



Vol. 103, No. 7

NEWS

801 N. Country Fair Drive, Suite A, Champaign, IL 61821

July, 2025 

Humble Beginnings, Bright Future: Two Colfax Businesses Making a National Impact

Spotlight on Local Innovation

What started as a mother-daughter hobby in a small-town garage has blossomed into two flourishing businesses that are now lighting the way for candle lovers and makers across North America.

Aster + Indigo Candle Co., located in Colfax, Illinois, was founded in 2021 by Lauren Wyant and her mother, Becky Janssen. What began as a fun side project—pouring small batches of soy candles in their garage—quickly grew into something more. As word spread about the quality and craftsmanship behind their products, demand soared.

Today, Aster + Indigo is known for its high-quality, handmade candles crafted with 100% soy wax and phthalate-free, Prop 65-compliant fragrances. The product line now includes wax melts, room sprays, and perfumes, all created with the same attention to safety and detail. The company serves customers through an ecommerce platform and wholesales to shops and businesses across the U.S. and Canada. Lauren and Becky continue to travel across Illinois to take part in vendor markets, where they connect directly with customers and share their passion for quality products. Even with rapid growth and a small team of four part-time employees, the business remains committed to small-batch, handcrafted

production.

Their use of soy wax, derived from soybeans—many of which are grown right here in Central Illinois—is a shining example of how local agricultural products can be transformed into value-added goods that reach far beyond our region. It's a reminder of the many ways agriculture powers not just food production, but innovation in areas like home goods, wellness, and small business.

But their entrepreneurial journey didn't stop there.

Seeing a growing need for reliable supplies in the candle-making industry, the family launched a second venture: Central Illinois Candle Supply. Founded in 2022 with the help of Lauren's father, Kent Janssen, the company began in a rented corner of a machine shed and has since grown into a full-scale operation. Central Illinois Candle Supply now operates out of its own warehouse in Colfax, specializing in soy and coconut-soy wax blends. The company ships thousands of pounds of wax and candle-making supplies each week to makers across the country



and even offers a showroom for local customers.

The success of these businesses is rooted deeply in community support. Colfax rallied around Aster + Indigo from the very beginning—at their first vendor market—and that hometown encouragement fueled the drive to keep growing. Today, both companies remain committed to giving back to their community by supporting local schools, teams, charities, and events.

At the heart of it all is a shared commitment to creativity, quality, and rural values. We are proud to recognize Aster + Indigo Candle Co. and Central Illinois Candle Supply as outstanding examples of rural entrepreneurship,

proving that big dreams can grow from small towns—especially with strong community roots. Their story is also a testament to the versatility of Illinois agriculture and the power of turning local commodities, like soybeans, into sustainable products that serve communities near and far.

As a special thank-you, Champaign County Farm Bureau members can receive 15% off their purchases from both Aster + Indigo Candle Co. and Central Illinois Candle Supply when shopping online. Please call the Farm Bureau office to receive your exclusive member discount code before placing your order.

MEMBERSHIP APPRECIATION PICNIC

Join us for a picture-perfect day filled with food, outdoor activities, dairy barn ice cream and giveaways.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 3, 2025

4-7 AT HUDSON FARMS

1341 County Rd. 1800 E Urbana 61802

No Charge - please rsvp by July 25th by calling 217-352-5235



July Report

President, Doug Downs



Doug Downs, CCFB President

The crop is well established and for the most part appears to be in about as good of shape as one could reasonably expect for mid June. I wish I'd of replanted a few beans here and there, but a very few thin bean stands, with plenty of waterhemp poking though my non-gmo beans, is my worst problem. So I will be grateful and hope for the best the rest of the year.

It's also the weekend after the big Gala the Foundation puts on and this year was a roaring success. Thanks to all of you who attended, donated a desert or auction item, or bought a desert or auction item. I feel sorry for those who bought my desert, although I'm grateful for their overwhelming generosity, because there was an unfortunate accident with the desert I baked. It had to get substituted 30 minutes before the gala with the help of a local bakery and our astute assistant manager. Talk about a stressful situation! I had the privilege of hosting 4 other local county farm bureau presidents at my table and it was good to share our thoughts with each other and had a great night of fun and fellowship.

The calendar at the farm bureau office is absolutely packed with events for the summer. I encourage you to look through that calendar of events and try to maximize your membership. There are several "social" events as well as value based events with celebrity speakers that give presentations where you can literally take home information that most people pay for, then put that information straight to use. Recently some of us spent an evening with one of our bright local attorneys regarding easements and such and later this month, we will have a marketing meeting in the office with as good of advice as you could pay for anywhere. We are fortunate to be in an area where some of the best of the best work and provide services to farmers all across the country, and here at the Champaign County Farm Bureau, are happy to bring those insights straight to you to keep that constant value chain flowing.

Enjoy your summer.

Doug Downs
CCFB President

CCFB Calendar of Events July 2025

July 10	Prime Timers	10:00 a.m.
July 14	Women's Committee	9:30 a.m.
July 15	Burger Bash	
July 17	Toolshed Meeting	11:30 a.m.
July 17	Full Board Meeting	6:30 p.m.
July 19	FarmDocs	
July 22	Governmental Affairs	7:30 a.m.
July 24	Marias Mums YL & Women Rooted in Ag	5:30 p.m.
July 29	YL Discussion Meet	5:30 p.m.

Prime Timers Meeting

July 10, 2025

Speaker Stanley Seavers, Antique Display
Entertainment – Seth Anders, Saxophone Player

\$8 per person/Fried Chicken Buffet

No Walk-Ins

Call to reserve your spot by July 7

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

July 14, 2025 • 9:30 a.m.

CCFB Auditorium • General Meeting

Featured Speaker:

Jim Rossow – News-Gazette

Sewing dates: July 2 at 9 a.m.

PEACHES ARE BACK
THIS YEAR!

25-POUND BOX \$40

COBBLER MIX \$10

PEACH MIX \$10

CALL THE OFFICE AT 217-352-5235 TO PLACE
YOUR ORDER

-PAYMENT DUE AT THE TIME OF ORDERING

Delivery will be on August 20th
around 11:30am



2025
YOUNG
LEADER

DISCUSSION MEET

District 11 & 12

DATE: Tues. July 29

LOCATION: Champaign County FB, Champaign

ORIENTATION TIME: 5:30 PM

CONTEST STARTING TIME: 6:00 PM

NEW IN 2025

ALL CATTLE & SWINE
EXHIBITED AT ILLINOIS
COUNTY & STATE
FAIRS WILL BE
REQUIRED TO HAVE
AN ELECTRONIC
840 TAG..





SAVE the DATE

2025 AGTECH INNOVATION SHOWCASE

CONNECTING FARMERS, INNOVATORS, & INDUSTRY

WEDNESDAY, JULY 16

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS RESEARCH PARK | CHAMPAIGN, IL

Get a firsthand look at emerging AgTech solutions tailored to Midwestern farming challenges as innovative startups share their technology and seek your input to shape tools that work in the real world.

Happy 4TH OF JULY

JOIN US

2025 DAIRY TECH TOUR

TUESDAY, JULY 8
10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

U OF I DAIRY FARM
2307 S. LINCOLN AVE.
URBANA, IL 61801

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.ILLINOISMILK.ORG

SAVE the DATE

FINISH FIRST

WITH YOUR IFB MEMBERSHIP

NASCAR CUP RACE
MEMBER APPRECIATION EVENT

SEPTEMBER 7, 2025 • MADISON, IL

Tickets for \$200/each (Value is \$400/each)

Your MEMBER EXCLUSIVE PACKAGE includes: Buffet meal with cash bar in a private VIP hospitality structure with a turn 4 view • FS 1 Section tickets • Gateway Garage Experience Infield Fan Zone Pass • Free Parking • Limit 5 tickets per paid membership

Contact your local County Farm Bureau to register.

Chic n' Threads

BECKTECH
A BARBECK COMPANY

SHOP BY KNIGHT
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SHERWIN WILLIAMS

The Rural Rose

COVER EARTH

SAVE THE DATE

Toolshed Meeting

THURSDAY, JULY 17TH

SPEAKER
Ryan Whitehouse
Illinois Farm Bureau
Director of National
Legislation

Come enjoy a meal and learn what Illinois Farm Bureau has been advocating for at both the state and national levels.

lunch served
2392 County Road 1300 East
Champaign, IL 61822

RSVP to luca@ccfarmbureau.com or 217-352-5235



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Thank you!

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Chris Greenwald
217-355-8675



Jordan McDaniel
217-352-9817



Robert Lalumendier
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Preston Engel
217-974-7949



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217-359-3941



Tony Wesselman
217-352-3466



Tim Osterbur
217-469-2033



Scott Jackson
217-359-9335



Jordan Johnson
217-485-3010



Tim Bridges
217-586-6170



Drew Arteaga
217-469-9800



Dawn Babb
217-892-0291

4 Ways to Prepare Your Farm for Severe Weather

by John Grant, Manager, Agribusiness Underwriting

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

1. Take inventory

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

2. Prepare employees

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

3. Inspect farm equipment

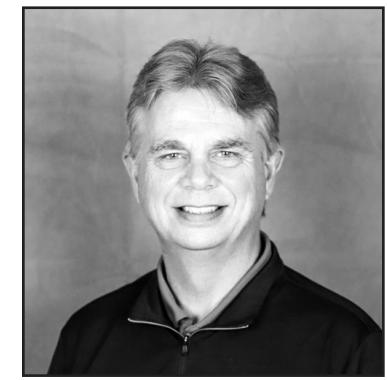
Keep generators in working order. Make sure you have an adequate supply of liquid propane in the event that power is out for multiple days. If portable generators are hooked up to tractors, make sure the tractor has adequate fuel supply.

4. Review farm insurance

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

You may not be able to stop bad weather from striking, but these steps can help you feel more prepared.

SUNRISE



**JIM MEINHART,
GENERAL MANAGER**

From The Field

I often receive many questions about fungicide applications in corn and soybeans at this time of year. They are general questions such as, "Is it worth it?" and "What else should I include with my fungicide application?"

These questions can usually be lumped into two different categories.

1. "I'm going to wait and see if we get any disease development, and then evaluate if fungicide application is needed."
2. "Then the other set of questions seems to be around what else should be tank-mixed because the value of the fungicide has already been realized."

Category One

Treating acres purely around waiting until disease development can sometimes be tricky to manage. For some foliar diseases like Tar Spot, there is a delayed time period between infection and when foliar symptoms appear, and it may take as long as two weeks to be visible and to be identified. Unfortunately, once foliar symptoms occur and hybrid susceptibility, it may prove very costly and difficult to control if waiting until foliar symptoms arise. However, other diseases like Gray Leaf Spot can be controlled with timely field scouting, corn hybrid field tolerance, and an appropriately timed fungicide application that is labeled for Gray Leaf Spot in field corn.

For broad-scale disease development of many critical foliar diseases in corn and soybeans, I rely on the following website. The Corn ipmPIPE network is supported by Land Grant University across the country that monitors the progression of disease development of key economical foliar pathogens such as Southern Corn Rust and Tar Spot. Monitoring this website can help direct field scouting of some key foliar pathogens.

<https://corn.ipmpipe.org/>

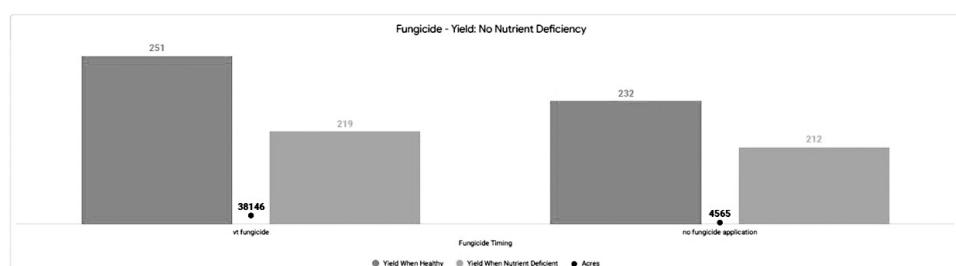
One other item that also falls into this category is waiting until disease development, as follows:

"I've tried using fungicide in the past but didn't see a return on investment."

"I always use foliar fungicides with my soybean acres but not my corn acres."

If growers find themselves with these types of questions, I encourage you to try to find the answers to these questions before fully deciding if fungicide truly didn't work for your farming operation.

- It is essential to know which active ingredients were utilized in the past. A product likely didn't have good activity on the specific pathogen in your field.
- Timing of application of fungicide is also critical, since the mainstream use of fungicide in corn and soybeans we have learned that the best ROI in corn is at VT/R1 growth stage (when tassels are fully emerged) and for soybeans at R3 growth stage (beginning pod development with pods 3/16" long in the 4 upper most nodes) The reason that we generally target these application windows is that corn and soybean plants are most susceptible to stressors because of reproduction growth stages.
- Were there other limiting factors that affected the performance of fungicide applications? Such as nutrient deficiencies or other factors that may be limiting crop development.



- However, if a perfect set of conditions of low stress, good environmental conditions, and good availability of nutrients, there may not have been a need for fungicides. But these conditions rarely present themselves, and often are not realized until after the growing season.
- It's also important to note that most fungicides are generally broken into three categories, utilized at this time of year.
 - "Preventive" that prevents disease infection must be sprayed before a specific plant pathogen is present.
 - "Curative" that provides localized protection and stops further disease development of the plant pathogen. Fungicide coverage is key, even though it may have systemic properties or be advertised as such. It's a very localized activity, and application coverage is key.
 - "SDHI" type fungicides are a relatively new class of fungicides that lengthen the length of residual control and broaden the amount of control to different plant pathogens.
- Were accurate yield comparisons being made between treated and untreated acres? For instance, yield comparisons were made in the same field with the following variables
 - Similar field productivity levels across the entire field?
 - Same hybrid or variety used in treated vs untreated.

- Was there a represented, untreated portion of the field? Sorry, but end rows and field borders do not adequately represent the field.
- How was yield performance evaluated, capturing a known weight and defined area, or with a properly calibrated yield monitor?

These are just a few questions that must be answered before evaluating whether fungicides perform locally.

Category Two

For those growers who have witnessed the performance of utilizing modern fungicide premixes that contain the 3 different active ingredients mentioned above, realize the benefits of growing crops that include any or all of the following statements.

- Broad spectrum disease control plus key diseases like Gray Leaf Spot, Rust, Frog Eye Leaf Spot, and Tar Spot.
- Residual control, 30-40 days after application
- Plant Health benefits that include a reduction in overall plant health from abiotic and biotic factors. This plant stress reduction often goes unrealized unless applications occur with an untreated field portion.

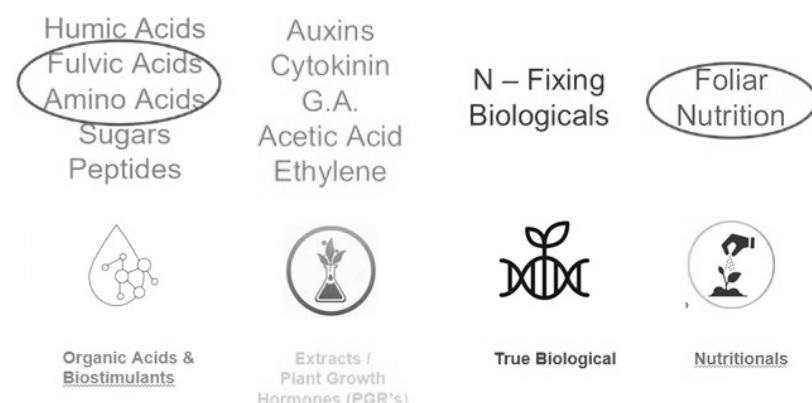
Key items to include in fungicide tank mixes include any of the following that have been proven locally to provide stress reduction and overall improvement in yield

- Key foliar nutrition that aids in reproducing plant functions at the time of application.
- Bio stimulants that can aid in stress reduction.
- Insecticide to prevent feeding of key plant parts such as corn silks or soybean leaves.

The following illustration with items circled in red should be considered at this time with fungicides.

Nutritional / Biostimulants

What belongs where?



Organic Acids &
Biostimulants

Extracts /
Plant Growth
Hormones (PGR's)

True Biological

Nutritionals

Foliar Nutrition

Root Dev – N, P, K, Ca, B, Zn

• Most critical early season

Vigor – N, P, K, Mg, B, Mn, Zn

• Rapid growth and increased photosynthetic ability

Photosynthesis – N, P, Mg, Cu, Cl, Fe, Mn

• Energy production

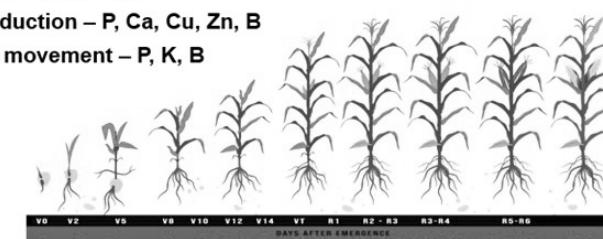
Fruiting – P, K, Ca, B

Reproduction – P, Ca, Cu, Zn, B

Sugar movement – P, K, B

Corn: feed ahead of demand time

Soybeans: feed at demand time



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
ebeckett@illinifs.com



Fun with Resources on the Farm

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

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

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

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

On a slow-paced day, we sit on the porch smelling the smoker transform our farm-raised beef chuck roast into the most flavorful pulled beef and question why anyone besides neighbors would want to drive our dusty gravel road. Then again, we realize our routine farm chores deliver someone else's fun. Relatives who visit love to feed the cattle, so Dad makes piles of grain around the utility vehicle for an



up-close encounter. They gather eggs from our chicken house, harvest vegetables from Mom's garden and ride in the combine and tractors in the fall or the planters in the spring while we work.

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

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

2025 Champaign County Farm Bureau Trips

Wednesday, August 6, 2025 – Matinee

Oklahoma – Myers Dinner Theatre – Hillsboro, IN

Rodgers & Hammerstein's first collaboration remains, in many ways, their most innovative, setting the standards and rules of modern musical theatre. In a Western territory just after the turn of the 20th century, a high-spirited rivalry between local farmers and cowboys provides a colorful background for Curly, a charming cowboy, and Laurey, a feisty farm girl, to play out their love story. Their romantic journey, as bumpy as a surrey ride down a country road, contrasts with the comic exploits of brazen Ado Annie and hapless Will Parker in a musical adventure embracing hope, determination and the promise of a new land.

Price per person: \$125 Deadline to Register or cancel reservation: Monday, July 14

Thursday, September 25, 2025 – Matinee

Stand By Your Man – The Tammy Wynette Story

Tammy Wynette – the woman behind the legend and the incredible songs that made her the First Lady of country music – leaps off the stage and into your heart. Through her eyes, the audience relives her journey from the cotton fields of Itawamba, Mississippi, to international superstar. With comic flare and dramatic impact, Stand by Your Man recounts triumphs and tragedies and explores Tammy's relationships with the five husbands she stood by. Among the twenty-six songs are "D-I-V-O-R-C-E," "Til I Can Make It on My Own," and "Golden Ring."

*Price per person: \$125 Deadline to Register or cancel reservation: Tuesday, September 2
Stay tuned for more trips!!*

Monday, December 1, 2025 - Matinee

Kenny & Dolly Christmas – Starved Rock Lodge – Oglesby, IL

Back for a repeat performance are Dave Karl (Kenny Rogers) & Wendy Engler (Dolly Parton) for all of the top songs, mannerisms and humor of the real Kenny and Dolly. This tribute has it all, the best of Kenny, Dolly and of course many of their famous duets. There will be the perfect mix of Christmas music sprinkled in this show.

Price per person: \$150.00 Deadline to Register or cancel reservation: Monday, November 10

Stay tuned for more trips!!

Please call Debbie at the number below to reserve your spot!

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

Please note the deadlines posted for each trip

Any cancellation, for any reason, must be made on or before the deadline posted for each individual trip to guarantee any refund. We ask that all day trips are paid for in full when you register.

***** Gratuity is included in the price unless indicated*****

Please feel free to share this information with friends, neighbors and family. We would love to add them to our list of travel friends.

Thank you and we look forward to traveling with you.

INCREASE YOUR SOYBEAN YIELD



The United Soybean Board (USB), in collaboration with the Midwestern Regional Climate Center (MRCC), University of Illinois Extension, Illinois State Water Survey | Prairie Research Institute, and Illinois Soybean Association, invites you to a workshop focused on leveraging climate data for improved soybean production.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30, 2025

8:30 AM (CHECK-IN), 9 AM – 3 PM CT

ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION,

1108 TRINITY LANE | BLOOMINGTON, IL

HOW TO PARTICIPATE:

Registration is free but required for planning purposes. Receive a \$350 honorarium, available to the first 25 registered participants, to offset travel costs and time investment. Meals are included.

REGISTRATION REQUIRED BY JULY 23

<https://bit.ly/USB-Illinois>

WHAT YOU'LL BE DOING:

- Discuss previous USB funded project findings
- Discover ag climate decision support tools
- Demo a new ag climate tool dashboard
- Assess soybean production decision needs
- Recommend future tool development



MRCC
Midwestern Regional Climate Center



Illinois Extension
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



ILLINOIS SOYBEAN ASSOCIATION



ILLINOIS
Illinois State Water Survey
PRAIRIE RESEARCH INSTITUTE

CCFB Members in Action

Champaign County Farm Bureau's summer calendar is packed with events, seminars, tours, and meetings. Thank you to all the CCFB members who turned out in force for CCFB's June events! Check out our calendar on page 2 or ccfbureau.com for the most current events. We hope to see you soon!

Senior Fraud Seminar



On June 4th members turned out for CCFB's Landowner Meeting featuring attorney Kyle Emkes.

Women Rooted in Ag



Women Rooted in Ag visited the Rantoul Sports Complex in June.

TGM



Illinois State Senator Chapin Rose in conjunction with the CCFB Women's Committee hosted a Senior Fraud Seminar. Very important information was distributed to our members.

WOMEN'S COMMITTEE RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Submitted by Diane Lecher

Cinnamon Muffins

Ingredients

- 1 ½ c. flour
- ¼ c. white sugar
- ¼ c. brown sugar
- 2 t. baking powder
- ½ t. salt
- ½ t. cinnamon
- 1 beaten egg
- ½ c. vegetable oil

Preparation

Sift together flour, white sugar, brown sugar, baking powder, salt and cinnamon. Combine egg, vegetable oil and milk; add to dry ingredients. Stir just enough to moisten.

Bake at 400 degrees for 20-25 minutes or until a toothpick comes out clean.

Yield: 12 muffins

Why is a cookbook exciting? Because it has many stirring events!

THURS AUG 7TH
U of I
ORANGE & BLUE
GOLF COURSE

JOIN US FOR A DAY OF FUN AND SHENANIGANS
ON THE GOLF COURSE... ALL FOR A GREAT CAUSE!

SEPARATE MEN'S & WOMEN'S DIVISIONS
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To Register or for More Info:
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Brazil Coop Coagril joined CCFB for a tour of TGM