

HENRY COUNTY FARMER



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



HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU DATEBOOK

DECEMBER

- 6-9** Illinois Farm Bureau Annual Meeting, Chicago
- 16** HCFB Foundation Annual Meeting, HCFB office, 6pm
HCFB Board of Directors Meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 7pm
- 24-26** **MERRY CHRISTMAS!**
HCFB office will be CLOSED
- 31** **HAPPY NEW YEARS!!!**
HCFB office will be CLOSED

JANUARY

- 1-2** HCFB Office
Closed for New Years
- 9-14** American Farm Bureau Federation Annual Convention, Anaheim, CA
- 20** HCFB Board of Directors Meeting, 7pm
- 29** Women's Mental Health Program, Black Hawk East Auditorium, 6pm

FEBRUARY

- 6-7** Illinois Farm Bureau Young Leaders Conference, East Peoria
- 17** Illinois Farm Bureau Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference
- 18** HCFB Board of Directors Meeting, 7pm
- 20** Farm Family Succession Planning Workshop, Lavender Crest Winery, 9am-4pm

FARM BUREAU ANNOUNCES EXCITING INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL OPPORTUNITY *TO IRELAND IN SUMMER 2026*

Henry County Farm Bureau is thrilled to announce an exclusive travel opportunity for its members: the **Shades of Ireland Tour, scheduled for July 25 – August 3, 2026.**

This unforgettable journey will take travelers from history-filled Dublin to the rolling green hills and dramatic coastline that make the Emerald Isle world-renowned. Highlights of the trip include exploring the breathtaking Ring of Kerry and the stunning Cliffs of Moher, visiting the historic Blarney Castle to kiss the legendary Blarney Stone, and enjoying a traditional Irish sheepdog demonstration. To top off the experience, participants will enjoy a once-in-a-lifetime overnight stay on the grounds of an authentic Irish castle.

"This is a wonderful chance for members to travel with friends and neighbors while discovering the

rich culture, history, and natural beauty of Ireland," said Katie Laleman, Henry County Farm Bureau Manager. "We are delighted to offer such a memorable experience."

Enrollment for this unique travel opportunity is now open and will close on January 26, 2026. To reserve your spot, please visit the official tour website: <https://gateway.gocollette.com/link/1381753>.

For additional questions, please contact Christina Zobrist, Tour Coordinator, at czobrist1119@gmail.com.



"UNLOCK YOUR PERSONALIZED ROADMAP TO SUCCESSION SUCCESS" Henry, Mercer & Rock Island County Farm Bureaus to Host Farm Succession Planning Workshop

Is your farm future-ready? Join us for an exclusive, full-day workshop designed to help farm families build a clear, confident path forward for future generations. Led by UnCommon Farms' Mike Downey, an expert in farm succession planning. This hands-on session provides actionable strategies to transform your plans from overwhelming to organized. The approach is designed to be personalized for the needs of your farming operation.

The day-long workshop, with important information for your

entire farm family, will be held on Friday, February 20, 2026; 9:00am-4:00pm at Lavender Crest Winery, 5401 US Hwy 6, Colona, IL.

Workshop highlights will include:

- The Common Traits of Highly Successful Farm Transitions
- Strong Business and Family Foundations
- Business Continuity and Governance
- Management and Leadership Transition
- Family Harmony and Communication

- Estate Planning and Wealth Preservation
- Your Personal Roadmap to Succession

Registration fee is \$40 per person, and includes the full day's workshop, materials, light breakfast and lunch. A Farm Bureau membership within the farm family is required for attendance. Registration deadline is February 16 – contact the Henry County Farm Bureau at (309) 937-2411 or email manager@henrycofarmbureau.org.

MEMBERSHIP Corner



As another year draws to a close, we want to take the opportunity to THANK YOU for being a member of the Henry County Farm Bureau®. We greatly appreciate your support of family farmers and agriculture in Henry County. Your support means so very much to us!

We invite you to continue to take advantage of your many membership benefits and to be involved in the county organization and attend the many programs and events held throughout the year.

Thank you for your support of Farm, Family and Food in Henry County!

HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU

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Henry County Farmer (USPS-240- 260) published monthly,
A nominal fee charged for subscription, by the Henry County
Farm Bureau, Inc., 128 N. Prospect Street, Cambridge, IL
61238. Periodical postage paid at Cambridge, IL and/or
additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address
changes to Henry Co. Farm Bureau, 128 N. Prospect Street,
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HENRY COUNTY REPRESENTED
AT ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU
COLLEGIATE DISCUSSION MEET

Zoey Vance who is a Henry County
Farm Bureau member and an Illinois
State University Collegiate Farm
Bureau member recently participated
in the Illinois Farm Bureau® Collegiate
Discussion Meet, held on October 24th
at Illinois Farm Bureau Home Office.
The event brought together 24 students
from 10 chapters across the state to
showcase their agricultural knowledge,
communication skills, and ability to find
solutions to complex industry issues.

The Collegiate Discussion Meet challenges
participants to engage in a collaborative
exchange of ideas, similar to a committee
meeting, as they discuss pre-determined
topics relevant to agriculture. Competitors
are evaluated on their knowledge of the
subject, ability to build on others' ideas,
and skill in moving the conversation
toward realistic solutions.

Gracie Murphy was named the state
winner and Haley Bode was named
the state runner-up both representing
Southern Illinois University. Benjamin
Bremmer representing University of
Illinois, and Rylee Skillman, representing
Joliet Junior College, rounded out the final
four as honorable mentions.

"We are proud of the students for
stepping up to the challenge and
representing their chapters," said Taylor
Hartke, Youth & Collegiate Program
Coordinator for Illinois Farm Bureau. "The
Collegiate Discussion Meet is a great way
for students to learn how to share their
perspective, collaborate with peers, and
prepare for future leadership roles."

The Illinois Farm Bureau Collegiate
Discussion Meet is one of several
statewide programs that give students
the opportunity to develop leadership
skills and advocate for agriculture.

For more information about Collegiate
Farm Bureau, contact Taylor Hartke at
collegiate@ilfb.org or visit Illinois Farm
Bureau Young Leaders on Facebook and
Instagram.

About Illinois Farm Bureau

Founded in 1916, Illinois Farm Bureau
– originally known as the Illinois
Agricultural Association – is a nonprofit,
grassroots membership organization.
Illinois Farm Bureau and its statewide
network of county Farm Bureaus give
members an advantage through impactful
advocacy, trusted information, and
meaningful development to support their
careers and Illinois farm families.

Collegiate Farm Bureau is a program of the
Illinois Farm Bureau® designed to engage
college students in agriculture, leadership,
and service. With chapters across the
state, Collegiate Farm Bureau unites
students as the voice of agriculture on
their campuses and in their communities,
empowering them to be powerful assets
for the agriculture industry.

Learn more about Illinois agriculture at
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FEBRUARY

17

20

26

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FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION TO HOLD ANNUAL MEETING

Notice is hereby given of the Annual Meeting of the Henry County Farm Bureau Foundation to be held on Tuesday, December 16, 2025. The Foundation meeting will begin at 6:00 p.m. at the Henry County Farm Bureau, Cambridge, Illinois.

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Henry & Stark County Health Departments & First Choice Healthcare Offer Guidance for the Infectious & Holiday Season

The Henry and Stark County Health Departments and the First Choice Healthcare Clinics note it's the time of year to look ahead to preventing sickness during this holiday and infectious season. It's important to alert the public that Covid-19, Flu, RSV and Common Cold infections will be and are already on the rise. Therefore, we offer some suggestions on how to help keep germs away during gatherings and activities and the infectious season.

Remember, it's important to enjoy the season's traditions in good health by taking steps to protect yourself and others from Seasonal Flu,

- COVID-19 and other infections:
- Stay up to date with COVID-19 & Flu vaccines
 - Know what to do if you're exposed
 - Clean hands frequently
 - Cover your nose and mouth when coughing
 - Stay at home when you are sick for at least 24 hours, until both are true: your symptoms are getting better overall, and you have not had a fever (and are not using fever-reducing medication).
 - Avoid contact with others who are sick
 - And feel free to wear a mask

The Henry & Stark County Health Departments and First Choice Healthcare are pleased to remind local residents we have the Pfizer Updated Covid-19 Shots for Adults. Covid-19 shots are available on a "Walk-In" basis Monday-Friday from 8am-4pm or by appointment at our Kewanee, Colona and Toulon clinics.

Adults 18 years+ can get their Flu vaccination on a "Walk-In Basis" (Monday-Friday 8am-4pm) and Children's Flu shots (6 mos.+) are available by appointment at our Kewanee 309-852-5272, Colona Clinic 309-792-4011, or Toulon Clinic 309-852-3115.

Henry & Stark County Health Department & First Choice Healthcare Announce 'Food Drive Incentive' to obtain Annual Wellness Lab Special in Kewanee & Toulon

The Henry and Stark County Health Departments and their First Choice Healthcare Clinics in Kewanee and Toulon announce they are extending their popular General Health/Thyroid Panel Blood Test Special in order to raise donations for local food pantries. Until January 1st, our First Choice Healthcare clinics are featuring the General Health/Thyroid Panel Blood Test for only \$40-Cash Only (with a donation of 'non-perishable food' items). This test includes a full

lipid "Cholesterol" panel. Please note, fasting is recommended for these tests for optimum results.

Many residents are looking to schedule your health insurance plan's Annual Health Check-Up. This lab special is a great supplement to the yearly check-up. Protecting one's health is probably the most important thing you can do for yourself and the ones you love.

Appointments for the lab special or for an annual health check-up with one of our providers are offered at all our locations: Kewanee 309-852-5272, 110 N. Burr Blvd; and Toulon 309-852-3115, 120 E. Court St.

Anyone wanting to donate to our clinics' food drives may drop off 'non-perishable food items' during regular business hours through the year's end. These donations will then be taken to local food pantries for those in need.

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DIRECTORS RECOGNIZED FOR THEIR SERVICE

Farm Bureau President Steve Nightingale recognized Directors that have reached their tenure or leaving the Board of Directors during the County Annual Meeting held on November 18. Those fulfilling their terms are (l to r) are Kevin Schwartzkopf, Lisa VanWatermeulen, Greg Decker and Kate Huffman.

thank you

Safe

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FARM PROVIDES A GATHERING GROUND

My Spiritual Gifts Quiz from church put hospitality at the top of my list. Mom didn't take the quiz, but I'll bet the Lievens 40 she'd score the same. So, with a strong service mindset and the shop space to match, we host. In the last 10 years, our farm has hosted two weddings, FFA and 4-H meetings, farmer events, a bridal shower, my daughter's graduation party, and last summer, the first-ever all-class reunion for our local high school.

By now, our employees know "other duties as assigned" in their job descriptions gets some mileage. And they know with Christmas coming, the shop clear-out and clean-up is imminent. In preparation for our four-generation Christmas party, we pause machinery maintenance, remove the farm equipment and scrub the concrete floor. Christmas carols replace country tunes on the shop speakers. When the big event

arrives, the cousins make memories in a farm shop turned makeshift gymnasium for kicking balls, shooting hoops and riding pedal tractors. The adults play cards in the conference room, and potluck food lines tables down the office hallway for mealtime and grazing.

The farm naturally brings together family, tradition and community at the intersection of work and home, hospitality and hard work, generosity and gravel. Yes, rocks. We farm with 21st-century equipment and still live on a 20th-century road – a nuisance for guests arriving in heavy rain (mud and washouts), a dry spell (fog-level dust) or the early spring thaw when your car wrestles with the gravel road. It's all part of the experience.

Mom ensures hospitable elements carry farm flair. From wood salvaged off an old barn, a local carpenter transformed an old chest freezer into a rustic drink and ice cream

station and fashioned a rolling bar to match. A "dessert wagon" sports steel wheels from an old loading chute and the door from a barn mow hides some of the welding corner. Among my favorites: Two tractors on the farm span exactly 70 years apart to make a conversation piece as much as a party backdrop.

The FFA mom in me roots for a winter "drive-in movie" with teen vehicles parked in the shop to watch a film on the drywall projector screen. But if not, we'll have a farm conference in March and a graduation party in May. Fingers crossed, the weather allows planting in April.

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

20
26

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UNLOCK YOUR PERSONALIZED ROADMAP TO SUCCESSION SUCCESS

A WORKSHOP FROM UNCOMMON FARMS

Friday, February 20, 2026
 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Lavender Crest Winery
 5401 US HWY 6, Colona, IL



UNCOMMON
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Hosted by
Mike Downey, an
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A Farm Bureau membership within the farm family is required.
 Please register with your local county farm bureau by February 16th.

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ARE YOU MAKING THESE FINANCIAL MISTAKES?



Some common money
 missteps to avoid.

It can be easy to make mistakes with money. It's easy
 to make mistakes with anything. However, with money,
 certain pitfalls are easier to avoid than others. Here are
 some common money mistakes that can be avoided with
 just a bit of work.

Buying Too Much House

Just because you get approved for a huge mortgage
 doesn't mean you need to use it all. Think carefully
 before buying a house that might end up breaking the
 bank. Here are some guidelines:

- Aim for monthly housing costs (mortgage, property taxes, insurance, HOA) not exceeding 28% of your gross monthly income.
- Avoid PMI (private mortgage insurance) by putting 20% down.
- Emergency savings: 3-6 months of expenses saved.

You don't want to funnel all of your cash into your
 home just to keep the lights on. Have questions about a
 mortgage or looking to start the homebuying process?
 Get in contact with one of our Loan Officers.

Not Investing

You simply have to invest to ensure you have some
 retirement nest egg. Even the highest-yield savings
 accounts can't match the returns of the market
 over time.

- Start small.
- Setting aside a small amount is a great way to start.
- Use direct deposits into your work 401(k) or IRA.
- Put your money to work with investments.

Even a little bit into investments over time will
 compound and grow. You'll be happy you did when the
 time comes to step away from work.

Paying for Things You Don't Use

Everyone has subscriptions that they never or rarely
 use. Those little fees add up over time. Here's a game
 plan to follow:

- Go through your accounts to find all your subscriptions.
- Cut the ones you don't need.
- Reallocate that money to pay down debt, build emergency savings, or invest.

Forgetting to Check Your Credit Report

You can check your credit report yearly (one from each
 credit bureau) for free.

- Check your credit report regularly.
- If there are inaccuracies in your report, dispute the errors.
- Get them fixed and watch your credit score jump.

IAA Credit Union is proud to offer our members access
 to My Credit Score, where you have 24/7 online access
 to your reports and credit score.

Originally published by SavvyMoney Blogs on
 March 4, 2025, adapted by IAACU.



AFBF GROWS MENTAL WELL-BEING SUPPORT FOR FARMERS

FarmWeekNow.com

The American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF) is expanding its landmark Farm State of Mind initiative to include a broader coalition of food and farming sector partners by joining forces with the Farm Family Wellness Alliance to launch the Farm State of Mind Alliance.

“This is a critical time for mental health in rural America. Farmers and ranchers are facing economic uncertainty, the likes of which we haven’t seen in a generation,” said AFBF President Zippy Duvall. “I’ve heard firsthand from Farm Bureau members how our Farm State of Mind resources are changing lives in rural communities. I’m so proud to broaden our coalition and bring even more organizations alongside us to share the message that it’s OK not to be OK.”

Building on the work started as a pilot project in 2020 by Farm Foundation and National 4-H Council, the Farm Family Wellness Alliance expanded in 2023, offering Togetherall and

Personal Assistance Services to farm families nationwide.

Coming together under Farm State of Mind, managed by AFBF, will centralize resources and amplify unified messaging, allowing an even greater impact in rural communities.

AFBF expanded its focus on the issue of rural mental health in 2017 through a collaboration with the National Farmers Union (NFU). The two organizations, along with Farm Foundation and 4-H, will participate in the Farm State of Mind Alliance as founding members.

“Family farmers and ranchers face enormous pressures today, and the effects on their mental health can’t be ignored,” said NFU President Rob Larew. “No one should have to carry that weight alone. Through the Farm State of Mind Alliance, NFU is proud to continue our work with partners across agriculture to make mental health care more accessible, break down barriers to

support, and strengthen the sense of community that has always defined rural America.”

Existing Farm State of Mind resources will remain available at farmstateofmind.org, including a comprehensive, searchable national resource directory for rural mental health services, as well as Togetherall, the landmark peer-to-peer support program, which served as the cornerstone for the original Alliance managed by Farm Foundation.

“In this next chapter, as the administration of these critical services moves to the American Farm Bureau Federation, we’re proud to see this work continue in a way that strengthens and centralizes mental health and wellbeing resources for farm families. AFBF’s broad reach and deep network of affiliates will help ensure even more farmers can find care and community when they need it most,” said Shari Rogge-Fidler, president and CEO of Farm Foundation.





Kindergarten and 2nd grade at Cambridge Elementary School learned about turkey farms and made “turkey” treats!



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TURKEY PRICES HELP LOWER THANKSGIVING MEAL COSTS

By Hannah Spangler

Although shoppers may notice higher prices for certain ingredients, the overall cost of preparing a Thanksgiving dinner has decreased, according to an annual survey from the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF).

In its 40th year, the Thanksgiving survey reports a table of classic dishes for 10 people will cost an average of \$55.18, or about \$5.52 per person, down 5% from last year, but still higher than four years ago. The estimated cost in Illinois is 11% below the national average, with an estimated total meal cost of \$49.20.

Turkey prices help lower Thanksgiving meal costs

Thanksgiving dinner will cost less this year, marking the third straight year of price declines. Farm Bureau’s informal survey shopping list includes turkey, stuffing, sweet potatoes, rolls, peas, cranberries, a vegetable tray and pumpkin pie with whipped cream.

Taking center stage in the survey, and most Thanksgiving tables, the turkey drastically decreased in price, helping lower overall meal costs. The average price of a 16-pound frozen turkey is \$18.03 in Illinois and \$21.50 nationally, with the national price down more than 16% from last year.

“It’s encouraging to see some relief in the price of turkeys, as it is typically the most expensive part of the meal,” said AFBF Economist Faith Parum.

Parum noted farmers are still rebuilding turkey flocks hit hard by highly pathogenic avian influenza, but overall demand has declined. That combination is helping keep turkey an affordable option for families this Thanksgiving.

Other ingredients that dropped in price nationally include dinner rolls and stuffing, due to lower wheat prices reducing the cost of flour-based items, along with fresh cranberries. Pumpkin pie mix and pie shell costs stayed about the

same as last year. However, prices increased for sweet potatoes, frozen green peas, whole milk, whipping cream and a vegetable tray of carrots and celery, which jumped more than 61% from last year.

Labor shortages, transportation delays or trade disruptions are among the factors that can cause sharp, short-term price spikes. Parum said fresh produce is typically lower-cost, so even small increases can significantly affect year-over-year percentage changes.

“While the average cost of a Thanksgiving meal has eased in recent years, families are still feeling the effects of the dramatic price spikes we’ve seen,” said Illinois Farm Bureau President Brian Duncan. “Illinois farmers continue to advocate for solutions to address the challenging farm economy and permanent, enforceable trade agreements to provide long-term certainty for farmers.”

AFBF analysis shows regional differences in meal costs. The

classic Thanksgiving meal was cheapest in the South at \$50.01, followed by the Midwest at \$54.38, the Northeast at \$60.82 and the West at \$61.75.


The expanded meal, added in 2018 and including the classic dishes plus boneless ham, Russet potatoes and green beans, was also most affordable in the South at \$71.20, then the Midwest at \$76.33, the Northeast at \$82.97 and the West at \$84.97. The expanded meal adds an average of \$2.19 per person to the national total and about \$2.25 per person in Illinois.

This year’s national average was based on surveys with pricing data from all 50 states and Puerto Rico. Farm Bureau volunteer shoppers checked prices in person and online through grocery store apps and websites during the first week of November, finding the best prices without using promotional coupons or bundled deals.

This survey is considered an informal snapshot of current prices.



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WE HAVE AN ADVANTAGE

“It’s comforting knowing there’s a voice for young farmers like me. Farm Bureau allows me peace of mind, knowing I have someone supporting me and standing up for what’s right for my family.”

TIM GOULD
HENRY COUNTY FARMER
MEMBER SINCE 2015



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Sponsored by the Henry, Mercer, and Rock Island County Farm Bureaus

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



NO-BAKE PEPPERMINT BARK

Ingredients

- 12 oz white chocolate chips or melting wafers
- 6 oz semi-sweet or dark chocolate chips
- ½ teaspoon peppermint extract (optional)
- ½ cup crushed candy canes or peppermint candies

Directions

- **Prepare a pan:** Line an 8x8-inch baking dish or cookie sheet with parchment paper.
- **Melt the dark chocolate:** In a microwave-safe bowl, heat chocolate chips in 20-second bursts, stirring each time, until smooth. Spread evenly on parchment and let it set for about 10 minutes in the fridge.
- **Melt the white chocolate:** Repeat the process with the white chocolate chips. Stir in peppermint extract if using.
- **Layer and top:** Spread the white chocolate over the dark layer, then sprinkle crushed candy canes evenly on top.
- **Chill and break:** Refrigerate until firm (about 30 minutes), then break into pieces.
- **Storage tip:** Keep in an airtight container in a cool spot (or the fridge) for up to 2 weeks.

Your Membership matters

A photograph of a family of five (two adults and three children) sitting around a dining table, enjoying a meal together. The table is set with plates, glasses, and various food items.



The logo for Henry County Farm Bureau Young Leaders, featuring a stylized outline of the state of Illinois with the letters 'H' and 'F' inside, followed by the text 'HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU YOUNG LEADERS'.

A photograph of three people standing behind a long table filled with numerous brown paper bags of food, likely at a food drive event.

A photograph of a green tractor and a black pickup truck parked in front of a building, with several people standing nearby.

A photograph of two people walking through a field of tall crops, possibly corn, under a sunset sky.

GETTING TO KNOW YOUR FARM BUREAU POLICY

117. 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 farmland 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.

5. 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.