

MACOUPIN COUNTY FARMER'S GUIDE

Supplement to *FarmWeek* for Macoupin County Farm Bureau Members

CONGRESS MUST ADDRESS FARM LABOR CRISIS

The shortage of a skilled and reliable workforce is the single greatest threat to agriculture. That was the message American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall delivered to leaders of Congress today, describing the challenges facing more than 5 million Farm Bureau members across the country.

In a letter to Senate Majority Leader John Thune, Minority Leader Chuck Schumer, Speaker of the House Mike Johnson and Minority Leader Hakeem Jeffries, President Duvall said a lack of workers will ultimately affect the availability of healthy food.

"The problem is growing more urgent each year," Duvall said. "The Department of Labor's National Agricultural Workers Survey shows that most agricultural workers are foreign-born, and many lack a stable legal path to remain working in U.S. agriculture. Meanwhile, the national labor market remains exceptionally tight, with low unemployment, low labor force participation and limited interest in agricultural jobs from domestic workers. U.S. agriculture simply cannot meet its entire labor needs to sustain production under the current system."

For years, farmers and ranchers have urged Congress to enact a practical, bipartisan solution that recognizes labor challenges in agriculture. Despite broad agreement among farmers, ranchers and many lawmakers, no lasting reforms have been enacted by Congress in four decades.

Without action, the disturbing trend of losing U.S. family farms, wider agricultural trade deficits, and weakened national security may continue. Farm Bureau calls on Congress to move swiftly on a number of issues that would create lasting solutions for farmers and ranchers, including:

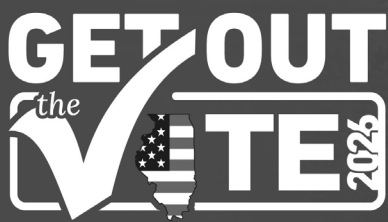
- Expanding visa programs to include year-round workers for nonseasonal agricultural sectors;
- Simplifying rules and regulations for employers, workers and agencies by eliminating red tape, streamlining processes, and setting uniform standards;



(Photo credit: Mark Stebnicki, North Carolina Farm Bureau)

- Eliminating unsustainable labor cost increases by codifying and strengthening the Department of Labor's interim final rule on the H-2A Adverse Effect Wage Rate methodology; and
- Providing a pathway for eligible workers to gain legal employment authorization consistent with the president's recent public comments.

"Farmers and ranchers have been waiting for a comprehensive workforce solution for decades. With a secure border, broad support among stakeholders, and growing bipartisan interest in finding a permanent fix, this is the best opportunity in a generation to enact reforms that will strengthen the nation's food supply, protect workers, and preserve rural communities."



2026 PRIMARY ELECTION CALENDAR

IMPORTANT DATES TO REMEMBER

FEBRUARY 5	Early voting begins, vote by mail ballots mailed
FEBRUARY 17	Last day for regular voter registration
FEBRUARY 18	Grace period registration and voting begins
MARCH 1	Last day for online voter registration
MARCH 12	Last day to mail vote by mail ballots for the general primary election
MARCH 16	Last day for early voting
MARCH 17	Primary Election Day
SEPTEMBER 24	Early voting begins, vote by mail ballots mailed
OCTOBER 6	Last day for regular voter registration
OCTOBER 7	Grace period registration and voting begins
OCTOBER 18	Last day for online voter registration
OCTOBER 29	Last day for vote by mail application through mail
NOVEMBER 2	Last day for early voting and in-person vote by mail applications
NOVEMBER 3	General Election Day



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Dan Metz
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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 reserves 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.

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

MACOUPIN COUNTY FARM BUREAU

220 North Road, P.O. Box 77
Carlinville, IL 62626
PH:217/854-2571

8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. - Monday-Thursday
Afternoon by appointment or by chance

Farm Bureau Staff:

Mark Dugger Manager
Casey Cervi Administrative Assistant

Officers:

David Heusing President
Bryan Thomson Vice President
Sarah Boente Secretary
Molly Rosentreter Treasurer

Directors:

Dalton Sanson, Tucker Launer, Sarah Boente,
Randy Darr, Tyler Brown, & Jay Fairfull

Farm Bureau Building Telephone Directory:

Macoupin County Farm Bureau217-854-2571
Country Financial217-854-2043
Central Macoupin County
Rural Water District217-854-6154

FEBRUARY BOARD OF DIRECTORS EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

- Membership as of February 16: 1,184 Voting; 1,416 Associate; 2,600 Total
- Austin Landon and Tucker Launer attended the IFB Young Leader Conference in Peoria on February 6-7.
- The IFB GALC was held on February 17 in Springfield.
- The Estate planning Seminar will be on March 9 in Carlinville.
- An ag industry tour to Arkansas with Madison CFB is being developed.
- Racoon Roundup was held on February 16. 657 tails collected and \$2,628 distributed.
- A spring plant coupon program with county FFA chapters is being developed.
- County Fair activities were discussed.
- Tabled a strategic planning session.
- Discussed the future of the Farm Bureau building.
- The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 7:00 pm at the Farm Bureau Building.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS ATTENDANCE RECORD

	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG
David Heusing		X	X	X	X	X						
Bryan Thomson		X	X	X	X	X						
Tucker Launer			X	X	X							
Jay Fairfull		X	X	X	X	X						
Dalton Sanson		X	X	X	X	X						
Sarah Boente		X	X	X	X	X						
Jason Boente			X	X	X	X						
Tyler Brown		X	X	X	X	X						
Molly Rosentreter		X		X	X	X						

FARM BROADCASTS

5:30AM RFD Illinois-Rita Frazier
6:05 WSMI Farm Report
7:18 Auction Time
9:30 Grain & Commodities
10:30 Grain & Commodities
11:30 Grain & Commodities
12:08PM Livestock Markets
12:40 Grain & Commodities
12:45 WSMI Farm Report
1:30 Grain & Commodities
6:05 Cash Grain & Livestock Market Summary

Radar Weather @ :15 & :45
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Randy Beuttel, Bunker Hill 618-585-3666
Jeff Thompson, Staunton 618-635-8249
Jason Ford, Palmyra 217-436-2406
Joey Boente, Carlinville 217-854-6722
Steve O'Dell, Virden 217-965-5888
or

AGENCY OFFICE, CARLINVILLE
PHONE (217) 854-2043

J.R. Earley, Agency Manager
Goldie Roberts, Agency Office Asst.

CLAIMS HOTLINE
800-846-0100

O'Reilly Auto Parts

in Carlinville, IL
401 West Main Street
Carlinville, IL 62626
(217) 854-9004

Store Hours:

- Mon: 7:30AM - 8:00PM
- Tue: 7:30AM - 8:00PM
- Wed: 7:30AM - 8:00PM
- Thu: 7:30AM - 8:00PM
- Fri: 7:30AM - 8:00PM
- Sat: 7:30AM - 8:00PM
- Sun: 9:00AM - 8:00PM

Services

- Battery Testing
- Fluid Recycling
- Wiper Blade Install
- Loaner Tools

**10% Discount for Macoupin County
Farm Bureau members**



M&M Service Company

130 N Chiles Street
Carlinville, IL 62626
217-854-4516

OFFICERS

Dan White - President Adam Gwillim - Secretary
Brian Michael - Vice President Jeff Thornton - Treasurer

DIRECTORS

Todd Armour; Mike Driscoll; Heather Hampton-Knodle;
Ross Heepke, David Schluckebier; Daniel Weder;
Taylor Hays and Mike Polo.

STAFF

David Wright - General Manager
Brennan Jensen - EHS Manager
Bryan Fairfull - Agronomy Marketing Manager
Lisa Furlow - Credit Manager
Tony Haberer - Energy Marketing Manager
Dwayne Krager - Agronomy/Grain Operations Mgr.
Kevin Moore - Grain Division Manager
Russ Waldhoff - CFO/Controller

WELCOME

...TO THE NEW FARM BUREAU MEMBERS

Voting

Ciarra D. Ciesler Randall K. Reno

David A. Drake



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AGRICULTURE GROUPS URGE EPA TO UPHOLD SCIENCE-BASED PESTICIDE REVIEW PROCESS

A coalition of leading agricultural organizations sent a letter to Lee Zeldin, Administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), urging the agency to uphold its rigorous, science-based pesticide registration process and ensure timely reviews under federal law.

The letter expresses support for the goals of the Make America Healthy Again (MAHA) movement and the MAHA Commission's Make Our Children Healthy Again Strategy, while emphasizing that access to safe, effective, and innovative crop protection tools is essential to achieving those goals. The organizations highlight that science-based pesticide approvals are critical not only to food security and affordability, but also to the long-term sustainability of

U.S. agriculture enabling growers to protect yields, use inputs efficiently, reduce losses, and continue investing in environmental stewardship and innovation.

The groups emphasize the importance of EPA meeting its statutory obligations under the Federal Insecticide, Fungicide, and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA) and the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act (PRIA). They note that prolonged delays in pesticide registrations and approvals place U.S. farmers at a competitive disadvantage, limit access to new technologies, and undermine the ability of producers across sectors to sustainably meet consumer demand.

Statements from Participating Organizations

American Farm Bureau Federation

"Farmers take seriously our responsibility to use crop protection tools responsibly to ensure safe, healthy food. EPA's rigorous review process and reliance on sound science to approve these products gives us confidence they can be safely applied," said American Farm Bureau President Zippy Duvall. "Under this proven process, growers need timely approvals of critical herbicides, insecticides, and other pesticide products to prevent bugs and weeds from destroying the crops that feed America."

American Soybean Association

"Pesticides approved by EPA undergo extensive scientific review to ensure they meet

strict safety and efficacy standards, and timely, predictable reviews under federal law are essential so farmers can access innovative tools and remain competitive and sustainable," said Scott Metzger, president of the American Soybean Association and Ohio farmer. "For soybean farmers, these tools are critical to protecting yields, managing weed resistance, and continuing to produce safe, affordable food, feed, and fuel for consumers at home and around the world."

International Fresh Produce Association

"Our growers have experienced an erosion of available tools to help grow the fruits, vegetables, and florals consumers expect from our industry. To remedy this, EPA should do more to encourage and incentivize registration of products for

specialty crop uses. This would dramatically improve the trajectory on new uses and tolerances," said IFPA CEO Cathy Burns. "This is even more important now with the Make America Healthy Again movement's focus on food and sustainability. All methods of fresh produce and floral production contribute to an abundant food supply. Each approach has its place, and each relies on science-based tools to manage pests, protect crops, and reduce food loss."

The full letter was submitted to EPA on February 5, 2026, and reflects broad alignment across agricultural sectors on the need for regulatory certainty, timely decision-making, and continued reliance on sound science to support a resilient, competitive, and sustainable U.S. agricultural system.

U.S., INDIA REACH FRAMEWORK FOR TRADE DEAL

By TAMMIE SLOUP FARMWEEK

An interim trade agreement between the U.S. and India includes additional market access commitments and support for more resilient supply chains, according to the announcement.

The two countries reached a framework for an interim agreement representing "a historic milestone in our countries' partnership, demonstrating a common commitment to reciprocal and balanced trade based on mutual interests and concrete outcomes," according to the Feb. 6 announcement.

As part of the agreement, India will eliminate or reduce tariffs on all U.S. industrial goods and a wide range of U.S. food and agricultural products, including dried distillers' grains (DDGs), red sorghum for animal feed, tree nuts, fresh and processed fruit, soybean oil, wine and spirits and additional products.

The U.S. will apply a reciprocal tariff rate of 18% on originating goods

of India, including textile and apparel, leather and footwear, plastic and rubber, organic chemicals, home décor, artisanal products and certain machinery, and, subject to the successful conclusion of the interim agreement, will remove the reciprocal tariff on a wide range of goods, including generic pharmaceuticals, gems and diamonds and aircraft parts.

The countries also will address non-tariff barriers

that affect bilateral trade. India agrees to address long-standing barriers to the trade in U.S. medical devices; eliminate restrictive import licensing procedures that delay market access for, or impose quantitative restrictions on, U.S. Information and Communication Technology (ICT) goods; and determine within six months whether U.S.-developed or international standards, including testing

requirements, are acceptable for the purposes of U.S. exports entering the Indian market in identified sectors. India also agrees to address long-standing non-tariff barriers to the trade in U.S. food and agricultural products.

U.S. Trade Representative Ambassador Jamieson Greer said the agreement unlocks one of the largest economies in the world for American workers and producers, lowering tariffs for all U.S.

industrial goods and a wide array of agricultural products.

"(The) announcement demonstrates the deepening ties between the United States and India as we create new opportunities for farmers and entrepreneurs in both countries," Greer said.

Read the full announcement at bit.ly/4rxz5eY.

Scholarships AVAILABLE for 2026-2027 School Year



Apply by March 27, 2026

6 - \$1000 scholarships

Must be a graduating high school senior or a current college student who plans to attend or is attending an Illinois junior college, college, university or Career Technical Education (CTE) program, and majoring in agriculture.

Applications are available through your high school guidance counselor, high school agriculture instructor or the Macoupin County Farm Bureau® at mcfb@gomadison.com or (217) 854-2571.



MACOUPIN COUNTY AGRICULTURE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

FARMERS DISCUSS THE POWER OF GRASSROOTS DURING ILLINOIS FARM BUREAU GOVERNMENTAL AFFAIRS CONFERENCE

Macoupin County Farm Bureau members learned how to use the power of grassroots advocacy during the recent IFB Governmental Affairs Leadership Conference (GALC) in February.

The annual conference was held on Tuesday, Feb. 17 at the Bank of Springfield Center, 1 Convention Center Plaza. The daylong event featured updates on the farm economy, farm bill and local, state and federal policy. Centered on the theme "The Power of Grassroots," this year's conference highlighted the impact of member voices shaping policy at every level.

Throughout the day, members participated in workshop sessions led by IFB staff and guest speakers. The event also highlighted IFB national and state legislative priorities and provided insights from nationally recognized speakers.

This year's keynote speaker was Chris Sununu, former Governor of New Hampshire, who discussed balancing fiscal responsibility with economic prosperity. Sununu served four terms before returning to the private sector in January 2025. Under his leadership, New Hampshire ranked first nationally for personal and economic freedoms as well as the best return on taxpayer investment.

Attendees also heard insights on the Illinois General Assembly from House Speaker Emanuel "Chris" Welch, as well as perspectives on the farm economy from American Farm Bureau Federation Economist Danny Munch and National Corn Growers Association Chief Economist Krista Swanson.

The conference ended with the annual Illinois Legislative Reception with members of the Illinois General Assembly where Macoupin FB advocated firsthand with Illinois policy makers, Rep. Rita Mayfield and Rep. CD Davidsmeyer.



CLASSIFIEDS

FREE CLASSIFIED ADS FOR FARM BUREAU MEMBERS

Farm Bureau members may run classified ads free in the Macoupin County Farm Section of FarmWeek

Name: _____

Address: _____

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Ad: _____

Macoupin County Farm Bureau
 P.O. Box 77, Carlinville, IL 62626
 Ph. 217-854-2571



HOW FARM BUREAU SERVED YOU IN JANUARY

- 1** The Illinois Farm Bureau Board of Directors approved the organization's state and federal legislative priorities, including estate tax reform, protecting private property rights, expanding biofuel use, a full multi-year farm bill and more.
- 2** Four IFB policy submittals were adopted by American Farm Bureau Federation during the AFBF Convention, including language addressing ag labor, drones and science-backed conservation evaluation tools.
- 3** IFB partnered with the Illinois Specialty Growers Association and Illinois Farmers Market Association to host the Everything Local Conference, where hundreds of specialty growers come together for personal and business development and networking.
- 4** The IAA Foundation, charitable arm of Illinois Farm Bureau, opened applications targeting to award more than \$340,000 in college scholarships, helping students pursue degrees in agriculture-related fields and invest in their careers.

