



February 2026 | Editor Jill Frueh

IFB AWARDS 34 LOCAL POLLINATOR, NUTRIENT STEWARDSHIP GRANTS-BUREAU COUNTY FARM BUREAU RECEIVES 2

Committed to protecting Illinois' resources and the environment through farmer-led, locally developed programs, Illinois Farm Bureau (IFB) is awarding a record 34 grants for nutrient stewardship and pollinator projects to county Farm Bureaus across the state.

The Environmental Stewardship Grants support the education, outreach, and implementation for nutrient management and pollinator restoration, providing direct funding to support county Farm Bureau projects. This year, IFB more than doubled the number of Pollinator Conservation Grants awarded, and between both programs, six new counties applied and will receive grants.

"The Environmental Stewardship Grants are a key component of implementing Environmental Programs in Illinois," said Bena Pegg, IFB environmental program manager. "Not only do the funds provide

necessary support to local chapters for community inspired solutions, but they also provide space for individuals to connect to discuss conservation, the environment, and greater farming concerns. These connections are important for local communities and the greater regenerative agriculture conversation taking root across Illinois."

In 2026, 26 CFBs will collaborate on 17 nutrient stewardship projects. Additionally, 24 CFBs will work together on 17 pollinator conservation projects. Since 2015, IFB has awarded a total of \$1.75 million for 192 county-led nutrient stewardship projects. Entering the fifth year of the Pollinator Conservation Grant program, IFB has awarded \$165,000 for 45 projects.

Look for the following grants in Bureau County this year:

- Nutrient Stewardship Grant- Bureau County will continue to support and expand farm-scale research

on 1,100 acres. Funds will support the purchase of automatic water samplers and isotope labeling of fertilizer versus non-fertilizer nitrate. Monitoring also will be expanded to Walnut Creek. A field day will also be held in late July to share results of the research.

- Pollinator Conservation Grant- Bureau, Lee, Marshall-Putnam, Stark and Whiteside Counties will again fund a discounted pollinator seed sale program for Farm Bureau members in the spring.

The Nutrient Stewardship Grant program is part of IFB's ongoing commitment to furthering the state's Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy (NLRs). The program was developed to engage all levels of IFB in the NLRs. Projects have focused on four priority areas:

- Education and outreach to farmers, landowners and the public.

- Support for research of best management practices to reduce nutrient loss from agricultural fields.
- Support for farmer implementation efforts across the state.
- Demonstrating progress toward the long-term goals of the Illinois NLRs.

The Pollinator Conservation Grant Program provides CFBs and farmers with opportunities to engage in locally led pollinator projects. The program was developed based on interest and recommendations from CFBs and farmers who wanted to access additional support for farmer-focused pollinator programming and materials.

IFB maintains an active role in supporting CFBs and local partners to develop projects that address farmer needs for research, education and outreach, and implementing best management practices for nutrient loss reduction and pollinator conservation.

111TH COUNTY ANNUAL MEETING HELD

Bureau County Farm Bureau hosted its 111th Annual Meeting on January 19, 2026, at the Farm Bureau Building in Princeton. Directors, officers, and members were in attendance. Members were also able to vote through a mail in proxy. During the meeting special guests, current directors and staff were introduced, members were elected to serve on the 2026 Bureau County Farm Bureau board and official business was approved.

At the meeting, the following directors were elected to serve a two-year term: William Anderson, District 1, Seat 2; and Aaron Sears, District 3, Seat 2.

Officers were elected within the board at a reorganization board meeting held later that evening following the annual meeting. William Anderson of Walnut was re-elected to serve as President; David Ohlson of Ohio was re-elected to serve as Vice President, Kent Bickett of Princeton was re-elected to serve as Treasurer and David Noord of Princeton was elected to the role of Secretary. Each of these positions are one-year terms.

BUREAU COUNTY AG LITERACY GRANTS AVAILABLE

Are you an educator interested in enhancing agricultural literacy efforts in your classroom? Apply for a Bureau County Farm Bureau (BCFB) Foundation Ag Literacy Grant today! Understanding the value of agriculture in our lives is necessary for everyone. Increasing agricultural literacy can help students make more informed consumer decisions, as well as introduce them to potential careers in one of the biggest global industries, agriculture!

The BCFB Foundation has developed two new grants for teachers of Pre-K through 8th grade to improve the understanding and comprehension of agriculture through agricultural literacy programming. The first grant option awards up to \$1000 in the areas of capital improvement. Up to 30% of this grant may be used for consumable supplies. The goal of the capital improvement grant is to purchase classroom items which will be used for multiple years. The other grant option awards up to \$500 for supplies, materials, or other items to improve ag literacy. Up to 100% of the supply grant may be used for consumable supplies.

Suggestions for these grants include, but are not limited to, classroom incubator/egg programs, agriculture-themed books, field trips, pollinator plots, gardens, guest speaker programs, butterfly labs, and/or classroom pets; provided the program helps enhance the understanding of agriculture.

The deadline for the spring cycle is February 28th. Any applications received after a deadline will not be considered and must be resubmitted in the following cycle. **Applications may be found on the Bureau County Farm Bureau website at www.bureaucountymfbureau.org.**

Multiple grants may be awarded each of the 2 annual cycles and are determined at the discretion of the BCFB Foundation Board of Directors. All grant recipients will be required to submit a follow-up report detailing the program(s) completed utilizing grant funds. Feel free to contact the Bureau County Farm Bureau office with any questions via phone at (815)875-6468, or by email at aitc@bureaucountymfbureau.org

Tara Barrett-Duzan, "The Farmers Daughter", to Headline Women in Agriculture Conference



The Women in Agriculture Conference committee is excited for the 2026, Women in Agriculture Conference. Tara Barrett-Duzan,

"The Farmers Daughter" will headline for the annual Women in Agriculture Conference in Rock Island on Friday, March 27, 2026. Tara Barrett-Duzan is a former news anchor turned farmer, whose journey from the newsroom to the fields is a powerful testament of love, loss, and legacy. She shares her journey to encourage other women in agriculture to lead boldly, no matter how uncertain the path.

Our Mid-Day Panel consists of Dr. Josie Rudolphi and Adrienne DeSutter of Sow Hope, Grow Hope and their take on "Focus on the Female". "For women in agriculture, the work doesn't end in the field-it stretches across the kitchen table, the books, the barn, and the family."

To round out the day the closing speaker, Emily Reuschel, is a passionate advocate for the leaders,

dreamers, and changemakers of rural communities and beyond. Known for her ability to challenge the status quo, Emily empowers women to break free from limiting beliefs, step into their authentic power, and create meaningful impact in their lives and communities. As the host of the Wild & Waking podcast and the facilitator of transformative retreats, workshops, and virtual communities.

The conference also features a wide range of dynamic breakout sessions, covering everything from strategic tax planning and legal considerations to building your business and expanding your vision. Whether you're focused on practical tools or big-picture growth, there's truly something for everyone.

Pre-registration for the event begins on January 5, 2026. More details can be found at womeninagricultureconference.com. This Conference is sponsored by the Farm Bureau Women in Agriculture Conference Committee.

**Women in Agriculture Conference
Rock Island, IL | Friday, March 27**

DISTRICT 4 YOUNG LEADERS HOST CURLING EVENT FOR MEMBERS

Please join us for a night of Curling at the Waltham Curling Club in Triumph on:

**FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 27TH | 6:00 P.M.
\$30.00 /PERSON**

This event is open to Farm Bureau members between the ages of 18-35. Everyone who curls should have clean tennis shoes. Also, everyone will be asked to sign a liability waiver before they can play. **Please call the Bureau County Farm Bureau office at 815-875-6468 if you are interested in attending.**

IAA Foundation Offers CDL Training Scholarships

Truck drivers are critical for transporting farm commodities, inputs and food throughout Illinois and the nation. The Driving Agriculture Forward Scholarship helps offset the cost of needed commercial truck driver training and ensures more well-trained, safe drivers are available.

Applicants enrolled, or planning to enroll, in a commercial driver training program at an Illinois Community College are encouraged to apply. Five \$1,000 scholarships will be awarded every three months and are based on the Illinois Farm Bureau region where the applicant resides.

Full eligibility guidelines and the link to apply is available on the Foundation website, www.iaafoundation.org.