

HENRY COUNTY FARMER

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



HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU DATEBOOK

MAY

- 5** Henry County Pork Producers meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 7pm
- 12** Farm Bureau Women Leadership Team meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 6pm
- 26** HCFB Office Closed - Memorial Day
- 29** HCFB Young Leaders: Adopt-a-Highway Cleanup & Meeting, 6pm, Geneseo

JUNE

- 2** Henry County Pork Producers meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 7pm
- 10** HCFB Executive Committee meeting, 6:30pm
HCFB Board of Directors Meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 7pm
- 12** Henry County Beef Association meeting, HCFB Boardroom, 7pm
- 17-22** Henry County Fair
- 20** HCFB Young Leader's Pedal Pull, Midway Entertainment Tent, Registration 3pm, Pulls start at 3:30pm

JULY

- 9** "Safety Starts with YOU", Central Bank Pavilion, Geneseo, 5-7pm

AUGUST

- 8** Farm Bureau Foundation Golf Fun Day, Baker Park, Kewanee - Call the Henry County Farm Bureau to reserve your tee time!

FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION

Awards 2025 Scholarships

The Henry County Farm Bureau Foundation, in conjunction with the Wilbert & Carol Keppy Foundation, Kevin & Karen Urick, Glenn & Betty DeSmith Memorial and the James Ufkin Memorial are proud to award \$50,000 in scholarships to high school seniors and college students pursuing higher education.

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. Beginning in 2023, the Foundation created the Trade and Technical Program Scholarship for individuals pursuing training in an area of a skilled trade.

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.

The Glenn and Betty DeSmith Memorial Scholarship honors the life of Glenn and Betty DeSmith of Geneseo. The DeSmith's farmed southwest of Annawan until their retirement in 1990. Glenn and Betty were very active in their church, community and Farm Bureau. The DeSmith Memorial Scholarship recognizes students who are involved in the livestock industry and their family farms.

The James Ufkin Memorial Scholarship honors the life and service of Jim Ufkin. Jim was a life-long farmer, retiring after 46 years of farming corn, soybeans and raising hogs. He served on the Board of Directors of the Henry County Farm Bureau for 40 years and 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.

Henry County Farm Bureau Foundation Agricultural Scholarship

- Avery Knupp** – Ag Transfer/Animal Science, Lake Land College
- Ella Anderson** – Ag Studies, Iowa State University
- Kashen Ellerbrock** – Agricultural Business, Black Hawk East
- Kendra Downing** – Soil & Crop Science; Environmental Horticulture, University of Wisconsin – Platteville
- Kendall Ellerbrock** – Agriculture Transfer – Black Hawk East
- Makenna Walker** – Agriculture Business Management & Agriculture Production, Black Hawk East
- Will Baum** – Agricultural Systems Technology, Iowa State University
- Zoey Vance** – Agriculture Communications & Leadership, Illinois State University

HCFB Foundation Trade and Technical Program Scholarship

- Brayden Hardin** – John Deere Diesel Technician, Lake Land College
- Jacob Conrad** – CDL School, Spoon River College
- Jade Markey** – Veterinary Technician, Black Hawk East
- Joseph Venneberg** – Truck Driving, Agricultural Equipment Technician, Black Hawk College

Wilbert & Carol Keppy Foundation Scholarship

- Abigail Frank** – Agronomy, University of Nebraska
- Emma Frank** – Animal Science/Pre-Vet, Oklahoma State University
- Traiden Heir** – Political Science/Pre-Law Track, Augustana College

(2025 Scholarships continued on page 3)

MEMBERSHIP Corner

FOCUS ON HEALTH & SAFETY!

- Seeing a strong need for a focus on this important area, the Henry County Farm Bureau Board of Directors created the Health & Safety Committee.
- The goal is to promote health and safety to the ag community and the non-farm public. Each summer a free community event is held to bring individuals and families together with a key focus on safety.
- Each year Farm Bureau volunteers speak to Driver's Education Students throughout all of

Henry County to educate them about safe driving when sharing the road with farm equipment.

- Programs are held to promote positive mental health in the agriculture community and we regularly collaborate with the Henry County Mental Health Alliance to bring awareness to our entire county.
- We strongly encourage farm families to follow safe practices and procedures on their farms and in all their daily actions.

HENRY COUNTY FARM BUREAU
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Vice President: Heather Poppy
Vice President: Brian Corkill
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BJ Weber, Tim Yager

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Lisa VanWatermeulen,
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Henry & Stark County Health
Departments & First Choice
Healthcare Celebrate National
Women’s Health Week, May 11-17

The Henry and Stark County Health
Departments and First Choice Healthcare
announce that this Mother’s Day-Sunday, May
11th, acts as the official kick-off for National
Women’s Health Week, May 11-17, 2025.

The goal of Women’s Health Week is to
empower women to make their health a
priority. National Women’s Health Week also
serves as a time to help women understand
what it means to be well. This year’s theme,
“Empowering Women, Cultivating Health:
Celebrating Voices, Wellness & Resilience,”
is dedicated to empowering women to take
charge of their health journeys. The them
highlights steps women can take to improve
their health, emphasizing preventive and
positive health behaviors.

As we celebrate National Women’s Health
Week, we will also focus on what it means
to be a well woman. The fact is it’s really a
state of mind. It’s being healthy as you can
be. And, most importantly, it’s about takings
steps to improve your physical and mental
health. **Important steps include:**

- Continue to take steps to protect yourself
by staying up-to-date on recommended
vaccinations.
- Getting at least 2 1/2 hours of moderate
physical activity, 1 hour and 15 minutes of
vigorous physical activity, or a combination
of both each week.
- Eating a nutritious diet. Eat mainly fruits
and vegetables; grains (at least half should
be whole grains); fat-free or low-fat milk
and dairy products; fish, skinless poultry

- and lean red meats; and polyunsaturated
and monounsaturated fats.
- Visiting a health care professional for
regular checkups and preventative
screenings.
- Paying attention to mental health, including
getting enough sleep and managing stress.
- Avoiding unhealthy behaviors, such as
smoking/vaping, texting while driving, and
not wearing a seatbelt or bicycle helmet.

During Women’s Health Week, the
Department hopes to raise awareness of
the women’s health services available at
their First Choice Healthcare locations. The
First Choice Healthcare Clinics in Kewanee,
Colona and Toulon offer area women such
services as annual exams, pap smears,
pregnancy testing, contraceptive counseling
and supplies, clinical breast exams,
fasting blood profiles and lab services,
immunizations, and our mental health
services. Payment for Department services
include private pay, Medicaid, and most
insurances.


Every woman should have access to
affordable health care services. We
encourage local women to take advantage of
the savings offered through our First Choice
Healthcare Clinics. To find out more about
the First Choice Healthcare Clinic’s health
services for women call at Kewanee 309-
852-5272; Colona 309-792-4011; or Toulon
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ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU MEMBERS ADVOCATE, MAKE CONNECTIONS DURING LEADERS TO D.C. TRIP

Sixteen Illinois Farm Bureau leaders recently met with members of Illinois' congressional delegation at their Capitol Hill offices to advocate and share their concerns, including the need to pass a new, modernized farm bill that protects crop insurance and reflects the current agricultural economy.

Among them, Steve Nightingale and Heather Poppy, representing Henry County Farm Bureau, attended IFB's Leaders to Washington trip March 25-26 in Washington, D.C. During the trip, they spoke with U.S. Rep. Darin LaHood and U.S. Rep. Eric Sorensen to share first-hand accounts of how federal policies affect Illinois agriculture and businesses.

"The Leaders to Washington trip is a great opportunity for our members to meet with legislators and share their personal experiences of how federal policies affect their farm and livelihoods," said IFB President Brian Duncan.

Participants in IFB's Leaders to Washington trip brought a range of backgrounds and perspectives to the table. They represented a range of organizations, including local county Farm Bureaus, state and local Young Leaders committees and the IAA Board of Directors.

Other attending members were Berk Boehne, Dekalb County; Chris McKee, McHenry County; Jenny Bierman, Jasper County; John Yeley, Clark County; Bill Heyen and Molly Rosentreter, Macoupin County; Vikkie Becker, Cass and Morgan Counties; Ethan Brown, Montgomery County; Rick Edwards, Adams County; Katie King, Sangamon County; Ian Kessler, Madison County; Kyle Diekhoff, Tazewell County; and Joanie Stiers and Brandon Hall, Knox County.

Congressional meetings are an integral piece of the Leaders to Washington trip. During a jam-packed two days, the 16 IFB members met with lawmakers and/or staff including: U.S. Sens Dick Durbin, D-Springfield, and Tammy Duckworth, D-Hoffman Estates; and U.S. Reps Darin LaHood, R-Dunlap;

Eric Sorensen, D-Moline; Mike Bost, R-Murphysboro; Lauren Underwood, D-Naperville; Mary Miller, R-Oakland; and Brad Schneider, D-Deerfield.

Members also had meetings with staff from American Farm Bureau Federation, Farm Service Agency, Foreign Ag Service, Risk Management Agency, the Mexican Embassy, House Ag Committee, White House office of Public Liaison and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Members also met new Ag Secretary Brooke Rollins, who participated in a Q&A session with several Farm Bureaus.

While in D.C., IFB members carried three topline messages: Farmers need a new farm bill that protects crop insurance and reflects the current agriculture economy, expand agriculture markets and extend or make permanent the expiring 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA).

"Before our farmers get into the field work, we needed to do some Hill work," said Ryan Whitehouse, IFB director of national legislation. "It's important that elected and administrative officials hear directly from our members to better understand what's happening in the ag industry. Our members' stories really make a difference, and our members delivered the message."

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 a 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.

Learn more about Illinois agriculture at www.ilfb.org. Connect with Illinois Farm Bureau on Facebook: Illinois Farm Bureau | Facebook, Instagram @ilfarmbureau, X @ILFarmBureau, or on TikTok @illinoisfarmbureau.



Speaking with Congressman Darin LaHood during the recent "Leaders to Washington" program are (l to r) Ryan Whitehouse, Illinois Farm Bureau Director of National Legislation; Steve Nightingale, President of the Henry County Farm Bureau; and Heather Poppy, HCFB Vice President of Organization.

FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION AWARDS 2025 SCHOLARSHIPS

Continued from page 1

- Kevin & Karen Urick Farm Bureau Legacy Scholarship**
 - **Tyler Chamberlain** – Agricultural Systems Technology, Iowa State University
- Glen & Betty DeSmith Memorial Scholarship**
 - **David Mock** – Ag Econ Policy and International Trade & Russian and Eurasian Studies, University of Illinois
 - **Paige Sierens** – Animal Sciences, University of Illinois
 - **Taylor Burke** – Agricultural - Veterinary Science, The University of Tennessee at Martin
- James Ufkin Memorial Scholarship**
 - **Samuel Nightingale** – Ag Production and Ag Business, Black Hawk East

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FARMERS BOND WITH THEIR LUNCH BOX

Always take your lunch box along.

Accept the statement as words of wisdom or a standing joke among the farm crew. On a good planting or harvest day, farmers intend to camp out in a single piece of equipment – just a guy or gal and their lunch box in the tractor, combine, semi or sprayer. But the day quickly goes awry when you dismount the tractor to help with a breakdown, jump in the service truck to grab supplies at the home farm or drive another truck to fetch a part in town. Soon, you're thirsty, hungry and two vehicles removed from your afternoon snack and Cherry Coke Zero.

The lunch box provides comfort and routine. Its caloric content

caters to our personal cravings and delivers physical fuel for the body, emotional therapy for the mind and small moments of peace in a 14-hour workday. My teenage son says, "It's a good day when a lunch box is involved." The insulated cooler signals cab time and farming the land with his favorite snacks and a sweet tea.

I look forward to the lunch box rituals in the field, starting with yogurt and berries for breakfast. Lunch comes out about 11 a.m. or when field conditions allow, providing another hashmark in the timeline of a long day. Strangely, I like traditional hot foods served cold, including

homemade meatloaf or 4-H barbecue with no bun – all at the temperature of a lunchbox lined with ice packs.

While previously limited to handheld foods, today's auto-guidance permits spoons and forks. I enjoy the calm pace of soybean fields with long, back-and-forth passes. Satellites steer the tractor hands-free so I can fork my food while watching the machine's performance. In contrast, odd-shaped fields with lots of turning, stopping and starting keep my lunchbox lid largely closed.

Homemade trail mix ranks an afternoon highlight. Popcorn keeps me alert a kernel at a time. Miniature chocolate bars satisfy

sweet cravings but not quite like my grandpa's treats did. All the grandkids wanted to ride with him and raid his lunch box for a piece of strawberry licorice.

Grandpa called his lunch box a dinner pail, a nod to dinner as the noon meal in farm country. For most of the world, dinner means supper time, and that's when Mom is the hero. She delivers a hot meal, homemade dessert and drinks to the field as the contents of the lunch box dwindle.

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

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YOUNG LEADERS ANNOUNCE WINNER OF T-SHIRT CONTEST

The Henry County Farm Bureau Young Leaders have awarded the 31st Annual T-Shirt Contest award to Blake Vandersnick, 4th grade student at St. Malachy School in Geneseo. The theme for this year's contest was "Agriculture: Then & Now".

Henry County fourth grade students were eligible to participate in this drawing contest, with the winning entry placed on a t-shirt for the entire class. Special thanks to Gold Star FS, co-sponsors of the annual t-shirt contest along with the Young Leaders.



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- No interest on loan while you're in school
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STUDENT TIMELINE:

- Applications due May 15
- Interviews are conducted in June
- Loan proceeds are dispersed in August

APPLY NOW: www.ilfb.org/iVET



Pictured at the surprise announcement, (back l to r) Shane Asher, Chair of the Young Leaders; Logan Van Rheenens, Vice Chair; Stacy Markey, Gold Star FS, (front) Blake Vandersnick and Stephanie Seals, fourth grade Teacher.

FINDING STRENGTH IN VULNERABILITY: A Personal Journey Through Mental Health Awareness

May is Mental Health Awareness Month and provides the opportunity to highlight mental health and wellbeing, but it is something we should talk about regularly. I have been asked to write about this topic throughout this month and today I would like to share my story. I contemplated this for days. Do I put it in print? Do I show my vulnerability? Yes, because maybe I connect with you and help provide hope and the only way to remove stigma is to be open and honest to you but also to myself. Born and raised farm kid here, not a mental health provider, who takes medicine every day for anxiety.

Shortly after my son was born in 2010, my mental health started to fall apart but at the time, I felt it was something physical and not mental. With numerous doctor's visits and attempts to diagnose something physical, I finally knew I needed a referral and finally someone decided to prescribe me a medication for anxiety as a trial. Well, in 24 hours, I felt like a new person. Here I had struggled for 18 months, and I was finally "back to normal" or a new normal. For 18 months prior, I couldn't eat for days, and it became a chicken and egg scenario. Hated to eat because I might feel sick later and the thought of that made me feel sick. There seemed to be no rhyme or reason. The things I once loved and enjoyed were now causing me anxiety and I didn't and still don't completely know why.

Anxiety and depression can happen at any age and looking back I likely struggled for years but I finally had hit rock bottom and needed help, or I knew I wouldn't survive.

So, what's the point? I am here to tell you that there doesn't have to be a reason that you feel you are struggling and that's okay. People who find it strange and think people should "get over it" try to make reason/sense of something that in our brains isn't rational and sometimes we know it and sometimes we don't. If you have never been there, it's hard to understand.

If you are struggling and trying therapy and prescribed medication and it doesn't seem to be working, find a different provider and/or medication. A provider once told me that "we are working on a recipe and sometimes it takes time to get it right." You can't lose hope and those around you can't lose hope either. There shouldn't be stigma involved. We all want our friends and family to be well. Ask questions, listen closely. Know that sometimes we don't want to talk but we do like just having someone there.

I take my medication for anxiety just as I do my antacid each day. There are times that it still overwhelms me and I along with my family and close friends know and allow me the grace to reset.

Amy Rademaker, BS
Rademaker Agricultural Safety and Health Services



It's okay to not be okay. It's absolutely okay to ask for help like you would any other ailment. It's okay to take care of yourself. Your family needs you; there is HOPE.

About the Author
Amy Rademaker is a rural health and farm safety specialist, holding a degree in Ag Business, Farm, and Financial Management. She is known across the United States for her extensive outreach efforts in rural communities. With over 22 years of experience at Carle Foundation Hospital, Amy has impacted thousands of youth and adults through her work in prevention messaging, emergency planning, and addressing mental and physical health challenges, as well as farm emergency rescue. In 2024, she established Rademaker Agricultural Safety and Health Services to further her mission of fostering a safer and healthier environment for rural America. Raised on a grain and cattle farm in Moweaqua, Amy actively collaborates with her sisters in managing the family farm. She resides in rural Champaign County with her husband, Ryan, and their two children, Hunter and Emily.



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May is *Mental Health* Awareness Month

STRONGER together

WWW.ILFB.ORG/MENTALHEALTHWELLNESS

FIVE STEPS TO HELP SOMEONE AT RISK

1. Ask

2. Keep them safe

3. Be there

4. Help them connect

5. Follow up

Source: National Institute of Mental Health

NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE
1-800-273-TALK (8255) and 988

**ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU ANNOUNCES
NEW PARTNERSHIP WITH START HEARING**

Illinois Farm Bureau is excited to announce a new partnership with Start Hearing. Start Hearing is owned by Starkey, the only American owned and operated hearing aid manufacturer. With savings up to 60% off, Start Hearing's products feature numerous hearing aid models, many of which are virtually invisible. Features include Bluetooth compatibility with streaming capabilities, fall detection and GPS locator, rechargeable 51-hour battery, and language translation features. Start Hearing has a national network of more than 3,000 providers to serve our members throughout their hearing journey from hearing protection to hearing aids and services. SoundGear is Starkey's line of advanced hearing protection products, offering both active and passive options tailored for various work and recreational environments. To learn more, please call 1-888-304-8536 or visit www.starhearing.com/partners/ilfb.

Two from Henry County Farm Bureau Graduate from IFB Leadership Development Program

Austin Anderson and Shane Asher graduated from Illinois Farm Bureau’s Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow (ALOT) program, a comprehensive leadership development course, on March 20.

“I have thoroughly enjoyed the ALOT program,” Asher said. “Whether it is building friendships across the state, learning about their diverse backgrounds and goals, dedicating time to understand my personal leadership and legacy goals, or even the many valuable reading materials, I believe this program was a great investment in myself and my future. I fully encourage future participants who want to elevate their self-awareness and/or become a leader within farm bureau or their career, to apply for this program.”

Anderson and Asher were a part of the 25-member graduating class in 2025. Now in its 46th year, ALOT has graduated more than 1,200 leaders since 1979. The seven-session course featured experts in communication skills, political process, ag economics and global issues. Through a broad range of process and content skills, graduates enrich leadership abilities and enhance agriculture’s voice in Illinois. Past graduates have included past and current Illinois state legislators and agricultural influencers across Illinois. Various leaders of the Illinois Farm Bureau have graduated from the ALOT program, including past President Rich Guebert, Jr., and current Vice President Evan Hultine.

“For more than 40 years, ALOT has played a critical role in developing agricultural leadership in the state,” IFB President Brian

Duncan said. “We are proud of the 2025 graduates who have taken the initiative to better themselves, their communities and agriculture as a whole.”

Austin Anderson works on his family farm in Lynn Center where they raise corn and soybeans. He is a graduate of Augustana College, where he holds a B.A. in biology and a minor in biochemistry.

Shane Asher grew up helping his extended family farm growing corn, soybeans and a small beef herd near Quincy. He is a graduate of the University of Illinois, where he earned a B.S in engineering. Asher currently works full-time as a weld manufacturing engineer for John Deere, developing and implementing new products for the combine product line. In addition to his off-farm job, Asher and his wife, Sadie, are rebuilding “The Back 20” as a U-cut Christmas tree farm. In addition to Christmas trees, they also grow and produce luffa gourds packaged with honey (from their bees), goat soap, a large vegetable garden and a flower patch with their family and daughter, Judith. Asher is the Henry County Young Leader chair.

The 2025 ALOT graduating class heard from nearly 30 speakers, with topics ranging from ag economics to state and local government policy to communication and professionalism and more. Sessions are designed to give participants a head-start on tackling tomorrow’s leadership responsibilities.

Applications for the 2026 ALOT program will be available in September.



Shane Asher & Austin Anderson

Learn how to get more involved with Farm Bureau! Discover our committees and programs, and contact the Henry County Farm Bureau to find out how you can participate.

Legislative Action Committee

- Inform members and other groups of Farm Bureau policy on legislative matters. Contact state and federal legislators when an action request is issued as part of the FB ACT program.
- Regularly review policy of the organization and communicate policy to the membership.

Marketing Committee

- Sponsor the Market Outlook Seminar series, holding four seminars each year focusing on grain and livestock markets.
- Request and help develop new programs of marketing affiliates. Help keep the membership informed on developments in marketing and sponsor educational programs when needed.

Member Relations Committee

- Strive for retention of current members and educate them about the work of the organization and the benefits of membership. Explore new methods of communication to promote Farm Bureau to existing members and potential new members, both voting and associate.

Education Committee

- Bridge the gap between consumers and their source of food, while promoting connections between urban and rural agricultural communities.
- Engage non-ag consumers to provide educational opportunities and promote conversations on agriculture and food related topics.

Health & Safety Committee

- Promote health and safety to the ag community and non-farm public.
- Educate young drivers on safe driving when sharing the road with farm equipment.
- Strive to enforce positive mental health in the agriculture community.
- Encourage farmers to follow safe practices and procedures on the farm and in all their daily actions.

Farm Bureau Women

- The Henry County Farm Bureau Women hold programs to educate, develop and expand the knowledge of ladies involved in agriculture and Farm Bureau. Past programs have included women’s health, mental health, landowner rights, communication skills and food preparation.

Find an area that sparks your interest or a program you think you would enjoy? Contact the Henry County Farm Bureau at (309) 937-2411 or email manager@henrycofarmbureau.org for more information.



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May & June 2025

SUMMER GRILLING

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CANCER WARRIOR PREPARES AG WOMEN TO FACE STORMS

By Hannah Spangler, FarmWeek

After receiving a second cancer diagnosis, Brooke Taylor decided it was time to take stock of how she was living her life.

Taylor, founder of the Rural Gone Urban Foundation, challenged more than 200 women at the Women in Agriculture Conference last month to align their days with their priorities so when the time comes for them to “graduate to heaven,” they will be ready.

“I’m not hating on work-life balance. I’m simply saying, what are we working toward? Are you living your life today that if someone says, ‘Hey, kiddo, it’s cancer.’ You feel good about going out,” Taylor shared, reflecting on her personal experience of being told she had cancer.

Women from five states gathered in the Quad Cities to learn from Taylor’s “real-real” unfiltered journey, shared through two keynote speeches and a breakout session. They also attended sessions on mental health, the role of women in agricultural safety, current industry trends and more.

“In the end, we are all here because of agriculture,” Henry County Farm Bureau Manager Katie Laleman said about the conference.

Growing up in Oklahoma, Taylor was deeply involved with agriculture. Her experiences in FFA, raising cattle and studying agricultural communications at Oklahoma State University taught Taylor how to persevere through tough times.

Nothing could fully prepare her for her first cancer diagnosis at 38 weeks pregnant in 2019. Fortunately, her baby was born healthy, and after treatment, Taylor was declared cancer free in 2022. Life eventually returned to normal.

“When I think about heaven, I think about black cattle, blue skies and winter wheat; that’s about the closest thing to heaven ... and for me, everything went back to that,” Taylor shared. “But this is when the narrator would say, ‘Hold your beer.’”

Her cancer returned aggressively when her daughter was 2 years old. Stage 4 triple-negative breast cancer gave her a 13-month “expiration date.”

Taylor knew she couldn’t control the outcome, but she could control her legacy.

She launched the Rural Gone Urban Foundation to show her daughter that strong women can do more than just survive a storm; they can thrive.

The foundation’s mission is to invest “in brave and strong women through small business grants, love bombs and scholarships.” In three years, the foundation has gifted 21 love bombs (cash given to women with cancer to create memories or do something fun), 28 scholarships and three small business loans.

Even for those who were not given an “expiration date,” Taylor emphasized the importance of a “gut check” to prepare for whatever happens next. She advised reviewing spending habits, cutting down on screen time, evaluating relationships, getting affairs in order and scheduling overdue wellness appointments for physical and mental health. People don’t need to wait until something bad happens to do the next right thing, she said.

Taylor also recommended creating legacy items, like she has for her daughter. She suggested making memory books full of photos, documenting personal stories or writing letters to loved ones to help family members feel close even when someone isn’t physically present.

“I feel great about going out,” said Taylor, who now lives cancer free far beyond the date she was given. “It is scary some days because my cancer could come back tomorrow; it could be back right now, that’s just the way it works. But I know every single day that I wake up, I’m choosing to live my life exactly how I want to live it.”

When a person is going through a difficult season, Taylor said it is up to the individual to take charge of his or her life and decide what happens next. While some variables are beyond control, people can still choose to stand strong and weather the storm, like a bison, which is featured in the Rural Gone Urban logo.

“When a storm is coming, all the animals flee because it’s a storm, and storms are scary. You know what a bison does? It turns and faces the storm,” Taylor explained. “It’s in the storm for a less amount of time because it’s brave and strong, just like you.”



Brooke Taylor, founder of the Rural Gone Urban Foundation, was the opening and closing keynote speaker for this year’s Women in Agriculture Conference.



LAYERS OF SOIL

Kindergarten students at Belle Alexander School in Kewanee learned about plants and soil with Paula Janson, Henry County Ag in the Classroom Coordinator. The students made edible soil, a fun treat with pudding and Oreo cookies to represent soil layers, green-colored coconut for the organic matter and of course gummy worms!

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Pledges are now a one-time flat donation. You will also be able to guess the number of birdies recorded during the John Deere Classic for

your chance to win a car or other prizes. Simply fill out a pledge form by June 25 with your contact information and pledge amount and mail it to the Henry County Farm Bureau Foundation, 128 N. Prospect Street, Cambridge, IL 61238.

You may also make your donation online at <https://birdiesforcharity.com/donate> and select the Henry County Farm Bureau Foundation.

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. Contributions to the Foundation are accepted from the public and are tax deductible.

Please help us preserve our past and grow our future for the generations to come!

RECIPE OF THE MONTH



RANCH SNACK MIX

- Ingredients:**
- 1oz Ranch Salad Dressing Seasoning Mix (dry mix)
 - ¼ cup Vegetable Oil (or Canola if preferred)
 - 1 teaspoon Garlic Salt
 - 9oz bag Oyster Crackers
 - 1 bag Gold Fish Crackers

- Directions:**
1. Preheat oven to 250°F
 2. In a small bowl, combine add oil, seasoning mix and garlic salt. Stir until mixed through.
 3. In a 1-gallon-size zipper bag, add the crackers and oil mixture.
 4. Seal the bag and toss until well-coated.
 5. Arrange the crackers on an ungreased half-sheet pan in a single layer.
 6. Bake the crackers for 15-20 minutes or until golden.
 7. Let cool and transfer to air tight container or individual baggies!



GETTING TO KNOW YOUR FARM BUREAU POLICY

107. LAW AND ORDER

We support:

1. Vigorous enforcement of the current driving under the influence laws and legislative efforts to improve those laws.
2. Firm, fair, and prompt enforcement of existing laws.
3. Increased enforcement of existing littering laws.
4. Providing aid to victims of crime.
5. Greater member involvement in recruiting and electing qualified local law enforcement professionals.
6. Requiring that the County Sheriff and State’s Attorney be notified when an inmate from their county is released from a correctional institution.
7. Reducing the fiscal impact imposed on local governments by giving them flexibility to meet minimum federal jail standards.
8. Law enforcement officials seizing vehicles used in the commission of a theft involving agricultural commodities, supplies or equipment.
9. Legislation where needed to prevent the illegal production, importation, manufacture, or distribution of drugs and related drug paraphernalia.
10. Expanding the conditions allowed to be treated with medical cannabis to those proven by medical research to benefit from medical cannabis treatment.
11. Work programs for prisoners.
12. The establishment of Juvenile Justice Councils.
13. Seeking legislation to provide for severe and mandatory sentences for crimes committed with weapons.
14. Clearly defining the legal definition of the defense of one’s property.
15. Developing coalitions to address the problems with and education about methamphetamine production and use.
16. The development of an economical additive for anhydrous ammonia to prevent its use for the production of methamphetamine or other illegal purposes.
17. Seeking legislation imposing stiffer penalties for theft of anhydrous ammonia for methamphetamine production.
18. The regulation and taxation of recreational marijuana.

We oppose:

19. The “early release program” as a solution to prison overcrowding.
20. The use, production and distribution of illegal substances.
21. Giving a “Conservator of Peace” designation or granting similar law enforcement deputization powers to the members of the Illinois General Assembly.

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-Be sure to grab a kids bag and some farm bureau giveaways!

Discount tickets for HCFB Members

The Henry County Farm Bureau will offer its current members discounted tickets for the upcoming 2025 Henry County Fair, June 17-22.

Prices are as follows:

Day Passes: \$4 each (Limit 4)

Week Passes: \$18 each (Limit 2)

Senior Passes: \$13 each (Limit 2)

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Passes are available on a first come, first serve basis. Cash or Check ONLY.

Please take note of the quantity limits- there are no exceptions.

Passes may be purchased at the Henry County Farm Bureau Office any time during regular business hours (Monday-Friday, 8:30 am-4 pm)

LEARN MORE ABOUT ALL UPCOMING EVENTS, BENEFITS, AND MORE
HENRYCOFARMBUREAU.ORG

