Champaign County Farm Bureau News

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"Champaign County Farm Bureau will strive to assist families in agriculture by recognizing and responding to issues of concern while strengthening partnerships and improving farm family life for this and future generations."

Nursing Home
Questions to Appear on Upcoming Ballot

On April 4th, two questions will appear on the countywide ballot pertaining to the Champaign County Nursing Home.

First is a proposed property tax increase specifically funding the nursing home. **The Champaign County Farm Bureau Opposes the property tax increase.** As stated by the county, this would create a short-term fix in total of 2.4 million dollars annually. This is a 6-7 year outlook that does not address the long-term sustainability of the home.

A second question will ask the voter to provide the Champaign County Board the option to sell the nursing home. **The Champaign County Farm Bureau Supports the question asking the voter to give the option to the County Board to sell the nursing home.** Your vote is not to sell the nursing home, but to give the County Board the option to sell it. Only then if 2/3 (majority vote) of the County Board vote yes, would the nursing home be sold. Approving this only adds an option to the county's toolbox as it pertains to the nursing home.

Welcome Our New Directors to the Champaign County Farm Bureau Board!

By: Lesley Gooding

Mitchell Heap
East Bend Township

Extend a warm welcome to new Champaign County Board Member Mitch Heap. Mitch is a grain farmer representing East Bend Township. Mitch has been involved in agriculture his entire life saying "I grew up on a farm that consisted of my grandparents, uncle and mom and dad all farming together. So, for as long as I can remember I wanted to be a part of the farm." Mitch was given the opportunity to take on the board member role and says "being more active in Farm Bureau would be a good way to give back to my community."

Mitch's great area of concern is Limiting Regulation. Mitch says during his tenure on the Champaign County Farm Bureau Board "I would like to show government as well as people not involved in agriculture that farmers are good stewards of the land and that we don't need a large number of regulations to keep us from hurting the environment. To be successful farming we need to efficient with our resources as well as keep our soil healthy, farming economics will keep us from over applying fertilizer or excessive pesticide applications. We live where we farm and we value the land that allows us to do what we love." In addition to being concerned about regulation Mitch also believes educating the non-farm public about farming is very important.

Mitch is excited for the future of agriculture "The advances we have seen in technology in the machinery as well as seed. It is amazing to see how far we have come and I look forward to seeing how far we will go."

On a personal level, Mitch and his wife Ava like to travel and hike. "Last summer my wife, Ava, and I took a road trip to the Grand Canyon where we hiked to the bottom. Then we looped up through the major national parks in Utah and up through Mesa Verde and Rocky Mountain National Park. We don't have any big trips planed this year because we are expecting our first child the end of March. At the top of my bucket list of places to visit would be Egypt. I think that visiting the pyramids and the other Egyptian ruins would be awesome."

Tom Swigart
Tolono Township

Tom Swigart is a new face to the Champaign County Farm Bureau Board of Directors. Tom is a corn and soybean farmer representing Tolono Township. Does the name sound familiar? Tom and his wife, Beth, are also the owners of Monical's Pizza in Tolono. Tom grew up on a family farm in the Tolono area with his father and grandfather both farming. Tom got out of farming in the 1990's, but continued to help another farm family in the area. Moving away from farming led to other ventures as Tom and Beth purchased Monical's Pizza in 1996. After 20 years off the farm Tom made the jump back into agriculture.

Having the opportunity to return to farming after being away for so many years is very appealing for Tom. Tom says, "I am excited about new technology that is allowing us to get better every year. I am also concerned about exports and want to educate people about the importance of GMO's. We also need to focus on how to get people involved and educate them about the importance of agriculture."

Tom and Beth have one daughter, Megan, who is currently residing in Bloomington-Normal. If Tom isn't farming or at Monical's Pizza he likes to hunt and fish.

Lynn Doran
Young Ag Leaders Chair

Lynn Doran will be representing the Young Ag Leaders on the Champaign County Farm Bureau Board of Directors. She is the Young Ag Leader committee chair and spearheads the local Illini Farm Toy Show. Lynn is a Wisconsin native, growing up on a 50 cow traditional dairy farm before moving to Colorado with her family. Lynn graduated from Colorado State University with a degree in animal science and worked in the corporate world focusing on food safety testing and food labels before moving to Illinois.

Lynn is an artisan cheese maker at Prairie Fruits Farm and Creamery. She has been very active in the Champaign County Farm Bureau over the past year. She recently competed in and won the Illinois Farm Bureau state discussion meet and went on to compete nationally at the American Farm Bureau Federation discussion meet held in Arizona. Lynn is concerned about the public's perception of the agriculture industry.

In her spare time, you can find Lynn horseback riding, gardening, and being an advocate for agriculture.

Continue New Directors on page 3....

Send address changes to: CCFB News, 801 N Country Fair Dr., Champaign, IL 61821

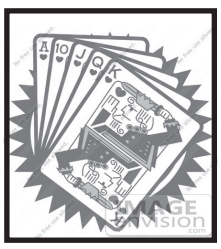
Registration is now open: $5 to attend!

2017 Women's Committee SPRING FLING!

Attention: Farm Bureau Women and their Guests

All Farm Bureau women are invited to attend our Women's Committee sponsored Spring Fling, to be held on Friday, April 28th. Registration begins at 9:30AM and the event starts at 10AM. Colleen Hatton from Dish Passionate Cuisine will provide a cooking demonstration, similar to a Taste of Home roadshow display. Be prepared to learn some new cooking tips and also get some new recipes. David Fulton will provide music (back by popular demand,) and the Dress Barn will round out our day with demonstrations about how to coordinate wardrobe choices for weekend trips and other special events. As usual, a delicious lunch will be provided. Your cost for the day is only $5.00. You may also register a friend if you wish. Please reserve your spot for the day and make payment by contacting Brenda at the Farm Bureau office.

Agriculture Leaders of Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow (ALOYTT) Challenges YOU to a hand of Euchre!



ALL FARM BUREAU MEMBERS WELCOME!!!

Games start at 2 p.m. and last until 4 p.m.
Champaign County Farm Bureau Auditorium

Mark these dates on your 2017 calendar!!!

Last Chance!!!

Sunday March 12

Thank you to all who came out this winter, we hope to see you again next year!

"Check Your Calendar!"

March - 2017

13	Women's Committee	9:30AM
14	WILL Spring Crop Outlook	6:30PM
14	Legislative	7:30AM
14	Premier Ladies Marketing	9:30AM
16	Full Board	6:30PM
17	Drainage Meeting	8:00 AM
20	Coffee Shop - El Toro Bravo Springfield AVE	NOON
21	Coffee Shop - Dewey Community Church	NOON
21	Winter Viewpoint Meeting	6:00 PM
22	Coffee Shop - JT Walkers	NOON
23	Coffee Shop - Philo Tavern	NOON
24	Coffee Shop - Stagecoach	NOON

APRIL 2017

4	Election	All Day
6	Young Ag Leaders	6:30PM
10	Women's Committee	9:30 AM
11	Premier Ladies Marketing	9:30 AM
13	Prime Timers	10:00AM
14	Good Friday - Office Closed	
16	Easter Sunday	
18	Legislative	7:30AM
20	Full Board	6:30 PM
28	(DATE CHANGE) Women's Committee Spring Fling!	9:30 AM

March President's Report 2017

Chris Murray

It has been an unprecedented February. We saw a period of time where a lot of anhydrous ammonia was going on in the county. It was hard to believe that sixty-degree weather was common to see when we looked at the forecast for our area.

Last month I talked about our new members joining the board, this month we didn't give them much of a break, they jumped right in for their first monthly meeting. From there the CCFB foundation and CCFB Board had the opportunity to head over to Bloomington. There, we toured the Illinois Farm Bureau building and their staff lead some discussion trying to get some long-range planning for our organization. It was a great evening, there were a lot of steps discussed of great opportunities that could be great for our county.

Just a couple weeks ago, some of our members took the opportunity to go to Springfield for Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference. They had some of the best breakouts that I have experienced since starting this event. One thing that came out of the two days was concern on the lack of phone calls on calls to action. Illinois Farm Bureau will find four to five periods during the year that an issue is highly necessary to call our state and national representatives. It's a very easy process, they call it FB Act and we have about 300 of our 2,300 farmer members signed up in the program in Champaign County. It takes about two minutes to complete the email, or call, to your representative's office. I believe we need to make it a priority to sign up, if you have not, and please call and report the action requests made back to the office. We have great lobbyist that do a great job but so do other groups and organizations. If we are getting forty calls on an issue and the other side gets two thousand, it isn't really hard to figure out which side will get the vote. I hope everyone has a safe planting season as we get closer to April and hope for a great growing season.

Sincerely,
Chris Murray

Trip to Springfield - May 10th

May 10 - Springfield, IL to the Presidents Museum & Library, Old State Capitol & IL State Military Museum

This 1-day trip Springfield, IL includes a tour of the Old State Capitol and then you are free to have lunch at any of the unique res-taurants, of your choice, near the Old State Capitol which is on your own. Then you will board the bus and head to the President's Museum and Library and before heading home you will stop at the Il State Military Museum. On our way out of Springfield we will stop at Freddy's Frozen Custard for ice cream and then head back to Champaign.

Cost per person: $60 per person

Deadline: May 5, 2017
Trip includes: transportation, admission to all tours and ice cream at Freddy's - ($6 limit) (lunch is on your own)

Trying to Figure Out the Markets? What Percentage of New Crop Should I be Selling?

Champaign County Farm Bureau Marketing Club Invites you to:

WILL Radio Spring Outlook Meeting
Tuesday, March 14- 6:30 p.m.
CCFB Auditorium

Heritage FFA Week

By: Heritage Chapter Reporter, Gracyn Allen

For the 2017 FFA week my chapter hosted a barnyard event on Thursday February 23rd. We set up gates outside the school in the morning before school started for the elementary students to come and see the animals. We received the animals from FFA members who volunteered to bring them in. If the kids wanted to pet them there was a FFA member right there with their animals to get out of the gates. There was definitely a wide selection of animals for all the students to look at. We had a wonderful turnout this year! We had plenty of compliments on how well behaved all the animals were and the kids really enjoyed them. This FFA week was one to remember!

What's New in Agriculture at Parkland?

Parkland College agriculture and horticulture students gain experience in many ways outside of the classroom. Recently, our students participated in the Illinois Annual Postsecondary Agriculture Student (PAS) Organization competition held at Lincoln Land Community College in Springfield, IL. Students participated in several career area events and we are very proud of how our students performed. To showcase our students, please join us for our 49th Annual Ag Banquet in the Student Union on April 10.

News to Share:

Students participated in Postsecondary Agriculture Student (PAS) Organization competition – Parkland agriculture and horticulture students competed against other IL community colleges and university students in the annual PAS conference held in Springfield, IL. The PAS Organization provides opportunities for individual growth, leadership and career preparation for students. Every fall and spring, Parkland participates in PAS events to provide students with the opportunity to compete at the state level to earn a spot to compete at the national level.

2nd place Ag Computers team – Graysen Voelker, Katie Blackford and Klint Edelman (not pictured). 1st place Equine – Hannah McDonald

Parkland students competed in Ag Computers (2nd place overall team – Klint Edelman, Katie Blackford, Graysen Voelker), Equine (1st place individual – Hannah McDonald), Soils Specialist (6th place overall team – Bailey Beyers, Graysen Voelker), Horticulture/Landscape (6th place overall team – Julie Nesbit, Jessica Byrd), and College Bowl.

Parkland agriculture and horticulture students that participated in annual PAS conference in Springfield, IL.

Participants in this spring's annual event were (pictured left to right, front to back): Jessica Byrd, Graysen Voelker, Taylor Lange, Ellie Raup, Hannah McDonald, Julie Nesbit, Theresa Meers (instructor), Jenni Fridgen (instructor), Kalvin Miller, Nathan McKeon, Klint Edelman, Zeke Pliura, Katie Blackford and Bailey Beyers (not pictured).

Urban Ag Leader of the Year – Brooks Marsh

Every year since 1985, the Champaign County Farm Bureau Young Ag Leaders have honored a member of the Champaign County community who is making a positive impact on agriculture. The 2016 recipient of this award is Brooks Marsh owner of Mahomet IGA. Brooks is a supporter and member of the Champaign County Farm Bureau. He supports Farm Bureau programs, caters Farm Bureau events, and this past summer participated in and sponsored a Farmer's Share Lunch event held at Mahomet IGA.

Brooks' Urban Ag Leader of the Year award and his involvement in Farm Bureau circles back to his childhood. Growing up on a family ranch in Montana with his family, tending to cash crops of winter barley and some wheat has given Brooks a lot of life lessons he can directly relate to his adult life. Brooks believes his farming and ranching background have given him a strong work ethic. Brooks says lessons learned at an early age on the ranch tie directly into the day to day operations of Mahomet IGA including "thinking in terms of production, valuing work, respecting people, the patriotism and hard work ethic."

During high school Brooks began working in a local grocery store and still found time to work on the ranch. College life called to Brooks after high school and he headed to the University of Montana, eventually making his way to Fort Lauderdale and earning an MBA. Brooks was employed by Supervalu for 30 years and has been at Mahomet IGA for 12 years.

Brooks is still involved in his family ranching operation in Montana. Many of his siblings are still actively working the ranch and Brooks is able to visit and help with business decisions. Brooks may have moved off the ranch, but his adult life has still been tied directly to agriculture through food distribution. Mahomet IGA provides the community with products produced by farmers from milk to cheese to bread. The demand for locally grown products has increased too. Mahomet IGA and its suppliers strive to meet demand by stocking local products for customers. Brooks is a great example of breaking out of the traditional way people think about agriculture. Brooks is directly tied to the agriculture industry and isn't producing food. He is distributing food and is a link in the chain of food from farm to table!

Brooks says "it is great to be honored by the Champaign County Farm Bureau. The Farm Bureau has always been full of great people who are leaders in the local and global economy. I was involved in the Farm Bureau in Montana and enjoy being involved today!"

Brooks and his wife, Tammy, live in Mahomet and are the proud parents of 6 children ranging in age from 27 to 15.

Continued New Directors from page 1...

Brian Krukewitt
South Homer Township

Meet new Champaign County Farm Bureau Board Member Brian Krukewitt representing South Homer Township. Brian is a grain farmer interested in sports, agriculture technology, fishing, and drones (UAVs).

Brian's interest and passion for agriculture began at a young age saying "I first became interested in agriculture when I was very young following my dad around our family farm growing corn and soybeans. I'm the fifth generation Krukewitt to farm where we live. My dad likes to laugh about when he bought a new sprayer and I took the training video to preschool. Pretty sure I was the only one interested in the video, but looking back I knew from a young age farming was for me."

Growing up on a family farm and at the direction of his father, Brian has been a Champaign County Farm Bureau member for quite some time. Becoming more active on the family farm led to Brian desiring a more active role in the Champaign County Farm Bureau saying getting involved is "an opportunity to grow as a farmer and a professional. I am excited that we have a hand in feeding the world. With a growing world population we will need to continue to get better at what we do."

The Champaign County Farm Bureau Board of Directors and farm bureau members are provided with opportunities to attend several meetings and workshops focusing on current hot agriculture topics. Serving on the board will allow Brian to focus on his greatest areas of concern related to agriculture saying, "I am very interested how the new administration is going to direct its agencies in regards to environmental regulation. Farmers are continually showing they are good stewards of the land for the most part. I am also especially interested in some of the newer issues like farming technology and other legislation."

When Brian is able to take a break from his busy life on the farm he likes to head to warmer weather. "I was lucky enough to travel to Costa Rica with the agriculture department while attending Parkland College. Getting to experience the issues their farmers face was an eye opener for a college kid. I have a few trips to Florida planned this year, which is currently my go to place of travel. However someday I would like to go to Australia to check out some of the farms you read about."

Earth Partners Coffee Shop Tour Returns

By: Myla Munro

Dave Gentry and WDWS have been steadfast supporters of our Coffee Shop Tour! A special Thanks to Dave for bringing our tour to the airwaves! Dave and Earth Partners Coordinator Myla Munro pose at the 2016 Philo Stop.

Chairman Jacob Kesler welcomes Earth Partners' supporter to the Dewey tour stop.

Earth Partners volunteer Steve Stierwalt and Dave Gentry chat with an out-of-state donor who called in to join the fun had at the Philo Tavern at the 2016 stop of the Coffee Shop Tour.

2017 Earth Partners WDWS Newstalk Radio Coffee Shop Tour Fundraiser

Monday, March 20 – 12pm at El Toro Bravo on Springfield Ave., Champaign
Hosts: Nancy Strunk (778-3010) & Sara Tondini (493-2732)

Tuesday, March 21 – 12pm at Dewey Community Church, Dewey
Hosts: Bea Motzer & Jacob & Ryann Kesler (898-1360)

Wednesday, March 22 – 12pm at J.T. Walkers, Mahomet
Host: Chris Karr (369-8751) & Jeff Karr

Thursday, March 23 – 12pm at Philo Tavern, Philo
Host: Dick Miller (493-6221)

Friday, March 24 – 12pm at Stagecoach Steakhouse, Gifford
Host: Eric Suits (202-4949)

The Earth Partners' Coffee Shop Fundraiser is just around the corner and in order to have another record breaking year, we need your help! Your donation helps the Earth Partners Ag Literacy Program serve thousands of students and hundreds of teachers within Champaign County by providing agricultural education through hands-on lessons and activities. With your continued support we can continue our efforts of educating on the importance of agriculture through classroom presentations, workshops and informational materials.

Contact your area chairman to register your donation, then come have lunch on us! WDWS radio personality, Dave Gentry will announce all the community contributions on air the following day. Thank you for helping to keep agricultural literacy efforts a priority in Champaign County! If you have questions, call 352-5235 or email myla@ccfarmbureau.com.

Foundation Board of Directors Reorganizes, Plans for Future

By: Kirk Builta

After adding two new members in January, the CCFB Foundation Board of Directors met last month to elect the 2017 leadership team. The 15 member board, which includes new members Bev Ehler of D&R Farms in Thomasboro and Jessica Patzwith of Longview Bank in Ogden, gathered for the first time.

Brian McCoy was elected to serve a second one-year term as president of the board. Originally elected president in 2016, McCoy is Manager of Birkey's Farm Store in Urbana. McCoy tells us that he's excited to lead the Foundation for another year and enjoys working with his board colleagues. "I'm proud to be a part of a very well rounded board of professionals," said McCoy. Our group includes an accountant, a lawyer, a lender, University of Illinois representatives, farmers, insurance representatives and more."

Also re-elected to their posts on the leadership team were board Vice President Jim Goss of The Atkins Group, Treasurer Vann Parkin of COUNTRY Financial, and Mike Mazzocco of Verdant Partners who will serve another term as Secretary.

Following elections, the CCFB Foundation gathered at the Illinois Farm Bureau in Bloomington, IL to discuss the group's future and to begin holding strategic conversations regarding the future of the CCFB Foundation and its mission.

These efforts included the establishment of concrete goals for both the Earth Partners Ag Literacy program and the Foundation's Scholars program; as well as a vision for the Foundation at large. The board began by discussing both challenges, and opportunities, that may face the agricultural community in the years ahead so that the Foundation can be best positioned to address these issues in the future.

The Foundation Board of Directors and staff pride themselves on providing educational opportunities that impact the future of the food and agricultural industry throughout Champaign County, and around the world.

Illini FS

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MARK THORNSBROUGH, GENERAL MANAGER

MOM Minimize Environmental Impact Optimize Harvest Yield Maximize Input Utilization

By: Dr. Howard Brown

Nitrification will likely begin early this year. The extended warm weather has allowed the soil temperature to warm as well providing an environment for early nitrification of Fall-applied N. Many producers will be questioning what has happened to their Fall-applied anhydrous ammonia. Now is a great time to establish an N-TRACKER Site to inventory what plant-available N remains in the profile. N-TRACKER is simply a tool that provides a way to watch Plant-Available N (PAN) in the upper two feet of the soil profile. Take the mystery out of what has happened to fall-applied N or manure applications. Track what happens to both nitrate and ammonium-N over time by resampling every month or after significant weather events. Although only a point in the field, N-TRACKER provides a way to learn the behavior of Plant-Available N over time, something needed if we all focus on M.O.M.; Maximize N Utilization and Optimize harvest yield, which will both help Minimize environmental impact and sustain management improvements.

See what Paris High School is doing to help with nutrient stewardship. Track what is happening to Plant-Available N in the upper 2 ft. by visiting www.nu-tracker.com and clicking on N-TRACKER update on the landing page or "PROJECTS" in the command bar. Click on the 100% Fall-Applied treatment to watch what has happened to nitrate and ammonium N each month since November, 2016. Visit with your local Illini FS Crop Specialist about how to sign-up for a site. A sincere "Thank You" to the Edgar County Community Foundation for the inspiration that made this project possible.

Should Agrotain be used with low volume UAN used as herbicide carrier? The N in Urea-Ammonium Nitrate is approximately 50% urea and 50% ammonium nitrate. Since Agrotain only has activity on urea conversion to ammonium, only 50% of the N will be affected by using Agrotain. Even when conditions favor N loss by volatilization (warm, moist soils that are with heavy residue cover, high soil pH and no rain for 5 to 7 days), the expected loss would be up to 40%. If 50 pounds of N were surface-applied, 25 pounds would be urea-N (25 pounds N), and 40% loss (maximum) would be approximately 10 pounds N. It is impossible to predict the impact of losing 10 pounds of on harvest yield since there is uncertainty with how many pounds of N is needed to optimize yield (within a 10 pound range).

What sulfur test is best to use when evaluating the need for a sulfur application? There is no soil test available that provides a consistent, reliable evaluation of a soil's sulfur status. The best way to evaluate a soil's need for supplemental sulfur (S) would be to utilize an On-Farm Discovery Project involving several with and without sulfate-sulfur strips. An application rate of 20 pounds of sulfur (as sulfate-S) should be used as the treatment. If a liquid form of sulfur is desired use Ammonium-Thiosulfate (ATS) at 15 pounds of sulfate-S/acre. Dry sources of sulfate-S include Sul-4R-Plus, calcium sulfate (Calcium Products), ammonium sulfate, and Micro-Essentials, MES-10. Visit with your local Illini FS Crop Specialist about how to set-up an On-Farm Discovery Project to address the sulfate-S question. Note: Sulfate-S, not elemental S, is the only form of sulfur to test for the 2017 crop. Elemental S (reduced) must be oxidized by microbial activity to convert it to a form that is available to the plant (sulfate-S), a change that would occur too late for early utilization of our upcoming crop.

It is too early for any Urea-Ammonium Nitrate (UAN) applications. Approximately 25% of the nitrogen in UAN is nitrate-N, subject to loss by leaching and/or denitrification soon after application. Surface soil will tend to warm earlier than further into the soil profile, expediting nitrification of the remaining ammonium-N if the surface soil stays warm. If the primary N source will be UAN and it will be applied in February or early March, a nitrification inhibitor, such as Instinct II or Agrotain Plus is recommended. A nitrification inhibitor should delay conversion of ammonium-N (stable) to nitrate-N (subject to loss) further into the Spring and hopefully beyond anticipated wetter weather.

Consider moving to a Spring soil sampling cycle. There is no improvement in soil the potassium soil test results by waiting until after harvest to collect soil samples. Spring sampling (after May 1) may provide a more stable K test (better moisture relationship) and provides ample time to interpret the results and develop a Nutrient Management Plan prior to fall applications. A Spring testing cycle also provides an early determination of lime needs, allowing for pre-harvest orders of Illini FS soft lime to be applied soon after harvest. There is no better source of liming material than Illini FS Soft Lime. Visit with your local Illini FS Crop Specialist for more information and to learn more about this premium liming material.

Our www.thinkstewardship.com site continues to evolve. If you haven't visited recently make time and check out the changes. Read the Blog and share your comments with the author. All comments and suggestions are welcomed. Register as a customer to gain availability to additional information, and participate in our Stewardship Program. Utilize our new tool, N-TRACKER/Soil. It is a good year to test-drive the tool, especially for farmers that have fall-applied N or manure and want an estimate of what remains in the upper soil profile after the unseasonably warm weather accompanied by winter rain events.

Remember to visit:
Paris High School Nutrient Utilization Outreach: www.ntracker.com
Illini FS Nutrient Stewardship Projects: www.thinkstewardship.com

Catching up with Matt Busby, Illini FS

By: Lesley Gooding

Getting ready for planting season? Champaign County Farm Bureau was able to catch up with Matt Busby, Agronomy Manager at Illini FS, and ask some questions related to the 2017 planting season.

CCFB: With all the water hemp problems from last year are you doing anything different with Illini FS Chemical Programs? What are you recommending for soybeans & corn?

Matt: Most of our growers are using residual chemistry to control weeds - especially waterhemp. The layering of residual chemistry will be critical to control weeds. We see growers applying residual chemistry at the preplant window and then again at the early post application time periods. In some cases we are seeing growers use higher rates of residual chemistry to help control weeds for a longer period of time. Application of Roundup and other post chemical products will be needed to help keep fields clean through harvest. Another emphasis we are using to control weeds is the use of multiple modes of action of chemicals to help control tough weeds like waterhemp. In some cases growers will use 3 to 4 different modes of action in the same field to control weeds and to help reduce the chances of weeds becoming resistant to certain chemical compounds. For specific recommendations, please contact your Illini FS Crop Specialist.

CCFB: Do you see more beans than corn being planted this spring because of lower input costs associated with beans?

Matt: Making a profit is always important when a grower determines their crop plans. The lower input cost associated with beans is attractive in these tough economic times. However, many of our growers over the last few years have moved towards a 50/50 split between planting corn acres and bean acres. This 50/50 split helps limit the risk of trying to forecast which crop will provide the best profit. Most of our customers appear to be keeping their corn/soybean planting percentages the same as last year. We do feel there might be a few more bean acres this year but overall there will not be a significant acreage switched to beans in our trade territory.

CCFB: What percentage of beans in the area are you anticipating will be Dicamba beans vs Liberty beans vs. Roundup beans?

Matt: Close to 80% of the Roundup Ready beans we sell this year are in the Xtend platform. Approximately 15% of our soybean sales will be Liberty traited beans. The Xtend beans have shown a yield advantage over our current Roundup Ready beans. For this reason we have moved to selling a high percentage of the Xtend Roundup Ready beans. Although these Xtend beans can handle an application of an approved Dicamba product, we still feel only a small percentage of these beans will actually have an application of an approved Dicamba product this first year. However, this technology does give growers one more tool to help control tough weeds.

CCFB: With warm temperatures this winter and early spring are you worried about any nitrogen loss from last fall's applications?

Matt: There are always concerns on how much nitrogen is still available for the corn crop. Nitrogen is one of the key nutrients in corn production. One tool available to help determine the amount of Nitrogen still available in the soil is our N-Tracker nitrogen soil test. This allows a grower to have a soil sample pulled in their field to give an accurate measurement of the plant available nitrogen at that specific site. This information will allow a grower to make a more informed decision on the quantity of nitrogen needed to help maximize yields while giving a return on their investment. If you have interest in learning more about N-Tracker nitrogen soil testing, please contact your local Illini FS Crop Specialist.

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Country Financial
Agency Manager

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Champaign Agency

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Andrew Deedrich
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Scott Jackson
359-9335

THE CASE FOR CROP INSURANCE

Why farmers should keep casting their safety net and include Crop-Hail coverage

Some farmers who have fallen on hard times may consider dropping their Crop-Hail insurance for 2017, but industry experts would advise otherwise. Most specialists believe Crop-Hail insurance is a key component to the success of our country's agricultural economy as well as to a farmer's safety net.

What it does

The coverage provides protection against hail, wind, fire, lightning, vandalism and malicious mischief. Experts say going without Crop-Hail coverage could be detrimental to an already struggling operation.

"Chapter 12 farm bankruptcy filings rose last year. Financial troubles are happening to grain farmers all across the Midwest—so now is not the time to pass on coverage," said Doug Yoder, crop agency manager for COUNTRY Financial. "These bankruptcies show just how financially distressed some family farmers really are, yet cutting Crop-Hail insurance could only increase their risk."

Three reasons farmers should consider Crop-Hail coverage

1. A Crop-Hail policy offers certain coverages that a federal crop policy does not
2. A Crop-Hail policy offers stored grain coverage, additional replant coverage and tornado cleanup coverage
3. A Crop-Hail policy also covers wind, fire and hail damage, which is not covered by a federal crop policy

Illinois is the second largest corn producing state in the United States and COUNTRY Financial is the number one crop insurer. Having affordable risk management has enabled the state's farmers to meet the demands placed upon them while also making them feel financially secure.

"These are serious farm debt times, the distress in the grain sector is real," Yoder said. "Crop-Hail insurance often serves as the biggest safety net because it offers widespread coverage for farmers. They sleep better at night knowing that should the unexpected happen, they'll have the financial security to stay in business and go on to plant the next season."

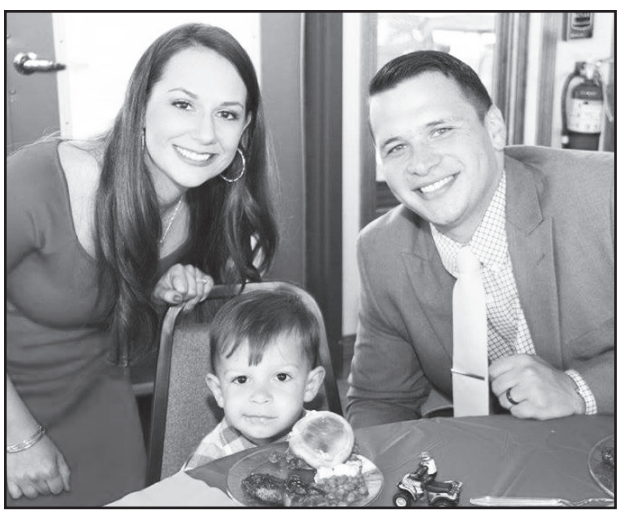
Crop-Hail Providers

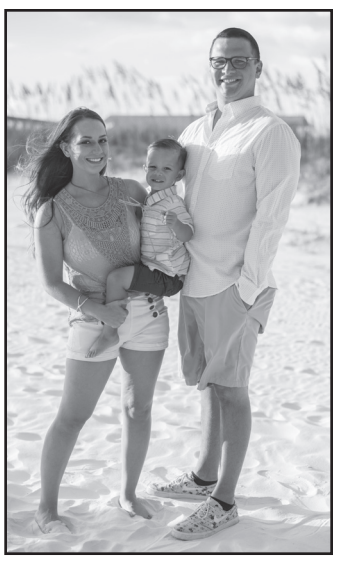
Whether farmers are looking for comprehensive Crop-Hail insurance or a specialized Federal Crop Insurance policy, insurance providers can work with them to create a customized coverage plan to fit their specific farm operation. Farmers can find a local crop representative in their area who will provide them with the best risk management solutions for their operation. Discover more about the need for Crop-Hail insurance at countrycrop.com.

SPOTLIGHT

COUNTRY Financial Representative

Austin Beaty





Meet COUNTRY Financial Representative Austin Beaty. Austin was born in Bloomington, IL, moved to Harrisburg, IL, at age 4 and made his way back to the twin cities to attend Illinois State University. Austin has COUNTRY Financial in his veins, his dad works here too.

After graduating from ISU, Austin began working in COUNTRY Financial's Billing Department. After two years in the billing department an opportunity arose in Champaign and Austin made the leap from the billing department to COUNTRY Financial's Champaign Agency. "I really enjoy working in Champaign. I feel useful and enjoy being hands on with clients. I like sitting down with people and figuring out their needs. I like people leaving in a better position than when they came in. The one thing that often surprises clients the most is how affordable and how important life insurance is."

Austin has been active as the only employee representative in Champaign County for the past two years. His typical day starts at the office around 8 a.m. with service work including making changes to existing client policies and can last late into the evening meeting with clients and making new contacts.

When Austin isn't working he is spending time with his wife Kelsey and their 3 year old son, Nash. Austin and his family enjoy being outside and can often be found in their yard building ramps and tracks for Nash's love of Monster Jam/Monster Trucks.

March 9 starting at 10 a.m.

Speaker: Stacy Clementz
Champaign County Forest Preserve
Entertainment: Ken Honecker

Ken Roellig, Prime Timers Chairman

- Meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month
- Cost is $8 to attend
- Call 352-5235 ahead of each meeting to reserve your spot

Mark your calendar - Don't miss a single Prime Timer date!

Prime Timers 2017:
April 13
May 11
June 8

Winter Viewpoint Meeting

Covering Issues Important to YOU!

- 6 p.m.
- Supper Included
- CCFB Auditorium
- Free to attend

March 21, 2017

Nutrient Management & Financial Integrity of the State of IL.

Featured speakers
- Bill Bodine, IFB
- Dr. Howard Brown, Illini FS

More details at
CCFB: 217-352-5235
www.ccfarmbureau.com

AgrAbility

Promoting Independence on the Farm for People with Disabilities

By: Lesley Gooding

AgrAbility gives agricultural workers with a physical, cognitive, or illness-related disability hope and opportunities to be successful! Started in 1991, AgrAbility provides assistance to farmers, ranchers, agricultural workers and farm family members and helps eliminate or minimize obstacles standing in the way of workers being successful. Funding for this program has recently been renewed from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and continues to pave the way for people with disabilities to gain independence and success in agriculture.

Illinois is very active with the AgrAbility program with the University of Illinois Extension leading the charge. Working in agriculture can be a very hazardous occupation. According to AgrAbility, "Illinois has nearly 1 million people directly and indirectly involved in production agriculture."

When someone requests help AgrAbility may provide services such as on-site assessments, education/training opportunities and referrals to other service providers, recommending appropriate assistive technologies, and more. Direct funding of equipment is not provided, but AgrAbility will work with the client to find other funding sources.

Yvonne Odom is one of approximately 3 AgrAbility volunteers in Champaign County. Yvonne has been serving Champaign County for 9 or 10 years and has referred a few people to the program for services. Yvonne says, "When someone is referred to AgrAbility we find out what is going on with the client either over the phone or in person." Yvonne stresses that providing a client with someone who is knowledgeable and can figure out what the client needs to be successful is very helpful!

AgrAbility volunteers can often be found manning a booth at events such as the Illinois State Fair or the Half Century of Progress Show. Do you know someone who could use some assistance for a disability including amputation, arthritis, back impairment, hearing impairment, respiratory diseases, etc.? Visit www.agrabilityunlimited.org for more information.

Look in our April Newsletter for Defensive Driving Dates and Deadline!

Champaign County Farm Bureau News

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CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FARM BUREAU
Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday-Friday
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Assistant Manager -- David Fulton
Communications Director -- Lesley Gooding
Administrative Assistant -- Brenda Wood
Membership Director -- Deidra Ochs
Earth Partners Director -- Myla Munro
Foundation Director -- Kirk Builta

Contact us at (217) 352-5235
www.ccfarmbureau.com

ILLINOIS AgrAbility UNLIMITED

promotes independence in agriculture for people with disabilities and their families

Free AgrAbility Unlimited services include:

- on farm assessments
- equipment & facilities modification information
- job restructuring
- if needed, assistance in obtaining funds for assistive technology
- community resource coordination
- a toll-free information & referral hotline
- networking with local agricultural & rehabilitation professionals
- peer support

University of Illinois Extension · iatp · Community Health Partnership of Illinois — Building Healthy Lives, Together • Creando Una Vida Saludable, Juntos · mri Building Meaningful Lives

1.844.876.5623
www.agrabilityunlimited.org

Benefits Include:

-AG Electric
-Agrible
-A & R Electric
-All About Eyes
-Arrow Auto Glass
-Barbeck Communications
-Bard Optical
-Blossom Basket Florist
-C.A.R.'S Auto Detailing
-Champaign Chrysler/Dodge/Jeep/Ram
- Cocky Collection Virgin Extensions
-Collette Travel
-Connect Hearing
-Country Squire Cleaners
-Culver's
-Driveway Chimes, Ogden
-Interstate Batteries
-Green Purpose
- Huey's Home Medical
-Fastenal, Champaign
-The Fitness Center -Furniture World of Rantoul
-Garber's Cleaners
-Goose Creek Firearms Training
-Houchens Heating & A/C Group
-Illini Contractor's Supply
-Illini FS Farmtown/Urbana
-Illini Hearing
-Nancy's Creations
-NAPA Auto Parts
-Nick's PorterHouse of Paints
-O'Reilly Auto Parts
-Pard's Western Shop
-Rahn Equipment Company
-Rainbow International
-Rantoul Goodyear Tire Center
-Rantoul Pizza Pub
-Refinery Health Club
-Rosati's Pizza & Catering
-Safely Filed
-Service Master
-Shooter's Bar and Grill - Rantoul
-Red Wing Shoes
-Sidney Dairy Barn
-Sunsinger Winery
-Sullivan-Parkhill Automotive
-TicketsAtWork.com
-Wyldewood Cellars
-Za's Restaurant
Benefits subject to change without notice

New Rantoul Township Director, Dale Franzen visits with Kyle Krapf and Derek Harms within their small group session at the Board Retreat in Bloomington.

Mike Hodge, Executive Director Member Services & Public Relations Division at Illinois Farm Bureau lead discussion on the first day of the Board Retreat

Champaign County Farm Bureau
&
Champaign County
Soil & Water
Conservation District

Drainage, Water & More

Friday, March 17th from 8:00 am to 11:00 am

at the Champaign County Farm Bureau Auditorium

Topics Include:

- Combining and Reactivating Drainage Districts
- Tile Monitoring Program
- Bridge Structures within Farm Fields - Ownership and Maintenance
- Climate Change and Agriculture Along with a Growing Season Weather Outlook

The meeting is open to all drainage district commissioners and individuals who have an interest in water related topics.

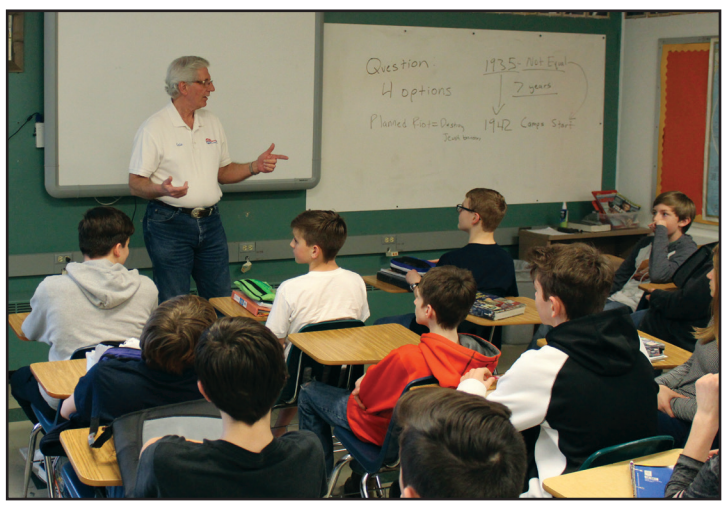
The event is free and no RSVP is required.

Champaign County Farm Bureau
801 N. Country Fair Dr. Ste. A
Champaign, IL 61821
217-352-5235

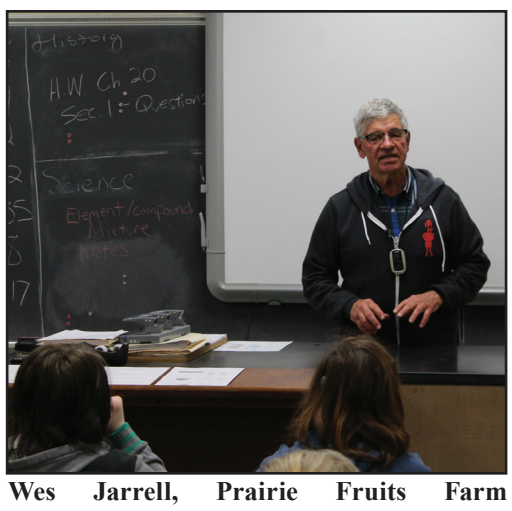
For More Information:
Champaign County SWCD
217-352-3536 ext 3
www.ccswcd.com

Joe Camp, AgriVisor, visits with attendees at the Crop Seminar on marketing their grain effectively

Traci Barkley, Sola Gratia, spoke to Mahomet - Seymour Jr. High School 8th Graders about her career at Sola Gratia and how she started her career with a focus on food.



Gale Cunningham, Farm Broadcaster for WYXY Classic 99.1 explains his career and how it relates to Ag Communications



Wes Jarrell, Prairie Fruits Farm and Creamery, LLC, talked to Mahomet-Seymour 8th grade students about being involved in specialized agriculture relating back to food.

The Champaign County Farm Bureau Equine Committee held their annual winter Tack Sale in February. The sale is a great opportunity for horse owners from all different skill levels to come in and purchase gently used horse tack and related items. This year we hosted 20 vendors.

Daniel Herriott, Busey Bank, covers his career as a Farm Manager and focused on math.

The Tax Bill Cycle 101 workshop offered different angles including tax caps, Farm Land Assesment and how the cycle works within Champaign County.

Champaign County Farm Bureau Members were able to visit with Senator Chapin Rose at the Governmental Affairs Conference in Springfield.

Doug Yoder covers the 2018 Farm Bill and crop insurance at the Crop Seminar.