

HENRY COUNTY FARMER



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

HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU DATEBOOK

APRIL

- 3** HCFB Office Closed – Good Friday
- 9** Henry County Beef Association Meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 7:00 p.m.
- 21** Henry County Farm Bureau Board of Directors Meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 7:00 p.m.

RURAL NURSE PRACTITIONER
Scholarship PROGRAM
Helping to meet the needs of primary care in rural Illinois. RIMSAP.com
DEADLINE IS MAY 1

APPLICATIONS AVAILABLE FOR VETERINARY STUDENT LOANS

Illinois Farm Bureau® (IFB) is accepting applications for its Illinois Veterinary Education and Training (IVET) loan program. Loans are available to second-year veterinary students attending any accredited college of veterinary medicine in the U.S. and who are focusing on Illinois food animal medicine.

The Illinois Veterinary Education Training (IVET) Program helps offset the high cost of veterinary education. The program loans up to \$40,000 to as many as three veterinary students each year. Loans are made over a period of

two to three years. IVET awards recipients a \$1,500 stipend during their fourth year in school to help pay expenses associated with clinical rotations. Loans are repaid over five years, during which graduates must commit to working in a food animal practice that services Illinois livestock producers.

“Illinois Farm Bureau encourages veterinary students to pursue a career in caring for food animals,” said Tasha Bunting, IFB director of commodity programs and food systems. “To succeed, farmers need the services of a food-animal

veterinarian to help them care for their beef cattle, swine, sheep, and poultry. It’s an incredibly rewarding career field that has seen an increase in demand in recent years.”

Applications are due May 15, 2026, and can be found online at www.ilfb.org/IVET. The selection committee will interview eligible applicants in spring 2026. Successful applicants will be notified by mail. Loan disbursements begin in August.

For more information about the program, contact Tasha Bunting at 309-557-2993 or tbunting@ilfb.org.



APPLY NOW: www.ilfb.org/iVET

Henry & Stark County Health Department & First Choice Healthcare Offer Public Health Week Special Throughout April in Kewanee & Toulon

The Henry and Stark County Health Departments and their First Choice Healthcare Clinics in Kewanee and Toulon will showcase their ongoing efforts “to protect and improve the health of the community,” during National Public Health Week, April 6-12, 2026 and throughout the month of April.

In keeping with National Public Health Week’s mission of promoting healthier living and achieving the goal of “healthiest nation by 2030,” the First Choice

Healthcare Clinics will offer a clinic special during the month of April featuring a combination General Health/Thyroid Panel Blood Test for only \$50. This test includes a full lipid “Cholesterol” panel. Please note, fasting is recommended for these tests for optimum results.

The First Choice Healthcare Clinics will be offering these specials at all their locations. The clinics are open to all area residents, and appointments 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.

To schedule an appointment or for more information on the First Choice Healthcare Clinics’ Public Health Week April Lab Special call Kewanee 309-852-5272; or Toulon 309-852-3115 or find us on Facebook at Henry and Stark County Health Departments & First Choice Healthcare or Follow Us on Twitter and Instagram.

Follow Us

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What is Shop Local? Shop Local is an online directory that brings fresh food and local business together. This directory provides simple yet powerful search tools to connect growers, buyers, sellers, and consumers. Search local products or register your business today! Shop Local is brought to you through a partnership with Illinois Farm Bureau, in cooperation with the Illinois Specialty Growers Association, and Illinois MarketMaker.

Visit <https://henrycofarmbureau.org/shop-local>



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RURAL NURSE PRACTITIONER SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATION AVAILABLE

We are pleased to announce that the Illinois Farm Bureau® Rural Nurse Practitioner Scholarship Program is now open for applications. This program offers 15 scholarships, each valued at \$4,000, to support nurse practitioners committed to serving rural communities in Illinois.

For over 33 years, this scholarship initiative has been instrumental in fostering a robust network of rural health practitioners, addressing the primary healthcare needs in Illinois' rural areas. Scholarship recipients are expected to practice in an approved rural area within the state for a minimum of two years.

Eligibility criteria include being a resident of Illinois and either accepted into or

currently enrolled in an accredited Nurse Practitioner Program as a Registered Nurse. The Rural Illinois Medical Student Assistance Program (RIMSAP) proudly funds this initiative.

Interested applicants can obtain application forms from county Farm Bureaus® throughout the state, the RIMSAP website at RIMSAP.com, or by reaching out to Donna Gallivan, Program Manager, at the Illinois Farm Bureau, 1701 Towanda Avenue, Bloomington, IL 61701. Please note that the application deadline is May 1.

For additional information or inquiries, please contact Donna Gallivan at 309-557-2350 or via email at dgallivan@iflb.org.



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LEARN MORE ABOUT ALL UPCOMING EVENTS, BENEFITS, AND MORE

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HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU
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“EXPLORING ICE CREAM”

Paula Janson, Ag in the Classroom Coordinator, made homemade ice cream with first grade students at Annawan Grade School.



“LESSON ON COTTON”

Six grade students at Orion Middle School learned about cotton and dissected a cotton boll during their Agriculture in the Classroom lesson.



“LEARNING BURGER BASICS”

Second grade students at C.R. Hanna Elementary School in Orion, learned where all the ingredients in a cheeseburger come from and made mini burgers for a fun treat!



“SWEET CLASSROOM LEARNING”

First grade students at Southwest Elementary School in Geneseo made ice cream with Paula Janson, Hency County Agriculture in the Classroom Coordinator.

National Public Health Week,
 April 6-12, 2026 *“Ready. Set. Action!”*
April Lab Special-All Month!

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SOYBEAN: SMALL BEAN WITH A BIG RESUME

If I were a crop, I might be a soybean. I'm short, low drama and work best behind the scenes. My mood can shift from tolerant and forgiving (planting season) to an annoying attention to detail (harvest). But chocolate holds it all together. (Soy is the key; I'll explain).

All of that is really by comparison to corn, the primary crop alternative in Illinois. We live in the Corn Belt. Corn gains name fame for its visual dominance in acres. We find fascination in corn mazes, and the most common consumer-facing farm policy conversations – like ethanol – involve corn.

Unbeknownst to most citizens, Illinois grows more than 20 million tons of soybeans annually and claims the reigning title of No. 1 soybean state in the nation. The

achievement reached the heart of Springfield, where legislators voted the soybean as the Illinois state bean in 2025.

Soybeans make a great team with corn as a rotational crop companion and literally bring the muscle with their protein punch. Our FFA chapter packed 4,000 non-perishable meals for local food pantries using soy protein, a budget-friendly, high-protein staple. Soy protein is a common ingredient in meat, both plant-based alternatives and the real thing. Soybean meal, the byproduct after removing the seed's oil, is the nation's top high-protein feed that brings chicken, pork, eggs and dairy to the table.

The average American consumes nearly half a cup of soybeans in

some form every day, which could include cooking oil, margarine, soy milk and protein shakes. Soy lecithin keeps chocolate and cocoa butter from separating. Hooray for soy holding together my bite-sized sweet fix after lunch, which likely was a salad that wouldn't exist without dressing, a soy-dominant lifeline for the fresh greens.

Our farm fuels its tractors and trucks with soy-based biodiesel. Soy oil is a named ingredient in plastics for John Deere and the foam in the seats of Ford vehicles. This month, I will see the bean more than my family as I plant some 300 million of those pea-sized seeds across our farm.

Thankfully, soybeans tolerate a wider range of "good-enough" conditions during planting season.

Corn prefers perfection. The tides turn come harvest, when the bean gets moody: moisture content rapidly shifts from too wet to too dry, and the mature, standing crop's harvestability is notoriously sensitive to weather.

Beyond that, soybeans check the boxes for Illinois: rotational cropping systems, soil types, climate and access to exports in a state literally shaped by rivers. As the top U.S. agricultural export crop, soybeans bring billions of dollars to America's economy.

Those are some cool beans.

About the author: Joanie Stiers farms with her parents and brother in west-central Illinois, where they grow corn, soybeans and hay, raise beef cattle and operate side businesses related to the family operation.



MAKING MOZZARELLA

Our Education Committee sponsored another great consumer engagement program with their Cheese Making Class! Special thanks to Lia Nightingale for leading the class and to Kendra Anderson of Midwest Dairy for providing great information to attendees. Watch the HCFB Facebook page for more upcoming programs and classes by the Education Committee.

COUNTRY OAKS VETERINARY CLINIC
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- BALLOON TWISTING ARTIST

HOW A NEAR-FATAL ACCIDENT MADE OUR FARM SUCCESSION PLAN CRYSTAL CLEAR

By Karen Bohnert, FarmWeek

The last Friday in February was supposed to be a victory lap for a winter well spent. It was a rare 65-degree gift from the Illinois sky. The kind of afternoon where the sun feels like a promise of the spring to come.

My husband, Scott, and our youngest son, Jacob, spent the afternoon moving cattle between sites. It's a project that usually takes three or four hours, and as any farmer knows, the cattle rarely cooperate. But Jacob did. He was right there, shoulder-to-shoulder with his dad. Our oldest son, Tyler, was home from college for the weekend, helping on the dairy with cattle work. It was one of those perfect, productive days where everyone was basking in the sunshine, the rhythm of the farm

moving in a steady, beautiful cadence.

When the clock hit 5 p.m., Scott was ready to call it a day. Our local high school boys' basketball team had made it to regionals, and we wanted to be there to cheer them on. We climbed into our SUV, chatting about the chores we'd finished and enjoying the lingering warmth of the day.

We were only a mile from our farm when the world shattered.

It happened in a blink. A truck made a mad dash across the four-lane highway, blindsiding us. There was no time to swerve, no time to brake. The police report would later confirm what we already knew: there was nothing we could have done.

Everyone tells you that life can change in a split second, but until you are sitting in the wreckage of mangled steel, surrounded by a dozen deployed airbags and the smell of gunpowder and dust, you don't truly understand it. As we hit, I felt the impact vibrate through my very bones. I immediately started to pray. "We will be OK. God, make us OK."

Through the haze of smoke and shock, Scott's voice was the only thing I could hear. He was a trooper, his own safety forgotten.

"Karen, are you OK?" he asked, over and over.

I wanted to scream that I was fine. I wanted to tell him I was right there. But the shock was a physical weight. My mouth opened, a moan



Photo courtesy Karen Bohnert

escaped, but the words were trapped behind a wall of trauma. I couldn't speak.

The rest of the evening was a blur of sirens, flashing lights and the sterile white walls of the ER. The ambulance took me away; the tow truck took what was left of our vehicle. We spent the night under fluorescent lights, but we walked away. We got to go home.

In the days that followed, a deep, heavy appreciation for life settled over our house. I am thankful to be writing this story, though I would give anything to have never lived it. But the most emotional moment didn't happen at the crash site; it happened at our farm.

Our children asked the question every farm kid fears: "What would happen if both of you had passed?"

I cried. But for the first time, I could answer them with certainty. I told them about the will. I told them it was all outlined, all documented. It took me losing both of my parents and my brother — and writing about other families' succession plans gone wrong for years — before we finally sat down and finalized our own a decade ago.

I think back to my own parents. It took them losing their own son — my brother — in an automobile accident to finally lean forward and be brave enough to talk about their own will. They put a plan together soon after and revised it a few times over the years. When

the time came that we eventually lost our parents, my sisters and I were so incredibly thankful we did not have to worry about the logistics during our grief. My parents had it all documented. They gave us that peace of mind.

Farmers, I am pleading with you: Don't push pause.

Don't wait for a sunny day to have the conversation. Or a rain day. The highway doesn't care about your schedule. Don't wait because it's an uncomfortable conversation; it will never get easier. Don't wait because you aren't sure what is "fair" or what is "best."

Start the conversation today. Meet with a lawyer. Get it documented. You can always change and revise it — we already have once since we started.

I am so incredibly thankful that today, my kids are out in the dirt helping on the farm instead of sitting in a lawyer's office reading a will. I am thankful they didn't lose their parents on an Illinois highway. But mostly, I am thankful that if the worst had happened, they wouldn't have been left in the dark.

Don't wait. Your legacy is too important to leave to chance.

Karen Bohnert and her husband, Scott, operate Bohnert Jerseys, a 750-cow dairy in East Moline. This article was originally published by Farm Journal and reprinted with permission.

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BOELENS RECEIVED AWARD

Laura Boelens of the Burns Boosters 4-H Club was a recipient of the Farm Bureau Young Leaders 4-H and FFA Project Grant. Ben Strand, Club Leader, presented Laura with her award, for her swine project at their recent club meeting.



PROJECT GRANTS AWARDED

Axel Strand was named a recipient of the Young Leaders 4-H and FFA Project Grant. Axel is a member of the Burns Boosters 4-H Club and his project is rabbits. Presenting Axel his certificate and award is Club Leader, Ben Strand.



YOUNG LEADERS PRESENT 4-H AND FFA PROJECT GRANTS

For the second year, the Farm Bureau Young Leaders have awarded 4-H and FFA members in Henry County with grants to assist students with financial support for their chosen project area.

Kate Huffman (right) awarded a \$100 grant to Emma Schroeder of the Western Jr. Farmers 4-H Club for her beef project. Congratulations Emma!

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HENRY COUNTY FARMER
MEMBER SINCE 2015

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Apply for Illinois Farm Bureau's iVET loan program today.

- Loan for food animal vet students
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- Up to \$40,000 loan distributed over three years

- STUDENT TIMELINE:**
- Applications due May 15
 - Interviews are conducted in June
 - Loan proceeds are dispersed in August



APPLY NOW: www.ilfb.org/iVET

Farm Bureau Salutes the COUNTRY Financial Membership Recruiters of the Month



Tom McKie, Cambridge



Katie Spivey, Galva



Henry & Stark County Health Departments & First Choice Healthcare Note April - Cancer Control Month

The Henry and Stark County Health Department and First Choice Healthcare announce April has been designated as Cancer Control Month.

RaeAnn Tucker, Health Department Director of Health Promotion, notes "While it is impossible to completely eliminate the risk of cancer, we can take action to reduce our chances of developing this disease. To beat this disease, prevention is the key. Today, scientists think most cancers may be related to lifestyle and environment - what you eat, drink, if you smoke and where you work and play. So, the good news is you can help reduce your own cancer risk by taking control of things in your daily life."

The Health Department and First Choice Healthcare, along with the American Cancer Society, offer the following 10 steps you can take to a healthier life and reduced cancer risk:

1) If you smoke or chew tobacco, stop! Smoking is a major cancer risk to smokers and everyone near them. If you are going to have a baby and you smoke, you pass the smoke and the risk right on to your baby. The combination of smoking and drinking alcohol is even riskier.

2) Get Vaccinated. Cancer prevention includes protection from certain viral infections. Talk to your doctor about vaccination against HPV and Hepatitis B. Human papillomavirus (HPV). HPV is a sexually transmitted virus that can lead to cervical and other genital cancers as well as squamous cell cancers of the head and neck. The HPV

vaccine is recommended for girls and boys ages 11 and 12. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration recently approved the use of vaccine Gardasil 9 for males and females ages 9 to 45.

Hepatitis B. Hepatitis B can increase the risk of developing liver cancer. The hepatitis B vaccine is recommended for certain adults at high risk — such as adults who are sexually active but not in a mutually monogamous relationship, people with sexually transmitted infections, people who use intravenous drugs, men who have sex with men, and health care or public safety workers who might be exposed to infected blood or body fluids.

3) Have regular check-ups. Ask your health care provider about the American Cancer Society's guidelines for early detection screenings.

4) Maintaining a healthy weight will help you reduce your risk of cancer - as well as heart disease and diabetes. Watching your portion sizes - especially of foods high in fat and sugar - is an important way to help watch your weight.

5) Enjoy more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and legumes. Eat at least five servings of colorful fruits and vegetables each day. They are packed with disease-fighting nutrients, are generally low in fat and calories, and may help you control your weight. Try to eat at least three servings of whole-grain products each day.

6) Limit how much saturated fat you eat by cutting back on red meats

(beef, pork, and lamb), processed meats (bologna, salami, and hot dogs), and high-fat dairy products.

7) If you drink alcohol, limit yourself to one drink a day if you are female and two a day if you are male.

8) Get some physical activity like walking, gardening, or dancing for at least 30 minutes or more on five or more days of the week. Check with your health care provider before you begin an exercise routine.

9) Protect your skin from UV rays. Stay out of the sun as much as you can between 10am and 4pm, when the sun's UV rays are the strongest. When you are outside, cover up with clothing. Wear a hat with a brim that shades your face, ears, and neck. Use sunscreen with SPF 15 or higher on all skin not covered with clothing. Wear sunglasses with UV protection. Don't use sunlamps or tanning salons.

10) If you work with harmful chemicals or fibers like asbestos, wear protective clothes and follow directions exactly. Be sure to learn emergency procedures.

For information about cancer, contact the American Cancer Society anytime at 1-800-ACS-2345 or www.cancer.org or visit the Health Department's website at www.henrystarkhealth.com or find us on Facebook at Henry and Stark County Health Departments or Follow Us on Twitter & Instagram.



GROWING FUTURE CAREERS

Makenna Walker and Jon Stevens of the Young Leaders spoke to 4th grade students at Cambridge Elementary about careers in agriculture.



CAREERS IN AGRICULTURE

Young Leaders, Kate Huffman and Justine Johnson, recently spoke to 4th grade students at Annawan Elementary. Each year the Young Leaders make presentations to fourth grade classes throughout all of Henry County, speaking about careers in agriculture.



BUILD YOUR FUTURE IN AGRICULTURE

Young Leaders, Katie Spivey and Makenna Walker, shared a presentation about careers in agriculture to 4th grade students at Galva Elementary School.

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



OLD FASHIONED HONEY ROAST HAM

Prep Time: 10 minutes • Cook Time: 1 hour • www.themoderngram.com

This old-fashioned honey glazed ham is tender, buttery, and coated in a sweet honey mustard glaze that caramelizes beautifully in the oven. It's a classic holiday centerpiece that's easy to prepare and perfect for Easter, Christmas, or Sunday dinner.



Ingredients

- 1 cooked ham joint (4–5 lbs)
- ½ cup honey
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter

Notes

- This recipe uses a fully cooked ham, so avoid overbaking
- Wrap the ham first to keep it moist before glazing
- Glaze can be made ahead and reheated gently
- Leftovers store well for sandwiches and wraps

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 170°C (325°F).
2. Place the cooked ham in a large roasting tray and wrap it tightly with foil. Bake the wrapped ham for 20–30 minutes, until warmed through.
3. While the ham warms, melt the butter in a small saucepan over low heat. Stir in the honey, brown sugar, Dijon mustard, and garlic powder until smooth.
4. Remove the ham from the oven and carefully unwrap the foil.
5. Brush the glaze generously over the ham.
6. Return the ham to the oven uncovered and bake for 25–30 minutes, brushing once more with glaze if desired.
7. Remove from the oven and let rest for 10 minutes before slicing and serving.



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR FARM BUREAU POLICY

120. FEDERAL ESTATE TAXES

We support:

1. Permanently repealing federal estate taxes while retaining a stepped-up basis at the time of inheritance.
2. Federal estate tax exemptions for heirs who actively farm land that is restricted by a voluntary conservation easement.
3. Eliminating the ceiling and limitation on the percentage of an estate's total value allowed in determining the existing exemption under Internal Revenue Code 2032-A for agricultural productive value.
4. Increasing the maximum gift tax exclusion per recipient to \$50,000 per year.

We oppose any reduction in the current federal estate tax exemption. Until repeal, we support inflation-adjusted increases in the exemption to ease the movement of farms and small businesses from one generation to the next.

BENEFITHUB: ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU'S NEW MEMBER BENEFIT PLATFORM

Illinois Farm Bureau members now have a simpler, smarter way to access and maximize their member benefits. **BenefitHub** is the new, easyto use platform where you can explore all your favorite discounts—and discover new ones—across dozens of everyday categories including travel, tickets, auto, electronics, and more. Many of the top brands in the U.S. are featured, giving members meaningful savings on the things they buy most.

Follow these four quick steps to get the best value and maximize savings:

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4. Enjoy both the retailer discount and cash back.

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