

# MACOUPIN COUNTY FARMER'S GUIDE

Supplement to *FarmWeek* for Macoupin County Farm Bureau Members

## IFB MEMBERS PUSH FOR MORE CERTAINTY

BY TAMMIE SLOUP FARMWEEK



Participants ( Austin Baer, McLean County; Elijah Floerke, Cook County; Mathew Heberling, Christian County; Hannah McKee, McHenry County; Bart Morgan, Clark County; Kiersten Sheets, Peoria County; Jenna Temple, LaSalle County; John Yeley, Clark County; Jeff Young, Moultrie-Douglas County) of the Illinois Farm Bureau Leaders to Washington trip pose on Capitol Hill. View more photos at [FarmWeekNow.com](http://FarmWeekNow.com) (Photo by Tammie Sloup)

A proposed new farm bill likely won't make it to the House floor until after Congress returns from recess in mid-April, Illinois Farm Bureau members learned while in Washington, D.C.

The 2018 farm bill been extended three times with an expiration of Sept. 30. Extending the bill again would further devastate the farm economy, members told lawmakers during IFB's Leaders to Washington trip.

"Farm economics have greatly changed since 2018 when this farm bill was created that we're working under. So we need something current for today's issues," Christian County Farm Bureau President Mathew Heberling told *FarmWeek* after meeting with House Ag Committee member Mary Miller, R-Oakland, who voted for the bill in committee.

Moultrie-Douglas Farm Bureau President Jeff Young has farmed corn, soybeans and wheat for about 18 years, and is hoping to keep his farm going for another generation. But without

a modernized farm bill, the insecurities in the ag economy will likely be a roadblock.

"We just don't have that extra safety net," he added.

Proposed provisions for young and beginning farmers in the farm bill also are needed for younger farmers to gain entry into a farming career and financially survive.

The majority of farmers depend on off-farm income, including Heberling, a fourth-generation farmer who is also a senior research manager. Heberling operates the family farm alongside his father and sister, growing corn, soybeans, wheat and hay and raising a cow-calf herd, and hopes to someday farm full time.

"If I had the opportunity, that is what I would like to do. But currently, economics aren't in that favor, access to lands aren't in that favor. And so luckily, I've got a career still within the industry that lets me still kind of be on the leading edge and farm on the side," he said.

As a first-generation farmer, McLean County Farm Bureau member Austin Baer emphasized the importance of crop insurance and higher loan limits for young farmers due to rising costs.

"As a beginning farmer or young farmer, stability is important," Baer told *FarmWeek* after meeting with U.S. Rep. Darin LaHood, R-Dunlap. "Crop insurance provides us a base and some risk management tools that allow us to leverage large amounts of money and have some security. So that is extremely important."

Baer farms corn, soybeans, wheat, alfalfa and raises livestock with his brothers on rented and owned ground. He also works for another farmer full time.

As LaHood sits on the recently formed E15 Rural Domestic Energy Council, Baer also took the opportunity to push for approval of year-round nationwide E15 to help expand the domestic corn market. Record crops in the U.S. and significant increases in South American competition have driven commodity prices down.

Advocates for E15 are hoping for news soon from the council.

Members came away with a deeper appreciation for the face time with legislators and others involved in ag policy.

Other topics discussed in meetings included the Union Pacific-Norfolk Southern merger, which could further exacerbate agricultural shippers' already limited transportation options; inland waterways infrastructure and the Water Resources Development Act, which is legislation that every two years authorizes the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Civil Works Program for projects involving water resources infrastructure; trade agreements and frameworks and more.

The group also met with AFBF staff, Risk Management Agency and National Agricultural Statistics Service officials, Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia representatives, officials with the Environmental Protection Agency, National Security Council, U.S. Trade Representative and Department of Health and Human Services and National Grain and Feed Association staff.

"This has been a great trip. It's really opened my eyes to just how the whole process works," Baer said. "Illinois Farm Bureau's role is extremely important. And being a grassroots organization, this is how we get our voices heard."

U.S. Sens Dick Durbin, D-Springfield; and Tammy Duckworth, D-Hoffman Estates also, met with members, and aside from Miller and LaHood, members also spent time with U.S. Reps Mike Bost, R-Murphysboro; Jonathan Jackson, D-Chicago; Brad Schneider, D-Deerfield; and Eric Sorensen, D-Moline, as well as staff from the office of Lauren Underwood, D-Naperville.

"Having direct access with some of the people that are really in charge of these programs is tremendously beneficial," Young said. "Illinois Farm Bureau staff does so much good for the farmers in Illinois, but for us to be able to see that and truly go out and voice our opinions to our legislators, it's been such a good experience, and I know it carries more weight when a Farm Bureau member is out here speaking to a legislator."



# SOYBEAN: SMALL BEAN WITH A BIG RESUME

If I were a crop, I might be a soybean. I'm short, low drama and work best behind the scenes. My mood can shift from tolerant and forgiving (planting season) to an annoying attention to detail (harvest). But chocolate holds it all together. (Soy is the key; I'll explain).

All of that is really by comparison to corn, the primary crop alternative in Illinois. We live in the Corn Belt. Corn gains name fame for its visual dominance in acres. We find fascination in corn mazes, and the most common consumer-facing farm policy conversations – like ethanol – involve corn.

Unbeknownst to most citizens, Illinois grows more than 20 million tons of soybeans annually and claims the reigning title of No. 1 soybean state in the nation. The achievement reached the heart of Springfield, where legislators voted the soybean as the Illinois state bean in 2025.

Soybeans make a great team with corn as a rotational crop companion and literally bring the muscle with their protein punch. Our FFA chapter packed 4,000 non-perishable meals for local food pantries using soy protein, a budget-friendly, high-protein staple. Soy protein is a common ingredient in meat, both plant-based alternatives and the real thing. Soybean meal, the byproduct after removing the seed's oil, is the nation's top high-protein feed that brings chicken, pork, eggs and dairy to the table.

The average American consumes nearly half a cup of soybeans in some form every day, which could include cooking oil, margarine, soy milk and protein shakes. Soy lecithin keeps chocolate and cocoa butter

from separating. Hooray for soy holding together my bite-sized sweet fix after lunch, which likely was a salad that wouldn't exist without dressing, a soy-dominant lifeline for the fresh greens.

Our farm fuels its tractors and trucks with soy-based biodiesel. Soy oil is a named ingredient in plastics for John Deere and the foam in the seats of Ford vehicles. This month, I will see the bean more than my family as I plant some 300 million of those pea-sized seeds across our farm.

Thankfully, soybeans tolerate a wider range of "good-enough" conditions during planting season. Corn prefers perfection. The tides turn come harvest, when the bean gets moody: moisture content rapidly shifts from too wet to too dry, and the mature, standing crop's harvestability is notoriously sensitive to weather.

Beyond that, soybeans check the boxes for Illinois: rotational cropping systems, soil types, climate and access to exports in a state literally shaped by rivers. As the top U.S. agricultural export crop, soybeans bring billions of dollars to America's economy.

Those are some cool beans.

*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.*

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS ATTENDANCE RECORD

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

**CANCELED**

## 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

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Amy Hauschild ..... Administrative Assistant

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Bryan Thomson ..... Vice President  
Sarah Boente ..... Secretary  
Molly Rosentreter ..... Treasurer

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Dalton Sanson, Tucker Launer, Sarah Boente,  
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## ECONOMIC STORM WORSENS FOR AMERICA'S FARMERS

Photo by AFBF



Severe weather, high expenses and global uncertainty are hitting farmers from all sides, squeezing them to the breaking point. Fifty-four agriculture groups laid out the challenges facing rural America in a letter to President Trump today.

The letter recognizes progress made last year in enhancing farm risk management tools and securing much-needed tax relief for farmers, but says additional resources are needed during these turbulent times, "As the administration considers a defense supplemental package in the coming weeks, we urge you to include much-needed market relief for America's farmers."

That relief should build on recent efforts to deliver Farmer Bridge Assistance Program payments, and should include meaningful support for all specialty crop, sugar and alfalfa growers, assistance for farmers and ranchers dealing with catastrophic weather events, and build longer-term demand stability for U.S. agriculture through year-round sales of E15 and tax incentives to increase use of domestic agricultural products, such as the Buying American Cotton Act and the Grown in America Act. The letter mentions administration actions, such as finalizing strong Renewable Volume Obligations in the Renewable Fuel Standard and supporting value-added opportunities for farmers in the 45Z Clean Fuel Production Credit, that will also help support longer-term demand stability for U.S. agriculture.

The recent closure of the Strait of Hormuz and its impact on fertilizer and fuel prices only worsened the financial strain farmers face and poses significant consequences for the food supply chain in America and around the world.

"We appreciate your longstanding commitment to rural America. Now is the time to ensure that American agriculture can weather this period of extraordinary strain. Without timely assistance, continued losses risk accelerating farm closures, reducing domestic production capacity and weakening the ability of farmers and ranchers across this great nation to provide food, clothes and fuel for the American people."

## AG THEMED BOOK PRESENTATIONS

Third grade classrooms around Macoupin County (Mrs. Gibson and Mrs. Rosentreter's Palmyra-Northwestern and Mrs. Williams' Carlinville classes pictured) were presented agriculturally themed books (I Love Blueberries; Food and Farm Facts) by Macoupin County Farm Bureau Directors Molly Rosentreter; Bryan Thomson and Tucker Launer. The goal of the program is to provide accurate agricultural information to students so that they can grow into informed consumers in the future. Books were provided by the Macoupin County Farm Bureau.



## AG Industry Tour

MEMBERSHIP VALUE



Illinois

Arkansas

Join us on a family friendly weekend, out of state, to learn about peanut, rice, and cotton production in Northeast Arkansas!

- August 7-9 in Jonesboro, Arkansas
- Tours tentatively include rice, peanut, and cotton fields, in addition to rice milling & peanut shelling facilities.
- Selected members receive 2 nights hotel stay, tour day transportation, and tour day meals (valued at \$250+).

Voting members of Madison & Macoupin CFB can apply via the link on the home page of [madcofb.org](http://madcofb.org).

Limited spots available.

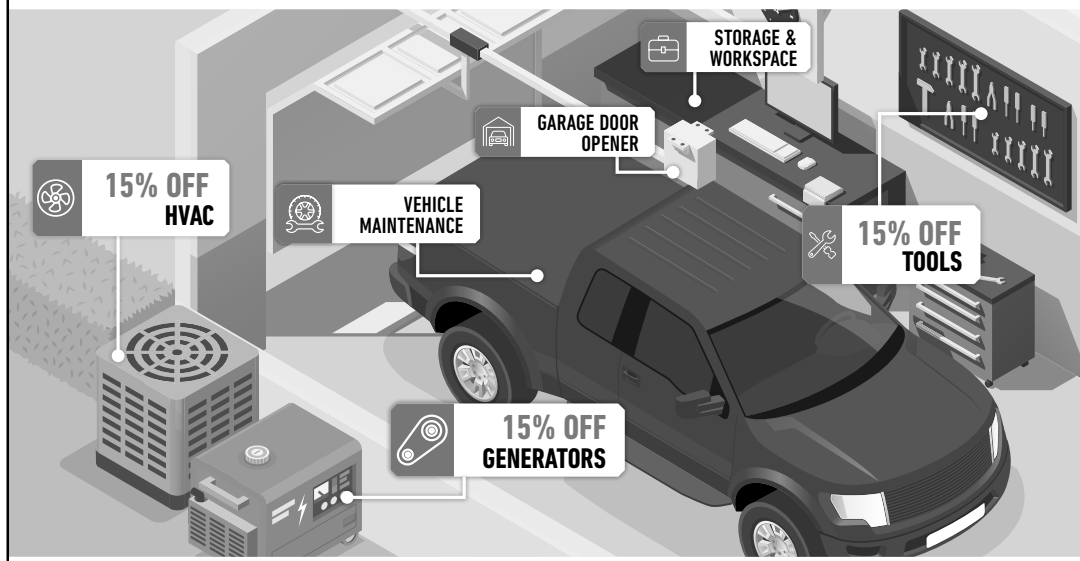
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Deadline to apply is April 15.

Find more details on the application.

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# IFB NAMES NEW RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT RECIPIENTS

BY HANNAH SPANGLER, FARMWEEK



with first responders. Fire Chief Danny McCallum said as a volunteer department in a rural district covering 127 square miles, including a stretch of Interstate 55, updated radios are essential.

"If we can find out some information ahead of time, it makes a huge difference," he said.

As one of the 21 rural development-focused projects, the Woodlawn FFA chapter received funding to build a greenhouse at Woodlawn High School in Jefferson County. Chapter adviser Sarah Morgan said the project will help serve the community of Woodlawn, which has a population of about 700 people, by providing additional access to fresh food.

The Woodlawn FFA chapter is one of 30 2025-26 Rural Development Grant recipients. This year's FFA chapter officer team includes, pictured from left, Levi King, JW Morgan, Peyton Hart, Hayden Mellott, Hollie Ard, Hudson Lowery and Landon Hutchison. (Photo courtesy of Sarah Morgan)

Morgan said having a greenhouse will also strengthen the school's agriculture program through hands-on learning opportunities for her students.

"We have a basic horticulture class, but I would love to be able to have a greenhouse management class," she said.

Another grant is going to the Clay County Food Pantry, which will purchase a refrigerated box for its

delivery truck. The pantry, run by Tom Simpson and the Clay County Ministerial Alliance, is fully volunteer operated, and Chairman Joe Goodman said every dollar helps them better serve the 650-800 community members who visit each month.

"This was a glimmer of hope," Goodman said of the impact of the grant. "We've got a good thing going, and we just want to make it stronger."

The additional 2025-26 award recipients are:

- Coles County, Fit-2-Serve, developing a ¼ acre regenerative garden to provide nutrient-dense fresh produce for the community
- Coles County, City of Mattoon, equipping the Mattoon Police Department with automated external defibrillators
- DeKalb County, Somonauk Fire Department, purchasing battery-powered tools
- DeKalb County, Malta Fire Protection District, purchasing battery-powered rescue equipment
- DeWitt, Farm to City Harvest Store Inc, developing a farm-to-city cooperative grocery store
- Edwards County, West Salem Volunteer Fire Department, purchasing lifesaving medical equipment
- Ford-Iroquois Counties, Gibson City Restoration Association, restoring windows for the historic Burwell Building
- Franklin County, Franklin County Senior Services

Inc., replacing 40-year-old equipment with a new walk-in freezer and cooler

- Fulton County, City of Cuba, providing the city with a necessary facility for an OSF mobile health care RV and storage of medical materials
- Hancock County, On Point Revival NFP, replacing the roof of the historic Saenger Halle building
- Jackson County, Grand Tower Food Pantry, helping residents gain access to fresh food
- Jefferson County, NewMed Diagnostics, implementing a mobile diagnostics initiative designed to expand access to preventive health services
- Knox County, Rio Fire Protection District, replacing mobile truck radios
- Knox County, Maquon Fire Protection District, supporting a STARCOM communication radio project
- LaSalle County, La Salle-Peru Township High School Foundation for Educational Enrichment, purchasing equipment and supplies for the school's new agricultural program
- Macoupin County, Macoupin County Fair and Agricultural Association, renovating and expanding an existing building for year-round use
- Massac County, Massac County Youth Fair and Community Center, renovating the community center kitchen
- Montgomery County, Nokomis New Sprouts Daycare Center, installing a

new playground

- Peoria County, B.Y.E. Ambulance Service Inc., improving communication with a radio project
- Piatt County, City of Monticello, implementing a downtown wireless system
- Pope-Hardin County, Arrowleaf, launching a retail merchandise assembly line at Arrowleaf's Developmental Services site
- Sangamon County, Central Illinois FarmFED Co-operative, installing fundamental office equipment and software
- Schuyler County, Schuyler County Economic Development Commission, renovating a building to house office space for economic development staff and provide space for community meetings
- Stephenson County, Greater Freeport Partnership, supporting BASE Camp's classes and activities for entrepreneurs and small business owners
- Union County, Wolf Lake Community Center, replacing siding on the community center building
- Warren-Henderson, Central Warren County Fire Protection District, upgrading mobile radios in fire vehicles
- Woodford County, Village of Roanoke, supporting phase one of developing a vacant lot into a pocket park and green space

**More information about all the grant recipients will be available soon at [ilfb.org/rdgrants](http://ilfb.org/rdgrants).**

Illinois Farm Bureau announced 30 recipients of its 2025-26 Rural Development Grants.

Response to the program continues to grow, with 139 applications representing 64 county Farm Bureaus this year. In the 2023-24 pilot year, the program distributed \$30,000 to 10 projects. For 2025-26, total funding increased to a record \$120,000 through a \$100,000 investment by Illinois Farm Bureau and a \$20,000 contribution from COUNTRY Financial.

"Entering its third year, the Rural Development Grant program has proven to be a meaningful way for Illinois Farm Bureau to invest directly in small towns and rural communities to meet the needs of farmers and rural residents," said Ryan Tate, IFB associate director of local government. "We set out to create an accessible grant program that could reliably support impactful projects in rural Illinois, and it's been gratifying to see how communities have used these funds to expand services, strengthen infrastructure and improve quality of life."

This year's awards include nine grants specifically for emergency services, including one in Montgomery County, where the Raymond Fire Protection District received funding to replace its outdated radio system and improve communication

**FARM BROADCASTS**

3:30AM RFD Illinois-Rita Frazier  
 5:05 WSMI Farm Report  
 7:18 Auction Time  
 9:30 Grain & Commodities  
 10:50 Grain & Commodities  
 11:30 Grain & Commodities  
 12:00PM Livestock Markets  
 12:43 Grain & Commodities  
 12:45 WSMI Farm Report  
 1:30 Grain & Commodities  
 5:05 Cash Grain & Livestock Market Summary  
 Radar Weather @ 15 & 45  
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