



McLean County Farm Bureau member, Austin Baer (2nd from left), visited about ag issues with Congressman Darin LaHood (R-Dunlap) during Illinois Farm Bureau's Leaders to Washington trip. Also pictured (from left): Kiersten Sheets, Peoria County Farm Bureau, Baer, LaHood, and IFB staff members, Rebecca Barnett and Ashley Cravens.

Baer Advocates for Ag on IFB Leaders to Washington Trip

McLean County Farm Bureau board member, Austin Baer, visited with members of Congress and policy makers during the IL Farm Bureau Leaders to Washington trip March 17-18, 2026.

Discussions focused on farm economic issues including commodity prices, input costs, trade, transportation, inland waterways infrastructure, and the Farm Bill.

The group of nine IFB members met with legislators, USDA, EPA, Department of Health and Human Services, the office of the U.S. Trade

Representative and visited the White House.

Baer shared the importance of crop insurance and passing a five-year Farm Bill in meetings with members of Congress.

Participants also met with representatives from the Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia and staff members at American Farm Bureau Federation and the National Grain and Feed Association.

The Leaders to Washington program takes farmers to the nation's capital to advocate for agriculture on key issues.

Bylaw Updates to Membership

County Farm Bureau Delegates to the 2025 Illinois Farm Bureau Annual meeting adopted bylaw changes to revise membership definitions and deadlines.

The changes reflect the delegate body's consideration of how to best keep Farm Bureau membership clear, current, and easy to manage as the organization continues to serve Illinois agriculture.

Effective May 1, 2026, McLean County Farm Bureau memberships will follow an updated timeline for membership delinquent status and cancellation:

•**Delinquent status at 30 days:** A membership will be considered delinquent if dues are not paid 30-days after the paid-thru date.

•**Canceled status at 60 days:** A membership will be canceled for

nonpayment of dues 60 days after the paid-thru date.

Another bylaw change will simplify membership categories and revise the definition of a voting member.

Effective September 1, 2026, the Regular Voting Membership (MM) classification and Professional Voting Membership (PM) classification will be combined into a single classification called Voting Membership. More details will be provided as the changes are implemented.

Membership benefits like FarmWeek and right to vote for the McLean County Farm Bureau Board of Directors will not change.

If you have questions, please contact us at membership@mcfb.org or (309)663-6497.

FFA Chapter Service Awards

Ten local high school students have been selected to receive 2026 McLean County Farm Bureau FFA Chapter Service Awards:

- Tyler Holtz, Blue Ridge
- Grace Kaisner, El Paso-Gridley
- Cashten Morger, Heyworth
- Maddie Larimer, Le Roy
- Micah Wiltz, Lexington
- Jaidyn Ormsbee, Normal Community
- Leah McKee, Normal West
- Kamryn Rader, Olympia
- Max Mason, Ridgeview
- Maeli Benjamin, Tri-Valley

The awards are given annually to one member from each local FFA chapter who demonstrates leadership through service to their FFA chapter, school and community. Winners are nominated by their ag teacher(s).

FFA Service Awards are presented to the winners at each chapter's banquet.

Save the Date: Fanfare May 30

Join us for McLean County Fair Fanfare a fun and exciting evening at the McLean County Fairgrounds, Saturday, May 30 from 4 to 7 p.m.

Pick your favorite fare from a variety of food trucks and enjoy family-friendly entertainment including bounce houses for kids, games and music from local artist, Kyle Yap.

A cash bar will also be available with a variety of drinks including local craft beers like County Fair Beer from White Oak Brewing Company and Roots Lager from Destihl.

The event is open to the public and there will not be an admission charge. The food trucks and music will be in Barn A with games and kids activities in the Mini Expo.

As a thank you for your membership, McLean County Farm Bureau members who pre-register will receive two \$10 food vouchers to spend at the event. Visit mcfb.org to sign-up.

The fairgrounds will also be hosting a 1/4 Scale Tractor Design Competition with tractor pulls starting at 7 p.m. at the grandstand (or in Barn D if it rains).

The tractor pulls are part of the American Society of Agricultural and Biological Engineers (ASABE) International 1/4 Scale Tractor Student Design Competition, where teams of university students design and build a tractor to compete in a series of performance and durability tests. The tractor pulls are also free and open to the public.



Sen. Dave Koehler, D-Peoria, discussed ag issues with McLean County Farm Bureau members during Ag Legislative Day in Springfield March 24. From left: Anna Ziegler, Manager; Reid Thompson, Sen. Koehler, Brian Dirks and Darren Davis.

MCFB Attends Legislative Day

McLean County Farm Bureau board members discussed the importance of estate tax reform and private property rights with legislators during Ag Legislative Day in Springfield March 24.

Board members Darren Davis, Reid Thompson and Brian Dirks, who also serves as IFB District 7 Director, met with legislators in their offices or caught up with them in the Capital Building.

The group met up with all of the legislators who represent

McLean County including Sen. Chris Balkema, R-Channahon; Sen. Dave Koehler, D-Peoria; Sen. Sally Turner, R-Beason; Rep. Jason Bunting, R-Emington; Rep. Sharon Chung, D-Bloomington; Rep. Regan Deering, R-Decatur; Rep. Bill Hauter, R-Morton; and Rep. Dennis Tipsword, R-Metamora.

McLean County's Adopted Legislator, Rep. Thaddeus Jones D-Calumet City also visited with the group during a busy day of session and committee meetings.



Illinois Farm Bureau board members Lu Ann Matejcak (left) and Steve Koeller (right) congratulate McLean County Farm Bureau members Oliver Kragelund (center left) and Matt Miller on completing the 2026 ALOT program.

MCFB Members Complete ALOT

McLean County Farm Bureau members, Oliver Kragelund and Matt Miller, completed Illinois Farm Bureau's 2026 Agricultural Leaders of Tomorrow (ALOT) program in March.

"The ALOT program has been valuable to me both personally and professionally, providing a deeper understanding of leadership while staying grounded in the realities of agriculture today," says Miller, Crop Underwriting Manager at COUNTRY Financial.

Kragelund and Miller completed the seven-session program March 19 as part of a class of 13 members from across the state.

"To anyone considering the ALOT program, if you have any interest in being a leader in

agriculture or are finding yourself in those kinds of positions, I think it is an incredibly valuable asset to add and enhance your skills and mindset," Kragelund says.

Kragelund is a student at Heartland Community College, pursuing a career in agricultural safety.

The 2026 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.

Now in its 47th year, ALOT has graduated more than 1,300 leaders since 1979.

Upcoming Events

April		
Tues. 14		Annual Township Meetings
Thurs. 23	11:30 a.m.	Prime Timers, MCFB Building
May		
Tues. 19		MCFB Board Meeting
Mon. 25		Office Closed - Memorial Day
Sat. 30	4 p.m.	McLean County Fair Fanfare