

Bulletin

Promote the understanding of agriculture in our community to improve the profitability of farmers and enrich the quality of life in Knox County.



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NUMBER 4



KCFB Member Joanie Stiers and KCFB Young Farmer Chair Brandon Hall and other IFB members met with U.S. Representative Eric Sorenson in Washington DC. during IFB Leaders to D.C.

Farm Bureau Members Advocate, Make Connections During Leaders to D.C.

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

Among them, Joanie Stiers, Williamsfield and Brandon Hall, Victoria representing Knox Farm Bureau, attended IFB's Leaders to Washington trip March 25-26 in Washington, D.C. During the trip, they spoke with U.S. Rep. Eric Sorenson to share first-hand accounts of how federal policies affect Illinois agriculture and businesses.

Other attending members were Berk Boehne, Dekalb County; Chris McKee, McHenry County; Jenny Bierman, Jasper County; John Yeley, Clark County; Steve Nightingale and Heather Poppy, Henry County; Bill Heyen and Molly Rosentreter, Macoupin County; Vikkie Becker, Cass and

Morgan Counties; Ethan Brown, Montgomery County; Rick Edwards, Adams County; Katie King, Sangamon County; Ian Kessler, Madison County; and Kyle Diekhoff, Tazewell County.

Congressional meetings are an integral piece of the Leaders to Washington trip. During a jam-packed two days, the 16 IFB members met with lawmakers and/or staff including: U.S. Sens Dick Durbin, D-Springfield, and Tammy Duckworth, D-Hoffman Estates; and U.S. Reps Darin LaHood, R-Dunlap; Eric Sorensen, D-Moline; Mike Bost, R-Murphysboro; Lauren Underwood, D-Naperville; Mary Miller, R-Oakland; and Brad Schneider, D-Deerfield.

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

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

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

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

The Knox County Farm Bureau would like to welcome the following to our organization

Dylan Day

KCFB Springfield Commodity Group Trip

The Knox County Farm Bureau hosted the Members who also represented the Knox First Annual Knox County Commodity Group County Cattlemen's Association and Knox Trip to Springfield to visit our Legislators versus them always coming to us. We spent time talking about Illinois Farm Bureau priorities but also

All five of our legislators took time out of thanking our Legislators for always being so their day to meet with our group of Farm Bureau good about coming to all our local events!



Above, left to right: Phil Goedeke – Farm Bureau Vice President, Drew DeSutter – Farm Bureau President, Kyle Underwood – Farm Bureau Board Member and Government & Policy Task Force Chair, Blake Hennenfent - Cattlemen's Vice President, Brandon Hall - Young Farmer Chair and Cattlemen's Board Member, Michael Goedeke - Cattlemen's President.



Members are always welcome at Knox County Farm Bureau's Board of Director meetings. They are held the third Thursday of each month. Please call for times.



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Thank You
KNOX COUNTY FARM BUREAU



**Repair, maintenance
keep the farm running**

Dad lifts the side panel of the combine to expose the gears, bearings, pulleys, chains and belts. And every single time, I'm in awe of its complexity and how anyone can understand how to engineer the machine or repair and maintain it. I'm thankful for the genius minds who designed a combine that "combined" the functions previously accomplished by multiple pieces of equipment, horses and open-station tractors. I'm especially grateful to the mechanically inclined brains on our farm who can fix and maintain it.

Socially accepted advice tells us to spend time on what's important, and our farm commits a significant amount of time on repair and maintenance. In

fact, my son has an FFA recordbook project with 1,000 hours focused on the subject area.

Repairs generally reduce costs compared to replacement. Maintenance intends to prevent repairs and costly "machine down" situations in the busy seasons. That strategy works most of the time to provide risk mitigation, a fancy way of saying we want to minimize the risk of breakdowns, accidents, delayed field operations, extra man hours and mental stress.

Equipment cycles through the shop about 60 days before its intended use in the field. This winter, our shop crew disassembled and re-placed wear parts on every row unit on the planters, changed oils and filters in the tractors that pull them, and checked over the sprayers by early March. On each item, they look for small problems that could morph into big ones. That shop time soon will extend to each combine. Each head attachment. The grain carts. The tractors again. Semi trucks and grain trailers. By winter,

the cycle resets.
In all, our farm keeps repair and maintenance records for about 100 items, from lots of little equipment like leaf blowers and chainsaws to 500-horsepower tractors – anything that has an engine, tires, grease points or wearable parts. We DIY as much as possible and call in a technician when the repair exceeds our abilities.

My dad and experienced employees teach the next generation shop skills as their interests and time allow. My son starts a typical weekday leaving home at 6:45 a.m. to train at a college welding class to improve his repair skills. Then, he goes to high school and afterward focuses on repair and maintenance in the farm shop when we're not in the field. He plans to be among the next mechanically minded who keep the farm running.

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

Getting To Know Your Farm Bureau Policy

**5. AGRICULTURAL AND
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION
We support:**

- 1. Continuation of agricultural education programs with emphasis placed on the recruitment and training of qualified agricultural instructors.
- 2. Efforts by county Farm Bureaus working closely with their local school districts to establish and ensure the maintenance, improvement and continuation of agricultural education programs and FFA. High school agricultural education and the FFA are vital programs for development of the talent and leadership needed in farming and agricultural service industries.
- 3. Efforts to expand agricultural and vocational programs including post high school training and retraining for skilled agricultural and vocational workers.
- 4. Retention of primary administrative responsibility for vocational pro-

- grams at the state and local levels.
- 5. Efforts by county Farm Bureaus to work with their school districts to implement an updated agricultural education curriculum to meet the needs of today's agriculture. The curriculum should include technology, agricultural science, vocational courses or other classes that would meet the criteria needed to receive credit for a college prep course.
- 6. The inclusion of agricultural projects in school science fairs.
- 7. Maintaining the Agricultural Education funding within the Illinois State Budget line item no less than the funding level of \$7,050,000 and within the Illinois Department of Agriculture budget of \$550,000.
- 8. The recognition of agricultural education as a Teaching Shortage Area by the Illinois State Board of Education and/or Illinois General Assembly.
- 9. Encouraging colleges and univer-

- sities to offer an internship program as part of their curriculum for students studying to become vo-ag instructors. The purpose of the internship would be to gain real world experience by providing hands-on experience working on a farm, at an agriculture business or for agriculture related organizations. To provide a variety of opportunities the internship should not be limited to any one type of farm operation.
- 10. The Illinois Committee for Ag Education (ICAE) and the Illinois Leadership Council for Ag Education (ILCAE) efforts to promote and improve Agricultural Education within the state.
- 11. The development of a certified Ag Teacher education program within the Chicago-metropolitan area.
- We oppose any additional licensure requirements or certifications that increase agriculture education teacher shortages or negatively affect program retention.**





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March KCFB Board Highlights

The meeting of the Board of Directors of the Knox County Farm Bureau was held on March 20.

Education & Outreach – Michelle Erickson
Ag Day for Kids- April 11, volunteers are always welcome! Will begin working with Marketing for t-shirt designs for the 4-H Fair Livestock exhibitors.

Farm Business – Brian Nelson
2022 Plat Books are \$30 for members and \$50 for wall maps for members. A 2026 Plat Book will be completed in 2025 and be for sale on December 1, 2025. Marketing Club continues to meet at the Agri Center at 12:30 every other Wednesday.

Government and Policy – Kyle Underwood
Knox County Commodity Group trip to Springfield took place on March 5. 7 members attended, all representing Farm Bureau. Drew represented the Knox County Corn Growers and Michael Goedeke, Brandon Hall, and Blake Hennenfent representing Knox County Cattlemen's. Legislative Luncheon will be held March 31 at Noon at Cherry Street. May be connecting with a new Adopted Legislator soon.

Member Relations – Joel McCormick
The 2025 Quota Program is threefold: Engagement- submit programs in all 8 CAE Categories; Retention- attain a certain percentage of membership quota – Knox County needs 771 members by July 31, 2025; Growth- Achieve a 3+ gain of MM/PM Members – Knox County needs 842 members. Will begin working with Marketing for t-shirt designs for the 4-H Fair Livestock exhibitors. Should receive order form for pork spice soon.

Young Farmers – Brandon Hall
Young Farmers Trivia Night was February 28 at 6:30PM at Big Catz. 13 teams participated. The March Young Farmers meeting will either be held March 19 or March 31. IFB Young Leader Ag Industry Tour this summer is to Michigan. KCFB Young Farmers participated in the

Ag Day Dinner at the Galva Lions Club. Kinsey Hall completed the IFB ALOT Program.

PrimeTimers – Hailey Hennenfent
The next PrimeTimers meeting will be March 18 at Noon at the KAC for the Program of Work planning meeting. PrimeTimers is always looking for new members, 55+.

Foundation – Hailey Hennenfent
The KCFB Foundation met on February 25 and went over 14 scholarship applications. Scholarship winners will be announced soon. The annual National Ag Day mailing fundraiser should arrive at mailboxes on March 18. The Agriculture in the Community Grant will be available again in 2025 with applications open quarterly. The next quarter applications are due May 1.

KAC – Hailey Hennenfent
The new plaque for the Meritorious Service to Ag Award is in and will be hung soon. The Knox Agri Center Board met on February 25 for their quarterly meeting. The meeting room HVAC system was replaced. 2 older units remain out of 6. The Spring Clean Up Day for the Knox Agri Center is scheduled for March 24 with a rain date of March 27. All volunteers are welcome to come to help at 8AM ending with lunch!

OLD BUSINESS
Two vacancies remain on the KCFB Board of Directors in District 2 and 3.

The IFB Organizational Member Strategy released 6 pilot projects for counties to sign up for. The Board decided to sign up for the Ag Business Series and Ag Tours.
The Board received an update on the 4-H Facilities purchase. A rental amount for Extension was discussed.

NEW BUSINESS
The KCFB Board approved the yearly Program of Work's for the Education & Outreach, Farm Business, Government & Policy, and Member Relations Task Forces.

KCFB Board Attendance 2024-2025

	January	February	March
Beard, Jennifer	P	P	P
Bollivar, Jason	P	P	P
Courson, Dustin	P	A	A
DeSutter, Drew	P	P	P
Eagle, Tim	A	P	P
Emken, Kurt	P	A	A
Emmons, Rob	P	P	P
Engel, Lori	P	P	P
Erickson, Dan	-	P	P
Erickson, Michelle	A	P	P
Goedeke, Phil	P	P	P
Grady, Jeff	P	P	P
Hall, Brandon	P	P	P
Link, Aaron	P	A	P
Link, Cory	A	A	A
Main, Jason	-	A	P
McCormick, Joel	P	P	P
Nelson, Brian	P	P	P
O'Connor, Tom	P	-	-
Stevens, Monica	P	-	-
Underwood, Kyle	P	P	P

(P) Present
(A) Absent
(C) Cancelled
(V) Virtual

Meet Knox County Farm Bureau Board Member, Jennifer Beard!

Jennifer has been on the Board of Directors since 2018. Learn more about Jennifer here:

Tell us a little bit about you and your family. My husband, Jason, and I live in rural Dahinda with our youngest son, Hayden, and two Australian Shepherds, Stella Gold and Archie. Hayden is a junior at Western Illinois University studying Ag Business. Our oldest son, Easton, lives in Elmwood with his wife, Nicole, and 16-month-old daughter, Wrenley May. I am the president of Farmers State Bank, Elmwood.
Where are you from? I grew up in rural Dahinda.
What do you love most about agriculture? From the day I passed out in the cattle lot while helping my dad treat a calf for pink



Jennifer Beard

eye to the many times we took lunch out to my dad working cattle in the pasture when I was young, I knew I would be involved in agriculture my entire life. Although I don't work on the farm, my entire career has been involved in agriculture, and it's an honor to be actively involved in the industry that feeds the World.

Why did you join the Knox County Farm Bureau? I joined Farm Bureau when I became the Boone County Farm Bureau Manager in 1993. I have a unique perspective of working for Farm Bureau for 10 years and now being on the County Farm Bureau Board. Farm Bureau has been and continues to be an outstanding organization that creates leaders, advocates for farmers and the ag industry, and educates the non-farm public about our industry. Membership in the Farm Bureau helps sustain our industry for future generations.

Favorite part of being on the Board of Directors? There's a lot of wonderful things about being a board member, but my favorite part is getting to know my fellow board members better.

What are your hobbies and interests? Besides playing with our pups, I enjoy being active in many local organizations, along with spending evenings and weekends on our boats during the summer with friends and family.

What is something people might not know about you? I was a founding member of the Sigma Alpha professional sorority at Western Illinois University, and I am proud of the fact that it still exists today providing leadership opportunities and sisterhood for the women studying agriculture at WIU.

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Knox County's Kinsey Hall Graduates From IFB Leadership Program

Kinsey Hall graduated from Illinois Farm Bureau's Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow (ALOT) program, a comprehensive leadership development course, on March 20.

"I am a firm believer of you are who you surround yourself. Being a part of ALOT has given me the opportunity to network with driven, passionate, and intelligent individuals with diverse backgrounds in our industry," Hall said. "This program has challenged me to think differently and pushed me outside of my comfort zone providing an enriching opportunity for professional development. I wholeheartedly recommend the ALOT program to anyone seeking invest in their professional growth."

Hall, a member of Knox County Farm Bureau, was a part of the 25-member graduating class in 2025. Now in its 46th year, ALOT has graduated more than 1,200 leaders since 1979. The seven-session course featured experts in communication skills, political process, ag economics and global issues. Through a broad range of process and content skills, graduates enrich leadership abilities and enhance agriculture's voice in Illinois. Past graduates have included past and current Illinois state legislators and ag-

ricultural influencers across Illinois. Various leaders of the Illinois Farm Bureau have graduated from the ALOT program, including past President Rich Guebert, Jr., and current Vice President Evan Hultine.

"For more than 40 years, ALOT has played a critical role in developing agricultural leadership in the state," IFB President Brian Duncan said. "We are proud of the 2025 graduates who have taken the initiative to better themselves, their communities and agriculture as a whole."

Hall has worked in the GROWMARK system for the past six years, with the last five spent as an operations manager at the Alpha Distribution Center. In her role, she oversees daily operations and ensures inventory accuracy at a world class level. Hall's passion for continuous improvement and process optimization has driven her success, allowing her to thrive in her role and consistently enhance efficiency. Her commitment to agriculture extends far beyond her career. She is deeply involved in several local organizations that promote and support the agricultural industry in her community, including the Knox County Farm Bureau's Young Leaders and the Knox County Cattlemen's Association.

Outside of work, Hall and her husband, Blake, raise their young family outside Monmouth, Illinois. Married for five years, they are proud parents to their daughter, Lakin, 2, and seven-month-old son, Beau.

The 2025 ALOT graduating class heard from nearly 30 speakers, with topics ranging

from ag economics to state and local government policy to communication and professionalism and more. Sessions are designed to give participants a head-start on tackling tomorrow's leadership responsibilities.

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



From left to right: IAA Board Director Lu Ann Matejczak, ALOT Graduate Kinsey Hall, and IAA Board Director Steve Koeller.

Recipe of the Month Pretzel Dip

Ingredients:

- 3 ounces cream cheese, softened
- 1/3 cup heavy whipping cream
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp hot sauce
- 1/2 tsp horseradish
- 1/2 teaspoon garlic, minced
- 3 bacon slices, cooked and crumbled
- 1 ½ cups extra-sharp cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/3 cup green onions, chopped



Directions:

1. In a medium sized bowl, add the cream cheese, heavy whipping cream, mayonnaise, Worcestershire sauce, hot sauce, horseradish, and garlic. Stir to combine.
2. Add bacon, cheese and green onions. Stir to combine. Refrigerate several hours or overnight before serving with your favorite pretzel shape and size.

7:10

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Fri, Feb 7 at 1:17PM

(West Central FS, Inc.) Stop by and see WCFS this weekend at the WIU Ag Mech Farm Expo in Macomb, IL! Show is open Saturday 9-5 and Sunday 10-4. STOP to end

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Health on the Farm

By the Knox County Health Department

Health Department Celebrating 33 Years of Public Health in Knox County

The Knox County Health Department recognizes National Public Health Week the week of April 7th-13th. This year's theme is "It Starts Here." Public Health starts with each of us making a difference in our communities and homes.

Public health efforts in Knox County have demonstrably impacted our community for the last 33 years by improving overall health outcomes, reducing disease prevalence, and promoting healthier lifestyles, as evidenced by initiatives like vaccination programs, food safety regulations, and chronic disease prevention programs. By the numbers 1992-2025:


- 18,356 food service establishments were inspected
- Over 6,313 temporary food permits were issued
- 1,522 septic systems were installed
- 544 abandoned wells sealed
- 51,897 immunizations were provided to children and adults
- 4,972 children screened for lead
- 792 nurse home visits for children with elevated blood lead levels
- 319 environmental investigations for children with elevated blood lead levels conducted
- Over 80,802 WIC clients certified
- Assisted 6,293 Illinois Breast and Cervical Cancer Program participants
- 66,916 dental clients served

During National Public Health Week, the Health Department is celebrating activities in the community. The Galesburg Public Library will have a Public Health book and resource display and there will


be a window display inside the Bondi Building, 311 E. Main St., Galesburg. Stop by each location and see how Public Health has impacted Knox County over

the last 33 years. Every day and during times of emergencies, public health departments make our country a healthier and safer place to live and work. Public health aims to prevent health threats before they occur. Although responsible for much more, public health prevents the spread of disease and chronic conditions that impact the health status of a community. Across the county, public health departments bring people together in emergencies and provide regular assistance to their

communities and continue to evolve to meet their needs. We celebrate how we are all interconnected. Coming together to support public health as businesses, individuals, families, or communities will continue to help follow our vision of "Healthy People in a Healthy Community." For more information about the Knox County Health Department visit our website at www.knoxcountyhealth.org or call us at 309-344-2224.



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Knox County Agriculture in the Classroom Update

On Friday, April 11, 2025, the Knox County Farm Bureau and Knox County Agriculture in the Classroom will host the annual Agriculture Day for the fourth-grade students of Knox County.

Over 500 students from all the public and private schools in our area will attend the event at the Knox County Fairgrounds in Knoxville. Volunteers from the agricultural community will instruct the students on topics such as corn, soybeans, pork or beef. FFA members from local chapters assist

the classes guiding them from station to station as well as bringing farm animals for the students to see firsthand. The weather looks promising, and the

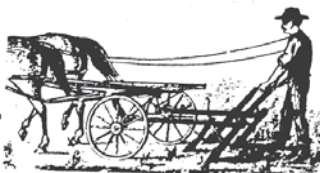
day should be enjoyed by everyone. Chicks are hatching across Knox County! Every Knox County public school and one local preschool are raising chicks. Thirteen classrooms have been incubating chicks since mid-March. After the first hatching, nineteen more classrooms will become chicken farmers. Some teachers may have gotten a sur-

prise egg or two! Farmer Shimmin informed AITC coordinator Mrs. Green that his ducks have been laying eggs in the hens' nests. Teachers are on the lookout for a bonus duck to hatch. Chicks take 21 days to hatch, but duck eggs require 28 days. In the meantime, students in kindergarten are learning about poultry and making their own baby chicks.

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Looking Back



April 1983



Knox County Farm Bureau Young Farmers salute the March of Dimes in their fight against birth defects. Members of the Farm Bureau Young Farmers, shown below, encourage you to consider your contribution. These people are: (left to right); front, Pat Hennenfent, Kim Hennenfent, David Dikeman, Andrea Johnson with Michael and David; back row, Greg Schoenbein, Bob Hennenfent, Tom Fisher, Bruce Johnson, and Pete Holmes with Jennifer.

PrimeTimers News

PrimeTimers met on March 18 and set their yearly Program of Work. The next meeting is potluck style on April 15 with a presentation on the Fosters Voice Program. The following meeting is on May 20. Please call the office to be added to the mailing list if you would like to join. Members 55 and older are welcome to join!

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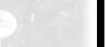
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