HENRY COUNTY IF A IR IVALED TO BE THE STATE OF THE STAT

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



JULY

- 1......Market Outlook Seminar, RSVP REQUIRED, Lavendar Crest Winery, 6:15pm
- 3.....Deadline for "Birdies for Charity" donations
- 4.....HCFB Closed
 Happy 4th of July!!!
- 7.....Henry County Pork
 Producers meeting,
 HCFB boardroom, 7pm
- 9....."Safety Starts with YOU" (free community event), Central Bank Pavillion, Geneseo, 5-7pm
- 15HCFB Executive Committee

 Meeting, HCFB Office, 6:30pm
- 15HCFB Board of Directors Meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 7:00pm
- 29HCFB Young Leaders meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 6:30pm

AUGUST

- 5.....Education Committee at
 National Night Out, Colona, IL
- 8......HCFB Foundation Annual
 Golf Fun Day (Office Closed),
 Baker Park Golf Course,
 Kewanee. Call now to reserve
 your tee time!

WESTERN ILLINOIS AG TEACHER WINS TOP EDUCATOR AWARD

By Hannah Spangler, FarmWeek

Although she's usually the one shining a light on others, western Illinois agriculture teacher Kindra Callahan recently found herself in the spotlight.

Callahan, who teaches at Kewanee High School and serves as one of the school's FFA chapter advisers, was one of just 11 educators statewide to receive a 2025 Golden Apple Award for Excellence in Teaching. The honor followed a highly competitive selection process, with more than 470 nominations submitted for outstanding 9th–12th-grade teachers across Illinois.

"I have been in agriculture my whole life, all of my professional experiences in agriculture, and any recognition I've ever received has been part of agriculture," Callahan said. "When I got nominated for the award, I thought, 'Oh, I'm being recognized as a teacher,' that was cool."

This award recognizes educators who make a lasting, positive impact on their students and school communities. Teachers are chosen for their proven ability to drive meaningful growth and learning in the classroom.



Farm. Family. Food.

Kindra Callahan

Callahan was awarded a cash prize and a spring sabbatical provided by Northwestern University. She also joins the Golden Apple Academy of Educators — a statewide network of teacher-leaders who mentor future educators through the Golden Apple Scholars and Accelerators programs, both aimed at addressing Illinois' teacher shortage.

continued on page 4





LEARNING ABOUT OUR STATE

Sixth grade students at Orion Middle School learned about Illinois symbols and each received a poster of the state symbols from Ag in the Classroom.

MEMBERSHIP Corner

Don't forget about all of YOUR MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS!

- ✓ There are so many benefits to take advantage of with your Farm Bureau membership. Over 302.000 benefits to be exact!
- ✓ From local businesses right here in Henry County to nationwide discounts, you can find great savings with your membership card.
- ✓ Find local businesses on our website at www. henrycofarmbureau.org/member-benefits
- ✓ Visit the Illinois Farm Bureau website for more discounts
- Download the Abenity app, sign-up today at ilfb.abenity.com
- ✓ Do you travel, visit theme parks, stay at hotels? Looking for a new Ford Truck? Thinking about something at John Deere or CASE? So many great benefits to save you money!
- ✓ The list goes on and on for benefits and discounts with your Henry County Farm Bureau membership.
- ✓ Need to check on the status of your membership or see if you need to renew? Contact the Farm Bureau office at (309) 937-2411 or set-up your log-in at www.myifb.org

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LEARN MORE ABOUT ALL UPCOMING EVENTS, BENEFITS, **AND MORE**



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FARMERS INVITED TO SEE WHAT'S NEXT IN AG TECH

By Phyllis Coulter, FarmWeek

An opportunity for farmers to give input into the development of new ag tech innovations, tailored to Midwestern farming challenges, is only weeks away.

The second annual AgTech Innovation Showcase, designed to foster connections between farmers, innovators and industry professionals, will be held at the University of Illinois Research Park in Champaign on July 16.

"The event is about giving our members a firsthand look at emerging new farming solutions and a chance to help shape how these tools evolve," said Jenny Webb, Illinois Farm Bureau associate director of industry affairs. "We're thrilled to bring the event to Research Park this year, partnering with both the University of Illinois and BioSTL (a St. Louis-based nonprofit supporting innovation) to connect farmers with the people creating practical tools for real-world challenges."

The showcase will feature rapid-fire presentations from startup companies offering cutting-edge, on-farm solutions, rotating sessions for attendees to connect directly with each innovator and lunch and networking with peers from across the ag community. Sponsored in part by the IFB, the showcase is designed to give participants an early look at emerging ag tech solutions designed for farmers in this region.

"We're looking for farmers who can share practical insights to help shape technologies that will truly work in the field. The more farmer voices we have, the better," Webb said.

"We also encourage agronomists and other ag professionals to attend and explore how new tools might benefit their farmer clients on a broader scale."

Many of the invited innovators are focused on four areas:

- Smarter decision tools powered by AI, remote sensing, and real-time field data
- Biological and soil health solutions to improve productivity and sustainability
- Technologies around inputs and equipment to help reduce costs and maximize ROI
- Farm management platforms that simplify operations, data, and financial insights

The first AgTech Innovation Showcase event, held at Heartland Community College in Normal last year, was a success, and it led to the showcase becoming an annual event, Webb said.

The 2025 showcase will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. July 16 in Champaign and is free and open to the public. More information and registration are available online, on.ilfb.org/agtech25. Registration is due July 9.



mel-o-dlaneboarding.com



4 WAYS TO PREPARE YOUR FARM FOR SEVERE WEATHER

by John Grant, Manager, Agribusiness Underwriting at COUNTRY Financial®



Severe weather like tornadoes, flooding, droughts 2. PREPARE EMPLOYEES and wildfires can all take a toll on your farm equipment and property. So, before bad weather hits, make sure you take these steps to prepare.

1. TAKE INVENTORY

- Take inventory of your farm equipment and property to keep a record of exactly what's on your farm, what the value is and where it's located. This will come in handy in the case of a farm insurance claim. Download our farm inventory document from countryfinancial. com, fill it out and give it to your COUNTRY Financial Insurance Agent. Pro tip: Photos are a great way to inventory your tools and equipment in your sheds.
- Verify with your insurance agent that you have the proper insurance for livestock and equipment.

- · Review emergency escape routes for each building. Keep in mind your emergency plan might differ depending on the event (tornado, flood, fire, etc.).
- Document procedures to account for all employees.
- Determine a safe place for all employees to meet.
- · Create an emergency contact list for owners, employees, family members, and suppliers.
- · Assign different roles and responsibilities to each employee, like who is responsible for taking care of livestock, moving equipment, or calling emergency contacts.

3. INSPECT FARM EQUIPMENT

Keep generators in working order. Make sure you have an adequate supply of liquid propane if power is out for multiple days. If portable generators are hooked up to tractors, make sure the tractor has adequate fuel supply.

4. REVIEW FARM INSURANCE

- Meet with your COUNTRY Financial Insurance Agent annually to review your farm insurance coverages and share any changes you have made to equipment and property. These conversations can help to identify any gaps in coverage and provide opportunities to discuss adding optional farm insurance coverages that are not currently on your policy.
- Discuss the process for filing a farm insurance claim if disaster strikes.

You may not be able to stop bad weather from striking, but these steps can help you feel more prepared. For more information on farm and crop insurance, visit countryfinancial.com.

HENRY & STARK COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT OFFERS FOOD SAFETY GUIDANCE TO SUMMER EVENTS

The Henry and Stark County Health Departments remind area residents that summertime is outdoor activity time. With the summer season many of us may be heading outdoors for our celebrations and meals. It's true that cooking and eating outside in the fresh air is fun for everyone. Unfortunately, warm weather eating also brings out something else less pleasant - food poisoning. To avoid such an unwelcome addition to any picnic or cookout the Health Department notes the following:

- When at the grocer's, choose meat and poultry last. Bag your selections with other cold items and get them home promptly. Don't leave such food in the car while you run errands. If foods are allowed to get warm, germs and pathogens that are present will begin to multiply."
- Once home, store soon-to-be-used meat and poultry items in the refrigerator in their original store wrapper or rewrap in freezer foil and stored in the deep freezer. This will shorten freezing time and also enable them to be thawed more quickly later on by reducing the time needed between thawing and cooking. What's more, meat and poultry products should never be allowed to thaw at room temperature. Defrosting such items in the refrigerator or microwave is a much safer practice.
- Pay close attention to how foods are prepared for cooking outdoors. Wash all countertops, cutting boards and knives with hot soapy water before and after using them for raw foods. Such "cross

contamination" could be unhealthy. Always wash hands before and after handling raw meat items.

- When packing up foods for a picnic or outing, place perishable items including hot dogs, cheese and luncheon meats in a well-insulated cooler and cover with plenty of ice. Keep coolers in the shade and open them only when necessary.
- While it is usually safe to store picnic leftovers in an ice filled cooler, it's a good idea to package up remaining foods immediately after the meal is finished. Food items left out at room temperatures for three hours or more should be discarded, but those exposed to warmer outside temperatures should be disposed of much sooner. Actually, the best rule to follow is "when in doubt, throw it out."

Food poisoning may often go undetected, as the symptoms often mimic those of the flu and include headache, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting and fever. However, food poisoning can be serious and anyone who suspects that they have such a condition should consult their health care professional right away.

The staff of the Health Department urges everyone to practice good food handling habits before, during and after warm weather meals. Help make summertime fun, delicious and safe. For more information on the Health Department's Food Program visit our website at www.henrystarkhealth.com, find us on Facebook at Henry and Stark County Health Departments or Follow Us on Twitter and Instagram.

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STATE OFFICER TEAM **ELECTED AT ILLINOIS** FFA CONVENTION

The 2025 - 2026 Illinois State Officer Team was elected Thursday morning, June 12, 2025, during the 97th Annual Illinois FFA State Convention. The officers were installed immediately following the election and will serve the Illinois Association FFA for the next 12 months.

After an exciting morning election session, the following individuals were elected to major state office:

- President: Natalie Pratt of Dixon - Amboy FFA Chapter
- Vice President: Koben Tate of Dallas City - Illini West FFA Chapter
- Reporter: Ethan Bremmer of Pearl City
 - Pearl City FFA Chapter
- Secretary: Kyle Bradshaw of Griggsville
 - Pittsfield FFA Chapter
- Treasurer: Kaydance Wooton of Weldon - Blue Ridge FFA Chapter
- Sentinel: Paige Sierens of Annawan
 - Annawan FFA Chapter

The SIX officers were elected from a group of 10 candidates selected by a committee in April. Each officer puts their collegiate pursuits on hold for one year as they serve over 42, 000 Illinois FFA members throughout the Illinois Association FFA. Officers typically travel more than 20,000 miles visiting FFA chapters around the state, conducting workshops and meetings, representing Illinois FFA in professional settings, and promoting agricultural education. Since 1929, Illinois has elected a State FFA Officer Team.





FUN WITH RESOURCES ON THE FARM

We can hike the woods, kayak the river, hop hay bales and fish for hours. But top on their list for farm fun? Digging a hole.

When my cousins' kids visit the farm, the No. 1 request is to find "Farmer Doug" who will stabilize his backhoe in a harmless, remote space on the farm. My dad acts as a driver's education instructor as they use the bucket with hydraulic thumb to dig, dump and even grab a tire and smash an old piece of metal that he staged in their big kid sandbox. Oh, the delight in digging.

No matter the dwelling, we hold the power to make our own fun where we reside. Certainly, the farm has plenty of natural and man-made resources to amplify the options. My teenage son takes his friends tent camping beyond the Southeast Field. They play Airsoft in the Moody Timber. He buckles up in a utility vehicle to ride trails with cousins, and the farmstead provides some challenging games of hide and seek.

Straw in the barn satisfies the climbers and outdoor rows of round bales the jumpers. We hunt for deer, raccoons and morel mushrooms in the appropriate season. The snowmobile and sleds surface when the snowfall exceeds 2 inches. My daughter finds peace for homework and reflections on the farm near the river

bridge, and in the warm months, she frequently picks wildflowers in ditches and woodland areas.

On a slow-paced day, we sit on the porch smelling the smoker transform our farm-raised beef chuck roast into the most flavorful pulled beef and question why anyone besides neighbors would want to drive our dusty gravel road. Then again, we realize our routine farm chores deliver someone else's fun. Relatives who visit love to feed the cattle, so Dad makes piles of grain around the utility vehicle for an up-close encounter. They gather eggs from our chicken house, harvest vegetables from Mom's garden and ride in the combine and tractors in the fall or the planters in the spring while we work.

We take vacations away from the farm and immensely enjoy them, but it never crosses my mind to make travel plans on a Labor Day break or other long weekends. Rather, those extended days provide the gift of time to enjoy being at home and on the farm.

About the author: Joanie Stiers farms with her family in Knox County, where they raise corn, soybeans, hay, beef cattle, backyard chickens and farmkids.

Western Illinois Ag Teacher Wins Top Educator Awardcontinued from page 1

"I found out in the fall that I had been nominated, and that alone was very humbling," Callahan said, noting that when she later found out that she was a finalist, she got to attend the Golden Apple awards banquet. "I wish that every teacher had a chance to sit in that banquet and just be spoken to like the speakers they had. I felt like a cherished professional."

"For me, that could have been it," she added.

With the Golden Apple banquet behind her, she moved on, figuring it was a long shot that an agriculture teacher from Henry County would be among the winners. When she was called to a school assembly on May 8, honoring the Kewanee music department and an FFA student who had earned a State Proficiency Award, she had no idea what was coming.

Then, Callahan watched in disbelief as members of her family, who had traveled from far and wide, walked in, along with her husband, former mentees, close friends and representatives from Golden Apple. The moment it all clicked, that this was for her, was nothing short of overwhelming.

But for her students, the recognition came as no surprise as they have a teacher who ignites curiosity, builds confidence and creates pathways for their lifelong success. The students told FarmWeek Callahan is known for ensuring everyone in her classroom is acknowledged, she wants her students

believe they can make an impact on their community.

"She's a unique individual who takes time out of every day to check in on us and make sure that we're okay," Kewanee student Paige Polowy said about why she thinks Callahan was selected for the award.

"She makes our strengths seem bigger," added Daniela Chavez, another Kewanee student. "Everyone has an opportunity to be seen."

About 30% of Kewanee's 550 high school students are enrolled in an agriculture class and a part of the FFA chapter. Callahan's inquiry-based teaching approach involves handson learning experiences, such as discovering how to grow sweet corn and understanding the pH scale through experimentation.

Callahan encourages
"adaptability and flexibility"
and uses what she calls a
"love sandwich" approach.
She starts by telling
students what they're doing
well, offers constructive
feedback and ends with
a reminder that they're
"rockstars," while helping
them feel loved and
supported.

"Really, it's bigger than the classroom. This was the puzzle piece I didn't know I was missing," Callahan said, summing up what she has learned through her seven years of teaching. "Maybe the biggest lesson I learned is that just because it's not the first place you start or the first job you have, it doesn't mean that it's not where you're supposed to be."

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Mike Geuns, Annawan



(Source: usda.gov)

As friends and families get ready to kick off summer by firing up the grill and serving foods at a cookout, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) shares some tips to keep your celebrations safe.

"Food safety is a year-round priority, but it's especially important during summer months when we're cooking outdoors and handling food in warmer temperatures," said FSIS Administrator Dr. Denise Eblen. "We have simple but effective steps that can keep you and your family safe while enjoying those outdoor meals."

Here are some key recommendations.

Clean Your Grill:

- · Grill surfaces should be washed with soap and water. Ensure old residue is scraped off.
- If you don't have access to a faucet, carry bottled water, soap and paper towels.
- · After washing, start your grill and allow the heat to kill any remaining bacteria before cooking.

Prevent Cross-Contamination:

- Pack raw meats in sealed containers at the bottom of the cooler to prevent juices from contaminating other items.
- When grilling, use separate plates, cutting boards, and utensils for raw and cooked foods.

 Never place cooked food on plates that held raw meat, poultry or seafood.

Cook to Safe Temperatures:

- · Remember that color is not a reliable indicator of doneness.
- Use a food thermometer to ensure foods reach a safe minimum internal temperature:
- · Beef, pork, lamb, and veal steaks, chops and roasts: 145 F
- Seafood (fish and shellfish): 145 F
- Ground beef, pork, lamb and veal: 160 F
- Poultry (whole and ground): 165 F

Avoid the Danger Zone:

- The bacteria that can cause foodborne illness grow between 40 F and 140 F also known as the Danger Zone.
- If you plan to keep perishable foods on the table for more than two hours (or one hour in temperatures above 90 F), keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold to avoid the Danger Zone.
- Keep hot foods heated at or above 140 F with chafing dishes or preheated grill.
- Keep cold foods chilled at or below 40 F by placing them on bowls of ice or keeping them inside a cooler near the picnic table.

For more information about food safety, call the USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-888-MPHotline (1-888-674-6854) or email MPHotline@usda.gov.

STUDENTS NAMED ILLINOIS FFA TOP 10 CHAPTER PRESIDENTS

Ten students were recently named Illinois FFA Top 10 Chapter Presidents in recognition of excelling in their role as an Illinois FFA President. They will be recognized for their achievement during the 2025 Illinois FFA State Convention.

"These outstanding students represent the future of agriculture and leadership in our state," said Lori Jackson, Illinois Farm Bureau Youth and Collegiate Program Coordinator. "Their commitment, innovation, and service to their chapters and communities embody the values of FFA, and we're proud to celebrate their accomplishments."

The 2024-25 award winners are:

- Toby Steffen, Newark FFA
- Benjamin Biros, Seneca FFA
- Taylor Crouch, Maroa-Forsyth FFA
- Emma Beckman, Dieterich FFA
- Jolene Blackert, Cambridge FFA
- Riley McDermott, Waterloo FFA
- Brock Portz, Marissa FFA Kalleigh Gale, Kewanee FFA
- Carter Anderson, Olney FFA
- Makinzie Gaither, Red Hill FFA

The FFA Chapter President award is sponsored by the Illinois Farm Bureau State Young Leader Committee and recognizes presidents from FFA chapters across Illinois for their outstanding efforts and involvement throughout the past year. Applicants were ranked either in the top 10, gold, silver or bronze. Of the 47 applicants, the top 10 and gold award winners were recognized at the Illinois FFA State Convention in June.



Succession planning and transparency, rarely something you hear together unless it is deliberate. With farming, I have heard on more than one occasion "my father didn't tell me so why would I need to tell them? We figured it out and they will too." While my parents never said that, I could feel when my dad was terminally ill, the need to share what he could and make sure things were in order. From that personal experience, I can tell you that sitting around a table with a lawyer and accountant doesn't feel like a good priority. This was a very important step for us to learn more, but he felt miserable. and we were overwhelmed. I remember one of the last things I told dad, "we will take it from here and while we likely won't do everything you would have done, we will do our very best" and that is exactly what we have done.

When thinking about mental health in agriculture, so much is discussed about "Legacy." No one wants to feel like they let anyone down from the past or for the future. They don't want their tenure as the great land keeper of family legacy to be the finality but how many parents who struggle want to see that happen with their kids? We never want them to feel that struggle or pain, yet we don't want to have that deep and sometimes very uncomfortable discussions; it could well become a cyclical experience and hard emotionally. True, silence may seem easiest, but it also can be the scariest. There is a famous proverb that most likely you have heard "We don't inherit the Earth from our ancestors. We borrow if from our children." WOW! That's a significant amount of pressure, and mentally, it can be a source of depression and anxiety. Therefore, it's crucial to talk about the challenges and consider what the future might hold.

At an event held by the Illinois Farm Bureau for county managers, I had the privilege of joining the group to hear Ted Matthews speak about mental health in agriculture. One of the things that he said really stuck out to me that day. He spoke of the process of planning and having EVERYONE at the table, including spouses who know nothing about agriculture. He said this was a requirement of some of his sessions. If they weren't all going to be there, then it wasn't happening. While our family didn't have this issue, I could imagine what it might feel like if a spouse was never part of these honest and open discussions.

So, what types of questions need to be addressed? Well, the sky is the limit but here are a few possibilities:

- · Who is going to farm now and, in the future, when the current matriarch passes?
- Is anyone going to farm?
- What are the expectations of EVERYONE?

Amy Rademaker, BS Rademaker Agricultural Safety and Health Services



- What role does everyone play, even if they aren't the active people tilling, planting and harvesting?
- What are thresholds that everyone can agree upon? What if it doesn't work; what's the next step?
- Are there live animals to consider?
- What about a multi-generational piece of land and possibly a home?
- · What happens if there is a divorce?

It's true that these conversations are not easy but if all the players and questions are at the table, this is a time to be open and honest. Each person in a family may have some various opinions and each person or couple may have legal and financial considerations that they need to plan. Not having a good plan can really cause hardship when someone passes.

It's time to talk. Be honest with each other and most of all, be honest for yourself and your wellbeing as well as those under your roof. Through honesty, there is HOPE.

2024-25 Harvest for All

TOP FFA CHAPTERS, COLLEGIATE FARM BUREAUS RECOGNIZED FOR HARVEST FOR ALL CONTRIBUTIONS

Recognizing tremendous need in their communities, Illinois FFA Chapters and Collegiate Farm Bureaus proudly raised a total of 206,084.37 pounds of food, volunteer 7,482.75 hours and donated \$54,897.42 during the 2024-25 "Harvest for All" campaign.

Top FFA sections and chapters, and the top Collegiate Farm Bureaus, were recently recognized for their outstanding efforts. Harvest for All is a statewide service program led by Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) that supports local communities by addressing food insecurity through volunteerism, food donations and fundraising.

"Harvest for All is a powerful example of students turning service into real-world impact," said Taylor Hartke, Illinois Farm Bureau youth and collegiate program coordinator. "It's inspiring to see students step up to combat food insecurity and support those in need. Whether it's through food drives, volunteering, or organizing fundraisers, these students are making a tangible difference, tailoring their efforts to meet the specific needs of their communities in meaningful ways."

Illinois FFA chapters competed within their respective sections, with 25 schools named Section Winners based on their service efforts. Of the section winners, five were named Top Five

From food drives and community fundraisers to hands-on volunteering with food pantries and shelters, each chapter demonstrated a strong commitment to living out the FFA motto: "Living to Serve."

The 2024-2025 FFA Section Winners are:

- Section 1 River Ridge FFA
- Section 2 Ashton-Franklin Center FFA
- Section 3 Galva FFA
- Section 4 Mercer County FFA
- Section 5 Midland FFA
- Section 6 Sycamore FFA
- Section 7 Streator FFA
- Section 8 Glenbard East FFA
- Section 9 Heyworth FFA
- Section 10 Peotone FFA
- Section 11 Bushnell-Prairie City FFA
- Section 12 Lewistown FFA
- Section 13 Greenfield FFA

- Section 14 Williamsville FFA
- Section 15 Highland FFA
- Section 16 Taylorville FFA
- Section 17 Mahomet Seymour FFA
- Section 18 Kansas FFA
- Section 19 Ramsey FFA
- Section 20 Teutopolis FFA
- Section 21 Nashville FFA
- Section 22 Okawville FFA
- Section 23 Edwards County FFA
- Section 24 Marion FFA
- Section 25 Carrier Mills-Stonefort FFA

The Top 5 FFA Chapters Overall were:

- First Place Nashville FFA
- Second Place Peotone FFA
- Third Place Cissna Park FFA
- Fourth Place Galva FFA
- Fifth Place Williamsville FFA

Illinois Collegiate Farm Bureau Chapters were also honored for their impact, with the Top 3 **Collegiate Chapters Overall recognized as:**

- First Place Southern Illinois University
- Second Place Kaskaskia College
- Third Place Lincoln Land Community College







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YOUR FARM BUREAU POLICY



110. LOCAL GOVERNMENT

We support:

- 1. The principle of strong local government.
- 2. The assignment of responsibility for government services to that unit of general government which best serves the people and can economically provide the service.
- 3. Maximizing efficiency and eliminating waste in all units of government.
- 4. Providing uniform requirements, including the printed full name of the voter, for signers of all public petitions.
- 5. Permitting consolidation of additional county functions between counties.
- Ensuring that any electronic registry of mortgage loan information shall not affect the current system of recording documents affecting title to real property with the county clerk or recorder.
- 7. Providing for salaries of all local officials to be set by the appropriate local unit, rather than by the state legislature.
- Requiring at least 15 percent of registered voters as signers on petitions within any territory proposed to become a new taxing district or within any area proposed to be annexed to an existing taxing district.
- 9. Requiring that a referendum to expand a taxing district be approved by a majority of voters in both the existing district and in the area proposed to be annexed. When a new taxing district is to be created encompassing both incorporated and unincorporated areas, the referendum should require approval by voters within the incorporated area and a separate approval by voters in the unincorporated area.
- 10. Extending the time limit from 30 days to 60 days to get the necessary percentage of registered voters' signatures on petitions concerning backdoor referendums.
- 11. More clearly defining what issues are appropriate for non-binding advisory referenda for units of local government.
- 12. Prohibiting individuals from serving concurrently as an elected mayor and an elected county board member.
- 13. Allowing townships with annual revenue less than \$850,000, when required to have a CPA audit, to have the audit performed on a cash basis rather than an accrual basis.
- 14. Providing for the absorption, consolidation, disconnection, and dissolution of units of local government by front door referendum.

- Only that unit's governing board or registered voters residing within the unit of government should be allowed to initiate the front door referendum.
- 15. Waiving the residency requirement for the office of Highway Commissioner and road district clerk in a road district if no qualified candidate willing to serve the office exists within the township or road district. All other requirements for the office shall remain.
- 16. Requiring special purpose units of local government, excluding drainage districts, that go dormant (no projects or expenditures) for more than two years to go before the voters within the district to determine if the unit should continue in existence.
- 17. Codifying case law dealing with prohibited activities to include serving on a unit of local government board and be an employee of that unit of government.
- 18. The shifting of additional responsibilities from the federal government to state governments if, at the same time, adequate access is made to the tax structure to allow for the financing of such programs by the states and a commensurate reduction is made in federal taxes. We will support state and local governments in the development of their capabilities to discharge these added responsibilities.
- 19. The shifting of responsibilities from the state government to local governments only if the state government reduces its taxes proportionately or provides local governments the resources to carry out such responsibilities.
- 20. State provided training and education for local government officials.
- 21. Efforts by local government officials, county Farm Bureaus and other organizations to increase public participation in the overall functions of local government.
- 22. Ensuring that citizens who do not currently live in a library district but wish to receive library services can receive equal and affordable access to the public library system.
- 23. Encouraging local governments to make compensation breakdowns and pension sweeteners more readily available to public scrutiny.
- 24. Amending the Cemetery Oversight Act, so that the provisions of the law are not overly burdensome for cemeteries.

- 25. Elected and appointed government officials being held to ethical standards including prohibiting nepotism.
- 26. Publishing public notices by alternative local methods when a newspaper is not in general circulation.
- 27. We support seeking legislation for:
- 28. Selection of special district board members by election.
- 29. Uniform fiscal years, classification of accounts, budgets, and audits for all taxing hodies
- 30. Additional authority for forest preserve districts to sell real estate, including farmland.
- 31. A referendum of registered voters in the township or townships to approve the site where municipalities propose to annex property for the location of any type of waste disposal facility, prison or other entity which could directly affect the lives of people residing in the area.
- 32. The requirement that any municipality or any other unit of local government considering annexation of farmland notify affected landowners by registered or certified mail at least 30 days prior to the filing of such annexation.
- 33. The capability of counties, townships, and special districts to levy impact fees to support local services during the time between construction of a project and when tax revenues would normally be received and to levy impact fees to support local infrastructure improvements in areas of new development.
- 34. The elimination of the liability of bonded indebtedness to areas that are annexed and then vote by referendum to disconnect from a taxing district which had previously incurred debt before the annexation. The annexed and then disconnected territory would only be liable for indebtedness occurring while they are a part of the district.

We oppose:

- 35. All efforts to mandate inclusion of areas not currently served by a library district into existing library districts.
- 36. Exposing an individual's personal financial information as a requirement to serve as a local official, except in the case of a financial conflict of interest.

FARM BUREAU TO HOST "SAFETY STARTS WITH YOU"

Have you thought about safety for you and your family? Do you want to see demonstrations and receive free giveaways and information? Looking for a great, free event for the whole family to attend?

The Henry County Farm Bureau Health and Safety Committee will hold a FREE community event focused on areas of safety, health, and wellness. Join us on Wednesday, July 9, 5:00-7:00 p.m. at the Central Bank Pavilion, 218 North State Street, Geneseo, IL. Following the event will be the Central Bank Concert Series featuring "Cats and Dragons", from 6:00-8:00 p.m.

The event will feature exhibitors that will highlight Grain Bin Safety & Rescue, CPR and "Stop the Bleed" Demonstrations, Mental Health, Ag Equipment Driving Simulator, "Touch a Tractor" and Overall Health & Wellness. Plan to enjoy food vendors along with safety demonstrations, kids' activities, giveaways and much more!

Join us for this FREE community event focused on safety and open to the public. Enjoy great information, handouts and giveaways. An event for the whole family! For more information contact the Henry County Farm Bureau at (309) 937-2411 or email manager@ henrycofarmbureau.org.



RECIPE OF THE MONTH

SHORTBREAD TURTLE COOKIE BARS

Makes 2-3 dozen bars

Ingredients:

- 1 1/4 c. (2 1/2 sticks) butter, softened, divided
- 1 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 c. old-fashioned oats
- 1 ½ c. packed brown sugar, divided
- 1 tsp. ground cinnamon

Directions:

- Preheat oven to 350°F. Position rack in the center of the oven.
- Beat ½ cup butter with electric mixer at medium speed for 2 minutes or until light and fluffy. Add flour, oats, ¾ c. brown sugar, cinnamon and salt; beat at low speed until coarse crumbs form. Press firmly into bottom of ungreased 13" x 9" baking pan.
- Combine remaining ¾ c. butter and ¾ c. brown sugar in medium saucepan; cook over medium heat

- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 ½ cups chopped pecans
- 6 oz. bittersweet or semisweet chocolate, finely chopped
- · 6oz. white chocolate, finely chopped

until mixture comes to a boil, stirring constantly. Boil 1 minute without stirring. Remove from heat; stir in pecans. Pour evenly over crust.

 Bake 18-22 minutes or until caramel begins to bubble. Immediately sprinkle with bittersweet and white chocolate; swirl (do not spread) with knife after 45 seconds to 1 minute, or when chocolate is slightly softened. Cool completely in pan on wire rack.





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NOMINATIONS OPEN FOR FARM DOG OF THE YEAR CONTEST

Farmers are invited to submit nominations for the Farm Dog of the Year contest, which comes with cash prizes and bragging rights. The contest celebrates farm dogs and the many ways they support farmers and ranchers.

The American Farm Bureau Federation, with support from Nestlé Purina PetCare, will recognize a grand prize winner—2026 Farm Bureau Farm Dog of the Year—as well as a People's Choice Pup winner.

A panel of judges selected by AFBF will select the Farm Dog of the Year. Members of the public will be invited to vote online for their favorite dog in the People's Choice Pup contest as part of the overall competition.

The owner of the Farm Dog of the Year receives a \$5,000 cash prize, a year's supply of Purina Pro-Plan dog food, a \$500 travel stipend and two free adult registrations to attend the 2026 AFBF Convention, a trophy plate and a Purina products basket. The owner of the People's Choice Pup receives a \$2,500 cash prize, a year's supply of Purina Pro-Plan dog food, a \$500 travel stipend and two free adult registrations to attend the 2026 AFBF Convention, a trophy plate and a Purina products basket.

To apply for the 2026 Farm Dog of the Year contest, complete the nomination form at https://www.fb.org/initiative/farm-dog-of-the-year. Entries will close on July 11, 2025, at 10:59 pm CST.





