



Sowing the Seeds of Innovation: Earnest Agriculture's Impact on Modern Farming

Farming has always been the backbone of the United States, sustaining communities and driving the nation's economy. However, the challenges facing farmers today are unprecedented. From fluctuating weather patterns and environmental stressors to the increasing need for sustainable practices, modern agriculture is at a crossroads. At Earnest Agriculture, a company that resides within the old chinook air force base in Rantoul, they believe that the future of farming lies in embracing innovation without losing sight of the tradition and dedication that have always defined this noble profession.

A Story Rooted in Passion, Purpose, and Science

The story of Earnest Agriculture is one of passion, purpose, and a drive to make a meaningful impact. Dr. Gabe Price, one of their co-founders, grew up in a farming community in the Quad Cities. His upbringing instilled in him a deep respect for the hard work and resilience that define the farming lifestyle. Gabe's fascination with the unseen world of microbes began early and led him to pursue a career in microbial ecology. For the past decade, Gabe has dedicated himself to studying the complex relationships between bacteria and plants, uncovering the critical role that beneficial microbes play in promoting healthy, productive crops.

Eddy Mejia, their other co-founder, comes from a different but equally passionate background. Eddy spent his early career in the military, where he learned the values of discipline, teamwork, and service. Although he did not grow up

on a farm, agriculture was always in his blood—his family farmed in Colombia, and those roots stayed with him as he moved forward in his career. After his military service, Eddy founded two successful startups before eventually turning his attention to agriculture. He saw a profound sense of purpose in helping farmers, whose work is vital to sustaining life.

The paths of these two innovators crossed at the University of Illinois's startup program, where they quickly bonded over their shared concern for the future of farming. They realized that by combining their skill set, they could make a real impact on agriculture. This realization sparked the creation of Earnest Agriculture, a company dedicated to developing sustainable solutions that could help farmers thrive in an increasingly challenging environment.

Addressing Modern Farming Challenges with Biological Solutions

The modern farmer faces a myriad of challenges that go beyond the scope of traditional farming practices. Nutrient uptake inefficiency, susceptibility to environmental stresses, and a reliance on chemical fertilizers and pesticides have become significant hurdles. Moreover, water scarcity is a growing concern, demanding more sustainable and efficient farming methods.

At Earnest Agriculture, they are committed to tackling these challenges head-on with our innovative biological solutions. Their mission is to decrease input costs and increase yields for farmers by harnessing the power of nature. They believe that the key to sustainable farming lies in the soil, specifically in the beneficial microbes that once thrived in our ecosystems.

Earnest's flagship product, Prairie Power, is set to hit the market at the end of 2024. Prairie Power is a holistic biostimulant and soil amendment specifically formulated to enhance the efficiency of nutrient uptake, including vital elements like nitrogen, phosphorus, and iron, while boosting plant resilience through improved growth hormone production and increased drought tolerance. By reintroducing prairie-derived microbes into the soil, they aim to restore the natural balance that supports healthy plant growth. These microbes work in harmony with the plants, improving nutrient absorption, enhancing resistance to environmental stressors, and reducing the need for chemical inputs.

The Earnest Approach: A 'Moneyball' Strategy for Agriculture

The approach utilized by Earnest

Agriculture is inspired by the 'Moneyball' concept popularized in baseball. Just as the Oakland A's used statistics to build a winning team on a limited budget, they use advanced algorithms to match bacterial strains that work together to benefit crops. Gabe's extensive research into microbial interactions allowed for development of a method for selecting and combining bacteria that thrive under various conditions, consume specific resources, and employ specific mechanisms to aid plant growth.

This meticulous matchmaking process results in a seed coating that nurtures plant roots, promoting better nutrient absorption, increased resilience, and natural disease prevention. Diverse microbial communities ensure effectiveness across various environments. This diversity is particularly important in agriculture, where conditions can vary widely from one field to the next.

Earnest's microbes, sourced from the remnants of the Midwest's prairie eco-

systems, are uniquely suited to thrive in agricultural settings. These ecosystems, which once covered vast portions of the United States, have largely disappeared—only 2% of prairies remain in the world—taking with them the beneficial microbes that supported plant health. By reintroducing these microbes, they can help farmers achieve healthier, more productive crops while also contributing to the sustainability of their operations.

Bringing Prairie Power to Market


As they prepare to bring Prairie Power to market, they are focused on ensuring that their product is not only effective but also accessible and easy to use. Prairie Power's microbial coating is applied on seed, meaning that farmers can integrate it seamlessly into their existing practices without needing additional equipment or altering their routines. This ease of use is a critical factor in Earnest's com-

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BY ACCIDENT**

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NATIONAL FARM SAFETY & HEALTH WEEK
SEPTEMBER 15-21, 2024



| | |
|----------------------|---|
| MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 16 | EQUIPMENT & RURAL ROADWAY SAFETY |
| SEPTEMBER 17 | HEALTH & WELLNESS DAY |
| SEPTEMBER 18 | GENERATIONS OF FARMING |
| SEPTEMBER 19 | CONFINED SPACES |
| SEPTEMBER 20 | REPORTING AG INJURIES |



ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU
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September Report



Doug Downs, CCFB President

President, Doug Downs

“Farm income has dropped at the fastest pace since the Great Depression” was a headline on a radio program I heard the other day. That’s a headline that will get your attention. A lot of you can probably get a strong whiff of the smell of struggling now. Even with what appears to be a phenomenal record crop out there, a lot of producers will lose money due to inflated input costs, higher interest, and high land costs. I don’t need to remind anyone of that.

What these times will give us are opportunities. Opportunities to search out lower cost inputs. Opportunities to critically look at the way we operate and figure out what can be cut, reorganized, reduced, or eliminated. Opportunities to look at different income streams. Opportunities to search out a service that’s missing that one could provide. Opportunities to perhaps change what it is we are actually growing for something with real value in high demand. The list can go on and on.

It will be easy to fall into pity mode. Whine and complain. Blame the USDA report. Blame the CBOT traders. Blame China. Blame whoever. But the fact is that these are the cards we have been dealt and we have to figure out how to play that hand so we can survive to play another.

It won’t be easy. It will be challenging and tough on families. Stress will be high. Relationships strained. But, if we go into it knowing that, maybe we will be better poised to handle what’s coming at us. That road looks long to me right now.

Our staff here at Champaign County Farm Bureau has hosted a multitude of events this summer with real value for you all to gain knowledge from. They are currently working on more events, maybe unique events for the winter meeting season. Take a look. Attend a meeting. Interact with your local public servants at our monthly governmental affairs meetings. The opportunities abound.

Doug Downs
CCFB President

Prime Timers Meeting

September 12, 2024

Speaker

Gale Cunningham, WYXY Classic

Entertainment

Dave Fulton

\$8 per person/Fried Chicken Buffet

No Walk-Ins

Call to reserve your spot by September 9

CCFB Office - 217-352-5235

Women’s Committee

The Champaign County Farm Bureau Women’s Committee is open to all women interested in agriculture.

Calendar of Events

***September 9, 2024 @ 9:30 a.m.**

CCFB Auditorium

Web Workshop

Notice to all membership: You are invited to attend a web workshop on Sept. 9th led by personnel from the Champaign Public Library to be held at the Champaign County Farm Bureau Auditorium at 9:30 a.m. The session is designed to help you to better navigate your electronics. Please plan to bring your smart phone, iPad or laptop to better engage in the learning experience. After completion of the meeting, you are cordially invited to join the Women’s Committee, sponsoring event planners, for lunch at Houlihan’s Restaurant.



Please call the FB office at 352-5235 to register so the room can be set up to accommodate all guests by 9-6-24.

***September 21, 2024**

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Ag in the Orchard

Curtis Orchard, Champaign, IL

CCFB Calendar of Events September 2024

| | | |
|--------------|---|------------|
| September 2 | Holiday – Office Closed | |
| September 4 | Canning Class | 5:30 p.m. |
| September 9 | Women’s Committee | 9:30 a.m. |
| September 10 | Flight Night – Ag in the Classroom@ Riggs | 5:00 p.m. |
| September 12 | Prime Timers | 10:00 a.m. |
| September 19 | Full Board | 6:30 p.m. |
| September 21 | Ag in the Orchard Day | 10:00 a.m. |
| September 24 | Governmental Affairs | 7:30 a.m. |

COMMUNICATIONS SURVEY

Please take a few moments to fill out this survey. One lucky person will win a \$100 gift card to a restaurant of their choice!



JOIN US FOR FAMILY FUN!

ACTIVITIES FOR KIDS & FAMILIES

Learn About Agriculture At Curtis Orchard

September 21st 10am-2pm



The Champaign County Farm Bureau Women’s Committee along with Ag In the Classroom’s Director, Sarah Kaper and members of the Sigma Alpha sorority, invite you to join us at Curtis Orchard in Champaign for some great family fun ag activities!

Bring your kids and/or grandkids (ages 3-8 years old) from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. September 21st, and join us in the Poppy Field Pavilion, just across from the pony rides and next to the Putt and Play area. Look for signs & balloons directing you.

Each child will earn 6 tokens upon completing the fun ag learning activities which can be used for the Wicked Orchard Air Cannon, Tractor Tour, Emerald City Rope Maze, Giant Corn Maze, Pony Ride, Carousel Slide, Giant Jumping Jacks Pumpkin Pad, or Giant Slide.

Families will enjoy strolling through the pavilion and participating in agriculture activities like: Apple Tasting, Corn Shucking, Planting Corn and Beans, Mini Pumpkin Launch and MORE!! Take home Ag magazines and other give aways in a “take home bag” provided.

Looking forward to seeing you at Curtis Orchard on September 21st 10am.

LEADERS Yesterday, Today & Always

HELPING YOU Grow

Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow

WHY ALOT?

ALOT was started in 1979 as an extensive leadership development program. It has offered more than 1200 participants an opportunity to learn a broad range of process and content skills to enrich their leadership abilities and enhance agriculture's voice in Illinois.

Agribusiness professionals will face and embrace challenges and victories through the ALOT program.



You will benefit from this course:

- Improve communication skills
- Develop creative solutions
- Explore global issues
- Join in the political process
- Develop new relationships
- Understand the changes in agriculture
- Learn from experts
- Exchange ideas
- Gain confidence

HERE'S WHAT ALOT GRADUATES HAVE TO SAY:

ALOT is so much more than what I anticipated. It sparked a passion for agriculture that I didn't know I had. A desire to advocate for the people, the land, and the way of life.



To leave my own legacy.

Leah Glaser
ALOT 2023 Graduate

The connections made, and lessons learned have provided immeasurable benefit to me.

I am a better leader

in the agricultural industry because of the ALOT program.



Kade Hill
ALOT 2023 Graduate

GROW AS AN Ag Professional

AS AN ORGANIZATION, the Illinois Farm Bureau relies on our member leaders to not only promote Farm Bureau, but also to REPRESENT AGRICULTURE on a greater level.

AS AN EMPLOYEE, you want to help your employer succeed in their industry, as well as grow and flourish in daily activities and leadership roles. You are a reflection on your employer.

AS A FARMER OPERATOR, you are living and breathing your farm everyday. You will gain more opportunities to network with other members about important issues and how to be stronger advocates for Agriculture.

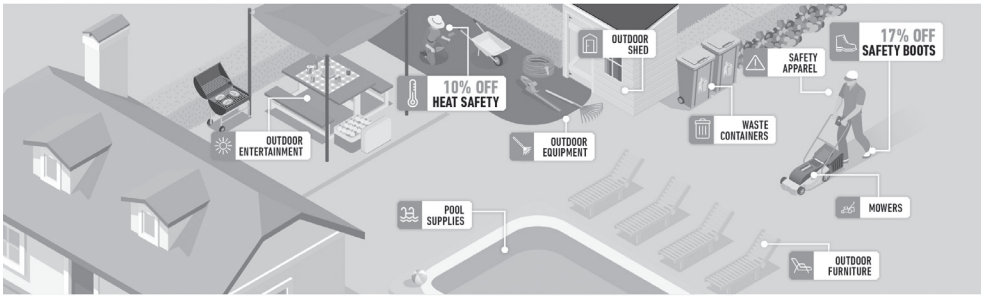


Applications are available on itfb.org. "Get Involved"



Illinois Farm Bureau | Training & Development Team
1701 Towanda Ave | Bloomington IL 61701 | training@itfb.org

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GRAINGER

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY COVER CROP INITIATIVE



The Champaign County Farm Bureau (CCFB) has been granted American Rescue Plan (ARPA) funding to increase the utilization and grow understanding of the use of cover crops in Champaign County. In partnership with the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District (CCSWCD) & the Illinois Nutrient Research Council (NREC), the CCFB will be administering the Champaign County Cover Crop Initiative (CCCCI).

THE CHAMPAIGN COUNTY COVER CROP INITIATIVE WILL:

1. Incentivize farmers for costs up to \$33 per acre of cover crops planted
2. Incentivize a maximum of 2,500 acres for the 2024-2025 growing season
3. Be open to all farmers using cover crops and to all size of operations; however, the program will give preference to farmers utilizing cover crops for the first time and to small farming operations
4. Provide notification to farmers of their acceptance in the program by no later than Sept. 20th of each year
5. Randomly spot check 20% of farmers participating in the program to verify planted acres, seed varieties planted, and seeding rate
6. Make payment to the farmer or landowner will be made after verification is complete and will be completed by February of the following year at the latest. (ex. 2024 cover crop acres will be paid by Feb. 2025 at the latest)
7. Provide educational opportunities for all Champaign Co. farmers about best management practices for cover crop usage

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

1. An application must be completed in either electronic form or by hard copy and received by CCFB staff at 801 N. Country Fair Drive, Champaign, IL 61821 by **Sept. 6th** of each year of participation
2. Agronomic details including: planting date, variety planted, and seeding rate must be provided to the CCFB office by **Dec. 1st** of the planting season
3. Producers must cooperate fully with CCFB staff if randomly selected for additional verification purposes

The CCFB and its partners do not guarantee that receiving funds in one year will guarantee acceptance to the program in subsequent years. Furthermore, the CCFB takes no responsibility for the success or failure of individual producer's cover crops, nor any resulting agronomic or land issues that might result from cover crop usage.

OVOTE24

ELECTION CALENDAR

- SEPTEMBER 26 Early voting begins, vote by mail ballots mailed
- OCTOBER 8 Last day for regular voter registration
- OCTOBER 9 Grace period registration and voting begins
- OCTOBER 20 Last day for online voter registration
- OCTOBER 28 Last day for vote by mail application through mail
- NOVEMBER 4 Last day for early voting and in-person vote by mail applications
- NOVEMBER 5 General Election Day





Golf FORE Ag 2024

Golf FORE Ag was a huge success this year! Thanks to the many sponsors, volunteers and golfers who attended and supported our mission. It was a full course with 34 teams who were all up to their usual shennanigans!



Thank you Eagle & Birdie Sponsors!



Agent
Bret Kroencke



Hastings CCI

Thank you Tee Sponsors!

Birkey's-Urbana - Murray Wise - Longview Bank - Peoples Company - Watson & Sons - Larry Dallas
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FLIGHT NIGHT FOR Ag in the Classroom



JOIN US FOR A FUN EVENING IN SUPPORT OF AG IN THE CLASSROOM.

Casual | Come & Go | Bring a Friend

TUESDAY, SEPT. 10, 2024

5-8pm

Riggs Beer Company | Urbana, IL

Live Music by Luke Rund | Food | Beverages

3 ways to donate



ONLINE: www.ccfbfoundation.com/grounded

MOBILE: QR Code | MAIL IN | DONATE AT THE DOOR





Nathan Hubbard
COUNTRY Financial
Agency Manager



Rhonda Wagner
Administrative Assistant
Champaign Agency



Dan Punkay
217-328-0023



Bret Kroencke
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Keith Garrett
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217-586-5030

9 Tips To Keep Your RV Tip-Top

by COUNTRY Financial

Take care of your RV, and it'll take care of you!

If your home is the biggest investment of your life, purchasing an RV could be a close second. For all the joy it can bring your family, the cost is just part of the equation. Maintaining your RV is just as much of a commitment. But it's easier than you think.

If you're new to the RVing world, here are a few of our favorite maintenance tips to get you started.

1. Treat it like you treat your car

That means regularly changing the oil, tire rotation, brake inspection, filter replacement and other fundamental maintenance. Never start a lengthy road trip without checking the tire pressure, fluids and filters.

2. Roof upkeep

You should be checking all the seals and seams on your RV's roof at a minimum of two times a year. It's easy for water to collect on top of a flat roof, so if you ignore this step, you could be looking at thousands of dollars in repairs. If you have a rubberized roof on your RV, it should be professionally treated at least once a year to keep it pristine.

3. Battery maintenance

Some RVs come with so-called "maintenance-free" batteries, but that doesn't mean they can be ignored. Check them before every trip and at least once every six months. After 3-5 years, replace them. Don't forget to replace the batteries in your smoke detectors and CO2 monitors at least once a year, too.

4. Generator upkeep

Run your RV's generator at least once a month, whether you're planning a trip or not.

5. Tank tips

The last thing you want is your freshwater, grey or black tanks going kaput, especially when you're on the road.

- Freshwater tanks: Flush them at least two times per year and use a simple bleach and water solution to help prevent any bacteria or odors from building up.
- Grey water tanks: Odor is the biggest issue with grey tanks, but there's an easy fix. Just pick up some grey water odor blockers to prevent those musty smells.
- Black tanks: Only use approved black tank chemicals to break down solids. Flush the system regularly and don't forget the biodegradable TP.

6. Clean your awnings

Give them a good wash a few times a year, because they easily capture mold and mildew over time. Let them dry completely before you retract them back in.

7. Clean your slide outs

It's easy for dirt and grime to build up, so keeping them clean will save you headaches down the road. Don't forget to lubricate the sliding mechanism and any window seals.

8. When in doubt ... hire a pro

Not a DIYer? Find a local pro. Your RV is a massive investment, but it's like taking care of a home and car all in one. If you don't want the hassle of all the maintenance on your list of chores, find an RV maintenance/repair shop you trust to do the work for you.

9. Read your owner's manual

Whenever in doubt, refer to your RV's owner's manual for more upkeep tips.



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217-892-4479



Tim Osterbur
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KORY KRAUS, GENERAL MANAGER

From The Field

Pre-Harvest Scouting. Scouting fields before harvest may be key to a successful harvest this year, if nothing else, because of the wide range of stress events many growers' fields have gone through this growing season. I like to use this expression this time of year. You've likely heard an elephant never forgets; corn plants are no different. This time of year, many of the stressful events that first occurred around planting or even during pollination can still be observed when examining a corn crop. There is still time to note the stressors and change the 2025 crop plans. However, soybeans can be a bit trickier figuring out when individual stressors occur due to the indeterminate growth habits of soybean varieties typically grown in Illinois.

A Corn Plant Never Forgets. If readers remember my last newsletter earlier, I discussed what to possibly expect post-pollination and key plant functions that corn fields would be going through. Every year, it seems like there are a few pivotal dates that, after the fact, planting operations should have been paused. If growers remember, a short planting window presented itself from around the 2nd weekend to the third week in April. Shortly thereafter, we experienced below-average day and nighttime temperatures along with wet soil conditions due to continued rainy conditions that persisted until the 2nd week of May. Throughout the summer, I have tracked many of these fields that were planted in this April time frame, and those fields may have benefited from not being planted in that time frame because of the stressor that can still be identified today. Some of those stressors have ranged from any or all the following that occurred around planting.

1. Tomahawk Roots – caused by sidewall compaction due to wet planting conditions.
2. Factors of inconsistent tillage depths cause consistent planting depth.
 - a. Through close examination of aerial imagery and interview growers, many of these inconsistencies were caused by any of the following.
 - i. Tillage speed – too slow or too fast
 - ii. Tillage implements are not level across the main frame and wings.
 - iii. Rolling baskets depth not set correctly.
 - iv. Previous crop residue management.

All the items above have led to stressors put onto corn plants that were observed in uneven emergence, leading to uneven pollination and, most notably, an uneven ear set. Conservatively, some of these stressors may decrease yield by 10-15 bu/acre. Also, growers might observe stressors in their crop this time of year: stalk cannibalization, often due to poor plant health, or mismanagement of soil fertility. Many corn fields in the area are simply running out of applied Nitrogen. Other stressors may be observed in the corn ears. Anything less than a fully developed and pollinated corn ear often indicates some stress. These stressors may include any of the following.



1. Timing issues with pesticide applications
2. Nutrient Deficiencies
3. Excessive air temperatures during daytime and/or nighttime
4. Drought

5. Disease or Ear Rots
6. Insect – Corn Leaf Aphids on certain hybrids x planting date severely impacted pollination this year

All these items may lead to a reduction in overall yield. If any of these items are detected in growers' fields, appropriate considerations should be made to harvest, on-farm grain storage, and develop management strategies for 2025. Ohio State University Extension has a great Tech Sheet that discusses "Abnormal Corn Ears" and can easily be found by following this link for a free copy. <https://u.osu.edu/mastercorn/abnormal-ears-poster/>

Detecting individual stressors in soybeans becomes more difficult due to the growth habits of the soybean varieties grown in EC IL. The type of soybeans we grow is indeterminate growth, which means soybeans' overall growth habits are driven by temperature and photoperiods. Unlike corn, corn ears are determined at the early vegetative stage around V5-V6. However, we can still determine stressors that may have occurred early in the growing season around planting that may be traced back to compaction, nutrient deficiencies, and even early-season seedling diseases. To identify these stressors, the main taproot and fine root hairs will need to be closely examined, along with observing the main stem at the soil line and even the main stem to see if anything interfered with the natural flow of water and plant nutrients.



Illini FS is now into year three of hosting a "turnkey" custom seed cover crop program focusing on cereal rye following corn and ahead of planting soybeans next year in 2025. If growers are interested in how Illini FS's Cover Crop Program might benefit their operation, please follow the QR code below or contact Drew Hewitt at 217-751-2751. Illini FS's Crop Program consists of:

- Timely seeding of cereal rye ahead of soybeans by Illini FS.
- Recommendations for termination of cover crops
- Recommendation for planting in the next crop year.

Energy Update from Chris Olson – Energy Department Manager

Here is a quick look at recent energy market movement:

Crude and diesel continue to cut into recent weeks gains, while gasoline fell to one-week lows as elevated tension in the Middle East seems to have subsided as retaliation plans against Israel by Iran have yet to materialize.

If ceasefire discussion is once again initiated between Hamas and Israel, we could see the rest of the built-up risk premium from last week drop out of markets as chances of retaliation would decrease further.

Also aiding the drop in energy markets are weekly EIA numbers that unexpectedly showed a build in crude inventories versus a reported draw of more than 5 million barrels by the API.

OPEC officials scaled back oil consumption growth for rest of 2024, while IEA representatives adjusted demand down for 2025 as both organizations alluded to weaker than expected economics out of China as the main factor.

US crude oil production has increased to 13.4 million barrels a day, which is a record and will help offset any OPEC reduction in production.

Current pricing still is considerably lower than the fall futures. If you haven't filled your storage you may want to consider doing so this month.

If growers or readers of this newsletter have questions or concerns about management strategies for this year, Illini FS or I would welcome the opportunity to partner with you. If readers want to contact me personally, please utilize my contact information below.

Eric Beckett, CCA 4R NMS
217-318-9100
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OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Abnormal Corn Ears

Authors: Peter Thomason and Allen Geyer

More information online at u.osu.edu/mastercorn/ HORTICULTURE AND CROP SCIENCE

THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF FOOD, AGRICULTURAL, AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES

2024 CCFB Trip Dates, Deadlines & Information

Questions? Call the Champaign County Farm Bureau at 217-352-5235.

Thursday, September 26, 2024 (Matinee)

Million Dollar Quartet Beef & Boards Dinner Theatre – Indianapolis, IN

On December 4, 1956, an extraordinary twist of fate brought Johnny Cash, Jerry Lee Lewis, Carl Perkins and Elvis Presley together at Sun Records in Memphis for what would be one of the greatest jam sessions ever. Million Dollar Quartet bring that legendary December night to life featuring an incredible score performed live onstage, including: “Blue Suede Shoes”, “Fever”, “Walk the Line”, “Sixteen Tons”, “Who Do You Love”, “That’s All Right”, “Folsom Prison Blues”, “Whole Lotta Shakin’ Goin’ On”, “Hound Dog”and more.

Price Per Person: \$120

Deadline to Register or cancel reservation: September 13



Wednesday, December 4, 2024 (Matinee)

Miracle on 34th Street Harmony Theatre – Hillsboro, IN

A holiday classic from the writer of the musical theatre classic, *The Music Man!*, and based on the movie of the same name, *Miracle on 34th Street* features a book and score by none other than Meredith Willson. Single mother, Doris Walker, doesn’t want her six-year-old Susan’s head filled with romantic notions. Their neighbor, Fred Gailey, tries to woo Doris by charming Susan and taking her to see Santa Claus at Macy’s, where Doris works. Doris is not impressed, but when it turns out that Macy’s Santa may, in fact, be the real Kris Kringle, a wave of love spreads across New York City that melts even the most cynical hearts. Filled with humor, spectacle and such beloved songs as “Pinecones and Hollyberries,” “It’s Beginning to Look a Lot Like Christmas” and “My State, My Kansas,” this joyous, heartwarming musical is pure family entertainment, wholesome without being cloying. *Miracle on 34th Street The Musical* is the perfect holiday treat for everyone.



Price Per Person: \$120

Deadline to Register or cancel reservation: October 28

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mitment to making biologicals a viable option for all farmers, not just those with the resources to experiment with new technologies.

Their field trials have shown promising results, with a 7% increase in yields when using thier microbial consortium. This improvement in yield, combined with the reduced need for chemical inputs, translates to significant cost savings for farmers. In a time when profit margins are often razor-thin, these savings can make a substantial difference to farm families.

Another key focus for them is extending the shelf life of our product. Currently, they are working to increase the shelf life from weeks to 60 days, with a long-term goal of achieving a two-year shelf life. This is a significant challenge, but one that they are dedicated to overcoming to

ensure that Prairie Power remains effective and easy to use for farmers across the country.

A Vision for the Future of Agriculture from the founders of Earnest Agriculture

At Earnest Agriculture, we see a future where farmers are empowered with the tools they need to feed the world sustainably. Our work is driven by a deep respect for the traditions of farming and a recognition of the need for innovation. We believe that by combining these two elements, we can create a future where agriculture is not only productive and profitable but also sustainable and resilient.

Our journey is just beginning, and we are excited to continue developing solutions that address the challenges faced by modern farmers. We are committed to continuous improvement, leveraging our expertise and partnerships to stay at the forefront of agricultural innovation. As we bring Prairie Power and future products to market, our goal remains clear: to support the farmers who work tirelessly to feed our nation and protect our natural resources.

Earnest Agriculture is not just another agtech company; we are a partner to farmers, dedicated to helping them navigate the complexities of modern agriculture. Through our innovative biological solutions, we are sowing the seeds of a more sustainable and prosperous future for farmers and their families. We invite you to join us on this journey and explore how our products can make a difference on your farm. Visit us at growearnest.com to learn more and become part of the future of agriculture.

It’s Grow Time.



Volunteer For The Better

During my side gigs over the years as parent-teacher club president, Sunday School teacher and FFA alumni volunteer enthusiast, my home office has served as much a dumping grounds for community service projects as it has a private space for writing commentaries and paying bills.

I call it my staging area, a designated place that holds the intent to make a difference in our small town of 600 people. I have friends with such spaces, too, because if small towns want or need something, their citizens often must collaborate to provide for the community.

Our parks offer some of the most visual evidence of volunteerism in our village, which lacks a taxpayer-funded park district. Volunteers fundraise, install and oversee the 18-hole disc golf course, perennial beds, arboretum, depot pavilion, caboose museum and the barn playground, an incredible project that alone won the state’s top award for volunteerism. Currently, talented community members donate time and resources to install a mini golf course with nine holes of unique themes to reflect our community’s history – a coal shovel, grain bins and iron river bridge among them.

Unthinkable to my city friends, trained volunteers fight fires and provide our first-response medical care. Unpaid folks decorate the downtown for the holidays and archive our history in a small museum. Veterans hang dozens of flags in the park and cemetery every Memorial Day. Our musical leaders at church sing and play for God’s glory without compensation. Passionate volunteers endlessly support student success in the local FFA and make youth soccer, summer ball, 4-H and the scouts a reality.

Our kids learn at a young age that community service provides church dinners, roadside cleanups, fun youth programs, impactful non-profits and special events like the upcoming town festival. For the latter, more than 125 volunteers will organize and deliver agri-entertainment-style fun for free to attendees at a festival that encapsulates the power of community service. Magic happens and friendships form when talents, skills and resources of volunteers come together for the common goal of community betterment.

About the author: Joanie Stiers farms with her family in west-central Illinois, where they grow corn, soybeans, wheat, hay and cover crops and raise beef cattle, backyard chickens and farm kids.

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FARM BUREAU NEWS

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Sunflower Celebration

This year's Clearview Farm Sunflower Celebration was a huge success. Thank you to our sponsors Prairie Farms Dairy, The Osterbur Group - Country Financial, and Illini FS for donating supplies. The Champaign County Farm Bureau was able to serve 500 root beer floats to the guests that came out to enjoy the celebration.



WOMEN'S COMMITTEE RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Submitted by Sara Hiser

Spaghetti Casserole

Ingredients

- 1 Box spaghetti 16 oz*
- 2 Cans tomato soup 10.75 oz each
- 1 Cup water
- 1 lb ground beef
- 1 small can mushrooms
- 2 Teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tablespoon sugar
- 1 Medium onion (chopped)

Preparation

Brown hamburger and onion. Add soup and water. Cook spaghetti (rinse and drain) then mix all ingredients. Place in 13 by 9 cake pan. Add 1 lb grated cheese on top. Bake at 350 degrees approximately half hour.

*I like the Great Value Half-Length Spaghetti.

