

New CCFB Board Members

We're excited to welcome three new members to our Farm Bureau Board. Charlie, Dirk, Chris and Nate each bring years of experience in farming and a strong connection to our local communities. Their knowledge, hard work, and dedication will be a huge asset as we work together to support farmers and rural communities across the region.

Charlie Mitsdarfer (Crittenden Township)

Charlie Mitsdarfer is a farmer from Tolono, Illinois. He earned a bachelor's degree in Geology and Earth Science and a master's degree in Crop Sciences from the University of Illinois. His farming operation, run with his father and brother, includes corn, soybeans, alfalfa, wheat, and a small herd of cattle. He and his wife, Amanda, also grow a modest amount of produce and specialty crops.

Charlie also serves as an agriculture instructor at Parkland College, where he shares his knowledge and passion for the industry with students. He is actively involved in his community, serving as a sacristan at his church, and enjoys outdoor activities such as fishing and disc golf, as well as supporting his three sons in their sports. He is particularly concerned with overregulation and government influence in agriculture and hopes to see Farm Bureau take strong stands to protect valuable farmland.



Welcome new CCFB Board Members

Dirk Rice (Urbana Township)

Dirk is a farmer from Philo, Illinois. He earned a bachelor's degree in agricultural economics from the University of Illinois and has been involved in production agriculture since that time. His operation primarily consists of corn and soybeans, along with a small acreage of wheat.

Dirk currently farms with his son, who is involved in the day-to-day operations. He is committed to supporting the next generation of farmers and is focused on addressing the challenges young producers face when starting their own operations. He also places importance on maintaining strong relationships with state leaders and advocates for continued investment in critical infrastructure, including roads, waterways, and rail systems.

Chris Sommer (East Bend Township)

Chris Sommer is a farmer from Foolsland, Illinois. He earned a degree in Crop Science with an emphasis in Agribusiness from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He farms alongside his father in a father-and-son operation, focusing on crop production.

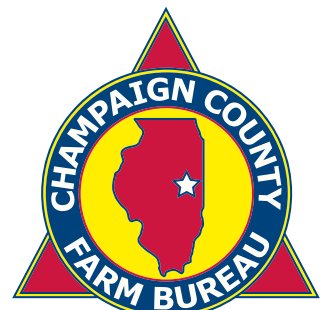
Chris is active in his community and enjoys sports and other outdoor activities. He is particularly concerned about pricing in agriculture, including the cost of grain, equipment, and inputs, and supports efforts to create a sustainable and profitable environment for producers.

Nate Bidner (Hensley Township)

Nate Bidner is a farmer from Hensley Township, Illinois. He was

including input costs, markets, regulation, and public perception. He also values the strong sense of community within agriculture and appreciates the outreach and leadership provided by the Champaign County Farm Bureau. As a board member, Nate is committed to representing the interests of local farmers and serving as a direct link between members and the work of the Farm Bureau at the local and state levels. He looks forward to connecting with fellow members and supporting agriculture across the county.

A big thank-you to Charlie, Dirk, Chris and Nate for stepping up to serve on our board. We're grateful for their time, energy, and commitment to agriculture, and we're proud to have them helping guide the future of our Farm Bureau.



raised on his family's farm and attended Mahomet-Seymour Schools before earning a degree in Agricultural Engineering from the University of Illinois in 2018. After graduation, Nate worked for five years as a Research Mechanical Engineer with the Department of Defense in Champaign while farming part time with his father. He returned to the farm full time in the fall of 2024.

Nate now farms in Hensley Township and understands firsthand the challenges facing today's producers,



WOMENS COMMITTEE

SPRING FLING

APRIL 13, 2026 | CCFB Auditorium

DRESS CODE: FLORAL AND FUN!

9:00 - 9:30 Meet & Fellowship
 10:00 Cheri Burcham - Looking on the Funny Side
 11:00 Kevin Schwartz, Soloist
 11:45 Catered Lunch

Cost \$10
RSVP BY MARCH 30TH
217-352-5235

March Report



Doug Downs, CCFB President

President, Doug Downs

Winter is almost behind us and by the time this comes to print, I'm sure everyone's focus will be on making sure all the details are in place to grow another whopper of a crop. Everyone's focus is on trying to outyield the financial storm we are all facing. Anyone priced any nitrogen or dry fertilizer lately? How about comparing the price of an oil change on a tractor to last year or 5 years ago? Never mind all the parts and supplies that go along with all these things. The cost of inputs are dramatic, now imagine them being taxed.... It's on our radar and that be our next battle. We will be focused on that if it comes around.

Thinking about all these things will make a person's head spin and naturally we go to raising as many bushels as we can put in the tank to beat it, and I'm no different. I'd like to think I've made the most of every opportunity that was given with all the value-added crops I grow, but sometimes those have hidden costs of their own that I (we) need to carefully watch. We're all doing the best we can with the hand that we've been dealt, and it's important to keep focus on that. Stay focused.

This past winter has been a real barn burner for me and my counterparts in leadership at the county level across the state. I'm going to spare all of you the drama I deal with on a "not daily" but very regular and nearly daily basis this past winter. I just want to let you all know that at a local level, your county farm bureaus have been very diligent in responding to events that are extraordinary. Events that should have been avoided need explanation and have caused many of us to lose focus on what's important in our own operations as well as our daily lives. Your county level individuals, which is where the strength and foundational principles of farm bureau reside, have really stepped up to the plate. Luckily, when it comes to the common senses in the countryside, everyone has everyone's else's back and once again, the grass roots' voices came together and showed up when needed. We are a powerful voice, and you are all part of it. I'm grateful to the members of your board who have also stepped up to help me, and others get through these extraordinary events.

As I write today, it's been the first day in months that's been fit to work outside. I was in an all-day meeting in Bloomington at IFB headquarters with a dozen other county presidents and tomorrow look forward to rubbing elbows with all the politicians we need to keep close at the annual governmental affairs conference. Keep on keeping on everyone.

Doug Downs
CCFB President

Prime Timers Meeting

March 12, 2026 • 9:30 am

CCFB Auditorium

Speaker: Jennifer Shike,

Illinois Pork Producers writer

Entertainment: Mike & Eric Gordon

Please RSVP by March 9

\$8 per person/Fried Chicken Buffet

No Walk-Ins

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

March 9 – General Meeting

9:30 a.m. CCFB Auditorium

Speaker – Matt Riggs, Agrivoltics.

Lunch - El Toro on Springfield.

Mark your calendars – April 13 – CCFB's Women's Committee Spring Fling

CCFB Calendar of Events March 2026

March 9	Women's Committee	9:30 am
March 9	Women Rooted in Ag	5:30 pm
March 12	Prime Timers	10 am
March 12	Young Leaders	
March 19	Full Board	6:30 pm
March 24	Governmental Affairs	7:30 am

FARM SMARTS: A FRESH LOOK AT FARM FUNDAMENTALS

Diseases, Deficiencies, & Dirty Fields

Agronomy 101—best practices for soil health and knowing which questions to ask your agronomist before the season starts.

SPEAKER: Jill Henninger, Sunrise FS

MARCH 10TH • 6:30 PM

CCFB Auditorium • Supper Provided



FARM SMARTS: A FRESH LOOK AT FARM FUNDAMENTALS

"We're the Government, and We're Here to Help" (Really!)

Decoding the alphabet soup of agencies—SWCD, NRCS, FSA, Rural Development, USFWS, and more. Learn who's who, what they do, and how they can actually help farmers

FORMAT: Quick, TED-style talks from agency representatives, followed by a lively panel discussion.

MARCH 5TH • 6:30 PM

CCFB Auditorium • Supper Provided



Announcing Champaign County Farm Bureau's Trips and Tours

Mark Your Calendars • 2026 Trips

April 8, 2026 - Kenny & Dolly in Harmony – White Pines Theatre – Mt. Morris, IL

Matinees Dave Karl & Wendy T are together once again at the Rock to recreate the incredible songs and the onstage playfulness of Kenny Rogers & Dolly Parton's "Real Love" tour. This tribute act has it all, the songs, the mannerisms, the vocals, the professionalism and of course, the charm, the magic and the on-stage playfulness of Kenny and Dolly!

Price Per Person: \$150.00 Deadline to Register or Cancel: March 13, 2026

May 7, 2026 - Beef House on Broadway – The Beef House – Covington, IN

A concert celebrating 30 seasons! A show you don't want to miss!

Price Per Person: \$150.00 Deadline to Register or Cancel: April 17, 2026

June 4-5, 2026 - Gaither Vocal Band – Shipshewana, IN **OVERNIGHT TRIP**

Since the early 1990s, the Gaither Vocal Band has served as a standard-bearer in the world of gospel music. Founded by legendary gospel songwriter and producer, Bill Gaither, this Grammy-winning vocal group has performed in the world's most prestigious venues, including the Sydney Opera House, The Kennedy Center, and Carnegie Hall. Today, the Gaither Vocal Band roster is comprised of five power-packed voices, including Bill Gaither, Wes Hampton, Adam Crabb, Todd Suttles and Reggie Smith. Individually, these men are gifted artists and men of authentic faith. Together, they are the known around the world for their stunning vocals, innovative harmonies and life-altering message... a message of grace, hope and redemption.

Enjoy a few hours of shopping on June 5th before heading back home!

Price Per Person: \$325 Deadline to Register or Cancel: May 1, 2026

July 20, 2026 – A Tribute to the Best of the Best – Starved Rock Lodge, Oglesby, IL

Travel through the decades as Joe Nuccio honors some of the most iconic singers from the 30s to the 70s. Sit back and enjoy the songs of crooners and

showmen like Louis Armstrong, Tony Bennett, Perry Como, Bobby Darin, Jimmy Durante, Nat King Cole, Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, Cab Calloway, and more. Then get your toes tapping rock and soul singers like Fats Domino, Jerry Lee Lewis, Ray Charles, Elvis, Roy Orbison, Tom Jones, Neil Diamond, and others. It's sure to be an afternoon filled with your favorite songs by the most popular artists of all time..

Price Per Person: \$150 Deadline to Register or Cancel: July 3, 2026

August 19, 2026 – The Buddy Holly Story – Drury Lane Theatre – Oakbrook Terrace, IL

Buddy – The Buddy Holly Story chronicles the life and music of rock and roll pioneer Buddy Holly from his early start in Texas to his meteoric rise to fame and untimely death at the age of 22. Experience the original sound that changed rock and roll music as we know it..

Price Per Person: \$150.00 Deadline to Register or Cancel: July 24, 2026

September 23, 2026 – Ring of Fire – Beef & Boards Theatre – Indianapolis, IN

Set to the legendary songs of Johnny Cash, Ring of Fire takes audiences on a heartfelt journey through the Man in Black's iconic career. From the early days of country and gospel to chart-topping hits that defined an era, this spirited musical revue features favorites like "I Walk the Line," "Folsom Prison Blues," and, of course, "Ring of Fire." Full of heart, humor, and the raw honesty that made Cash a legend, the show paints a rich portrait of love, struggle, and the uniquely American sound that still resonates today.

Price Per Person: \$150.00 Deadline to Register or Cancel: September 4, 2026

November 20, 2026 – Holiday Cruise – Celebration Belle – Moline, IL

Enjoy a tradition holiday meal and listen to your favorite holiday tunes! Get ready for some holiday cheer with a Christmas Show presented by Aaron & Jade from Bloom. Join them for this fabulous combination of Christmas Spirit, music, and dance!

Price Per Person: \$150.00 Deadline to Register or Cancel: October 30, 2026

REGISTER TODAY!

LEARN MORE ABOUT SAFETY, CDL, & TRUCKING REGULATIONS
Contact your local County Farm Bureau to register.

FEBRUARY	MARCH
MCHENRY.....2/19 @ 10AM	FORD-IROUOIS.....3/3 @ 6PM
STEPHENSON.....2/20 @ 8AM	MERCER.....3/4 @ 10AM
UNION.....2/24 @ 6PM	PIKE-SCOTT.....3/11 @ 10AM
MONROE.....2/24 @ 10AM	LAWRENCE.....3/12 @ 9AM
EDGAR.....2/25 @ 12PM	
TAEWELL.....2/24 @ 6PM	

Young Leader Conference in Peoria – 2026



ILLINOIS HAS OVER **71,000 FARMS**

ILLINOIS IS **#2** IN CORN PRODUCTION IN THE U.S.

75% OF ILLINOIS LAND IS FARMLAND

AG IS ILLINOIS' **#1** INDUSTRY

NATIONAL AG DAY MARCH 24

Logos include: ESC, BeckTech, Shop by Knight, Kettle Korn Stop, Lincoln Street Lounge, The Apple Dumplin, A.G. Electric, Sidney Dairy Barn, Champaign County Farm Bureau, Local Member Benefits, Sleepy Creek Vineyards, Charlie's Grub & Suds, Red Wing Shoes, Buford's Pub, Gordon Farms Seed Company, Aster Indigo Candle Co., Beyond Bonded Permanent Jewelry, Contractors Supply, Don's Auto Center, Inc., Western Ship Pard's, Captain Hook Roll Off Boxes, Culver's, Country Squire Cleaners, Sherwin Williams, and The Rural Rose.

planting a legacy



CCFBFOUNDATION.COM | CCFBFOUNDATION | CCFB_FOUNDATION

AG in the Classroom 2025-2026

Providing hands-on learning opportunities that represent our industry in a truthful and modern way.

www.ccfbfoundation.com/aitc

Basketball

LET'S GO ILLINI!



It's basketball madness as students learn how this sport is made possible by agriculture. Younger students in Bottenfield and Stratton made a charm bag necklace of the commodities. Sixth grade in Fisher played a commodities card game.



LET'S GO AGRICULTURE!



Let-Us Grow Together

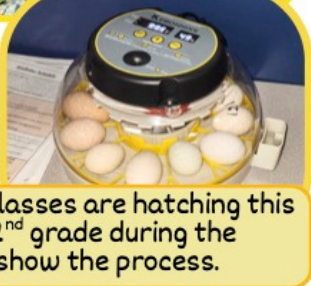
Brandon Rutherford, Multilingual Learner Interventionist, at Stratton checked out the garden tower to supplement life cycle science. It is rotating in first grade classes with lettuce and herbs. After spring break, they are replanting with flowers to send home with students for the summer.

Eggventure Time



Teachers stop by the office for training on the incubator and brooding chickens. The next round will start at the end of March.

Four Unity West 4th grade classes are hatching this year. They brought in 2nd grade during the incubation period to show the process.



Upcoming

March 2-6
Read Across America

Tuesday, March 24
Incubator Training
4-5:15 pm



Keep in Touch



QR Code to ccfbfoundation.com/aitc



sarah@ccfarmbureau.com
julie@ccfarmbureau.com



Champaign County Ag in the Classroom

GOLF CART RAFFLE



GRAND PRIZE:
NEW STREET LEGAL
GOLF CART

Support Scholarships & Ag in the Classroom!

\$100 /TICKET
FOUR CHANCES TO WIN!

Additional Prizes:
Blackstone Grill Package, Ooni Pizza Oven & Cash!
Drawing Time/Location: Tuesday, September 8, 2026 at Flight Night for Agriculture at Riggs Beer Company
**Do not need to be present to win.*



DO YOU HAVE YOUR LUCKY TICKET YET?
Tickets sell out fast. Buy yours TODAY!

Click the QR Code to Purchase Online
or visit our website:
www.ccfbfoundation.com/raffle



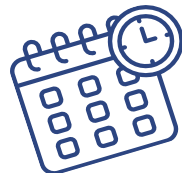
Champaign County Farm Bureau Foundation

FUEL Grants

The FUEL Grant helps students pursuing hands-on, technical ag careers—like precision ag tech, diesel power, ag operations management, vet tech, landscape design and more. Whether it's tuition, books, tools, or equipment, this grant is built to remove roadblocks and help students move forward!

Application Deadline: April 15th

Apply today at
CCFBFOUNDATION.COM/FUEL



SAVE THE DATE

2026 Annual Gala
Thursday - June 11th
Pear Tree Estate



Golf FORE Ag
Thursday - August 6th
UI Orange & Blue Golf Course

Flight Night
Tuesday - September 8th
Riggs Beer Company





Nathan Hubbard
COUNTRY Financial
Agency Manager



Bret Kroencke
217-359-9391



Dan Punkay
217-328-0023



Kolby Jackson
217-586-5030



Austin Beaty
217-352-2652



Chris Greenwold
217-355-8675



Jordan McDaniel
217-352-9817



Robert Lalumendier
217-352-3341



Barry Karuzis
217-352-4555



Preston Engel
217-974-7949



Tanna Suits
217-892-0200



Andrew Deedrich
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



7 Tips for Farm Safety

by Eric Vanasdale, Supervisor, Loss Control

Farming is one of the most important and dangerous jobs in the United States. Yet here you are – working sun-up to sundown to help put food on our tables.

While you dedicate your life to others, we're here to help protect you from the unexpected with the right farm insurance coverage.

Try our seven farm safety tips for farmers and their employees:

1. Maintain your farm equipment.

Most farm accidents and deaths involve outdated machinery. That's because older machinery might lack safety features, or it's not maintained correctly. Make sure you update farm equipment according to the manufacturer's advice to help prevent accidents.

If you have sold or purchased farm equipment, talk with your COUNTRY Financial Insurance Agent about updating your farm insurance policy.

2. Understand how to safely handle chemicals.

Keep chemicals in their original containers. Train all farm employees on how to best handle the chemicals and what to do in an emergency.

Are you properly covered if an employee is injured while working? Talk to your COUNTRY Financial Insurance Agent about farm liability coverage options.

3. Be alert on the road.

Most accidents occur when drivers try to pass a

slow-moving farm vehicle, so it is important to practice extra caution on the road during planting and harvest times. You can also use flashing lights to draw attention to the tractor's slow speed.

4. Have a plan for grain bin safety.

Train workers on grain storage hazards. Follow safe bin entry practices like "Lock Out Tag Out" and use a lifeline system. Have an emergency action plan and train everyone on your farm to follow it.

5. Tell your family and employees where and when you're working.

Be sure to also carry a cell phone or walkie-talkie in case of emergencies or accidents.

6. Get plenty of rest and take frequent breaks.

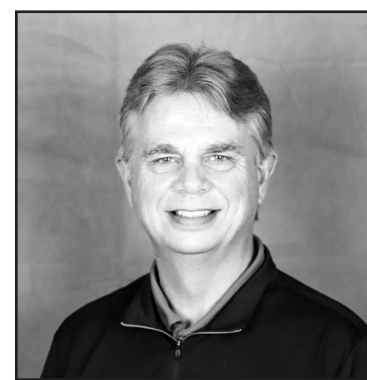
Have healthy snacks and fluids on hand to keep your energy levels up. Do not push yourself past healthy limits. Accidents are more likely once fatigue sets in.

7. Know how your medications affect you.

Some machinery and medications (both prescription and over the counter) do not mix. Consult your doctor to see if your medicine may harm your ability to safely operate your equipment.

Prioritizing farm safety will not only protect you and your workers, but your business as well.

SUNRISE



**JIM MEINHART,
GENERAL MANAGER**

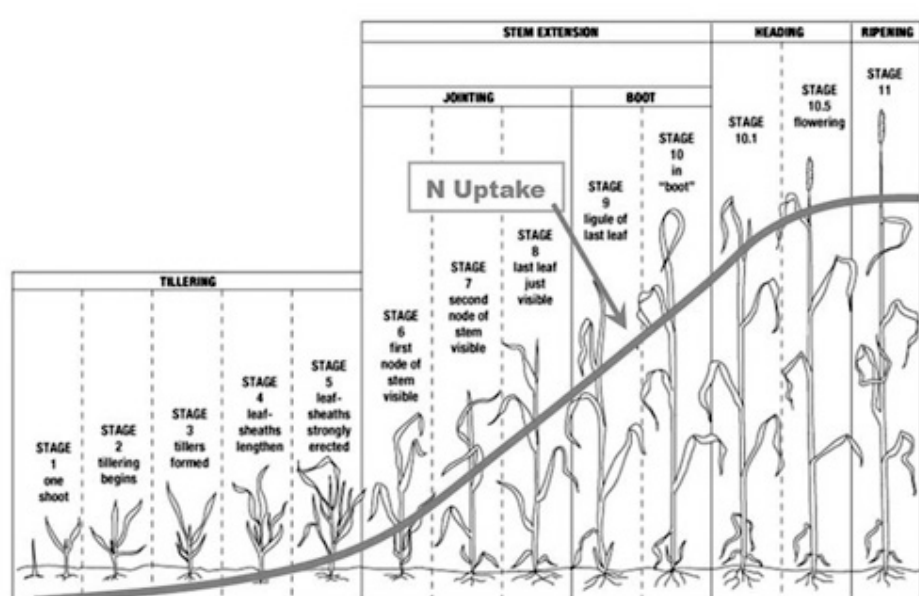
From The Field

Late February and early March are generally times when growers should begin evaluating wheat in East Central Illinois. Over the past several years, growers have generally achieved excellent wheat yields. When reflecting on the type of growing environments we've had, it appears we owe a lot of credit to environmental conditions during the fall, winter, and springtime. However, growers that managed nitrogen, stand establishment, and disease particularly had excellent yields. I will cover key management strategies for this month's newsletter to finish out this year's wheat crop.

Once we enter late winter or early spring, winter wheat begins waking up or breaking winter dormancy. Spring green-up will occur. Wheat is generally at growth stages Feekes 4-5 depending on last year's fall growth. Wheat will generally begin tillering during the fall months before winter dormancy, but tillering may not be complete until spring. This time period of "Green Up" is an excellent time to evaluate stand establishment from winter kill or plants that may have been frost heaved during freeze and thaw cycles. Apply the remaining balance of crop nutrients and scout for potential pests, including wheat pathogens, insects, and weeds.

Growers in East Central IL have become accustomed to applying two nitrogen applications to their crop, once in the fall around the time of seeding and then in late winter/early spring. This system has worked very well for most growers. However, I would like to remind growers that nitrogen applications for wheat crops benefit from the same care and considerations as we do for corn crops and keep the 4Rs in mind when making applications. 4Rs for wheat nitrogen applications will include the following below:

1. Avoid applications on frozen soils.
2. Utilize creditable nitrogen stabilizers.
3. Avoid applications when heavy rainfall events are forecasted, especially using dry nitrogen sources.
4. Right Time, Right Rate, Right Source, Right Place.



Much like corn at V5, wheat determines the head size of potential spikelets and florets at Feekes 6 or the jointing growth stage. It is important to have most, if not all, of the applied crop nutrients by this growth stage. Sulfur is another crop nutrient that may be very beneficial to apply with nitrogen applications. We continue to see sulfur continuing to be deficient in many fields that may not have had any applications and conditions where soils did not mineralize sulfur from organic matter due to adverse environmental conditions. Typically, we see a total nitrogen application of 90-150 lbs/A of nitrogen and a sulfur application of 100 lbs/A.

If growers are applying crop nutrients during this time period of "Green UP" it is important to ensure application equipment will handle application requirements. Issues with nutrient applications tend to be very costly at this growth stage and will generally continue to be an issue through harvest with variable yields.

1. Work with the limitations of the application equipment.
 - a. Swath control for both liquid and dry applications.
 - b. Spread patterns for dry applications.
 - c. Spray tips for liquid application.
 - d. Excessive windy conditions may interfere with the application.
 - e. Challenging field conditions may reduce plant stands due to equipment tire configuration.
2. If the liquid application of nitrogen and sulfur is considered, proper spray tips must be considered to minimize foliar burn risk. Streamer-type nozzles often deliver the best results. However, if herbicides are tank-mixed with this application, these may not provide the best results for weed control. Also, nitrogen rates should be reduced by 20-30 lbs/A to reduce foliar injury potential further.
3. Split spring application may provide the best results at Feekes 3 and then again at Feekes 5 with nitrogen stabilizers.



When scouting wheat fields, be sure to pay attention to potential wheat pests that might include winter annual weeds, wheat pathogens, and even possibly insect pests such as leaf hoppers. Many of the herbicides labeled for use within wheat have cutoff application timings around the Feekes 6 or jointing to avoid potentially interfering with wheat head size.

Be on the lookout for early-season foliar disease, including powdery mildew and leaf blotch. Depending on the severity of the disease, wheat may benefit from an early-season fungicide application with a post-applied herbicide. Field scouting is also beneficial around the Feekes 8 or at the Flag Leaf stage to determine if a foliar fungicide application is needed. At Feekes 8, most fungicide applications occur. Recent data has suggested that there is as much as a 12 bu/A advantage to using foliar fungicides in wheat.

If readers of this newsletter have questions or concerns about management strategies for 2026, Sunrise 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, CPag, CCA-4RNMS
Agronomist, Sunrise FS
217-318-9100
ebeckett@sunrisefs.com*



It's National Ag Month

Hats Off to the Many Roles of Family Farmers

Our son has 39 hats hanging in his bedroom – bill facing down and caps evenly spaced in a single row on hooks positioned within inches of the ceiling.

Wait. Make that 42. Dad just returned from two farm shows.

Farmers own and wear many hats, a culture traced back to at least his great-grandpa's era in farming. Farmers love to wear hats. Ag retailers love to give them away as walking advertisements. And nowadays, many schools allow hats during the academic day, making them both a style statement and a part of today's youth identity.

Metaphorically, farmers wear many hats throughout the day, a juggling act worth recognizing in this season that honors National Ag Day on March 24, 2026. Being a full-time farmer means embracing a wide range of part-time roles: grower, mechanic, heavy equipment operator, agronomist, meteorologist and veterinarian among them.

You could add scientist to the list: The liquid fertilizer jar tests in our shop fridge prove this one. Logistics manager is another: Necessary to direct trucks hauling grain 11 months of the year. Firefighter, too: This last dry and abnormally hot harvest required that. Add in accountant: We keep our own books. Then, our grain requires a marketer, our freezer beef a sales lead; our employees, a human resources manager; and the next generation, a mentor and teacher.

An impressive 96% of Illinois farms are owned by families, and on those farms family operators and their employees must assume many roles with enough skill to be mechanics at 8 a.m., marketers after the late-morning USDA report, agronomists before the kids get off the bus and accountants by dusk. We personally recognize the value of partnering with outside professionals who improve our performance in those fields as we conduct this orchestra of crops, people, tools and nature.

Our son owns trucker-style farm hats for nice events, school and playing golf. He re-



serves a grungy one for farm work and another for outdoor FFA events. He also displays one that belonged to his great-grandpa, a nod to Gramps and his former hat collection. I still can picture those farm caps, more than 100 that fully covered Gramps' farmhouse office walls to the point Granny didn't realize termites had destroyed the studs behind them.

Outside of termite exterminator, farmers wear many hats in every sense of the phrase.

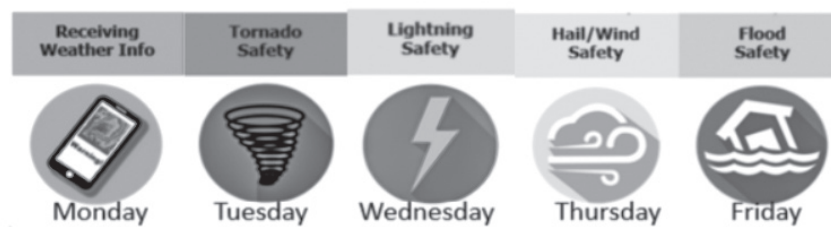
I own hundreds of pages of local recipes in five cookbooks. Mom has a dozen. Grandma's stash fills a cabinet, and my aunt collects them. The recipes are worth repeating, the novelty worth preserving and the pages a testament to the women who – in their quiet heroism – fed a community. And still do.

About the author: Joanie Stiers farms with her parents and brother in Knox County, where they grow corn, soybeans and hay, raise beef cattle and operate side businesses related to the family operation.

2026 Severe Weather Preparedness Week

Monday March 2nd to Friday March 6th, 2026

Highlights of Severe Weather Preparedness Week include:



or the lowest level of the building. In a basement, go under the stairs, under a heavy piece of furniture or a work bench. Stay there until the danger has passed.

- If in a mobile home, get out and seek shelter elsewhere, well before the storm arrives. A mobile home can overturn very easily even if precautions have been taken to tie down the unit. If there is not a substantial shelter nearby, go to a low-lying area and shield your head with your hands.
- If there is no basement, go to an interior hallway or a small interior room without windows, such as a bathroom or closet. Stay away from outside windows and walls as they may be penetrated by high speed, wind-borne debris.
- Get under a piece of sturdy furniture, such as a workbench or heavy table, and hold onto it. If sturdy furniture is not available, make yourself the smallest target possible. Squat low to the ground. Put your head down and cover your head and neck with your hands.
- Use pillows, mattresses or cushions to protect your head and neck.

Outdoors:

- If possible, get inside a substantial building on the lowest floor, away from windows and doors.
- If an indoor shelter is not available or there is no time to get indoors, then, as

a last resort, lie in a ditch or culvert. Use your arms to protect your head and neck. Beware of the potential for flash flooding.

In a Vehicle:

- Do NOT park under a bridge or overpass! The embankment under an overpass is higher than the surrounding terrain, and the wind speed increases with height. Additionally, the overpass design may create a wind-tunnel effect under the span, further increasing the wind speed. Many overpasses are completely exposed underneath, and most lack hanging girders or a crawl-space-like area to provide sufficient protection from debris, which can travel at high speeds even in weak tornadoes. People stopping underneath overpasses block the flow of traffic, putting others in danger.
- Immediately exit the vehicle in a safe manner and take shelter in a nearby building.
- Never try to outrun a tornado in a vehicle. Heavy rain, hail and traffic may impede your movement. Tornadoes can change directions quickly and can easily lift up a vehicle and toss it through the air.
- As a last resort, if there isn't time to get indoors or if there is no secure shelter nearby, lie flat in a ditch, culvert or low-lying area away from vehicles.



Tornado Facts & Safety

Tornadoes Fast Facts

- Another big tornado year for Illinois with 126 tornadoes in 2025. That keeps Illinois ranked 3rd in the United States for the most tornadoes per square mile, behind Mississippi and Alabama.
- Dec 28ths 10 tornadoes was third most for a December day in Illinois dating back to 1950. 29 occurred on Dec 1, 2018 and 19 occurred in Dec 18, 1957.
- The six months with the most tornadoes the past ten years in rank order include: May, July, April, June, March, and August. December is a close #7 and February #8. Fifty percent (50%) of Illinois tornadoes occur between the hours of 3 p.m. and 7 p.m. However, tornadoes have occurred every month of the year at all hours of the day.
- Nearly 20 percent of all tornadoes in Illinois occur after dark, which included one of our EF-3 tornadoes last year, near Robinson on March 31st.
- Based on a 30-yr rolling average, 62 tornadoes occur each year in Illinois

(1995-2024)

- 2025's 126 tornadoes came in second place for most tornadoes in Illinois in a calendar year, behind last years record setting tornado year of 142.
- The 2025 tornadoes resulted in no fatalities and 11 injuries. The strongest tornado was a violent category EF4 tornado with 190 mph peak winds on May 16th in Williamson County just south of Marion. There were 7 injuries and no fatalities. The is the first EF-4+ tornado in Illinois since April 9, 2015, that traveled from just north of Rochelle to Fairdale.
- In 2025, 1 tornado was rated violent (EF-4) and a total of 16 tornadoes were rated EF2 (15) or EF3 (1) (Strong). A total of 94 tornadoes were rated EF0 or EF1 (weak). 17 tornadoes were given an EF-Unknown rating because they were either very brief tornadoes OR they traveled across open areas where there were no crops, trees or buildings in their path.
 - The day with the most tornadoes in the state of Illinois in 2025 was April 20. A total of 22 tornadoes were reported across Illinois. 1 EF-U, 9 EF-0 and 12 EF-1. There were no injuries or fatalities that day.
- In Illinois since 1950:
 - 78 percent of tornadoes have been weak with wind estimated less than 110 mph,
 - 21 percent of tornadoes have been strong with wind estimated between 110-167 mph,
 - 1 percent of tornadoes have been violent with wind estimated greater than 167 mph.

SAFETY During a Tornado Watch vs. Warning:

- A WATCH means that conditions are favorable for severe weather to occur, usually in a 6-10 hour period. "WATCH" for more information.
- A WARNING means that severe weather is occurring or about to occur soon for your area (next 30-60 minutes). We are "WARNING" you to stop what you are doing and seek safe shelter. Take the following actions when a Tornado Warning has been issued by the National Weather Service, when sirens have been activated or when a tornado has been sighted near your area:
 - Monitor a weather radio, radio, TV, weather app, or social media for the latest information.
 - Go immediately to your predetermined shelter, such as a storm cellar, basement

CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FARM BUREAU NEWS

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CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FARM BUREAU

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8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

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Contact us at (217) 352-5235
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CCFB In Action



FOOD BANK February

BECAUSE OF YOU...
CCFB DONATED 618 POUNDS OF FOOD THIS MONTH,
PROVIDING 475 MEALS FOR FAMILIES IN NEED.

THAT INCLUDES:

- 🌽 177 LBS OF FRESH PRODUCE
- 📦 441 LBS OF DRY GOODS



Eastern Illinois
FOODBANK



Food Bank February Shopping Challenge with Chapin Rose & Brandun Schweizer / Doug Downs & Casey Hettinger / El Food Bank / WCIA Channel 3 Jacob Dickey. Participants raced to fill their carts with high-impact food donations!

Women Rooted in Ag hosted a Galentine's Day event, and it was a huge success! Join in the fun on March 9 - Jupiters at the Crossing @ 5:30 pm for a Family Fun Night.



Farm Smarts with Greg Johnson and Doug Yoder: The first 3 Farm Smarts sessions were great! Join us Mar. 5th and 10th for the last 2 sessions!



SWCD award: The CCFB was honored to receive the Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation Districts "Team Player of the Year" Award, recognizing the CCFB's support for the CC SWCD's mission. Pictured is CCFB Manager Bailey Conrady and CC SWCD President Steve Stierwalt.



CCFB's Young Leaders hosted guest speaker Brad Zwilling with FBFM. Brad shared valuable insights and perspective.

WOMEN'S COMMITTEE RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Submitted by Kay Windler Fink

Soft Sugar Cookie Ingredients

- ¾ c butter or margarine
- 1 c butter flavored crisco
- 1 c white sugar
- 1 c powdered sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 t cream of tarter
- 1 t salt
- 1 t soda
- 1 t vanilla (Watkins)
- 4 c flour

Preparation

Cream shortening & sugars. Add eggs and add dry ingredients. Chill dough overnight.

Roll into balls. Either roll balls in sugar and press with potato masher (cubes on top) to

1/2 inch thick OR press with a glass dipped in colored sugar for the season to 1/2 inch thick.

(I use orange and blue for Illini or orange for fall or red and green at the holidays)

Bake 350 10-11 minutes until light brown on bottom. Freeze immediately up to 3 months and take out as needed

Visit myifb.org to see details.



ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU MEMBERS

Save
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