

# HENRY COUNTY FARMER



Official Publication Of The Henry County Farm Bureau, Cambridge, IL 61238

## HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU DATEBOOK

### FEBRUARY

- 2.....Illinois Farm Bureau Young Leaders Conference, Springfield
- 5.....Henry County Pork Producers meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 7pm
- 8.....SILO Film showing, Geneseo High School Performing Arts Center (reservations preferred, but not required), 6:30pm
- 8.....Henry County Beef Association meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 7pm
- 14.....HCFB Manager, Katie Laleman live on WKEI 1450 AM, 8:25am
- 21.....Henry County Farm Bureau Executive Committee meeting, HCFB building, 7pm  
Henry County Farm Bureau Board of Directors meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 7:30pm
- 22.....Farm Bureau Women – Business Meeting, 5:30pm
- 22.....HCFB Young Leader T-Shirt contest entries due
- 27.....“Rules for the Road” Trucking Seminar, The Camden Centre (Milan, IL), 10am (Registration is required)
- 27.....HCFB Young Leader’s meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 6:30pm
- 29.....Wellness Clinic with Henry County Health Department, 7:30-10am, (appointment time required)

### MARCH

- 4.....Henry County Pork Producers meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 7pm
- 8.....HCFB Foundation Scholarship Deadline

## FARM BUREAU TO HOST FREE SCREENING OF SILO FILM

*“SILO is the First Ever Feature Film about a Grain Entrapment”*



Inspired by true events, SILO follows a harrowing day in an American farm town. Disaster strikes when teenage Cody becomes the victim of a grain entrapment accident. Family, neighbors, and first responders must put aside their differences to rescue him from drowning in the 50-foot-tall silo where corn quickly turns to quicksand. Shedding light on an issue plaguing rural America, SILO shows how dangerous modern farming can be, while also highlighting the ways in which communities band together to look after one another.

Join us for a FREE screening of the film to be held on Thursday, February 8, 2024 at 6:30 p.m. at the Geneseo High School Performing Arts Center, 700 N. State Street, Geneseo. Reservations are not required, but strongly encouraged – reserve your seat by contacting the Henry County Farm Bureau at (309) 937-2411 or email: membership@henrycofarmbureau.org.

The film screening is sponsored by the Henry County Farm Bureau Health & Safety Committee and Gold Star FS, in conjunction with the Geneseo FFA Chapter.

SILO is the product of an extensive collaboration between city-based filmmakers and the rural American community. The entire creative team spent years working with farmers, fire/rescue workers, and trusted agricultural institutions to ensure the authentic portrayal of the all-too-common danger of grain entrapment. SILO is not just a dramatic reminder of the importance of agricultural safety — it is also a testament to what communities can accomplish when they work together.

## DWYER WINS FOURTH PLACE IN NATIONAL EXCELLENCE IN AG CONTEST

**By Tammie Sloup, FarmWeek**

Not only are fewer people in production agriculture, but fewer people with that background are “in the room” to make sure the right decisions and policies are made.

This was an integral part of Megan Dwyer’s messaging through her presentations during the Young Farmers & Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture contest.

“That’s really where I see myself and being able to be an advocate and an asset to the industry,” said Dwyer, fourth-generation farmer, mother of four and director of conservation and nutrient stewardship at IL Corn.

Her advocacy was honored during the American Farm Bureau Federation’s annual convention in Salt Lake City when she took home fourth place in the contest.

“It’s been tremendous to get to know some of the other competitors and just seeing the wealth of talent that we have as a

Farm Bureau family across the country,” said Dwyer, who attended the conference with husband, Todd. “It’s really amazing. But I think it’s been great for me personally to be here and being able to show the importance of making sure we show up and we have a seat at the table.”

She wove the analogy of wearing different hats and sitting at different tables into her presentations. “I talked about being a mom, a millennial, a farmer, an ag professional, all of these things, but we really can’t get to the point of talking about the hats that we wear until we have a seat at the table,” she said. “So I broke my experiences up into five different tables: the kitchen table, the wobbly table, the influencer table, the virtual table and the



Megan Dwyer of Henry County won fourth place in the Young Farmers & Ranchers Excellence in Agriculture contest. She accepted the award from American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall at the AFBF convention in Salt Lake City. (Photo by Tammie Sloup)

kids table.”

As a results-oriented person, Dwyer said the contest experience was like a report card and a check-in on whether she’s been doing enough in the industry and to promote agriculture.

Dwyer’s family lives on the same dead-end road where she was raised on her family farm — Seys Farms — in Henry County. While both have off-farm

jobs, she and Todd remain active in their families’ farming operations on both the row crop and livestock sides. Dwyer also is a certified crop adviser and helps with scouting the fields.

She got involved at the county Farm Bureau level and with Young Leaders, traveling to South Florida as part of the Ag Industry Tour. She would go on to participate in the Leaders to Washington program

**See DWYER, page 7**

## HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU BOARD OF DIRECTORS

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

**President:** Steve Nightingale  
**Vice President:** Heather Poppy  
**Vice President:** Brian Corkill  
**Secretary:** Kevin Schwartzkopf  
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### DISTRICT 1

Jon Chamberlain, Bridgett Wildermuth, Emily Baum, Dan Wolf

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### STAFF:

**Manager:** Katie Laleman, FBCM  
**Administrative Assistant:** Chelsea Vyncke

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## MARKET OUTLOOK SEMINAR FEATURING PAUL OTTO



Paul Otto, Meteorologist with Freese-Notis Weather, will be the featured speaker on Thursday, March 14 at 6:15 p.m. at Lavender Crest Winery, 5401 US Highway 6, Colona. Dinner will be served followed by an update from Tom Parchert, River Valley Cooperative. Reservations are required and must be made by March 7 to guarantee your attendance.

Paul Otto grew up in Green Bay, Wisconsin and then moved to St. Louis, Missouri, when he was a child. He was that child that was always looking out the window to study the geography while taking car trips with his family throughout the eastern two-thirds of the U.S. He used these trips as an opportunity to figure out how the land and water features changed with every mile and how these features working in tandem and sometimes against one another.

As a teen, his focus narrowed to studying the weather for selfish purposes as any approaching winter storm could mean that he did not have to complete that evening's homework, if he could just figure out its severity for his area. In college, Paul studied Meteorology at the University of Missouri-Columbia and took every opportunity to get involved in radio, television, and agriculture. In agriculture, he filled in for the State Climatologist over holidays so that atmospheric measurements could still be carried out at the campus research farm.

On television, Otto was brought on as the weekend Meteorologist after serving as an intern. He honed his radio skills through the University of Missouri's Journalism School as part of KBIA's Morning Edition. Before graduating, he was fortunate that Freese-Notis Weather in Des Moines reached across what was then the BIG 8 boundary to interview a Missouri Tiger. When Paul Otto started working for Freese-Notis Weather, early in the summer of 1993, I quickly realized that he was right in time to witness the unfolding of the Flood of '93'. It started innocently enough as slow moving, but intense thunderstorms over small lakes in northern Iowa each afternoon, day after day, that built over the course of a month to overwhelm the river basin. The situation reached

levee breaking potential when the thunderstorms became a nightly ritual as well that ultimately became the Flood of '93'.

As a Meteorologist, Otto looks forward to providing short- and long-term forecasts that are exact and therefore serve a purpose for his listeners. He aims to give them all of the information they need in order to carry out and develop their own plan of action.

Cost for the single session is \$35.00 (if not pre-registered cost will be \$40.00). To make reservations, please call the Henry County Farm Bureau (309) 937-2411, Rock Island County Farm Bureau (309) 736-7432 or Mercer County Farm Bureau (309) 582-5116.

The Market Outlook Series is sponsored by the Henry, Rock Island and Mercer County Farm Bureau Marketing Committees in conjunction with: Gold Star FS; BankORION; COUNTRY Financial - Alan Davis, Crop Insurance; Central Bank; COUNTRY Financial - Brent Bigham, Tracy Bigham, Chad Nelson, John Waugh; Big River Resources; River Valley Cooperative; Diamond Ag; Wyffels Hybrids; Compeer Financial (Aledo & Geneseo offices); COUNTRY Financial - Dan Kniss, Mike Geuns, Eric Henderson, Julie Hessler, Tom McKie, Jerry Samuelson, Erin Spivey, Katie Spivey, Cassie Stahler; Blackhawk Bank & Trust; Hertz Farm Management.

## HEALTH DEPARTMENT, FIRST CHOICE HEALTHCARE AND FARM BUREAU TO HOLD SPECIAL HEALTH CHECK CLINIC ON FEBRUARY 29

The Henry County Health Department, First Choice Healthcare, and the Henry County Farm Bureau announce they will be holding a special Health Check Clinic for all Henry County Farm Bureau members on Thursday, February 29th at the Henry County Farm Bureau, 128 N. Prospect St., Cambridge. The clinic is open to all men and women 18 years of age and older.

In keeping with the Health Department's mission of promoting healthier living, the Health Department's Farm Bureau Health Check Clinic will be featuring a combination General Health/Thyroid & Lipid Panel Blood Test for only \$50. This test offers 45 results, including a full lipid "Cholesterol" panel. Please note, fasting is recommended for this test for optimum results.

The Department will offer a \$10 Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test for men aged 50-64. In addition, free blood pressure checks will also be available to clinic participants.

Appointments for the February 29th clinic are necessary and will be accepted on a first come, first served basis. Please note, these lab specials are available on a "Cash Only" basis and the Farm Bureau Discount has already been applied.

To schedule an appointment, or for more information on the upcoming Henry County Farm Bureau Health Check Clinic, call the Farm Bureau at (309) 937-2411.

In addition to the health screenings, the clinic will feature free donuts, coffee and juice courtesy of the Henry County Farm Bureau. A variety of health pamphlets, brochures and giveaways will also be on display.

## ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU TO HOST 'RULES FOR THE ROAD' TRUCKING SEMINAR IN MILAN

Milan, Ill. — Illinois Farm Bureau will host a series of two-hour programs focusing on transportation laws and regulations as they pertain to the agricultural industry. Farm Bureau will host one of the sessions on Tuesday, February 27th at 10:00 a.m. at the Camden Centre in Milan. The Rules for the Road Seminar will cover recent changes, as well as some of the more established but still misunderstood rules. Topics may include the USDOT Number, UCR registration, Entry Level Driver Training, farm exemptions, and driver's

license classifications to name a few. In addition, one of the events will also be broadcast virtually on March 5th at 10 am. "These presentations take a closer look at the rules and provide an opportunity for farmers to ask ag-related trucking questions that they can't seem to find clear answers for," said Rodney Knittel, IFB Associate Director of Transportation and Infrastructure. Knittel specializes in farm transportation issues and will lead the seminar series and will be joined by Illinois enforcement agencies.

Rules for the Road seminars are open to all Illinois Farm Bureau members. Attendance is free, courtesy of Illinois Farm Bureau, but advance registration is required. Coffee, water, and donuts will be provided.

Please call your local county farm bureau to reserve your place at the Rules for the Road Seminar by Friday, February 23rd. Registration opens February 1st. For more information, contact the Henry County Farm Bureau at 309-937-2411 or email manager@henrycofarmbureau.org.

## HENRY COUNTY BEEF ASSOCIATION BANQUET



**Saturday March 23, 2024**  
 Lavender Crest Winery,  
 5401 US Hwy 6, Colona, IL 61241

Social hour begins at 5:00 p.m.  
 Dinner at 6:00 p.m., Program and auction to follow

For tickets contact Courtney Ericson at (309) 507-2025

# 'THAT WON'T HAPPEN TO ME': IFB HOSTS FARM EMERGENCY PLANNING SEMINARS

Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) and COUNTRY Financial are partnering to host four "Emergency Planning on Your Farm" seminars in February 2024 to help farm families and businesses prepare for crisis situations and farm emergencies.

Join IFB, COUNTRY Financial and guest host Mike Pearson, long-time farm broadcaster and host of RFD-TV's "This Week in Agribusiness" to hear best practices to navigate crises.

"Every year, farms across the U.S. encounter disasters, including severe weather, life-threatening farm accidents and even social media challenges threatening businesses' reputations," said Kim Knapp, IFB membership operations manager. "While such crises are heartbreaking, they don't spell the end of an operation."

"These seminars are intended to prepare farm families and businesses for potential crisis situations through hearing about real-life situations and learning common best practices to bring back to their operation."

Each seminar will last approximately 2.5 hours with doors opening 30 minutes before the event. Meetings are planned at the following locations and times:

- Thursday, Feb. 8 at 5 p.m. in Rock Island
- Friday, Feb. 9 at 11 a.m. in Edwardsville
- Monday, Feb. 12 at 10 a.m. in Bloomington
- Monday Feb. 12 at 5 p.m. in Effingham

Each seminar will provide attendees with information and questions that are essential to being prepared if a farm emergency occurs. Peason will also share lessons learned from farm operations that had emergency situations and best practices for farm families and

businesses to implement. An IFB leader will also provide information on crisis situations.

Lindsey Rinkenberger, COUNTRY director of commercial agribusiness underwriting operations, will also provide a brief overview of how COUNTRY farm-certified reps can help farmers protect their farm and crops with proper insurance coverages and plan for their farm's financial future.

A meal is provided during each seminar, so those interested in attending are encouraged to save-the-date at <https://on.ilfb.org/farmplan21>. Those saving the date will receive a notification once registration opens on Dec. 1.

For more information, contact Henr County Farm Bureau or Kim Knapp at 309-557-2601, or by email at [kknapp@ilfb.org](mailto:kknapp@ilfb.org).

About Mike Pearson

Mike Pearson was born and raised in South Central Iowa, where he grew to love agriculture on his family's hog and cattle farm. After graduating college, he worked as an agricultural lender. Over the next 10 years, Pearson left the world of finance and entered the world of media. He's previously hosted "Market to Market" on public television, and Ag News Daily podcast, and currently anchors "This Week in Agribusiness" on RFD-TV. Listeners can hear him every day as the host of Agriculture of America, a daily ag-focused radio show.

About Illinois Farm Bureau

The Illinois Farm Bureau is a member of the American Farm Bureau Federation, a national organization of farmers and ranchers. Founded in 1916, IFB is a non-profit, membership organization directed by farmers who join through their county Farm Bureau. IFB has a total membership of more than 364,452 and a farmer membership of 75,959. IFB represents three out of four Illinois farmers.

# IAA FOUNDATION OFFERS SCHOLARSHIPS TO SUPPORT AGRICULTURE, ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU FAMILIES

BLOOMINGTON, ILL. — More than \$192,000 in scholarships are available for agriculture students through the IAA Foundation.

"We are once again pleased to offer a scholarship program that encourages students to explore degrees in agriculture related fields," said Jennifer Smith, IAA Foundation development manager. "It is imperative that the next generation of agriculture leaders receives the financial support they need to stay immersed in their education and build their career in agriculture."

Agriculture students and Illinois Farm Bureau® (IFB) members, spouses and children are eligible to apply for 110 college scholarships offered by the IAA Foundation, Illinois Farm Bureau's charitable arm. The scholarships, ranging from \$1,000 to \$7,500, will be awarded in total of \$192,001 for the 2024-25 school year.

Applications are open for a variety of financial awards including the newly created Promoting Careers in Agriculture Scholarship, Robert E. Koeller Scholarship and the Allen and Ellen M. Blessman Scholarship. Additionally, the IAA Foundation offers scholarships on behalf of Prairie Farms Dairy and several family scholarships established to honor loved ones. Fellowships are also available to support students pursuing advanced degrees in fields that directly relate to agriculture.

Scholarships are awarded based on involvement in extra-curricular activities, community service, academic performance, leadership experiences and an essay. Previous winners of an IAA Foundation scholarship are eligible to apply again if the individual scholarship allows.

A full listing of available scholarships and eligibility guidelines is available at [www.iaafoundation.org](http://www.iaafoundation.org). Applications must be completed online by Feb. 15. For more information, contact your county Farm Bureau, the IAA Foundation at 309-557-2232, or email Jennifer Smith at [jsmith@ilfb.org](mailto:jsmith@ilfb.org)


The mission of the IAA Foundation, Illinois Farm Bureau's charitable arm, is to fund education, research, and charitable activities that benefit Illinois farm families and agriculture.



**"FARM GATE TO DINNER PLATE"**

From the farm to your dinner table – agriculture is everywhere! Use your t-shirt design to show the many things that are grown and raised on the farm, how they arrive on your dinner plate – think farm to fork!


**DEADLINE: FEBRUARY 22, 2024**  
Complete details can be found at [www.henrycofarmbureau.org](http://www.henrycofarmbureau.org)

**FEBRUARY 27<sup>TH</sup> AT 10 AM**  
Hosted by: Rock Island County

**CAMDEN CENTRE**  
2701 1st St East, Milan IL 61264  
Doughnuts provided • Door opens at 9:15am

Attendance is open to all Illinois Farm Bureau Members.  
Please contact your local County Farm Bureau to register by February 23rd



2024 HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU

## Poster Contest

**Food and Family Traditions – What do you do together with food?**

Food connects us in so many ways! What traditions do you have with your family that involve food?

Applesauce Day is here! In this story, Maria and her family visit an apple orchard and pick apples. Then it is time to turn the apples into applesauce. Every year they use a special pot that has been in the family for generations. Follow along as everyone helps to make delicious applesauce. Look for this book in your school or local library!

*\*USE YOUR POSTER TO TELL US ABOUT THE FUN YOU HAVE AND THE FOOD YOU GROW, PREPARE OR EAT!*



**Deadline: February 15, 2024**  
Complete details can be found at [www.henrycofarmbureau.org](http://www.henrycofarmbureau.org)

Farm Bureau Salutes the COUNTRY Financial Membership Recruiter of the Month



*Eric Henderson,  
Geneseo*

## Deferred Payment On Tire Purchase

Aledo Tire Shop 800-322-1435  
Cambridge Tire Shop 800-824-3679




**Any New Tire Purchase Made January & February 2024**

Minimum Purchase of \$2,000.00

Payment Deferred until June 25, 2024 with approved credit.



# HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION TO AWARD \$45,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

The Henry County Farm Bureau Foundation is offering up to six scholarships, at a minimum of \$1,500. In addition, Farm Bureau will be administering the following scholarships: Wilbert and Carol Keppy Foundation, three each in the amount of \$5,000; Kevin and Karen Urick Farm Bureau Legacy Scholarship, in the amount of \$1,000; Glenn and Betty DeSmith Memorial Scholarship, three in the amount of \$5,000 each; Trade and Technical Program Scholarship, up to four in the amount of \$1,000 each; James Ufkin Memorial Scholarship, in the amount of \$1,000.

The **Henry County Farm Bureau Foundation** was formed in the Spring of 1984 to carry out charitable, scientific, literary, and educational work in the field of agriculture. The Foundation awards scholarships each year to graduating high school seniors and college students pursuing degrees in Agriculture.



The **Glenn and Betty DeSmith Memorial Scholarship** honors the life of Glenn and Betty DeSmith of Geneseo. Glenn proudly served his country in the Army during the Korean War from January 1951 to January 1953. The DeSmith's farmed southwest of Annawan until their retirement in 1990. Glenn and Betty were very active in the community and their church. Glenn served on the Henry County Farm Bureau Board and the Henry County Soil and Water Conservation District Board, receiving the Henry County Conservation award in 1975. The DeSmith Memorial Scholarship recognizes students who are involved in the livestock industry and their family farms.



This year we are announcing the **James Ufkin Memorial Scholarship**, honoring the life and service of Jim Ufkin. Jim was a life-long farmer, retiring to Geneseo after 46 years of farming corn, soybeans and raising hogs near Hooppole, IL. He served on the Board of Directors of the Henry County Farm Bureau for 40 years, representing Yorktown and Geneseo townships and held the offices of Vice President and Secretary. During that time Jim also served on the Board of the Henry County Farm Bureau Foundation. Mr. Ufkin was a dedicated leader in the agriculture community in Henry County and beyond.

This year the HCFB Foundation Board is proud to announce, for the second year, that they will award those pursuing a skill in a "Trade and Technical Program." Four scholarships will be

awarded, each in the amount of \$1,000, to individuals enrolled in a program and seeking skills benefiting agriculture in the area of study including, but not limited to, truck driving, welding, electrical, plumbing, carpentry, HVAC, etc.

Any student who qualifies under the guidelines may submit an application for either or all scholarships. Applications will be judged separately.

Applications must be received by or postmarked to the Henry County Farm Bureau® office, 128 N. Prospect Street, Cambridge, by March 8, 2024. The Foundation Board will make the final selections after the deadline.

Guidelines and applications may be obtained on the Henry County Farm Bureau website [www.henrycofarmbureau.org](http://www.henrycofarmbureau.org) or by emailing [manager@henrycofarmbureau.org](mailto:manager@henrycofarmbureau.org).

If you have any questions concerning the scholarship application or the Farm Bureau Foundation, please contact the Henry County Farm Bureau at (309) 937-2411.



## A Sign of Your Legacy

Embrace this tradition unique to agriculture by hanging a gate sign of your own! Whether you're on the farm or connected to agriculture, displaying your member sign shows pride in and support for your Farm Bureau organization.

Each sign can be customized and shipped for just \$50. Proceeds benefit the Illinois Agriculture in the Classroom program, so you're also helping teach children the importance of farming.

Gate signs make excellent gifts!  
**Order your Gate Sign NOW!**  
 Order online @ [iaafoundation.org](http://iaafoundation.org)



**Wilbert and Carol Keppy** farmed and raised hogs along the Osco slab for decades. The Keppy's were instrumental in starting the Henry County Pork Producers and were among a group of pork producers throughout the state that started the Illinois Pork Producers in the early 1960s. The Keppy Foundation annually provides scholarships for students in Henry County.



The **Kevin and Karen Urick Farm Bureau Legacy Scholarship** honors a recipient from a farm family, that has been involved for multiple generations, in Henry County Farm Bureau. Farm Bureau has impacted the Urick family for multiple generations. This scholarship is designed to honor the organization that has served as an educational, social, and economic tool for its members, as the "Voice of Agriculture" in Henry County, since 1917.



Your farm is your legacy.  
 We can help you protect it.



Eric Henderson  
 Geneseo  
 (309)944-4618



Julie Hessler  
 Orion  
 (309)526-8024



Tom McKie  
 Cambridge  
 (309)937-3372



Jerry Samuelson  
 Woodhull  
 (309)334-3430



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Katie Spivey  
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 1220-507HC\_9/15/2023



# HEALTH DEPT & FIRST CHOICE HEALTHCARE NOTE RISK FACTORS FOR HEART DISEASE DURING HEART MONTH

The Henry and Stark County Health Departments and our First Choice Healthcare Clinics in Kewanee, Colona and Toulon note that February is American Heart Month. The Health Department and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) note during the month of February we tend view the human heart as the symbol of love, admiration and affection. But this February show yourself the love. Learn about your risks for heart disease and stroke and stay "heart healthy" for yourself and your loved ones.

RaeAnn Tucker, Director of Health Promotion with the Health Departments states, "Cardiovascular disease (CVD)—including heart disease, stroke, and high blood pressure—is the number 1 killer of women and men in the United States. It is a leading cause of disability, preventing Americans from working and enjoying family activities." Truth

is many CVD deaths could have been prevented through healthier habits; but it helps if you have a plan and carry out some strategies for better heart health:

**Work with your health care team.** Get a checkup at least once each year, even if you feel healthy. A doctor, nurse, or other health care professional can check for conditions that put you at risk for CVD, such as high blood pressure and diabetes—conditions that can go unnoticed for too long.

**Monitor your blood pressure & get your cholesterol checked.** The Department and our First Choice Healthcare Clinics remind area residents that our Family Nurse Practitioners in Kewanee, Colona and Toulon can help with the management of high blood pressure and high cholesterol. If you don't know your blood pressure and cholesterol numbers; we have services that can

help you see where you stand.

**Eat a healthy diet.** Choosing healthful meal and snack options can help you avoid CVD and its complications. Limiting sodium in your diet can lower your blood pressure. Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables—adults should have at least five servings each day. Eating foods low in saturated fat, trans fat, and cholesterol and high in fiber.

**Maintain a healthy weight.** Being overweight or obese can increase your risk for CVD.

**Exercise regularly.** Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight and lower cholesterol and blood pressure.

**Don't smoke.** Cigarette smoking greatly increases your risk for CVD. If you don't smoke, don't start. If you do smoke, quit as soon as possible.

**Limit alcohol use.** Avoid drinking too much alcohol, which can increase your blood pressure.

**Manage your diabetes.** If you have diabetes, monitor your blood sugar levels closely, and talk with your health care team about treatment options.

**Take your medicine.** If you're taking medication to treat high blood pressure, high cholesterol, diabetes, or another condition, follow the instructions carefully. Always ask questions if you don't understand something.

So, remember, this February show yourself some love, and lower your risk of heart disease. For more information on the "Heart Healthy" services available through the First Choice Healthcare Clinics can call Kewanee 309-852-5272; Colona 309-792-4011; and Toulon 309-852-3115.



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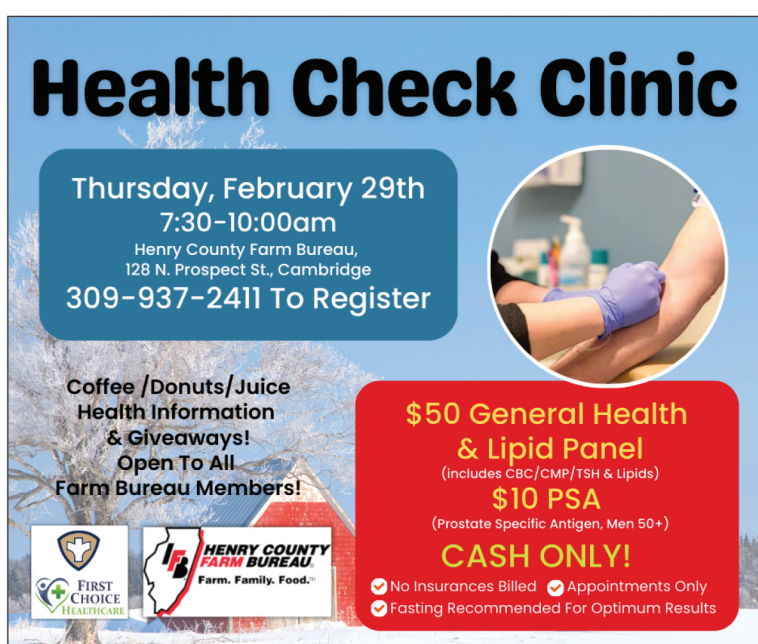
**MARKET OUTLOOK SEMINAR SERIES**

**THURSDAY MARCH 14 6:15 P.M.**

**Paul Otto**  
Freese Notis  
(Registration deadline March 7)

**Lavender Crest Winery**  
5401 US Highway 6  
Colona, IL 61241  
[www.lavendercrest.com](http://www.lavendercrest.com)

HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU Farm, Family, Food.™  
ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FARM BUREAU Farm, Family, Food.™  
MERCER COUNTY FARM BUREAU Farm, Family, Food.™



**Health Check Clinic**

Thursday, February 29th  
7:30-10:00am  
Henry County Farm Bureau,  
128 N. Prospect St., Cambridge  
309-937-2411 To Register

Coffee / Donuts / Juice  
Health Information & Giveaways!  
Open To All Farm Bureau Members!

**\$50 General Health & Lipid Panel**  
(Includes CBC/CMP/TSH & Lipids)  
**\$10 PSA**  
(Prostate Specific Antigen, Men 50+)  
**CASH ONLY!**

No Insurances Billed  Appointments Only  
 Fasting Recommended For Optimum Results

FIRST CHOICE HEALTHCARE HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU Farm, Family, Food.™

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**2024 Women IN AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE**

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## FARMERS NEED LICENSED TRUCKERS

CDL? 10-4.

That three-letter acronym for Commercial Driver's License also stands for one of my biggest life achievements. Until two years ago, I had no idea how to drive a stick shift. Not even in a car. But our family farm needed more truck drivers, and I wanted to contribute. I stood determined to drive a 10-speed-transmission semi and learn to double clutch while mindful of a 42-foot-long trailer behind me.

Semis arrived on our farm about 30 years ago, a need driven by greater crop productivity, bigger farm equipment and the desire for efficiency. Today, we require people with this licensed skill in the spring to deliver seed and fertilizer to planters in the field, in the summer to get product to the sprayer, in the fall to move grain from field to storage, and another nine months of the year to haul grain to market.

Given my serious lack of experience, I must credit the patience of six men with licenses on the farm who encouraged and helped me earn a full-fledged CDL about 14 months ago. Poor Kent on the first day I attempted to learn straight-line backing, and poor Dale, who witnessed me crawl a hill in first gear from a standstill while fully loaded.

With the help of YouTube and excessive amounts of practice with members of our farm team riding shotgun, I passed all the required tests: the three written exams, the detailed under-hood inspection, the skills course, and the drive. Per test requirements, I parallel-parked the semi and grain trailer, successfully putting all 18 wheels inside the lines from the driver's side. (Just in case I ever need to parallel park on a one-way street.) I aced offset backing with no pull-ups on my second skills

course attempt, and afterward drove the city streets and interstate without missing a gear. Whew.

Most importantly, I gained empathy and respect for our team and other men and women who have mastered the skill. I now drive my minivan differently, understanding the risks that drivers of passenger vehicles can create in their sudden stops, haphazard lane changes and merges without consideration. All drivers should take a written CDL exam, if nothing more than to learn the length a semi needs to stop. To that, I would expect a loud and clear 10-4.

*About the author: Joanie Stiers farms with her family in West-Central Illinois, where they grow corn, soybeans, hay and cover crops and raise beef cattle, backyard chickens and farmkids.*

## DRIER JUNE, JULY HELPED 2023 CROP OVERALL

By Phyllis Coulter, FarmWeek, Jan 19, 2024

With 2023 in the rearview mirror, researchers continue to unfold lessons learned from a growing season that was notably dry, but still produced high state yields.

Considering the dryness in June and parts of July, Emerson Nafziger, professor emeritus of the University of Illinois, says 2023 crop had a "tremendous yield" with corn showing a state average of 206 bushels per acre and soybeans at 63 bushels acre.

Nafziger told attendees of the Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Association (IFCA) annual convention in Peoria that he attributes part of the higher-than-expected yields to genetics.

"Having soils remain moderately dry after planting brings huge benefits," he said. Roots get down into the soil profile without restriction. Also, there is no loss from drowned out plants or saturated soils, he said.

But the dry soils created some problems including competition from cover crops, which damaged some fields, especially corn. "Planting green carries a price," he said of the practice of planting corn into a living cover crop.

Research he presented showed lower corn yields in 2023 in fields with cover crops, no matter the tillage method. Yields were lower with no-till, one-pass and strip till, he said. Cover crops took more moisture and nitrogen,

giving corn a slower start, he said of the 2023 research. Other speakers at the IFCA convention highlighted the benefits of cover crops including preventing soil erosion, helping prevent nutrient loss, building organic matter and suppressing weeds. Last year also bucked the trend of long-term U of I research in Monmouth where planting dates for corn historically didn't make a big difference. However, later-planted corn in 2023 showed significantly lower yields. He attributes this yield loss to problems with tar spot in some areas.

In 2023, abundant soil-supplied nitrogen was available in corn fields. It was another year where adding "extra N" didn't pay off, Nafziger said.

"Using extra nitrogen for extra yield is a habit I hope we can break," he said.

"More nitrogen is not a cure for stress," he said.

In answer to a question about the impact of the smoky sky in Illinois because of wildfires in Canada during the growing season, Nafziger said it didn't seem to have a major impact on crops. It didn't seem to lower seasonal light as much as expected and some say the diffused light may help. In total, it was a minor factor in the season, he said.

Overall, the drier June and July weather helped crops, but only because it did rain later in the season, Nafziger said.

## DR. ANNIE KINWA-MUZINGA TO HEADLINE WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE

The Women in Agriculture Conference committee is excited for the 2024, Women in Agriculture Conference. Dr. Annie Kinwa-Muzinga will headline for the annual Women in Agriculture Conference in Rock Island on Friday, March 22, 2024. Dr. Annie Kinwa-Muzinga is a Professor of Agribusiness in the Regina Roth Applied Agricultural and Food Studies Department at Morningside University since August 2018. Dr. Annie Kinwa-Muzinga's research on Gender Assessment of the Agricultural Sector in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2012 helped her understand that the fight against hunger and malnutrition of one widow and her children.

Leader Tony McCombie will be the featured mid-day speaker. In January 2023 Leader McCombie began her fourth term of office as State Representative and first term as Leader of the House. She is also the first woman to serve as House Republican Leader in Illinois. Please join Lieutenant Governor Juliana Stratton and House Leader Tony McCombie for a listening session. Closing out the conference is Annaliese Wegner. Also known as Modern-day Farm Chick, is a dairy farmer, mother, wife and AGvocate. Through social media, speaking, workshops, retreats and

events, Annaliese helps others in agriculture effectively share their farm story in an effort to bridge the gap from farm to table.

The conference will host a variety of breakout sessions with topics including aquaponics, landowner rights, tax law and planning, local food markets, and mental health on the farm just to name a few.

Included in the day is an exhibit area, with many businesses and organizations offering materials, promotional items, and give-away drawings, a breakfast and luncheon buffet and mid-day snack break. Conference cost prior to February 29 is \$70. March 1 through March 15 the cost is \$90. Registrations taken March 16 through the day of the conference will cost \$100. If paying by check registration and payment must be received by February 29, 2024. Registration the day of the conference begins at 8am. To pre-register, contact any sponsoring Illinois County Farm Bureaus or register online at [womeninagricultureconference.com](http://womeninagricultureconference.com).

Pre-registration for the event begins on January 8, 2024. More details can be found at [womeninagricultureconference.com](http://womeninagricultureconference.com). This Conference is sponsored by the Farm Bureau Women in Agriculture Conference Committee.

### DWYER Continued from Page 1

and make it to the Sweet Sixteen at the American Farm Bureau Federation Young Leader Discussion Meet in New Orleans. She also served as a county Farm Bureau director for six years.

As former chair of the county education committee, Dwyer has been involved in visits to local classrooms, Farm to Fork events and a number of consumer events such as food and nutrition vendor shows.

Dwyer is used to being in front of crowds, especially in her professional role, but she was grateful for the support of her family and Farm Bureau family leading up to and at the convention.

"I cannot imagine a situation or place where I'm not trying to talk about agriculture or my story and make those connections," she said.

Her takeaway from this recent contest experience?

"I think it's really making sure that we have leaders coming up behind us that are being equipped and have the skills necessary and that are interested and driven to be engaged and be at the table," she said.

As the fourth-place winner, Dwyer won a Case IH-branded Solo Stove worth more than \$1,000, courtesy of Case IH.

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# RECIPE OF THE MONTH DEVEILED STRAWBERRIES



**Ingredients:**

- 18-24 Large Strawberries
- 1 (8oz) package of cream cheese (softened)
- 2/3 cup white granulated sugar
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice (optional)
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/3 cup sour cream
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1/2 cup graham cracker crumbs

**Instructions:**

1. Prep the strawberries by cutting off the stems and slicing them in half. Next, cut a small sliver off of the back of each half so they will sit up straight. Use a small melon baller to carefully hollow out the middle (you don't need to take out much, just enough of a small indent so the filling doesn't slide off).
2. In a medium sized mixing bowl, beat the whipping cream until stiff peaks form (about 5 minutes).
3. In a separate bowl, mix together the softened cream cheese, sour cream, sugar, vanilla extract, and lemon juice with an electric mixer until smooth.
4. Fold the whipped cream into the cream cheese mixture until well incorporated.
5. Fill a piping bag with the cream cheese mixture, pipe it onto each sliced strawberry.
6. Sprinkle graham cracker crumbs over the top
7. Serve and enjoy!

## PREPARING FOR TAX SEASON: CONSIDER THESE TIPS BEFORE FILING

Originally published on Jan 16, 2024, FarmWeekNow.com

The Illinois Department of Revenue (IDOR) is providing taxpayers with tips and alerting them to changes they may encounter when filing their 2023 state income taxes.

Taxpayers are encouraged to file electronically as early as possible in the tax season and choose direct deposit to ensure the fastest processing and issuance of any refunds. If taxpayers electronically file an error-free return, they should receive a direct deposit refund in approximately four weeks.

Taxpayers receiving notices from IDOR should respond as quickly as possible to help expedite processing and minimize any delays in issuing refunds. IDOR continues to increase and enhance efforts to protect taxpayers from identity theft and tax fraud. These highly

successful methods combat criminal activity all while striving to disperse tax refunds as quickly as possible.

Some changes to the 2023 Form IL-1040, Illinois Individual Income Tax Return, and Schedules include:

- The 2023 personal exemption amount is \$2,425.
- The original due date for filing the 2023 Form IL-1040 and paying the 2023 individual income tax liability is April 15.
- The extended due date for filing a return is Oct. 15.

Before starting to file tax returns, it is important to have the necessary documents and records. Some common documents, records or receipts taxpayers may need to file include:

- Adjusted Gross Income from 2022 IL-1040

- Copy of federal income tax return and schedules

- Copies of all W-2 and 1099 forms

- Property number and amount of property taxes paid if claiming a property tax credit

- Voluntary emergency worker credit certificate

- Receipts for qualified education or moving expenses

- Routing and account number if owed a refund and choose to deposit refund directly into checking or savings account.

Tax return filers will also want to determine their eligibility for tax credits. Depending on the circumstances, taxpayers may be able to reduce the amount of taxes owed through tax credits, including the Illinois Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), the Illinois K-12 Education Expense Credit and the Property Tax

Credit.

Starting this year the EITC has been increased to 20% of the federal EITC and expanded to include those who are:

- 18-25 years of age and older and 65 and older without a qualifying child, and

- filing with an Individual Taxpayer Identification Number (ITIN) or have children with an ITIN.

This year also includes the Volunteer Emergency Worker Credit, a \$500 non-refundable tax credit given to volunteer fire emergency workers who qualify, apply and are awarded the credit.

There are several ways to file a state tax return.

MyTax Illinois, IDOR's free online account management program, has been enhanced and allows taxpayers to file returns with or without an account, operates with a simple question and answer format and works to reduce errors by using automated calculations and prepopulated information from previous returns.

In addition to free filing of Form IL-1040 through MyTax Illinois, individuals may also utilize the site to make payments, respond to department inquiries and check the status of their refunds using the Where's My Refund? link.

Taxpayers may also look up IL-PINs, amounts of any estimated

tax payments made, and when necessary, amounts reported on Form 1099-G with MyTax Illinois. Individuals may also choose to file using tax-prep software, a tax professional, or the paper Form IL-1040.

While the state of Illinois does grant an automatic six-month extension to file an IL-1040 each year, taxpayers must still pay any money owed on their returns by April 15 to avoid penalties and interest.

If a return cannot be filed by the due date, taxpayers may make an extension payment electronically through MyTax Illinois. To pay by mail, they may use Form IL-505-I, Automatic Extension Payment for Individuals Filing Form IL-1040, to calculate and make payments.

IDOR's taxpayer assistance numbers are available for tax-related inquiries and include automated menus allowing taxpayers to check the status of a refund, identify an IL-PIN or receive estimated payment information without having to wait for an agent.

To receive assistance taxpayers may call 800-732-8866 or 217-782-3336.

Free language assistance for Limited English Proficiency individuals is available. For the most up-to-date information, forms, schedules, and instructions for the 2023 tax season, please visit IDOR's website, tax.illinois.gov.

### MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

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### HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION TO AWARD \$45,000 IN SCHOLARSHIPS

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Applications are available at [www.henrycofarmbureau.org](http://www.henrycofarmbureau.org) select Foundation

Deadline to apply: March 8, 2024

# GETTING TO KNOW YOUR FARM BUREAU POLICY

## 92. HEALTH CARE RURAL HEALTH CARE QUALITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

### We support:

1. Increasing awareness of the health care resources available to rural populations.
2. Providing additional health care resources where needed.
3. Efforts to direct state funding to medical schools to train additional qualified family physicians who will practice medicine in rural areas.
4. Residency programs to provide post-graduate family physician and primary care training away from major metropolitan-based medical training centers.
5. Programs and incentives to encourage doctors, nurses, and other health care professionals to practice in rural Illinois.
6. The development and implementation of programs to assess rural hospital programs, rural health care facilities, and alternative methods of delivering rural health care.
7. Efforts to develop mobile medical equipment and facilities to bring basic health care services to rural areas of the state.
8. Adequate ambulance service in all rural areas.
9. State regulations to allow the development of limited service hospitals to meet emergency care and other needs where the market will not support a traditional full-service hospital.
10. Legislation that provides exemptions to new state and federal regulations for volunteer fire departments and ambulance services.
11. The maximum possible use of the private sector in providing health care.
12. Exemptions in the two Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) rule to allow rural ambulances to proceed to the scene of an emergency call.
13. Granting continuing education credit to EMTs for their time spent responding to emergency calls.
14. The expansion of the size and scope of the Rural Nurse Practitioner Scholarship Program (RNPSP).
15. An increase in state appropriations for programs that allow for recruitment, training, and retention of additional health care professionals to serve rural counties of Illinois. Patient access to Critical Access Hospitals (CAH) in rural and underserved areas.

### We will:

1. Encourage county Farm Bureaus to host or sponsor community forums of interested professional and lay groups to assess rural health care and facilities in their county.
2. Encourage county Farm Bureaus to host or sponsor rural health and awareness activities including making screening and testing available to their members.
3. Continue to support the Rural Illinois Medical Student Assistance Program (RIMSAP) in its efforts to provide medical practitioners for rural communities in Illinois. We encourage expansion of that program to meet the changing health care needs of rural Illinois.
4. Encourage the American Farm Bureau Federation to place a higher priority on its continuing study of the problems of the delivery of health care services in the United States.
5. Support an Agricultural Physicians and Nursing Program that would educate health care professionals in dealing with agricultural accidents and injuries.
6. Work with the Illinois Department of Public Health to reinstate and maintain all levels of Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) training and testing at convenient locations throughout the state as administered prior to the elimination of EMT basic level testing in Illinois. This will ensure that adequate volunteer services can be retained as a Basic Life System (BLS) and minimize additional mandatory training placed on Emergency Medical Technician Basics (EMT-B). Additional unfunded mandates will impose hardships on the rural volunteer emergency ambulance services. The state of Illinois should look at ways to provide funds for any additional mandates.
7. Encourage funding to rural ambulance services to increase their ability to employ additional certified Pre-Hospital Registered Nurse (PHRN), strengthening their rural emergency response and treatment capabilities.
8. Work to establish a unified EMT and Fire Service Training/Cadet program in which high school students who meet the requirements of the State of Illinois and of the program are able to serve in rural areas.
9. Support the concept of providing health insurance through the market place by allowing portability including insuring pre-existing conditions.
10. Seek legislation to allow Illinois associations to offer member health benefit plans.

### FARMER MENTAL HEALTH

#### We support:

1. Farm Bureau providing education and resources on mental health and stress management to farmer members.

2. Funding and improved delivery of mental health services.
3. Units of government investigating the creation of a community health board under the Community Mental Health Act (CMHA) to lead, contract, and support mental health services in the area.

### PAYMENT FOR HEALTH CARE SERVICES

#### We support:

1. Allowing Medicare recipients to purchase private health care plans that are actuarially equivalent to the current Medicare plan. The plan would receive a payment from Medicare to cover some or all of the costs of the premium.
2. Incentives which could be provided to Medicare recipients to allow them to participate in private or alternative plans.
3. Efforts to eliminate or significantly reduce cost shifting from Medicaid and Medicare to individuals and third-party payers.
4. Privately funded optional care delivery systems such as Health Maintenance Organizations (HMO's) and Preferred Provider Organizations (PPO's).
5. Efforts to encourage the medical profession to accept Medicare assignments. Rural and urban hospitals should be reimbursed equally for providing services to Medicare and Medicaid patients.
6. Relaxation of state and federal mandates which require that certain provisions be included in all health insurance policies. Consumers should be given choices as to what provisions are included in their health insurance programs.
7. Further expansion of medical savings accounts that would qualify for a tax credit to allow individuals and their employees to set aside money in anticipation of future health care costs.
8. Removing the caps on the annual maximum contribution amount for all health savings accounts (HSAs).
9. Eliminating the high deductible health plan mandate from HSA eligibility requirements, allowing more individuals to access the health savings plan.
10. Allowing HSA funds to be used for health insurance premiums.
11. Lifting restrictions placed on the use of HSA funds for Over-The-Counter medicines.
12. Consideration of a voluntary regional insurance purchasing cooperative to permit individuals and small companies to receive the same price advantages that corporations receive.
13. Efforts to simplify and make uniform all insurance forms to reduce the cost of processing.
14. Efforts to detect fraud and abuse of Medicare and Medicaid. We encourage swift and vigorous prosecution of those who are found guilty of defrauding these programs.

We will seek legislation to allow non-penalty and tax-free transfers from IRAs to health savings accounts for major medical emergencies.

We urge repeal of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act and support a more market-oriented system of health care delivery.

#### We oppose:

1. Mandated employer-provided health insurance.
2. Any movement to a single-payer health care system.
3. All tax increases to solve the Medicare problem.
4. Any further tightening of Medicare provider reimbursement.
5. Increasing Medicaid eligibility, in an effort to have national health care reform, that would result in increased cost shifting to the states.

### HEALTH CARE DELIVERY COST

#### We support:

1. Programs to reduce the inflation in health care costs.
2. The development and implementation of programs to provide incentives for consumers to practice wellness and disease prevention.
3. Tort reform to reduce the practice of defensive medicine (i.e., redundant, excessive or unnecessary testing primarily for purposes of liability concerns rather than diagnostic purposes).
4. Every possible effort to affect cost management while providing accessible high-quality health care.
5. State and federal efforts to reduce medical malpractice insurance costs, including limitations on certain punitive and non-economic damage awards, pre-filing mediation boards, and peer review.
6. The use of innovations such as surgical centers or outpatient facilities to allow consumers to opt out of expensive hospital costs when they are unnecessary.
7. The development of an aggressive education-information program for health care consumers to assist them in selecting the most cost-effective health care procedures.
8. Encouragement of regional hospitals to specialize in specific treatment areas with shared access to eliminate unnecessary duplication of equipment and personnel.
9. A periodic review of state regulations and licensing requirements for hospitals and medical professionals to determine the appropriateness of the regulations and licensing requirements in light of changes in the health care delivery system.
10. Efforts to allow consumers to purchase medications that are physician prescribed, as opposed to having to accept a substitute, in order to receive any reimbursement from their insurance carrier.
11. Efforts to encourage and strengthen price transparency in healthcare delivery systems.