chicken in a yogurt sauce to cool things down. If you love the heat, add a pinch of cayenne!



## GRANDMAMA'S MEATLOAF

*The Razvi Family*

### Ingredients:

- 1-1 1/2 pounds ground beef
- 1 sleeve saltines crushed to crumbs
- 1 small can tomato juice
- 1 medium onion, minced
- 1 egg
- Salt and pepper to taste (I use 1 tsp salt and several cranks of the pepper mill)

Place all ingredients in a bowl, with hands mix everything until fully incorporated. Form into a loaf or loose football shape and place on a cookie sheet. Bake at 350 for 1 hour.

### Sauce:

- 1/2 cup ketchup
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 2-3 shakes of Worcestershire sauce

Mix all ingredients in a small bowl, spread mixture on meatloaf in last 15 minutes of baking.

*Alicia notes: This simple recipe is complete comfort food for my family. It comes from my Dad's mom for the loaf recipe and my Mom's mom for the sauce. Everyone smiles when they walk in after taekwondo practice if meatloaf is on the table. My boys especially love it and there is never anything left over. (But when there used to be leftovers, they make a mean meatloaf sandwich the next day.) We almost always serve this dish with mashed potatoes and roasted broccoli.*

I am always open to meeting our members and especially love receiving your family recipe favorites. If you'd be willing to share recipes with me, you can send them to dtiry@wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

Happy and healthy eating to all!

Diane

# BITS N' PIECES

## Heart of Wisconsin Grazing event set

The Heart of Wisconsin 22nd Annual Winter Grazing Conference is coming up Thursday, March 17 at Stoney Creek Inn in Rothschild. The main conference will run from 9:45am to 3:45pm.

Topics and presenters will include:

- The economics of grazing annuals, Daniel Olson, Byron Seeds
- Management practices to improve pasture productivity and quality on organic dairy farms, Chelsea Zegler, UW-Madison, and Geoff Brink, USDA Agriculture Research Service
- Building Resilience: Cover Crops and Their Role in Your Grazing Operation, Jason S. Cavadini, UW-Marshfield Agricultural Research Station
- No Grain Dairy Farms: They are working, Kevin Mahalko, Mahalko Dairy, and Jeff and Pam Riesgraf, Riesgraf Dairy

There will also be a bonus evening session from 6 to 7:30pm on Driftless Waters: A Land Use History Lesson in Destruction, Redemption, and Renewal, featuring retired DNR fisheries biologist David Vetrano. Farmers play an important role in land use management. Learn how damaged natural systems can be brought back under good management with time and patience.

Pre-registration is highly recommended and is available at <http://tinyurl.com/o4zzovl>. The cost is \$15 per person or \$20 for walk-ins. RSVP by March 11.

For questions, contact Bill Kolodziej at 715 261-6000 or [william.kolodziej@co.marathon.wi.us](mailto:william.kolodziej@co.marathon.wi.us). The conference is sponsored by the Central Wisconsin River Graziers Network and Golden Sands RC&D.

## Assembly passes High Capacity Well Bill

Assembly Bill 874, which would grant permits for existing high capacity wells in perpetuity, passed through the Assembly Feb. 18. This legislation lacks key components of WFU policy, including periodic review of all high capacity well permits, and would allow continued rates of pumping that have dried up lakes, rivers, and the private wells of families and other farmers.

The bill would make it easier for farmers to repair, replace, or reconstruct their high capacity wells. It would also give farmers a measure of certainty in property values by allowing a high capacity well permit to transfer with the sale of property. Wisconsin Farmers Union agrees with both of these provisions, but opposes the bill unless it is amended to include a periodic review of all high capacity well withdrawals.

Periodic review of all high capacity well permits would ensure water withdrawals are not putting pressure on local water resources and would treat

all users equally. It would also grant farmers certainty for the length of their permit, and is not an unprecedented idea as other groundwater permits such as wastewater discharges are periodically reviewed on a five year basis.

Without periodic review, two classes of water users will be created under this bill. Those with high capacity well permits will have their withdrawals locked in, putting new farmers and businesses to an area at a disadvantage. Those who have permits will continue to have access to as much water as they were originally permitted for, while those without permits will be left to fight amongst themselves for whatever water remains.

The bill is a step forward in acknowledging that certain parts of the state face groundwater quantity issues by instructing the DNR to study a handful of watersheds in the Central Sands. However, it does not go far enough in granting authority to the DNR to remedy any problems they may discover.

## Rural Women Gathering Day set

**FOND DU LAC** — The Wisconsin Rural Women's Initiative will be hosting a Gathering Day March 12 at Founders Hall in Fond du Lac. The event will run from 9am to 2pm.

Those involved are encouraged to experience the unique Gathering Circle process and share stories in a supportive environment. Participants will engage in great conversation, meet friends old and new, and discuss topics such as empowerment and life stressors.

The cost is \$15 and includes food, program, and materials. Sponsors include the FDL Foundation and Wisconsin Rural Women's Initiative.

For more information contact Christy Harteau, director of administration at 262-812-3866 or email [wisconsinruralwomen@gmail.com](mailto:wisconsinruralwomen@gmail.com).

## Free grant advising available

Are you thinking of applying for a Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) grant? Farmers and ranchers in the North Central region are invited to submit grant proposals to explore sustainable agriculture solutions. Proposals should show how farmers plan to use their own innovative ideas to address sustainable ag options and how they will share project results. Projects should emphasize research or education.

Wisconsin Farmers Union is continuing its partnership with Michael Fields Agricultural Institute (MFAI) to provide free grant advising service. If you are considering any funding program or just want to know what is out there, please get in touch with MFAI Grants Advisor Deirdre Birmingham at [deirdreb4@gmail.com](mailto:deirdreb4@gmail.com) or 608-219-4279. She

is also a farmer and speaks from experience.

Contact Deirdre to be added to her email list so you get funding program announcements for Wisconsin as well as federal programs.

Find more grant opportunities at <http://www.michaelfields.org/grant-advising-resources/>.

For more information specific to the North Central SARE grant opportunity, visit <http://www.north-centralsare.org/Grants/Our-Grant-Programs/Farmer-Rancher-Grant-Program>.

## Value-added food and farm business consulting offered

A group of newly certified counselors are now available to work with local food businesses and farms in need of technical assistance to increase their bottom line. Eighteen counselors from throughout Wisconsin are offering assistance in cost of production modeling, market research, marketing, funding options, sales channels, business modes and more.

The Value-Added Food and Farm Business Counselor Program was developed by the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection in conjunction with the UW-Extension Food Finance Institute and is being administered by DATCP.

"My colleagues in the local food industry were seeing a need for a collection of people with targeted knowledge on how to offer technical assistance to farms and value-added food businesses," said program manager Kietra Olson. "We're hoping that this network of certified counselors can offer a long-term solution to that need."

The program started last autumn with an application process to find experienced industry members who underwent intensive training to receive Value-Added Food and Farm Business Counselor certification. The training was provided by Tera Johnson of the UW-Extension Food Finance Institute, who will continue to mentor the new counselors as they begin their work with clients.

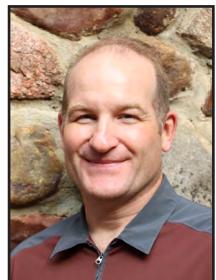
The group of counselors consists of local food industry professionals who bring their own expertise and knowledge to the table. Areas of expertise cover everything from the dairy industry to value-added processing, specialty meats, organic farming, CSAs, branding and marketing, and more.

Counselors' fee schedules range from no cost to \$150/hour. A full list of counselors, including contact information, fees and background can be found at [http://datcp.wi.gov/Business/Buy\\_Local\\_Buy\\_Wisconsin/Food\\_and\\_Farm\\_Certification\\_Program/index.aspx](http://datcp.wi.gov/Business/Buy_Local_Buy_Wisconsin/Food_and_Farm_Certification_Program/index.aspx)

Businesses interested in receiving technical assistance from one of the counselors listed should contact the counselor directly. Those seeking assistance on how to select a counselor, or help with other questions, can contact Kietra Olson at [kietra.olson@wisconsin.gov](mailto:kietra.olson@wisconsin.gov) or 608-224-5112.

# Kamp Kenwood Corner

Enjoy winter at the Cabin on Lake Wissota



**Brad Henderson**  
WFU Facilities Manager

What does Kamp Kenwood do in winter? The cabins go quiet, the water shuts off, the bunk beds lie motionless, still, waiting for summer's visitors. The classrooms yield to tables and chairs for storage, the costumes lie still on hangers and in drawers.

Our lodge, though cold, streams sunlight — now low in the sky — across the terrazzo floor and up the north wall. Our lake freezes deep and snaps with shifting ice, fisherman, snowmobiles traveling by.

The firewood for summer is easy to claim, devoid of leaves and lying on frozen ground. The work of mending fences, trimming branches, repairing doors and windows busies short-lighted days. Visitors make their way to our cozy cabin on the lake — families, friends, skiers, skaters, and more fishermen. The woods come to life, woodpeckers tapping, squirrels commence the chase, elusive fox leave prints in the snow.

Would you like to experience the winter at Kamp Kenwood? Consider a stay in our cabin on Lake Wissota. Winter rates are in effect through March. Contact me, Brad Henderson, at 715-214-7244 for more information.



### Donations always appreciated

When asking for contributions to WFU Kamp Kenwood I'm always optimistic, and I have good reason to be. After our wish list article ran in December, we received help from three different individuals who provided cutting boards for the kitchen, a pressure washer, and a large fan for the lodge. These items will be put to use throughout the year in operating and maintaining Kamp Kenwood, and we want the givers to know they are greatly appreciated for providing them! If you are curious to know what items we still need, check out [www.kampkenwood.com](http://www.kampkenwood.com).

### Reminder

Stay up-to-date on Farmers Union news by reading our e-news. Not finding emails from WFU in your inbox? Make sure they haven't landed in a spam or promotions folder!

Questions? Ask Danielle at 715-471-0398 or [dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com](mailto:dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com).

Wisconsin  
Farmers Union  
**KAMP KENWOOD**

CHIPPEWA FALLS, WI

## Cabin on Lake Wissota



Wisconsin Farmers Union's Cabin on Lake Wissota is nestled on the shore of Moon Bay on the northeast side of Lake Wissota, adjacent to the trails of Lake Wissota State Park.

A perfect destination for people who love outdoor recreation in all seasons:

### Family gatherings

Retreats

Ice fishing

Skiing

Skating



WINTER DISCOUNT!  
2-night stay  
for \$350  
(available Oct-April)

Fully furnished cabin  
sleeps 10-12 adults

Contact Brad Henderson  
at 715-214-7244 to  
make your reservation.

**WFU Kamp Kenwood**  
19161 79th Avenue • Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

[www.kampkenwood.com](http://www.kampkenwood.com)  
[www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com](http://www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com)

# The Ramifications of Brazilian and Argentine Agricultural Expansion for U.S. Grain Producers

The WFU Grain Committee undertook a cursory analysis of the United State's major competitors for the production and export of corn and soybean. Brazil and Argentina have become our most formidable competitors for grain production, currently meeting the demand in global markets better than the United States. This trend and their strength can be expected to increase.

## Brazilian and Argentine Agriculture

Brazil in 2015 had about 110 million (MM) cropland acres, but that number could easily more than triple to 350 million acres if the Cerrado (savannahs) were cropped.<sup>1</sup> In comparison, U.S. cropland acreage amounts roughly to 226 million acres. Presently, arable land in Brazil comprises 9.1 percent of total land mass, but has grown from 6.9 percent since 1996. Argentina in the same period increased its arable land from 9.9 to 14.5 percent of total land.<sup>2</sup> Agriculture constitutes 21 percent of Brazil's gross domestic product.

For total arable land, the World Bank data show that, for the period of 1996 to 2013, Argentina increased from 27.2 MM hectares (ha) to 39.7 MM ha, Brazil grew from 57.9 MM ha. to 76 MM ha., while the U.S. declined from 179 MM ha. to 151.8 MM ha.<sup>3</sup>

During the same period, the World Bank reports that Brazil increased land under cereal production from 17.5 million hectares (ha) to 20.9 million hectares, an increase of 8.4 MM ac. Crop land has appreciated geometrically; for example, it is reported that virgin or pasture land purchased in 1998 in Mato Grosso at \$160/ac now goes for \$6,900/ac.<sup>4</sup> Argentina decreased its acres under cereal production for the same period from 11.1 MM ha to 10.96 MM ha. Contrarily, in the U.S. land under cereal production for the same period dropped from 64.9 MM ha. to 59.5 MM ha., a drop of 13.3 MM ac.<sup>5</sup>

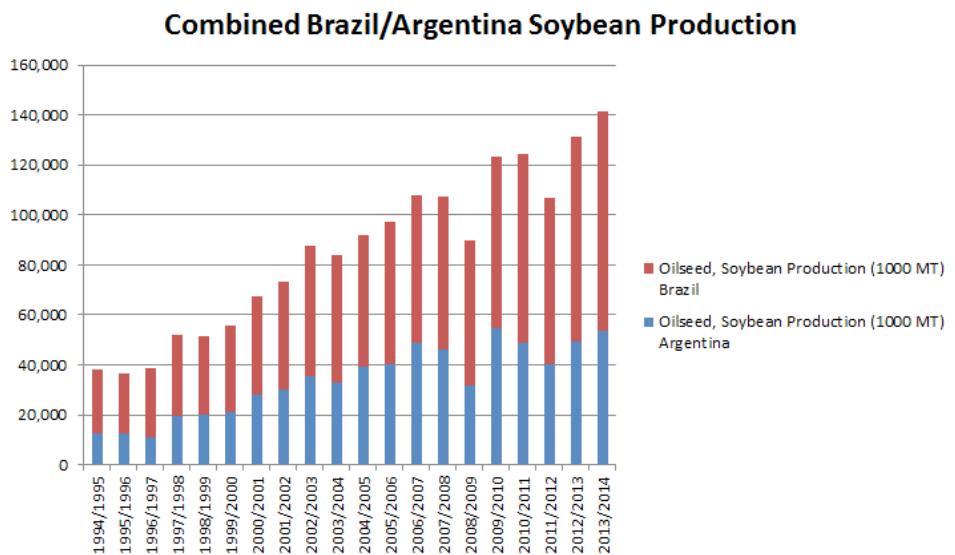
## Brazilian and Argentine Soybean Production

Like in the U.S., Japanese immigrants introduced soybeans to Brazil at the turn of the twentieth century. In a period of 23 years from 1990 to 2013, Brazil has increased its soybean acreage nearly threefold to 28.9 million hectares (c. 71.4 million acres) and its soybean production about 5.5 times to 88 million metric tons (c. 3.2 billion bushels). Average yield per acre in 2013/2014 year amounted to 45.3 bu/ac, which increased markedly from an average yield of 24.3 bu/ac in 1990.<sup>6</sup> As of 2014, Brazil was exporting roughly half (about 45 MM MT) of its production of soybeans.

Brazil's expansion of soybean planting has moved from its three southernmost states of Sao Paulo, Parana Santa Catarina, and Rio Grande do Sul into the north in what is called the Cerrado, comprising chiefly the states of Mato Grosso Do Sul, Mato Grosso in the northwest adjacent to the Amazon, Minas Gerais, Goias, etc. The Cerrado is estimated to contain about five million acres, or about 20 percent of total continental US land mass. This is where the expansion in soybean production is and will continue to occur. Pasture and lightly rolling plains (3 percent slope or less) are first converted to planting upland rice, because of their high acidity, before planting soybeans.

When we add in Argentine soybean production, over a 20-year period beginning in 1994/1995 until 2013/2014, combined country annual production has nearly quadrupled (3.8 times) to amount to 140 million MT (5.14 billion bu.). Argentina during this period increased their production 4.4 times. Argentina's soybean crop for the 2015-2016 crop year is projected to be a record with 62 MM MT (2.3 BB bu.).

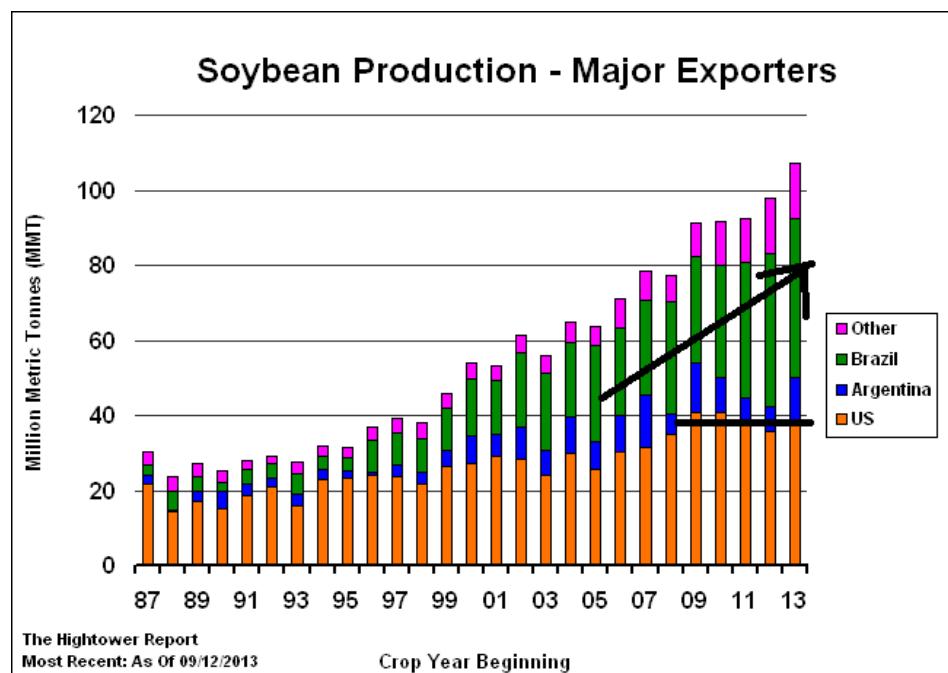
With Marci becoming president of Argentina in December 2015 and eliminating the export tax on corn, wheat, and beef, and reducing export tax on soybeans from 35 percent down to 30 percent, Argentine farmers and grain traders will look to export more soybeans, not just soybean oil and meal. The Argentine tax agency estimates that Argentine farmers are holding \$11.4 billion in corn, soybeans, and wheat in their bins for export.<sup>7</sup>



## Brazilian and Argentine Soybean Exports

As the chart below from the Hightower Report clearly shows, Brazil is exporting nearly as many soybeans as the U.S. and over the last 20 years has annually been increasing those exports. According to USDA reports, though, Brazil has exported more soybeans than the U.S. since 2012. Together, both Argentina and Brazil significantly export more soybeans than the U.S. and can be expected to rapidly expand their market share even more in the coming years. U.S. soybean exports, though, have remained virtually flat or declined slightly over the last five years.

We can expect Argentina to continue to be the world's largest exporter of soybean oil and meal with its crushing industry located proximate to its ports and its farmers. The U.S. pales to only a fifth of Argentine oil and meal exports.



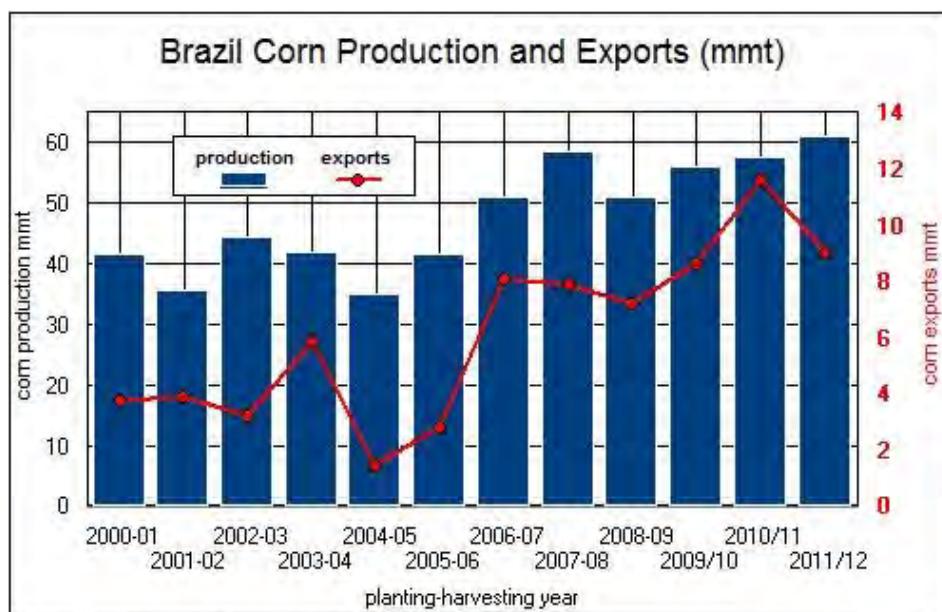
## Brazilian and Argentine Maize (Corn) Production

While Brazil is noted for its soybean production, it is not regarded as a major corn producer. During a 12-year period between 2001 and 2013, corn planting grew from roughly 12 million hectares (29.7 MM ac.) to 15.5 million hectares (38.3 MM ac.). Nowhere near the growth seen in soybean planting, but production more than doubled to a high of 76 MM MT (c. 3 billion bu.); yields increased on average 60 percent, but peaking at 78 bu/ac. Yields in the south now exceed 120 bu/ac. While Midwestern corn yields

are not seen in Brazil, this is attributable to the fact that corn is often planted as a second crop (38% in Mato Grosso and 68% in Mato Grosso do Sul), low fertilizer rates are used, and nighttime temperatures are higher.

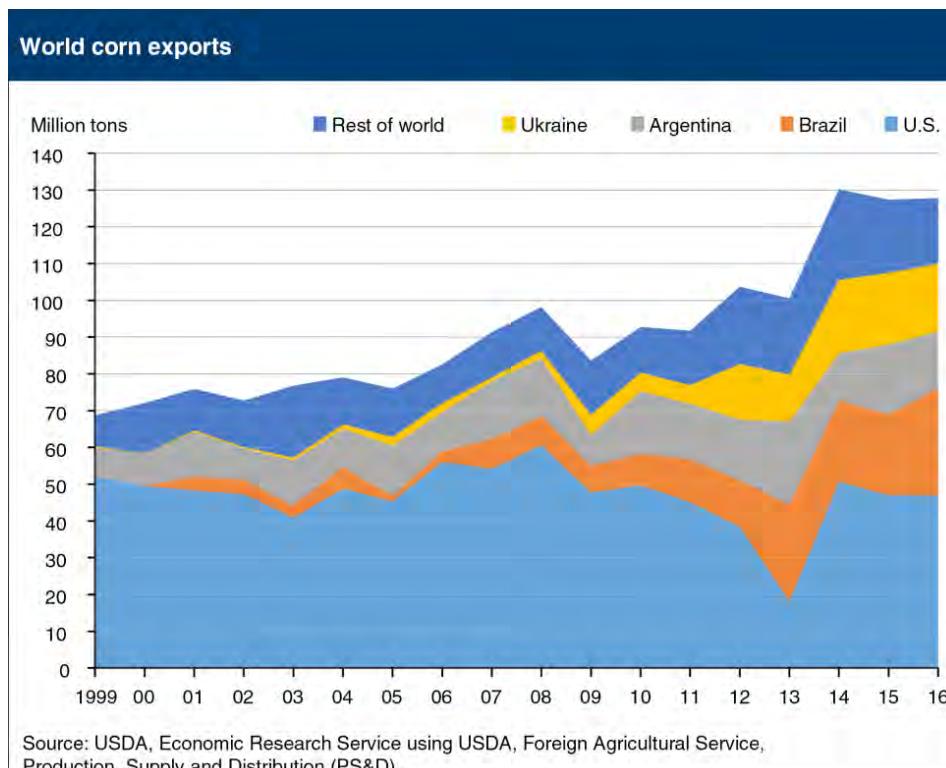
Most of its corn is used for livestock feed, not export, with at most only 14 percent of its crop being exported (c. 12 MM MT in 2010, or c 472 MM bu.). Brazil is gradually increasing its corn acreage, using shorter maturities, especially for double-cropping.

Between 2007 and 2011, as a five-year average, the U.S. dominated 54 percent of the global corn export market, but Argentina and Brazil had 16 and 9.4 percent, respectively of that market, ranking second and third. Because of the severe drought in the U.S. in 2012, for a single year Brazil, according to the USDA's chief economist, exported more corn than the U.S., demonstrating that it has the capacity to capture markets and reallocate its supply of corn.



Data source USDA; far right February 2012 estimates

When we combine corn exports for both Argentina and Brazil beginning in and after 2014, together these two countries are not exporting as much as the U.S., but are increasing their market share of the global export market to nearly match U.S. export. Basically, over the past 10 years, U.S. export of corn has remained flat, excluding the drought of crop year 2012, while Brazil particularly continues to expand its corn exports. With the



elimination of the Argentine export tax on corn, Argentina can be expected to increase its exports dramatically in 2016 and to be a major competitor to the U.S. export market. It would seem that these two countries can easily surpass U.S. corn exports in 2016 and thereafter.

Certainly, the projected drop in U.S. exports of both corn and soybeans (down 25.3% and 12.6%, respectively, year-on-year) for 2015, because of the strong U.S. dollar, does not bode well for U.S. competitiveness.<sup>8</sup>

#### Challenges for Argentina and Brazil in Expanding Their Grain Trade

Although Argentina and Brazil are becoming formidable competitors to U.S. farmers in international markets and have surpassed U.S. exports recently, they face serious obstacles in dominating these markets.

Argentina, under Marci, has eliminated or reduced its export tax on agricultural commodities. The administration has also indicated that it intends to float the peso, now pegged at P9.77 to the U.S. dollar while the black market has it with 52 percent less value (P14.86) than the U.S. dollar. If and when this occurs, it will make their exports even cheaper vis-à-vis the U.S. Pent-up export pressure will further exacerbate U.S. competitiveness.

Brazil, while possessing nearly unfathomable development potential for agricultural and grain commodities, is meeting greater barriers, some of which they are overcoming. Because development of the Cerrado requires large initial investment for clearing land of brush, initial investment, excluding land acquisition, is comparatively large. Further, commodities must be hauled more than a 1,000 kilometers to ports in the south. Brazil's ports, however, have the ability to load ocean grain carriers that are 50 percent bigger than U.S. ports can handle in order to take advantage of the expanded facilities of the Panama Canal. Unfortunately, ships tire of waiting as much as 60 days to load in Santos and Paranagua in the south and frequently give up and contract out of the U.S.

Soybeans and other commodities hauled over unpaved roads lose beans on their way to the ocean or to the Amazon terminals. Bunge completed a terminal on the Amazon (at Santarem) in 2013 to match a decade-old one of Cargill and BR-163, though unpaved, is now capable of moving soybeans to Amazon terminals from Mato Grosso, significantly reducing freight cost.. Other grain traders such as ADM are building and expanding more terminals. Bunge now operates a terminal on the Tapajos River, which cuts the trucking distance, and utilizes barges to transport the grain to the Amazon; Cargill is awaiting approval to put a terminal on the same river..

Paved and expanded road system out of the Cerrado and the expansion of ocean port facilities are the two main hurdles for improving Brazil's competitiveness, but with ADM, Bunge, and Cargill investing billions of dollars, infrastructure obstacles will be overcome.

#### Global Demand for Soybeans and Corn

Global demand for soybeans has grown more than 25 percent since 2011 to reach 126.8 MM MT and occupies 88 percent of the world oilseed import market, beating out rapeseed, peanuts, and palm.<sup>9</sup> Despite the weakening Chinese economy that has been the driver of the world's expansion and soybean exports for more than a decade, we expect this trend to continue, but not at the pace previously seen.

Global import of soybean meal has grown also during the same period, but only by 12 percent to reach 63.6 MM MT, and only dominates 76 percent of the meal import market.

China and, more so, India have tremendous demand for vegetable oil that their domestic production cannot meet. In 2015, for example, China and India imported 10 MM MT and 14.5 MM MT, respectively. The vast majority of their vegetable oil is exported as palm oil by Indonesia and Malaysia, with even Argentine soybean oil not even coming close to palm oil imports.

With the demand for vegetable protein in Asian diets and, the increase for soybean's use in livestock feed, the rising demand for soybeans is forecasted to continue, particularly when developing countries seek higher nutrition standards and the shift to more meat consumption.

See GRAIN ▶ p.21

# Emerging Leaders gather in Tomah

Thirty-five adults and 19 children attended this year's Emerging Leaders Retreat at the Cranberry Country Lodge in Tomah Feb. 12-14.

Attendees spent the weekend learning more about WFU and how they could become more involved through the programs offered at the county, state and national level.

Along with the learning, there was plenty of time to spend with family in the pool area and networking with new and old friends from across the state. While the adults met, the children were educated and entertained while making new friends in the kids area.



## Thank you Associate Members!

Does your organization share the values of Wisconsin Farmers Union?

Contact WFU Membership Coordinator Deb Jakubek at 715-590-2130 to learn how being an Associate Member can benefit you and further our efforts in protecting family farms and rural communities.

Falls Silo Repair  
Osseo Plastics & Supply, Inc  
Cooperative Network  
Vernon Telephone Co-Op  
Midwest Renewable Energy Assoc.  
Barron Mutual Ins. Co.  
Dallman Insurance Agency, LLC  
Michael Fields Agricultural Institute  
Crawford Stewardship Project  
Deaton Nutrition, Inc  
Premier Co-Op  
Greenville Co-Op  
Hay River Pumkin Seed Oil  
Natural Heritage Land Trust  
Don-Rick Insurance  
Viroqua Food Cooperative



Wisconsin  
Farmers Union  
Kamp Kenwood

Chippewa Falls, WI

Our overnight youth camps promise a summer experience full of memories to last a lifetime! Camp education programs focus on cooperation, leadership and sustainability.

### 2016 Camp Sessions

Jr 1/Jr High 1 Camp • (Ages 8-14) • \$90 June 7-10	Senior Camp • (Ages 14-18) • \$100 June 12-16
Junior Camps • (Ages 8-12) • \$90 June 28-July 1 • August 9-12 August 14-17 • August 21-24	Acorn Day Camp • (Ages 7+) • \$15 August 5
Jr High 2 Camp • (Ages 12-14) • \$95 July 31-August 4	Family Camp • (All Ages) • Prices vary July 29-30

800.272.5531 • camp@wisconsinfarmersunion.com  
www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com



**From p. 19 ► GRAIN**

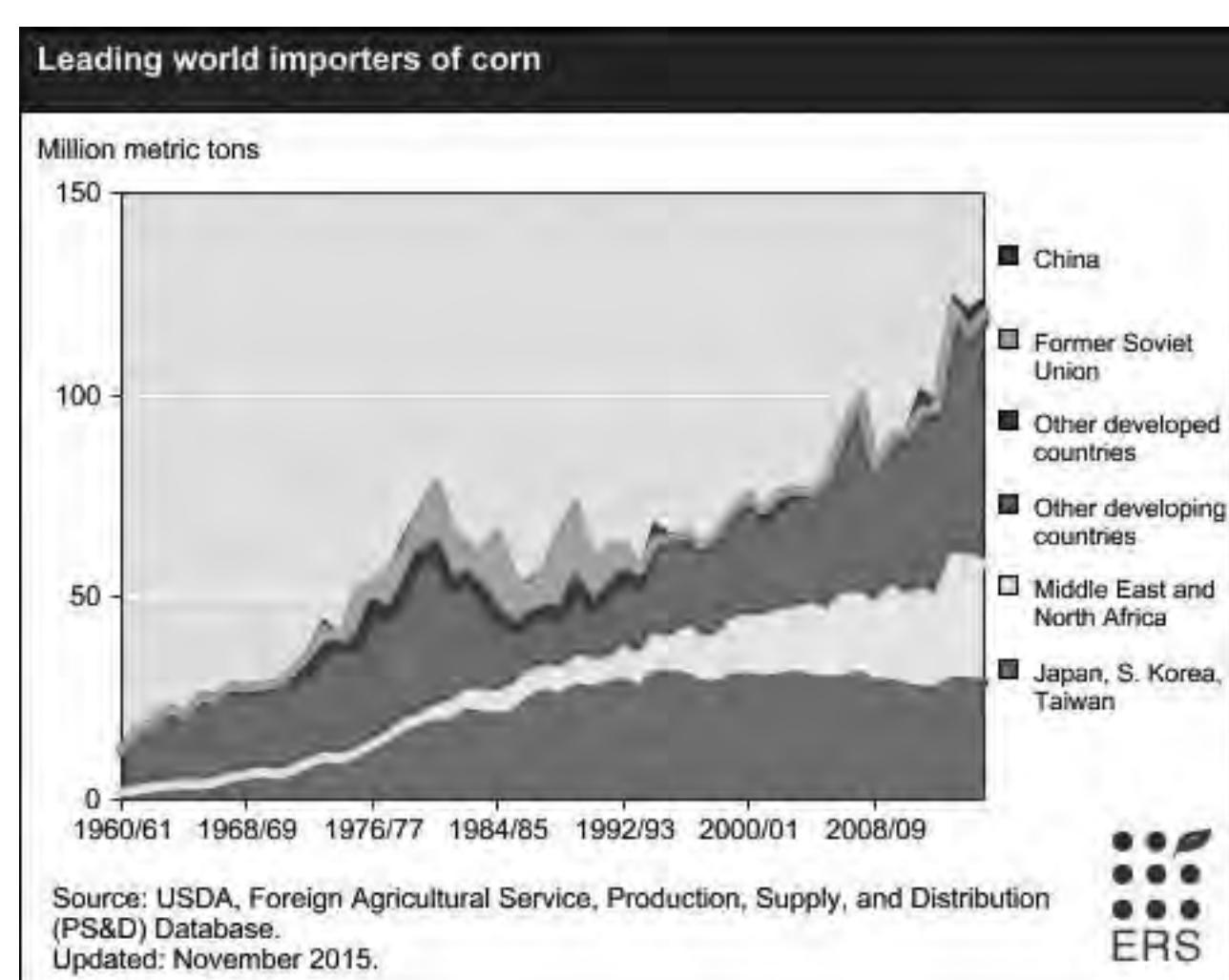
Because of the use of corn as a livestock feed, for the same reason noted above, world demand for corn is expected to continue to rise, particularly in consideration that the growth in imports has and is continuing to occur in the developing countries, the Middle East and North Africa. Unlike soybeans, Chinese corn imports are not as significant because China has been a major corn producer and, until three years ago, exported corn.

**Summary and Outlook**

In the U.S., we have essentially used export markets as a release valve to compensate for our over-production of corn and soybeans. With the U.S. dollar treated as a reserve currency and as a safe haven, we have continued to lose market share to other countries, particularly Argentina and Brazil. As our competitiveness in major export markets declines, while input prices lag the declining demand for our product, U.S. grain farmers face difficult choices. For 2016, domestic stocks for both corn and soybeans are very high. We are encountering a long-term structural market recession, if not depression in grain farming. Over-production is not out-stripping demand, hence the need for corn ethanol in the U.S.

Brazil's economy, as in 2015, is predicted to shrink 2.5 to 3 percent in 2016. Investment in farm and agriculture spending is forecasted to be cut a third (Economist, Jan. 2, 2016).

With the Brazilian reai losing 50 percent of its value against the U.S. dollar in 2015, and with its shrinking economy, partially attributed to the drop in world commodity prices (oil, iron ore, soybeans), Brazil may be facing a decade of political and economic turmoil, but the projected drop in its currency vis-à-vis its competitors bodes well for it to export more commodities, inclusive of soybeans, corn, cotton, etc., and capture greater share of world markets.



U.S. grain farmers would be advised to re-structure their farming practices, at least for the mid-term, because we will find it difficult to make a living on grain farming with the crops that we have become accustomed to grow. Further, for the U.S. corn belt, inclusive of soybean production in our duo-culture production, we can expect farm land values to continue to depreciate for the next several years at least.

**By Les Danielson & W. Michael Slattery**  
**WFU Grain Committee**

**RESOURCES:**

- <sup>1</sup> AgDecision Maker newsletter, Sept. 2001
- <sup>2</sup> World Bank data.
- <sup>3</sup> World Bank data.
- <sup>4</sup> Progressive Farmer, July 2015, pp. 17 and 20.
- <sup>5</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>7</sup> Bloomberg, Dec. 14, 2015.
- <sup>8</sup> FAS, USDA, US Export Sales, Dec. 31, 2015
- <sup>9</sup> FAS, USDA, Office of Global Analysis, Dec. 2015

## Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative among BLBW grant recipients

MADISON – The Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative was among seven local food projects named as recipients in the latest round of Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin grants administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP).

Designed to help farmers and food processors reach new local markets, the grants will provide consumers access to even more Wisconsin-grown food products, ranging from fresh fruits and vegetables to Wisconsin barley and organic maple syrup.

"I'm pleased DATCP was able to provide support for these innovative local food projects," said Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin Program Manager Teresa Engel. "The grants are intended to support the diverse sectors of Wisconsin agriculture, and outcomes generated by the grant recipients will provide benefits to local communities and serve as models for others in the local food industry."

DATCP received 23 funding requests of over \$750,000. Ultimately, seven projects totaling \$200,000 were selected to receive grants.

The grant will help the Wisconsin Food Hub Cooperative expand the market opportunity for Wisconsin farmers by increasing June and July sales of lettuce, zucchini and yellow squash and extending the timing of sales of winter squash through the Thanksgiving holiday.

Other 2016 grantees include B&E's Trees, LLC, La Crosse; The Cannery Public Market, Green Bay; Eastside Farmers Market, Madison; Fizzeology Foods, Viroqua; Hodan Community Services, Inc., Mineral Point; and REAP Food Group, Madison.

The Buy Local, Buy Wisconsin program has been funded since 2008. Since its inception, it has funded 45 projects, totaling \$1.2 million. Previous grant recipients have generated more than \$7 million in new local food sales, created and retained 187 jobs, and benefitted more than 2,365 producers and 1,380 markets. Learn more by visiting [http://datcp.wi.gov/Business/Local\\_and\\_Regional\\_Food\\_Program](http://datcp.wi.gov/Business/Local_and_Regional_Food_Program). For more information, contact Teresa Engel at 608-224-5101 or [teresa.engel@wisconsin.gov](mailto:teresa.engel@wisconsin.gov).



# WASHINGTON from National Farmers Union

## Corner

MARCH 2016

President Obama submitted his fiscal year 2017 budget request to Congress in early February, kicking off the federal budget process. It proposes beneficial research investments, as well as positive initiatives for rural America, but once again calls for cuts to crop insurance. In early February, Chinese government-owned ChemChina announced it would be acquiring Syngenta AG for \$43 billion, once again shaking up the agricultural inputs market. NFU will keep a close eye on this deal for potential competition and national security issues.

Leaders from the 12 nations party to the Trans-Pacific Partnership met in New Zealand in February to sign the agreement. The agreement cannot take effect, however, until Congress has approved it.

### TRANS-PACIFIC PARTNERSHIP SIGNED

The Trans-Pacific Partnership, a trade and investment deal among 12 Pacific-Rim countries including the United States, was signed by all member countries in early February.



The deal, modeled after many failed trade agreements of the past, threatens to increase the enormous U.S. trade deficit, and it does nothing to stop our foreign competitors from cheating the system. It also gives multinational companies the opportunity to undermine U.S. sovereignty by suing the U.S. government over our laws.



Before the deal can take effect, it will have to be approved by Congress - a tough task ahead of this presidential election. The top candidates from each party have all come out against the deal, even key Congressional supporters of past trade agreements have said the deal faces an uphill battle in Congress this year. President Obama will push for passage before he leaves office.

### CHEMCHINA TO PURCHASE SYNGENTA

China National Chemical Corporation, or ChemChina, announced in February that it will be acquiring Syngenta AG for \$43 billion. The deal, if approved, would make ChemChina the world's largest supplier of pesticides and agrochemicals.

National Farmers Union expressed concern over the deal, saying that everyone in agriculture, especially farmers, should be wary of this type of transaction. "NFU will pay particularly close attention to the alarming trend of Chinese government-owned entities purchasing U.S. and other agricultural companies," said NFU President Roger Johnson.

**CHEMCHINA**  
**中国化工集团公司**  
China National Chemical Corporation

If the deal goes through, Syngenta would be owned by a company controlled by the Chinese government. For an increasingly consolidated sector of agriculture, this is of particular concern because state-owned businesses frequently do not act in economically rational or predictable ways. As a result, more uncertainty will surround their business, and consequently, other competing businesses may be adversely affected. This typically leads to higher prices for customers of these businesses.



NFU is urging the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS) to review the transaction to the fullest capacity of its jurisdiction.

## PRESIDENT PROPOSES BUDGET FOR FY2017



President Obama submitted his final annual budget proposal to Congress in February, calling for a major cut to crop insurance, and a boost to funds for agricultural and clean energy research and development.

The administration, as it has done in past years, proposed an \$18 billion cut to crop insurance over 10 years. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack defended the cut, noting that USDA pays 62 percent of the crop insurance premiums and that the administration believes the cost burden between the government and farmers should be closer to 50-50.

The budget also proposed several beneficial investments to agriculture and rural America's future, including: \$700 million to the Agricultural and Food Research Initiative; funding for in-home rural care; funding to combat opioid addiction; increased funding for the summer nutrition programs for children; and increased SNAP funding for the elderly.

National Farmers Union was pleased with many of the initiatives rolled out in the budget, but strongly urged Congress to reject cuts to crop insurance, especially considering



the lagging farm economy, low commodity prices and weather challenges.

## BUDGET PROPOSAL DOUBLES CLEAN ENERGY R&D

Shortly before the president sent his budget proposal to Congress, he announced that he planned to double research and development (R&D) funding for clean energy initiatives from \$6.8 billion to \$12.8 billion by 2021.

This proposed increase comes just months after more than 190 nations agreed to a climate change agreement in Paris. If approved by Congress, the plan would set an example for the 20 countries that committed to the Mission Innovation initiative, an agreement that these nations would double their governments' clean energy R&D investments over 5 years.



Agriculture's conscientious approach to sustainable food and energy production, as well as climate change mitigation, has driven the need for continued investment in research and innovation in these areas. Research investments from the public sector have remained relatively stagnant since 1980, while private-sector investments have grown.

The budget also calls for a \$106 million investment from the U.S. Department of Agriculture for the development of bio-based energy sources that range from forest systems and farm products to increased biofuels production.

## MICROLOAN PROGRAM EXPANDED

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) in January expanded a federal microloan program designed to assist underserved farmers. The improvements to the program include expanding the eligibility requirements, simplifying the application process and expediting approval of real estate loans.

Since its inception in 2013, the USDA's microloan program has provided more than 16,800 low-interest loans, totaling over \$373 million, to producers across the country. The program is especially useful for beginning farmers and ranchers, veterans, small producers and other underserved communities in agriculture. For more information on this program and how to apply, contact your local FSA office.

## THE FACES AND PLACES OF FARMERS UNION

NFU is hosting a photo contest on Facebook - from February 1 - November 30, 2016 to showcase our members and the diversity of their operations. Enter for a chance to win one of two grand prize \$500 Visa prepaid gift cards in addition to monthly prizes!

Don't have a Facebook account? You can still win! Send your photo to [ajerome@nfudc.org](mailto:ajerome@nfudc.org) along with a caption to be entered into the contest! Find out more about the contest on the NFU website: [nfu.org/facesandplaces](http://nfu.org/facesandplaces)



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

# This is what ‘feed the world’ looks like



**Alan Guebert**

As American agriculture grinds through February's dull weather and even duller commodity markets, two Chinese firms have used the month to make inroads into the American farm and food colossus.

First, on Feb. 3, China National Chemical Corp., known as ChemChina, announced its purchase of Syngenta, the Swiss-based chemical and seed giant, for the equivalent of \$43 billion. While that's a 22 percent premium to Syngenta's total share price, it's 10 percent less than Monsanto Co. offered to pay for the firm just last summer.

Two days later, on Feb. 5, Nebraska's unicameral legislature voted 34-14 to end the state's 18-year ban on meatpackers owning livestock for more than five days prior to slaughter. The move, noted the Lincoln Journal Star, means "Nebraska will now join those states in allowing meat processors like Chinese-owned Smithfield to contract with farmers to raise pigs in large, concentrated operations."

Smithfield Foods, owned by China-based WH Foods since 2013, raises and slaughters millions of hogs throughout the U.S. Its record \$15 billion in sales last year easily makes it the world's largest pork producer.

WH Foods and ChemChina are not independent, shareholder-owned firms like the companies they bought. Both are state-owned, both are almost entirely state-financed, and both are driven by national interests as much as by economics.

As such, these companies and their acquisitions are less about geopolitics and international finance and more about owning—or at least controlling—the means to supply China's 1.4 billion eaters with safe, abundant, and cheap food.

In fact, noted a Feb. 3 New York Times story dissecting the Syngenta deal, China is "very sensitive" to its reliance on foreign food. Three years ago, "30 million Chinese were eating Western-style foods" and now, according to market estimates, "... by 2018, 300 million Chinese [will] be consuming Western-style foods..."

That "Western-style" food, however, doesn't mean Western companies or Western farmers will be in charge. They may

grow the food, but they won't own it.

Indeed, China's recent moves to lock-up key elements—and Syngenta is just the latest key element—of the West's food chain is what "feeding the world" looks like in rural America tomorrow: China, or someone else, either owning or controlling the technology used to grow food with American soil, water, and labor.

I know, I know; you thought you'd be the one feeding China. While that remains partly true, it's now quite clear that China is buying technology to boost domestic production. Equally clear is that it hopes to make a profit selling you the technology you need to grow the food it will import.

Those clever Reds, the Long March never ended.

China's growing investment in offshore food production is not, however, manifest destiny. It's just the latest example of how globalization, the freer, legal movement of money and ideas around the world, will shape our collective and individual futures.

It also is a clear signal that American agriculture's ironclad belief in a "feed the world" future is no longer the future. Oh, we may still feed part of the world, but it's more likely we'll do it to honor a contract, not our conscience.

This should not be news to anyone who has been paying attention. American farmers and ranchers played an outsized role in creating this future, a future where the World Trade Organization now has more control over American farm policy than the American Farm Bureau Federation and where 34 legislators in Nebraska can open the state's front door to international hog conglomerates despite 1,100 local citizens petitioning them to keep it locked.

A generation ago neither would have even been considered. Now both hardly raise a yawn. What changed?

The world changed. Not long ago it bought our production; now it's buying our means of production. And yet, Christopher Columbus was right: the world is flat and getting flatter.

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**Above:** WFU President Darin Von Ruden, center, and Membership Coordinator Deb Jakubek, left, accepted a check from Al Gabor, Hastings Mutual Insurance Company Territory Manager at the 85th Annual WFU State Convention in late January. WFU and NFU both receive a percentage of every farm policy sold to Farmers Union Members that is then used to help grow membership and foster the relationship made across the state with policy holders. Interested in learning more about Hastings? Contact Deb at 715-590-2130 to learn about Hastings and other membership benefits available to you.