

DEWITT COUNTY FARM BUREAU NEWS



SPRING WELL WISHES!

And just like that, it's that time or year, Planting Season 2026 is here! The DeWitt County Farm Bureau wishes you all nothing but a safe and successful planting season! Take care of yourselves and be safe as you continue your work in the fields. We can't wait to see those rows of crops here soon!

To all our drivers on the road, please be mindful and careful as you share the road this season. Remember, it won't be long before the large equipment will be off the road so for the time being, please be careful as you come across our farmers and be mindful of your surroundings. The farmers and doing just the same as you, just from a different point of view. Let's all be careful out there and get home safely!

OUTDOOR LEARNING PROGRAM DELAND-WELDON SCHOOL DISTRICT

In January 2025, Janelle Harper, middle school science teacher and district librarian, had a vision for an Outdoor Learning Program at DeLand-Weldon School District—but wasn't yet sure how to bring it to life. For those unfamiliar, outdoor learning moves beyond the traditional classroom, using nature as a powerful setting to deepen student engagement and enhance educational experiences.

In February 2025, Mrs. Harper attended a national educator workshop at The Ecology School in Saco, Maine. A key takeaway from the experience was the importance of building strong relationships between schools and local businesses, organizations, and individuals. Inspired by this message, Mrs. Harper returned with a clear understanding that community partnerships would be essential in turning her vision into reality.

What began as an idea just 18 months ago has truly taken root and began to grow.

This spring, the Outdoor Learning Program continues to make exciting progress thanks to the hard work of DeLand-Weldon students, the dedication of Mrs. Harper, and the ongoing support of community partners.

Current Projects and Highlights:

- Students are actively increasing the population of native Illinois trees and plants on campus to support a healthy ecosystem. Recently, students planted 13 bare root red oak trees in collaboration with Piatt County 4-H and University of Illinois Extension.
- The district is preparing to install perennial wildflower pollinator beds and a sunflower field. This project is supported by the 2025 CHS/CoBank Foundation Classroom Grant, awarded through National Agriculture in the Classroom.
- A garden shed, funded by the DeWitt County Farm Bureau Foundation, is currently under construction by students at Clinton High School and is expected to be delivered to campus in mid-May—making it a meaningful, student-involved, multi-district collaboration.



- Plans are moving forward for a pavilion that will serve as an outdoor classroom for students in Pre-K through 12th grade. Funding for the pavilion is being provided by the Piatt County Farm Bureau Foundation.

The DeLand-Weldon School District is deeply grateful for the partnerships that continue to strengthen and grow this program. Community support remains the cornerstone of its success.

With each new project, the Outdoor Learning Program is expanding opportunities for students to engage in meaningful, real-world learning while developing a lasting connection to the environment.

For more information about the Outdoor Learning Program or to learn how to become a community partner, please contact Janelle Harper at jharper@dwschools.org.

SCHOLARSHIP ANNOUNCEMENT

Once spring rolls around that means it is scholarship season! At the beginning of the month the students submitted their applications and were busy preparing for their interviews. This year, the same evening of our scheduled interviews, the storm of the spring season blew through our community which made our interview process a bit more exciting than anticipated, but we made it through and now we are excited to announce the recipients of the 2026 DeWitt County Farm Bureau Foundation Scholarships!

We are so pleased to share that the DeWitt County Farm Bureau Foundation was able to award 10 scholarships this year to graduating high school seniors and current college students who are pursuing a college degree in the agriculture industry. These scholarships are made possible all thanks to the generosity of our membership and through the DCFB Foundation events such as the golf outing and the Young Leader Tractor Drive. This year the recipients are –

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS:

- Mabrey Schick** - Jackson and Imogene Blue Scholarship
- McKegan Morgan** - DeWitt County Farm Bureau Foundation Scholarship
- Leah Mills** - Ernest Thorp Family Scholarship
- Ava Paullin** - Ken Bjelland Scholarship
- Emily Atten** - Lawrence Toohill Family Memorial Scholarship
- Payton Heiser** - DeWitt County Farm Bureau Foundation Scholarship

COLLEGE STUDENTS:

- Makayla Koeppel** - DeWitt County Farm Bureau Foundation Scholarship
- Brett Young** - DeWitt County Farm Bureau Foundation Scholarship
- Clayton Stapleton** - DeWitt County Farm Bureau Foundation Scholarship
- Chloe Barth** - DeWitt County Farm Bureau Foundation Scholarship

Thank you for your continued support to the DeWitt County Farm Bureau Foundation throughout the year. Without your continued generosity these DeWitt County students would not be positively impacted. The future is bright for both DeWitt County and the agriculture industry!

Summer Ag Institute
PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND APPRECIATION FOR TEACHERS
JUNE 11-12 9AM-3:30PM
PIATT/DEWITT COUNTY FARM BUREAU & CORKS AND CANVAS
Register Here!

DeWitt-Piatt AGRICULTURE in the Classroom



UPCOMING EVENTS

- MAY 12 – DCFB BOARD MEETING
- MAY 25 – MEMORIAL DAY
- JUNE 11-12 – SUMMER AG INSTITUTE
- JUNE 13 – DCFB YL PANCAKE AND SAUSAGE BREAKFAST