



WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION NEWS

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Photo by Danielle Endvick

Above: The sun set over a barn in Chippewa County. As winter sets in, the Wisconsin Farmers Union staff and board send warm wishes for a happy holiday season!

Tax cuts or trickery?

Tax reforms not all they're cracked up to be



Kara O'Connor
Government Relations Director

The week before Thanksgiving, The U.S. House of Representatives voted 227-205 to approve the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, a bill that would provide tax cuts and breaks to corporations and wealthy Americans at an estimated cost of \$1.5 trillion. The Senate is now pondering its own tax cut plan that differs slightly in the details, but would add just as much to the Federal deficit.

While the share of the pumpkin pie for wealthy Americans
See p.15 ► TAXES

WFU members to elect directors at convention

Delegates at the 87th annual Wisconsin Farmers Union State Convention Feb. 2-4 at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells will carry out the important task of electing directors to the WFU board. The election will be Sun., Feb. 4. Up for re-election this year are District 2 Director Dennis Rosen (Dunn, Pepin, Pierce, and St. Croix counties), District 6 Director Chris Holman (Adams, Columbia, Green Lake, Juneau, Marathon, Marquette, Portage, Waupaca, Waushara, and Wood counties) and District 7 Director Tina Hinchley (Dane, Jefferson, Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth counties). Rosen has announced he will not seek re-election.

In order to provide members with more information about candidates, WFU will publish brief incumbent and candidate biographies in the January edition of *WFU News*. Those interested in running are urged to email a brief biography (200 words or less) to Communications Director Danielle Endvick at dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com by Dec. 15. Any bios received by Jan. 19 will also be included in delegates' info packets.

Two delegates will also be elected to represent WFU at the National Farmers Union Convention in Kansas City, Missouri March 3-6.

Board candidates and anyone running for the National Convention delegate positions will be allowed to place a double-sided 8.5x11-inch letter-sized sheet about themselves on a designated table near the registration area at convention.

Find more details and register for convention on pages 4-5 or at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/convention.

Foxconn dollars could have been better spent



Darin Von Ruden
President

Rural broadband access. Affordable insurance. Transportation funding for better roads. Investment in building vibrant local economies. These are the things I hear many Wisconsinites asking their legislators for during my travels around the state for Wisconsin Farmers Union.

Instead, this fall Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker handed over a \$3 billion incentive package for the technology giant Foxconn, setting up the Taiwanese company to become the country's biggest foreign recipient of state subsidies.

See p.2 ► FOXCONN

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From p.1 ► FOXCONN

I can't help but wonder where those dollars might have otherwise gone and the good they could have done across the countryside.

This spring, Wisconsin Farmers Union was among a coalition that fought tooth and nail to keep Farm to School funding in the state budget. The \$66,400/year needed to restore the Farm to School program, which stimulates \$9 million worth of activity annually, is a far cry from the \$3 billion that will now line the pockets of a foreign corporation.

Thankfully, the Farm to School funding was secured, but the scenario left me wondering why our legislators drag their feet on investing in a relatively affordable program that clearly is generating a positive economic impact across Wisconsin — but then in turn unabashedly drop billions on a foreign investment that many are skeptical will actually pencil out as much of an economic boost for Wisconsin citizens.

On Nov. 16, Esquire ran an article on the Foxconn deal that ran with the headline "Scott Walker Really Should Have Read the Fine Print: Foxconn makes the rules now."

The article points out that even while Wisconsin has rolled out the gilded welcome mat for Foxconn and hailed it as a silver bullet for job growth, the company's net profit has been tumbling — down to about \$700 million this quarter, about 42 percent below the analysts' estimates.

An article in *The Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* quotes concerns from Tim Sheehy, president of the Metropolitan Milwaukee Association of Commerce, as he spoke at a meeting of the Greater Milwaukee Committee on the challenges the region faces in preparing for Foxconn. "Among those challenges are

increased traffic and the problem of getting huge numbers of workers — Foxconn says it will employ as many as 13,000 — to a semi-rural area 8 miles west of downtown Racine and more than 20 miles from downtown Milwaukee," the article states.

Funding has already been earmarked to widen the nearby stretch of Interstate 94 to eight lanes and improve local roads around the facility, according to the *Journal-Sentinel*. News broke in mid-November that Foxconn reportedly also suggested that some lanes be reserved for autonomous (self-driving) vehicles only.

These are the projects that are being pondered in our Capitol, even as rural roads crumble and our Main Street businesses struggle. It seems to me that our Governor and legislators are out of touch with the real needs of Wisconsin citizens.

The Racine incentive package reportedly would help subsidize 13,000 jobs at an average worker salary of \$51,000. Assuming that average includes the wages of high-paid officers in the company, what will the average blue-collar worker make?

Locally, Racine may see some benefit in job opportunities, but I fear rural Wisconsin really is going to be the loser in this process. Citizen tax dollars that could have been invested

in rural development and creatively spurring the growth of homegrown Wisconsin businesses will now prop up a business owned by foreign investors. Outside of a 50-mile radius of the Foxconn plant, I expect there will be little to no benefit.

The technology giant has also been given largely free rein on its impact on the environment. This is a disturbing amount of freedom to give any business, but especially one in a part of the state where the land is already subject to urban sprawl and the diversion of natural waters that come along with that population growth.

Ultimately, I think consumers want our legislators to support a more vibrant local economy. We're seeing this with the surge in the local food movement, and in consumer support for things like Country-of-Origin Labeling — another arena where legislators denied their constituents rights in exchange for lofty promises from foreign entities.

I believe it's time for President Trump and our other representatives to make good on their supposed campaign promises of 'Making America Great Again.' Compromising our natural resources and gutting the state's tax treasury so it can be handed over to foreign corporations is anything but great.

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Form # 812031

 National Farmers Union

Legislative Update: Co-ops, Farmer Veterans & Hemp



Nick Levendofsky
Government Relations Associate

Wisconsin Farmers Union, while disappointed in recent votes by the Assembly and Senate to pass the proposed cooperative statutes changes, pledges to inform and educate cooperative members on what this means for their co-ops in the future.

One key change that goes into place immediately after Gov. Walker signs these bills pertains to member access to cooperative records. Under these changes, cooperative boards may deny records requests if the purpose is not specific to the member's interest in the cooperative or is otherwise contrary to the interest of the cooperative. In regard to financial records only, the bill establishes a timeframe of five years plus the current fiscal year for requesting financial records. The board can authorize more than the limited time set forth in the bill, and co-ops can keep records for longer periods of time.

Veterans Farm Bill

A bipartisan bill passed Nov. 7 in the state Senate and Thursday, Nov. 9 in the Assembly would assist Wisconsin veterans who want to go into agriculture. The Wisconsin Veterans Farm Bill of 2017 would establish a program in the state Department of Agriculture, Trade

and Consumer Protection (DATCP) to train and provide mentorship to veterans who want to farm, as well as veterans who are already working in agriculture. It would also create a state-sponsored logotype that veteran farmers could use on their products — similar to the USDA Organic sticker.

Farm Freedom Act

The Farm Freedom Act passed the Senate on Nov. 7 and the Assembly on Nov. 9 with unanimous approval. The legislation would set up state licenses for farmers looking to grow industrial hemp. Wisconsin was once one of the nation's top hemp producers, but farmers have been banned from growing it for decades. Industrial hemp can be used to make items including paper, textiles, construction materials, health food, and can even be used in vehicle production.

Under the legislation, DATCP could issue licenses to authorize the growing and processing of industrial hemp with a concentration of no more than 0.3 percent THC. The bill would also allow DATCP or a college or university to create an agricultural pilot program to grow and study industrial hemp.

Under the 2014 federal farm bill, states were allowed to authorize pilot programs to grow and research industrial hemp, and at least 30 states have passed legislation allowing hemp farms. Both bills now make their way to Governor Walker for his signature.

BITS & PIECES

WFU seeks Rural Lobby Day intern

WFU is looking for a committed and reliable college student who can help with preparations for our Farm and Rural Lobby Day at the Wisconsin State Capitol on Feb. 21.

Main tasks include, but are not limited to:

- Entering registrations into an Excel database
- Making appointments with legislators
- Helping design written materials
- Working with caterer to set up lunch order

The time commitment will be 5-10 hours per week between December and February. We are offering modest compensation of \$7.25/hour for work totaling less than 82 hours and a wealth of experience.

Please contact Government Relations Associate Nick Levendofsky at nickl@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 608-234-3741 for more information or to apply.

NFU Women's Conference coming up

SAN DIEGO — Calling all women in agriculture: are you looking for applicable business skills, innovative marketing tactics, advice for running for local office, and a strong network of other women in agriculture? National Farmers Union's Women's Conference, Jan. 14-18 in San Diego, CA, offers all that and more.

This year's agenda features several familiar faces within Wisconsin Farmers Union, including Sarah Lloyd and Lisa Kivirist, as well as a special panel featuring the Soil Sisters. Register today: <https://nfu.org/education/womensconference/>. The Dec. 1 deadline has passed for applications for WFU scholarships for the Women's Conference, but if you are interested, please call the WFU State Office at 715-723-5561 in case there are spots available.

Support WFU Convention Feb. 2-4

Sponsor and exhibitor registration is open for the 87th WFU State Convention Feb. 2-4 at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Cooperatives, farm organizations, and agribusinesses are encouraged to take part in the trade show, which runs throughout the weekend. Or consider investing in an ad in the convention program. Registration is now open at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

For sponsorship details, contact Tommy Enright, 715-563-2169 or tenright@wisconsinfarmersunion.com. Some local food items are needed. Farms or businesses interested in selling or donating local food for the weekend's menu or snacks for break times are asked to contact the WFU State Office at 715-723-5561.

Wisconsin Farmers Union Foundation

Friday Night Fundraiser

Proceeds go toward facility upgrades to:



6-9 p.m., Friday, Feb. 2, 2018

Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells

Live Auction • Raffles • Buffet Dinner

\$50/person

(Or \$10/person entry fee after 7:30pm for auction & activities - includes dessert)

Register at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com/convention today!



87th Annual State Convention

February 2-4, 2018

Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells

TOP REASONS TO ATTEND CONVENTION!

1 The Wisconsin Farmers Union State Convention, set for Feb. 2-4, is a gathering of farmers from all backgrounds and walks of agriculture — dairy, beef, crops, CSA, and more! Veteran farmers, beginning farmers, you name it! Attend and **network with other farmers from across the state!**



2 Join in Saturday's workshops:

The Future of Agriculture:
The Next Generation of Farmers
Outside Investment in Agriculture
Farmers Union History
Financing a Value-Added
Ag Enterprise



3 We're pleased to welcome **keynote John Ikerd** to convention this year. Ikerd, a Professor Emeritus of Agricultural Economics, was raised on a small dairy farm in southwest Missouri. He worked in private industry for a time and spent 30 years in various professorial positions at state universities. Since retiring, he spends most of his time writing and speaking on issues related to sustainability with an emphasis on agriculture and economics. He is the author of six published books.

4 Did we mention convention is **family-friendly**? Child care is available when the conference is in session. The whole family will love Lost Rios Waterpark at Chula Vista! There is also a coinciding Youth Co-op Convention (generously sponsored by CHS Foundation) for older youth.



5 Take part in a lively discussion about the future of rural Wisconsin during the pre-convention event Feb. 2, **Groundswell: Revitalizing Our Family Farms & Communities.**



7 **Help guide WFU's work** at the Capitol and around the countryside by chiming in on the policy discussion, where members set priorities for the coming year.

6 **Celebrate the rich history** of Wisconsin Farmers Union and our important role in carrying the torch forward as National Farmers Union Historian Tom Giessel returns to host workshops.



Please note the following before mailing the registration form:
Registration and payment must be mailed by Thursday, Jan. 18, 2018 to receive the early bird rate.

Find more convention details at www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com.

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

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

LODGING

Chula Vista Resort
2501 River Rd.
Wisconsin Dells, WI

To reserve call 855-923-8144 and refer to **ID#F44235**. A room block is reserved through Mon., Jan. 1.

All individual reservations require a one-night deposit plus taxes at the time the reservation is made. Any cancellation inside the 72 hour cancellation period will forfeit the full deposit amount. There is also an early check out fee of one night's room and tax for departing before arranged departure date.

YOUTH OPTIONS

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

Cancellation Policy:

Any cancellations must be reported to the WFU State Office by noon on Thurs., Jan. 25 in order to receive a refund. Please call Diane at 800-272-5531 with cancellations or questions.



87th Annual State Convention
February 2-4, 2018
CHULA VISTA RESORT, WISCONSIN DELLS

ATTENDEE REGISTRATION FORM

Please PRINT CLEARLY all information as you would like it to appear on your name badge. List Youth Co-op Convention attendees in designated area and additional adults in lines below.

Event information: 800-272-5531
www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com

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

REGISTRATION & MEAL PACKAGE PLEASE NOTE THAT PACKAGE RATES INCLUDE ALL MEALS: Saturday lunch and banquet, Sunday breakfast and lunch. Use Separate Meal Tickets area below for non-delegate guests who need an individual meal only.					
Type of Registrant	Early Bird Price before 1/18/18	Price after 1/18/18	# of Packages	Total	
DELEGATE Member	\$70	\$90		\$	
ADULT Member	\$70	\$90		\$	
NON-Member	\$90	\$110		\$	
YOUTH or YOUTH LEADER (Member) (Please fill out youth info below)	\$40	\$60		\$	
Annual Membership (I wish to join WFU)	\$30	\$30		\$	
PRE-CONVENTION WORKSHOP					
		Nonmember	Member	Total	
Groundswell Workshop Registration (Workshop is noon to 4:30pm on Friday, includes lunch)		\$65 x # _____ (includes membership)	\$35 x # _____	\$	
SEPARATE MEAL TICKETS Tickets available for non-delegate individuals who want to join us for meals only (includes programs.)					
Meal (List attendee name after each meal)	Early Bird on or before 1/18/18	Price after 1/18/18	NON-MEMBER Rate ONLY	# of Tickets	Total
Saturday Lunch	\$20	\$24	\$30		\$
Saturday Banquet	\$35	\$38	\$45		\$
Sunday Breakfast	\$20	\$23	\$28		\$
Sunday Lunch	\$20	\$23	\$27		\$
REGISTRATION TOTAL					\$

YOUTH CO-OP CONVENTION ATTENDEES Please note number of youth attending and include Youth fee in table above.				
Youth Activity	First and Last Name	Age	Grade	Dietary
<input type="checkbox"/> Co-op Convention (Gr 7-12) <input type="checkbox"/> Co-op Youth Zone (Gr 1-6) <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare (Infant-K)				<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian <input type="checkbox"/> Vegan <input type="checkbox"/> Gluten-free <input type="checkbox"/> Allergies (we'll contact you)
<input type="checkbox"/> Co-op Convention (Gr 7-12) <input type="checkbox"/> Co-op Youth Zone (Gr 1-6) <input type="checkbox"/> Childcare (Infant-K)				<input type="checkbox"/> Vegetarian <input type="checkbox"/> Vegan <input type="checkbox"/> Gluten-free <input type="checkbox"/> Allergies (we'll contact you)

Please use this space to list additional attendees, if needed:

MAIL REGISTRATION FORM WITH CHECK PAYABLE TO:
WISCONSIN FARMERS UNION, 117 W. Spring St., Chippewa Falls, WI 54729

Editor's Note: Our voices are as important as ever. That's why this opinions section will be a new mainstay within Wisconsin Farmers Union News. I urge you to consider submitting a Letter to the Editor (500 word limit) next month on an issue that matters to you.

If you'd like to submit a letter or would like to request help editing a letter, submit letters via email to me, Danielle Endvick, at dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or via mail to 117 W. Spring St., Chippewa Falls, WI 54729.



Urban vs. Rural Water Supplies: Values and Public Health

I am Harry Pulliam, an active member of the Wisconsin Farmers Union and a water quality activist with Sustain Rural Wisconsin Network (SRWN), a statewide coalition of individuals and organizations dedicated to preserving the environment while maintaining the health and economic vitality of rural communities. SRWN is devoted to promoting sustainable agriculture and policies that support environmentally sound, socially responsible, profitable agriculture.

As you may already know, in late 2016 there was a massive manure spill at Emerald Sky Dairy in the St. Croix County Town of Emerald. Sadly, the spill went unreported until Wisconsin DNR received an anonymous tip at the end of March 2017. That spill is still under investigation.

I recently received an email from a friend in St. Croix County. In her email she described a perfect example of the urban-rural divide that is present in Wisconsin and elsewhere. You see, she recently queried the DNR as to why they didn't test to determine the source of the E. coli found in Emerald Township wells early this summer, after land spreading of manure from the spill cleanup was completed. The DNR told her that it "didn't fit their protocol," largely because it was not a "recent" manure spill, and that if she had health related questions about E. coli contamination, she should talk to her medical doctor.

Contrast this with what would happen if E. coli had been found in a municipal water system. It would have been "hair on fire" time and the situation would have been addressed *immediately*. Notices would have been broadcast on TV and radio; mailings would have gone out, warning the public to boil their water or to drink bottled water.

None of that happened for Emerald families. The spill wasn't reported for more than three months, and when St. Croix County did get the report, it didn't notify the public for over three weeks because "they didn't want to get sued." When the letter finally did go out, it went to only those within two miles of the dairy, despite the fact that E. coli contamination showed up well outside that radius.

Why is there a discrepancy between how DNR treats city folks and rural folks? Do water quality and public health in rural areas not merit the same response as is expected for customers of municipal water systems? I firmly believe that this should be a campaign issue in the 2018 elections. Learn more at www.saveemeraldwater.com.

Harry Pulliam, New Glarus, WI

Tax reform could impact co-ops

While lower taxes get nearly unanimous support from both sides of the political aisle, one component of Congress' current tax reform framework should have agricultural cooperative members deeply concerned: the repeal of the Domestic Production Activities Deduction (Section 199) tax deduction.

This pass-through is vital for the financial stability of cooperatives and their member-owners. The deduction allows business owners – and farmers – to not pay income tax on a portion of their taxable income. The deduction started in 2005, and was intended to incentivize domestic investment and job creation. Nationwide, the deduction returns an estimated \$2 billion each year to farmers and their rural communities. This deduction cooperative members rely on is now at risk, and they must vocally oppose its repeal.

Under the tax framework, Section 199 would disappear, greatly impacting farm income. Supporters of the plan to repeal the deduction say that larger business tax cuts will more than make up for the loss of Section 199, but we know that's not true for farmer cooperatives and their members. Farmer-owned cooperatives are not taxed like traditional corporations, so they cannot benefit from lower corporate rates like most other industries.

Even more troubling is that for many farmers, changes to the individual tax code would not be enough to offset the loss of the Section 199 agriculture deductions. This means the elimination of Section 199 is an effective tax hike on independent producers across the country.

Across virtually every commodity, farmers are facing the fourth consecutive year of stagnant prices. We are crunching the numbers, trying to figure out how to pay the bills and keep afloat another year. We shouldn't also have to worry about a higher tax burden.

The House of Representatives passed the version of the tax reform bill on Nov. 16, and the Senate is expected to take it up sometime in the next few weeks, which means cooperative members must act now. Our voices will be a critical part of the effort to preserve Section 199, and I strongly encourage all cooperative members to get in touch with their representatives and senators and explain the compelling reasons to keep the Section 199 deduction.

Les Danielson, Cadott, WI

Wisconsin Farmers Union KAMP KENWOOD

CHIPPEWA FALLS, WI

CABIN ON WISSOTA



The cozy Cabin on Lake Wissota at WFU Kamp Kenwood is available to rent from mid-October through April. A perfect getaway for the outdoor enthusiast, the cabin offers convenient access to hiking and cross-country trails in Lake Wissota State Park.



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To reserve, contact Brad at 715-214-7244.

It's time to enroll

*Affordable Care Act
deadline is Dec. 15*



Above: WFU Board Member Tina Hinchley said the Affordable Care Act is the reason she has health insurance today, after going years without it.

Open enrollment for the Affordable Care Act (ACA) started out with a bang, with more than 600,000 people choosing plans on the federal HealthCare.gov marketplace in the first four days, according to the Center for Medicare & Medicaid Services.

"Enrollment numbers are outpacing 2016, despite fears that reduced funding for outreach may have impacted sign-ups," said Wisconsin Farmers Union President Darin Von Ruden. He urged those needing to health insurance to enroll before the deadline of Dec. 15.

"Wisconsin Farmers Union's member-driven policy affirms that access to quality health care should be a right of all people rather than a privilege," Von Ruden noted. "Though there is room for improvement in the Affordable Care Act, the impact the marketplace has had on rural Wisconsin cannot be denied – it has been a game-changer for many family farmers who struggled to find insurance due to being self-employed or having pre-existing conditions."

Open enrollment runs through Dec. 15, allowing time for people to shop for insurance through the health insurance marketplace (www.healthcare.gov) and either renew an old plan or sign up for a new one. Eight out of 10 people are eligible for premiums under \$75 thanks to financial assistance offered through the ACA. Most people who miss the Open Enrollment period will be without health insurance in 2018.

One of the farmers who knows this first-hand the value of the ACA is Tina Hinchley, a dairy farmer from Dane County. "Before the Afford-

“There is work yet to be done to make sure the Affordable Care Act truly is affordable health care for all.”

—Darin Von Ruden
WFU President

able Care Act, we went without health insurance for over 8 years because of pre-existing medical conditions. We would apply for insurance, but were continually denied. We have insurance today because of the ACA marketplace," Hinchley said.

Wisconsinites face higher costs

Patty and Gary Edelburg and their children own and operate a 130-cow dairy and 450 acres of corn and alfalfa in central Wisconsin. The Edelburgs get their health insurance through the ACA, and previously were unable to get health insurance. They didn't qualify for Badger Care,

and were denied by traditional private health insurance companies because of very minor pre-existing conditions. Without the ACA, they would not have health insurance

"My husband and I are equal partners and work equally as hard on the farm," Patty says. "If one of us were to get a job off farm, just for health insurance, we would have to find someone to replace that person on the farm." The Edelburgs noted there are still flaws that need to be worked out within ACA – they pay \$542 a month and have a \$14,000 deductible for the family of four. They would have to sell cows in order to come up with that \$14,000. "If we were to fully need to use our health insurance in the course of a year, we would pay over \$20,000," Edelburg said.

"There is work yet to be done to make sure the ACA truly is affordable health care for all," Von Ruden said. "According to a health care cost analysis by Citizen Action of Wisconsin, there were strong variations in premiums and deductibles between Wisconsin and Minnesota, with consumers on the most common Silver plan paying 45 percent more annually on average in Wisconsin compared to Minnesota consumers."

For metro areas, the second lowest cost silver plan total premiums range from 18 percent higher to more than double (144% higher) in Wisconsin, compared to the average premium in Minnesota, Citizen Action notes in the findings. These percentage differences translate into \$727 to \$5,676 more per person per year in premiums alone in Wisconsin depending on geography.

Citizens Action joined other health care advocates and consumers in raising awareness that these rate spikes would be avoidable if Wisconsin adopts the BadgerCare Public Option bill (AB 449/SB 363), which would give Wisconsinites the option of purchasing BadgerCare on the Affordable Care Act marketplace.

Wisconsin Farmers supports a comprehensive single-payer system of health care.

Under ACA, there is a minimum penalty of \$695 for not having health insurance. Luckily, free help is available for those struggling to find a plan that fits their needs. Learn more online at Healthcare.gov, visit LocalHelp.Healthcare.gov to find a nearby agent to help you enroll, or call 1-800-318-2596 to connect with a customer service representative who can help you fill out an application, review your choices and enroll.

National Farmers Union has created a portal to help provide more information. Visit www.nfu.org/GetCovered to learn more.



Growing for the Future is Dec. 4-7

National Farmers Union invites you to join in the second annual Growing for the Future, a free virtual conference for beginning farmers and ranchers. Set for Dec. 4-7, the series of webinars will cover mentorship, business planning, USDA programs, conservation, and women and veterans in farming.

The conference will highlight leaders in the field of agriculture and focus on building a network for beginning farmers throughout the country. There will be featured speakers from the Farmer Veteran Coalition, National Young Farmers Coalition, USDA Farm Service Agency, Female Farmer Project and more.

Register for free today at <https://nfu.org/growing-for-the-future/>. For any questions or concerns please email NFU Education Director Melissa Miller at melissamiller@nfudc.org.

Tentative topics and presenters:

- Eric Sannerud, Mighty Axe Hops: Access to Land as a Beginning Farmer
- Sarah Campbell, USDA Farm Service Agency: Access to Capital
- Cara Fraver, National Young Farmers Coalition: FSMA Produce Safety Rule: Are You In or Are You Out?
- Donna Marie Pahl, Produce Safety Alliance: FSMA Produce Safety Basics
- Kriss Marion & Lisa Kivirist, Soil Sisters: Mentorship & Networking
- NFU Staff: Farm Bill Breakdown
- Matt Perdue, NFU: Beginning Farmers & Healthcare
- Michael O'Gorman, Farmer Veteran Coalition: An In-Depth Look Into Vegetable Production
- Audra Mulkern, Female Farmer Project: Live Q&A Session
- Midwest Organic & Sustainable Education Service: Organic Certification
- TBA: Farm Aid

Learn more about the event and Farmers Union's efforts to support beginning farmers at <https://nfu.org/growing-for-the-future/>.



Midwest CSA Conference

December 7 & 8, 2017

Chula Vista Resort • Wisconsin Dells, WI

By CSA farmers, for CSA farmers

There's still time to register for the Midwest CSA Conference



Sarah Lloyd

Special Projects Coordinator

Don't miss out on the largest gathering of CSA farmers in the Midwest — there is still time to register for the Midwest CSA Conference Dec. 7-8 at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells.

The Midwest CSA Conference will kick off with lunch at noon on Dec. 7, bringing CSA farmers and advocates from across the region together for a day-and-a-half of discussion, dialogue, sharing, and learning. The three general sessions during the workshop will provide time for in-depth exploration of issues impacting vibrancy and resiliency at the farm, community and movement levels.

The conference features four workshop tracks, each with four workshops providing hands-on and peer-to-peer learning for CSA farmers in the areas of:

Beginning CSA Farming

Is CSA farming right for me?

Launching a Farm Business

Creating Community in your CSA in the Start-Up Years

CSA in the Urban Setting

Building Community

Member Voices: Strengthening CSA Relationships at the Farm & Community Level

Lessons In CSA Member Preferences

Strategies for Improving Food Access (and Farm Viability)

Facebook Best Practices for Increasing CSA Shares

Business & Financial Management

Improving Your Financial Management Skills

Building CSA Farm Viability Through Unique Succession and Labor Strategies

Fair Labor Relationships on the Farm for Farmer and Worker

Strategic Diversification

Production & Logistics

Risk Management I - Managing Risk Through Variety Selection

Building a Culture of Food Safety on Your Farm

Risk Management II - Building Shared Risk with Production and Communication Strategies

Cool Tools - Mechanical Weed Control Techniques and Tools

Visit www.midwestcsa.com for a more indepth look at workshops, rates and the conference schedule. Please help spread the word to your CSA friends and colleagues around the region. Child care is available - so bring the family!

We invite CSA farmers from across the Midwest to join us in Wisconsin Dells for this important gathering of the movement. The registration rate for the conference is \$135 per person, which includes all meals. Bring additional people from your farm or organization for \$95 a person. The special block of rooms for the conference has been released but when booking a room, mention the conference and if there are rooms left from the block you may be able to get the conference rate.

We still have spots for exhibitors and sponsors for the 2017 Midwest CSA Conference. Being a sponsor or exhibitor is a great opportunity for you to reach this audience for your business or organization. We hope to see you there!

Farmers Union Emerging Leaders convene for Waupaca retreat



Tommy Enright
Communications Associate

Farmers Union members from across the state came together Nov. 10-12 in Waupaca for the Farmers Union Emerging Leaders Retreat. This family-friendly retreat is an opportunity for members to hone their leadership skills as well as learn more about the organization. Hosted at a hotel with a waterpark, it provides a chance for participants to spend time with their families while allowing them to build relationships with Farmers Union staff and other members.

This class's participants were a fantastic group of WFU members from a range of different farm types. CSA, dairy, pastured poultry, beef ranchers, ancient grain and non-farming but active members were among those represented. With beginning and seasoned farmers alike, the retreat was a microcosm of the "big tent" nature of Farmers Union.

Kelly Adlington, a beginning farmer from Wood-Portage-Waupaca Farmers Union, was among the participants. "I felt the uniqueness of each person or family who attended and really valued the diversity in types of farming represented. As a young, aspiring farmer it was grounding to be around new and experienced farmers in that setting — one that allowed everyone to freely seek improvement

and share a common purpose."

"What was particularly encouraging was that some of these folks were interested in starting chapters in their regions," said WFU President Darin Von Ruden. "It's great to see a new generation eager to carry the torch for the organization."

Topics covered throughout the event included WFU programming opportunities, as well as workshops about telling your story, farm financials, social media and op-ed writing, organizing, and improving communication skills for effective lobbying. Speakers included Bob Kjelland from Rocky Mountain Farmers Union, Paul Dietmann of Compeer Financial, WFU Communications team Danielle Endvick and Tommy Enright, community organizer Tom Mosgaller, WFU District 6 Director Chris Holman, and other staff. WFU President Darin Von Ruden facilitated the program.

If you are interested in attending a Farmers Union Emerging Leaders event or know of someone who is, please contact a WFU staff member.



Top: Community Organizer Tom Mosgaller, right, talked about the importance of intentional one-on-one relationship building and practiced the technique with Tommy Enright.



Left: WFU District 6 Director Chris Holman presented the intriguingly-titled topic of "What I learned as an Interrogator." The talk, geared at effective lobbying and interviewing, touched on how to project confidence and navigate feedback.

Below: Juli Montgomery-Riess of Steady Hand Farm near Amery shared a quiet moment with daughter Ida during the retreat.



Left: A great group turned out for the Farmers Union Emerging Leaders Retreat Nov. 10-12 in Waupaca. Stay tuned for future details on more Emerging Leaders events geared at young or beginning farmers and Farmers Union members.

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



Membership Application

Name: _____

Spouse's Name: _____

of Children under 21: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Household Type:

☐ Farm ☐ Rural ☐ Small Town ☐ Urban

Type of Farm: Check all that apply.

☐ Dairy ☐ Poultry ☐ Vegetables or Fruit

☐ Beef ☐ Crops ☐ Organic

☐ Hogs ☐ Horses ☐ Other _____

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

☐ New Member ☐ Renewing Member

☐ 1 Year (\$30) ☐ 2 Years (\$55)

☐ 4 Years (\$100) ☐ Lifetime (\$2000)

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

Join us today!

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117 W. Spring St. • Chippewa Falls, WI • 54729

Or sign up online:

www.wisconsinfarmersunion.com

For more information, call 800-272-5531

Chapter Chatter

Share it here!

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

Columbia County hosting winter get-together

Columbia County Farmers Union will have a winter get-together meeting on Saturday, Dec. 30 at 2pm. It's a potluck, so bring a dish to pass. Bring the kids. Bring your friends and neighbors.

Let's ignite some holiday cheer! We'll be playing some cards and games starting around 3:30 - 4pm. Join us at Nelson Dairy Farm, W14297 Broadway Road, Wisconsin Dells. For directions call Sarah Lloyd 920-210-7335.

Convention fundraiser donations sought

Wisconsin Farmers Union invites you to join us for the WFU Foundation Fundraiser from 6-9pm on Fri., Feb. 2, kicking off convention weekend at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells! Enjoy a buffet dinner, raffle, live auction and networking with Farmers Union friends! The evening supports the WFU Kamp Kenwood facilities fund.

Individuals and WFU chapters are encouraged to donate an item or basket! Donations can be dropped off at the WFU Office (117 W. Spring St., Chippewa Falls or 108 S. Webster St., Suite 201, Madison) or brought to the County President's Meeting Jan. 13 in Tomah. Donations are preferred prior to convention. (Late additions still welcomed at registration table.) Contact Amanda at 715-723-5561 or akollwitz@wisconsinfarmersunion.com for more details.

Road to Recovery

Farmers Union Enterprises Leadership Program graduates Craig and Vickie Dunnum of Westby sent the following update:

"On Oct. 18 Vickie finished her 8th chemo over the past four months. Even though we still have 30 radiation treatments ahead we feel the road will get smoother," Craig writes. "This is a picture from Vick's birthday party in August with a breast cancer survivor cake. We thank you and all our FUE and Farmers Union friends for your prayers and encouragement on this journey. God is faithful and answers prayers."

We're sending good thoughts from the WFU family to you, Vickie!





Wisconsin Farmers Union makes it to Italy

Above: Recently WFU members Jodi Parins and Star Salemi visited the Tuscany and Umbrian regions of Italy where they toured various small farms and agritourismos. "We found their struggles are much like ours, however where we consider a small farm someone with, say, 40 acres, they farm seven. None the less they take joy in their friendships and interdependence much like here. They all help each other whether it's three in the morning birthing a calf or helping bring in the harvest."

Pictured are two of the hosts, Chiarina and Rossanna, who farm outside of Assisi, showing off their WFU apparel presented as a gift by Parins.

Madison Local Farmers Union forms

Below: Wisconsin Farmers Union recently welcomed a new chapter. On Nov. 1 the Madison Local chapter officially formed in Dane County. Elected into leadership were President Matthew Rucker, Vice President Sophie Patterson and Secretary/Treasurer Oren Jakobson.



FARMERS UNION HAPPENINGS

DEC 2, Vernon County Farmers Union Annual Meeting, noon to 3pm, Gasser's Bar & Grill 920 N. Main St Viroqua. Info: Brian Austin 608- 632-1579

DEC 2, Dunn County Farmers Union Annual Meeting, 2pm, Family Restaurant Meeting Room, 2616 Hills Ct., Menomonie. Info: Bill Krueger, 715-665-2386

DEC 2, Polk Burnett Farmers Union Annual Meeting, 11am, Oakwood Inn, Luck. Info: Don Chell, 715-689-2233

DEC 3, Dane County Farmers Union Annual Meeting 1pm, Daniel & Lori Kvalheim Farm, 2256 Cty. Rd. T, Sun Prairie. Info: Krist Kvalheim, 608-658-9106

DEC 4-7, Growing for the Future Online Conference, register for free at www.nfu.org

DEC 7-8, Midwest CSA Conference, Chula Vista Resort, Wisconsin Dells, www.midwestcsa.com

DEC 9, Adams/ Washara County Farmers Union Meeting, 1pm, Adams Town Hall, 1980 11th Ave., Friendship. Info: Gary Banes 608-339-7688

DEC 9, Sauk County Annual Meeting and Cookie Exchange, noon to 2:30pm, Driftless Glenn, Distillery & Restaurant, 300 Water St., Baraboo. Bring cookies for a cookie exchange. RSVP to Erin at e.schneider.hilltopfarm@gmail.com by Dec. 6

DEC 22, Exhibitor registration deadline for WFU Convention
JAN 14-18, National Farmers Union Women's Conference, Catamaran Resort, San Diego, CA, www.nfu.org

FEB 2-4, 87th Wisconsin Farmers Union State Convention, Chula Vista, Wisconsin Dells

FEB 21, Wisconsin Farmers Union Farm & Rural Lobby Day, Madison. Stay tuned for more details!

MARCH 3-6, National Farmers Union 116th Anniversary Convention. www.nfu.org

MARCH 6, The Big Share fundraiser for Wisconsin Farmers Union Kamp Kenwood, www.thebigshare.org

Submit events to 715-471-0398 or dendvick@wisconsinfarmersunion.com

Canadian guest to be featured at Youth Co-op Convention Feb. 2-4



Cathy Statz
Education Director

Youth from across the state will gather in Wisconsin Dells this winter for the Youth Co-op Convention at the Wisconsin Farmers Union 87th annual State Convention Feb.

2-4 at Chula Vista Resort.

The Youth Co-op Convention will begin at 9:15am Saturday morning. Wisconsin Farmers Union has a long tradition of inviting a Canadian speaker to the Youth Co-op Convention in even-numbered years. For 2018, the program will feature Lacey Chyz, manager of marketing and communications for Arctic Co-operatives, Ltd., the co-op system that serves Canada's north.

Chyz began her cooperative career as a member service representative at a local credit union in Alberta, and then went on to be an intern with the Canadian Co-operative Association, volunteer for the Co-operative Youth Leadership program in 2011 and as manager of the Marketing and Communications Department for the Alberta Community and Co-operative Association. She was honored as an Emerging Co-operator in 2016.

We look forward to hearing from Chyz during the youth program on Saturday and Sunday.

Youth will have free time for swimming and visiting with friends during the afternoon before the Saturday evening banquet, which will feature the Torchbearer Ceremony to honor graduating Farmers Union youth. A youth dance/social with pizza party will follow the banquet.



Chyz

An interfaith worship service and breakfast will begin the Sunday morning program, followed by the continuation of the youth program. The convention and youth program will conclude after lunch on Sunday afternoon.

Youth volunteers are welcome to help with child-care and other convention duties while the Youth Co-op Convention is not in session. Please contact Cathy Statz at 800-272-5531 or cstatz@wisconsinfarmersunion.com to volunteer. Also needed are collegiate-aged volunteers.

The WFU State Convention and Youth Co-op Convention are a great opportunity for families to get away and spend time together. We look forward seeing you in Wisconsin Dells! See more details on pages 4-5.

NOTE: *Farmers Union Camp dates have been set (see ad below). We will open registration soon!*

WFU seeks summer staff candidates

WFU is looking for great candidates to apply for summer staff (paid and volunteer) positions for the 2018 season! This opportunity would range from May 14 to Aug 23, with some flexibility in May. Applicants must be able to live on-site at WFU Kamp Kenwood near Chippewa Falls during camp sessions or on the road during outreach events and day camps.

These positions offer excellent experiences for those with career expectations in education, ag, environment, youth programming or counseling! Ideal candidates will have at least one year post-secondary experience in a college or work environment. Lifeguards, first responders/EMTs, artists and musicians are encouraged to apply.

For more information, contact Camp Director Cathy Statz at cstatz@wisconsinfarmersunion.com or 715-723-5561.

Youth Co-op Convention Agenda

Friday, February 2

- 4:30-9pm Registration (Lobby)
- 6:00pm Friday Night Fundraiser (Tickets required)

Saturday, February 3

- 9:15am Welcome & Introductions
- 9:30am Youth Program begins – featuring Lacey Chyz
- 10:15am WFU Presidential Address
- 10:30am Break
- 11:00am Program continues
- 12:00pm Break
- 12:15pm Lunch & Awards Program
- 2:15pm Youth free for afternoon
- 2:30pm Torchbearer rehearsal
- 6:00pm Banquet & Entertainment Torchbearer Ceremony
- 9:00pm Pizza & DJ for youth

Sunday, February 4

- 7:45am Interfaith Worship Service
- 8:30am Breakfast
- 9:15am Program continues
- 10:45am Break
- 11:00am Program continues
- 11:30am NYAC Updates: Fly-In
- 11:45am Evaluations
- 12:00pm Lunch
- Adjourn



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Junior 1/Junior High 1
(ages 8-14)
June 11-14

Junior Camps
(ages 8-12)
Aug 5-8 • Aug. 8-11
Aug. 12-15 • Aug. 19-22

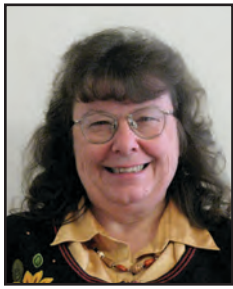
Junior High 2
(ages 12-14)
July 29-Aug 2

Senior
(ages 14-18)
June 18-22

Acorn Day Camp
(ages 7+)
Aug. 16

Family Camps (all ages)
July 27-28
Aug. 3-4

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



Holiday Leftovers ... What a predicament!

With holiday gatherings and large families sometimes leftovers are minimal, but regardless, one can get creative with whatever is available. There are numerous recipe sites online that will help you in finding new leftover recipes, from the Butterball Turkey Company at <http://www.butterball.com> to the Jennie-O Turkey Company at www.jennieoturkeystore.com and of course the Wisconsin Cranberry Association at <http://www.wiscran.org>. Then there is my old-faithful Taste of Home website at <https://www.tasteofhome.com/> where I encountered a Stuffing Crust Turkey Potpie Recipe and Homemade Turkey Soup, as well as the Midwest Living website at www.midwestliving.com to make Turkey Cranberry Enchiladas using that extra jar of cranberry sauce that seemed to be on sale and didn't get opened.

I hope there are enough leftovers at our homes to give all of these a try. I have made turkey soup out of the remaining turkey carcass in the past and the recipe below gives an added thickness with a canned cream soup or you can substitute 2 cups thick white sauce in its place for that homemade goodness. There are more recipes on the websites listed, so check them out and give your leftovers a whole new taste for the family to enjoy.

STUFFING CRUST TURKEY POTPIE

Source: <https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/stuffing-crust-turkey-potpie>

Ingredients:

- 2 cups cooked cornbread stuffing (I plan to use my own leftover sage stuffing)
- 3-4 Tablespoons chicken broth
- ¼ cup cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup turkey gravy
- 2 cups cubed cooked turkey
- 1 cup frozen broccoli florets, thawed
- ½ cup shredded Swiss cheese
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- 2 cups mashed potatoes
- ¼ cup half-and-half cream
- 2 Tablespoons butter, melted
- ½ cup French-fried onions, optional



Directions:

1. In a salad bowl, combine stuffing and enough broth to reach desired moistness; press onto the bottom and up the sides of a greased 9-inch deep-dish pie plate. Bake at 350° for 10-15 minutes until lightly browned. [This makes the crust a bit crunchy, if you want it that way otherwise, bake only 10 minutes.]
2. In a large bowl, beat cream cheese and gravy until smooth. Stir in the turkey, broccoli, Swiss cheese, salt and pepper. Spoon over crust.
3. In a small bowl, combine potatoes and cream; spread over turkey mixture. Drizzle with butter; sprinkle with onions, if desired. Bake 20-25 minutes longer or until heated through and lightly browned. Yield: 6 servings.

HOMEMADE TURKEY SOUP

Source: <https://www.tasteofhome.com/recipes/homemade-turkey-soup>

Ingredients:

- 1 leftover turkey carcass (from a 10-12 pound turkey, but can use any size)
- 2 quarts water (enough to cover the turkey bones)
- 1 medium onion, cut into wedges
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 2 bay leaves

- 1 cup chopped carrots
- 1 cup uncooked long grain rice
- 1/3 cup chopped celery
- ¼ cup chopped onion
- 1 10 ¾ oz can condensed cream of chicken or cream of mushroom soup, undiluted



Directions:

1. Place turkey carcass in a stockpot; add the water, onion, salt and bay leaves. Slowly bring to a boil over low heat; cover and simmer for 2-3 hours. (Can be placed in a slow cooker and cook throughout the day on low)
2. Remove the carcass; cool. Strain broth and skim fat. Discard onion and bay leaves.
3. Return broth to the pan; add the carrots, rice, celery and chopped onion; cover and simmer until rice and vegetables are tender.
4. Remove turkey from bones; discard bones and cut turkey into bite-sized pieces. Add turkey and cream soup to broth; heat through. Yield: 8-10 servings (about 2 quarts).

Option on cream soup: use a thick white sauce recipe and make 2 cups in place of undiluted cream soup.

TURKEY CRANBERRY ENCHILADAS

Source: <http://www.midwestliving.com/recipe/turkey/turkey-cranberry-enchiladas/>

Ingredients:

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 2 -2 ½ cups shredded cooked turkey
- 1-16 ounce can whole cranberry sauce
- 1-15 ounce can black beans, rinsed and drained
- 1 ½ cups bottled salsa
- 1 cup shredded Colby and Monterey Jack cheese (4 oz.)
- ½ cup dairy sour cream
- 3 green onions, sliced
- ¼ cup snipped fresh cilantro
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper
- 8 – 7 or 8 inch whole wheat or regular flour tortillas
- 1 teaspoon bottled hot pepper sauce



Directions:

1. Preheat oven to 350° F. Lightly coat a 3-quart rectangular baking dish with cooking spray; set aside. For filling, in a large bowl stir together turkey, half the cranberry sauce, beans, ½ cup salsa, ¾ cup of the cheese, sour cream, green onions, cilantro, cumin, salt, and pepper. Spoon about 2/3 cup filling on each tortilla. Roll up tortillas around filling. Place, seam sides down, in prepared dish; set aside.
2. Prepare sauce: in a small bowl stir together remaining cranberry sauce, remaining salsa, and hot pepper sauce. Spoon over filled tortillas. Cover with foil. Bake for 45 minutes. Uncover; top with remaining cheese. Bake 5-10 minutes more or until heated through and cheese is melted. Sprinkle with additional cilantro and green onions. Yield: 8 servings.

May this holiday season find you happy and eating healthy.
Diane Tiry

WFU members' farm tours a highlight of WFAN event



Photos by Sophie Neems

From top, left to right, Linda Dee Derrickson shares some background on her heritage sheep with attendees; National Farmers Union Government Relations Director Barbara Patterson meets the Circle M Market Farm welcoming committee — two friendly Great Pyrenees dogs; and April Prusia, second from left (in hat), told the story of how her farm, Dorothy's Range, came into being and explained how it has evolved.



Beginning Farmer Institute heads to California

Participants of NFU's Beginning Farmer Institute (BFI) convened in Salinas, CA Nov. 3-5 for the second of three programming sessions. Twenty beginning farmers from across the country attended the three-day, hands-on learning session hosted in partnership with the Agriculture and Land-Based Training Association (ALBA).

In addition to touring ALBA's facilities, participants visited two local operations, JV Farms Organic and JSM Organics and gained hands-on technical training. During classroom learning periods, the BFI cohort also learned about FarmLink, Farmer Veteran Coalition, risk management, and marketing.

"NFU's Beginning Farmer Institute provides the next generation of family farmers and leaders in agriculture with the opportunity to learn from industry experts, leaders, policymakers, and one another," said NFU President Roger Johnson. "The program builds on our organization's commitment to developing leaders in the next generation of family agriculture and celebrating the diversity in agriculture production today."



Above: The 2017-18 Beginning Farmer Institute class met in early November in California.

Five of the 20 beginning farmers and ranchers in the 2017-18 BFI program are from Wisconsin. They include Jess Bernstein, Mary Jo Borchardt, Jacob James Marty, Alicia Razvi and Sarah River.

The final BFI session will be held in March 2018 in Kansas City, Missouri.

Interested in taking part in the next BFI class? Applications will be available in January. See www.nfu.org for details.

From p. 1 ► TAXES

would get bigger under both the Senate and the House plans, not everyone would see their taxes decrease over the long term. According to an analysis by the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy, the amount of taxes paid in Wisconsin will actually go up by 2027 under the Senate Plan. How could this be? For starters, the tax cuts for average households expire in 10 years, whereas the tax cuts for businesses are permanent. The deduction for state and local income taxes paid that benefits average households would be eliminated (or in the case of the House version, severely curtailed.) And under both the Senate and the House plans, farmers will see changes to deductions of new investment purchases, lose the benefit of carryback provisions of net operating losses except in case of a disaster, and face elimination of the Section 199 deduction which delivers a significant tax benefit to farmers via their cooperatives. (See opinion by Les Danielson on page ____ for more information.)

The net effect is that Congress is actually proposing a long-term increase in taxes for some working Americans to give even greater tax cuts to businesses. Count me as one of the skeptics who doubts whether the benefit of tax breaks showered on Wall Street will make their way to middle America. As if all this weren't enough, health care costs are also expected to rise under the "reform," because the bill repeals the individual health care mandate from the Affordable Care Act. The result will be an estimated 10 percent increase in premiums and fewer people covered on the exchanges and through employer-supplied health care.

Nearly one year ago at the 2017 Wisconsin Farmers Union annual convention, delegates passed a Special Order of Business that sets out a very different vision for Tax Reform. It states:

WHEREAS, President Donald Trump has proposed a tax plan that would cost an estimated \$9.5 Trillion over 10 years; and

WHEREAS, the only place in the federal budget with enough money to offset the resulting budget shortfalls would be the \$596 billion-per-year federal military budget;

WHEREAS, House Speaker Paul Ryan has proposed cutting corporate taxes by 20 percent for businesses and 33 percent for individuals, with the losses offset by eliminating credits, deductions, and loopholes in the tax code; and

WHEREAS, one of the largest of such provisions in the tax code is the tax break for capital gains and dividends, which primarily benefits the wealthy. Capital Gains and dividends are taxed at a maximum rate of 20 percent (in contrast to the maximum tax rate for ordinary income of 39.5 percent); and

WHEREAS, another significant deduction that could be targeted in the federal tax code is the federal deduction for state and local taxes paid. State and local taxes are regressive, with the poor paying a much higher percentage of their income compared to the wealthy. The federal deduction offsets some of the regressiveness of state and local taxes; and

WHEREAS, government budgets are not magic. Deep cuts to taxes must be offset with either deep cuts to government programs, or heavy borrowing that will land on the shoulders of future generations.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that Wisconsin Farmers Union calls for either:

- 1) significant cuts in military spending to offset the proposed billions of dollars in lost tax revenue; or*
- 2) a reevaluation of the wisdom of deep income tax cuts.*

Wisconsin Farmers Union opposes cutting taxes if it will result in either cuts to bedrock government programs like Social Security, Medicare, or Medicaid, or deepening of the already-unsustainable federal deficit.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Wisconsin Farmers Union specifically supports taxing capital gains and dividends the same as other income. This would bring in \$616 billion per year to the federal government.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Wisconsin Farmers Union opposes the elimination of the deduction for state and local taxes on the federal tax return, because it would make overall tax collections less progressive.

FINALLY, Wisconsin Farmers Union reaffirms the general principle of progressive taxation, with the wealthy paying a higher percentage of their income in taxes than the poor. The income tax is a more progressive tax than the sales tax or property tax. Wisconsin Farmers Union urges the heaviest reliance on the income tax in funding essential government programs.

Notably absent from the Congressional tax reform discussion is an honest accounting of what services Congress plans to cut to make up for the loss in revenue. Under the "Pay-As-You-Go" (PAYGO) law passed in 2010, the federal Office of Management and Budget is required by law to sequester funds from other non-exempt accounts to offset any additional spending or tax cuts that Congress passes. One non-exempt account is the Commodity Credit Corporation, which funds farm safety net programs such as ARC and PLC that are authorized in the Farm Bill. You read that right – Congress's proposed tax cuts are so deep that they would require either completely zeroing out ARC and PLC (and many other government programs as well) in order to offset the cuts, or some complicated legal gymnastics to get around the PAYGO requirements.

Luckily some members of the Senate on both sides of the aisle are having second thoughts about the wisdom of the proposed tax package. Both Senator Tammy Baldwin and Senator Ron Johnson from Wisconsin have signaled their intention to vote no, and several other critical votes hang in the balance. I encourage all members to reach out to our Senators and point them toward a better vision for tax reform. We have shared the Wisconsin Farmers Union Special Order of Business on Tax Policy with them. Call them and let them know that you support it as well.

Remind them that the first place to start with tax reform should be to tax Capital Gains and Investment Dividends at the same rate as income earned from an honest day's work. This would bring in \$616 billion per year in lost revenue to the federal government. Any tax "reform" package that does not close that gaping loophole is no reform at all.



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Those not around the table



Alan Guebert

Editor's Note: We often run Alan's hard-hitting policy pieces, but switched it up this month with a heartfelt piece that may remind you to slow down a bit, gather with family, and enjoy the holiday season this year. Happy Holidays!

The scarlet and gold promise of mid-harvest has slipped into the gray, damp reality of early winter. Last month we smiled at sun-kissed crops; this month we smile when we see the sun.

On the southern Illinois dairy farm of my youth, November was a month more endured than enjoyed. Its most memorable features were muddy cows, muddy machinery, and often-muttered prayers for weather cold enough to freeze the ground so we could complete harvest by Thanksgiving.

Neither ever happened. Harvest usually dragged on until the next holiday, Christmas. The only consolation to that cold fact was that we weren't the only ones picking corn in the mud and snow. Back then, very few farmers completed harvest—let alone fall tillage—by Thanksgiving.

Still, outside of milking cows, we never worked on November's high holiday. Thanksgiving was reserved for family, feasting, and loud, laughter-filled pinochle games with my father's side of the family.

Those long, wonderful holiday afternoons, like the equally long, wonderful holiday meals, were pure delights. Card partners had been decided at birth; they were, as Grandpa liked to announce, "Missouri Synod," or women versus men. The friendly competition, however, was anything but ladylike or gentlemanly.

I can still see and hear the usual players—my parents, Dad's parents, and my grandmother's two sisters and their husbands—playing eight-handed, single-deck, single-bid pinochle from almost the moment the dinner table was cleared until the minute the supper table was set.

At the head of the table was Grandpa doing the two things he did every card game—keeping score and scowling. The grimaces were usually directed at his own teammates, Uncle Ches and Uncle Pete. Ches was the family comedian who often brought games to a guffaw-filled halt with a clever wisecrack. Uncle Pete was Ches's perfect straight man. "What's so funny?" he'd often ask with a face so placid it would ignite another round of full-bellied laughter.

Grandma sat opposite Grandpa at the kitchen-end of the dining room table in the unlikely event someone could possibly want more food during the game. She and her sisters, Aunt Del and

Aunt Lu, were as quiet as their husbands were loud. All, however, laughed and laughed when the Ches-and-Pete "What's trump? Who's my partner?" comedy routine started.

My grandmother, however, would be the first to get back to the business at hand because she played cards like Ulysses S. Grant commanded a battlefield: she always attacked. Grandma never hesitated to bid over, trump over, and shout over anyone, including her sisters, husband, son or pastor, if they stood between her and card table triumph. Also like Grant, she was humble in victory and quiet in defeat.

Now, 50 years later, all, except my mother, are gone. The first to go of the generation was my grandfather after a summer-long ailment in 1969. The last was Aunt Del, in 2008, after 102 healthy, card-filled years.

After my grandfather's death, the Thanksgiving meals and card games rotated between Dad's aunts

and two sisters. Since all except Aunt Lu and Uncle Pete lived 40 or more miles from the farm, one of my older brothers or I would "volunteer" to stay home on Thanksgiving to do the evening milking so everyone else could enjoy the holiday.

It was better than it sounds. A three-hour shift in the evening dairy barn with the quiet, easy-going herdsman, Howard, was a small price any teenager would pay for an entire day of no church, no parents, and no hard work.

But I did miss being at a table so sturdy and so generous it could easily hold Grandma's wonderful food, the family's roaring, red-hot card games, and a three-generation chorus of almost endless laughter.

I still do, and all will be mentioned—as will many others—when we again give thanks for all their giving.

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From all of us at Wisconsin Farmers Union

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

Left to right (back row) Communications Director Danielle Endvick, Government Relations Associate Nick Levendofsky, Government Relations Director Kara O'Connor, Membership and Programs Organizer Kirsten Slaughter, Accountant Amanda Kollwitz, Communications Associate Tommy Enright and Executive Director Tom Quinn; (front) Membership Coordinator Deb Jakubek, Special Projects Coordinator Sarah Lloyd, Administrative Assistant Diane Tiry, Education Director Cathy Statz, Facilities Manager Brad Henderson and President Darin Von Ruden.