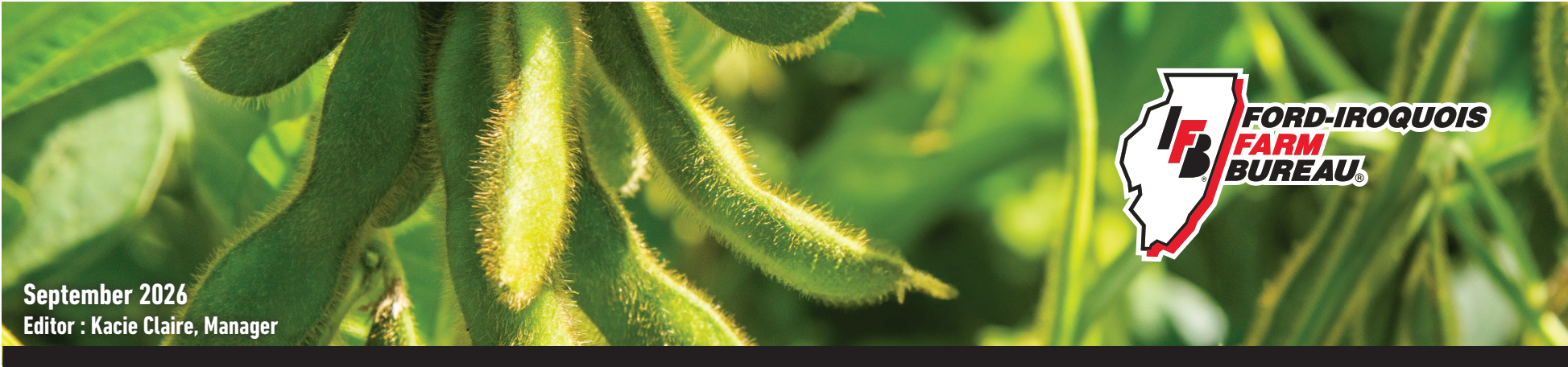




September 2026
Editor : Kacie Claire, Manager

A SUMMER RECAP

As summer winds down, we want to extend a sincere thank you to everyone who participated in Ford-Iroquois Farm Bureau programs and events over the past few months. From educational programs and youth activities to community events and member engagement opportunities, this summer was filled with learning, connection, and support for agriculture.

The success of our summer programs would not have been possible without the involvement of our members, volunteers, sponsors, and community partners. We are grateful for everyone who attended, volunteered, and supported our efforts throughout the season especially at the county fairs. Thank you for helping make this an amazing summer, and we look forward to seeing you at our upcoming fall events!



MASTER SHOWMANSHIP CONTEST

On Friday morning of the Iroquois County Fair, the best showman from each barn went head-to-head to see who the Master Showman is. This year looked slightly different as we invited the winners from each barn in Ford County to come and compete as well. Each barn had their own contest to see who would represent them in the Master Showmanship contests. The barns winners were:

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| Danielle Behrends – Rabbits | Madison Price – Dairy |
| Kempton DeOrnellas – Swine Barn (Ford County) | Lily Schurr – Horses |
| Evan Harpster – Cattle | Hannah True – Poultry |
| Ashtyn Hurliman – Swine | Kailey Vaske – Goats |
| Alivia Porter – Sheep | |

The 4-H members display their showmanship skills across three species – beef, sheep and swine. The competitors were judged on their ability to handle each animal, knowledge of the species and animal husbandry, as well as overall showmanship skills.



Alivia Porter was named the Iroquois County Grand Champion Master Showman and Evan Harpster was Reserve Champion and Alternate. Kempton DeOrnellas was the Ford County Grand Champion Master Showman.



SILO TO SOURDOUGH CLASS

Sourdough is all the rage right now and what’s not to like? A delicious baked good that is good for your gut and tasty! Our summer intern was tasked as her main project this summer to come up with a program that would help promote a skill that can add value to our farm bureau members. She partnered with Heidi Stone with Stone’s Farmhouse and Janie’s Mill in Ashkum to come up with the Silo to Sourdough class.

This event was held on July 30th at the Ford-Iroquois Farm Bureau office. We were at max

capacity with 50 participants and 6 additional observers to learn how to feed and make sourdough from our local expert, Heidi Stone. Each participant was given 4 bags of flour from Janie’s Mill, a weck jar to keep their starter in, a rubber spatula, recipe cards and already developed starter from Stone’s Farmhouse that is ready to use the next day! While they learned, the participants munched on freshly made sourdough treats including lemon poppyseed muffins, chocolate chip cookies and brownies from Stone’s

Farmhouse.

Heidi went over how to feed their starter and keep it alive as well as tips and tricks for making loaves of bread. The group was very active listeners and asked great questions to help them become successful at home. It was quite clear that this is definitely more of an artform than just a science but we know that everyone was walking away with all of the skills to succeed. If anyone needs a taste tester, bring it by the Farm Bureau office and we would be glad to help you out.

ADOPT-A-LEGISLATOR VISIT

On July 7th, Ford-Iroquois Farm Bureau board members and staff traveled to the 104th District in Plainfield for a tour with our Adopted Legislator, Senator Meg Loughran Cappel.

Throughout the day, the group visited the Western Will County Communication Center Emergency Dispatch and the Slovenian Planinsek Grocery and Meat Market Museum, where we learned more about 911 dispatch and the area’s rich history. The tour also included a visit to Senator Cappel’s office for great conversation, and the day wrapped up with a well-earned ice cream stop!

A special thank you to the Chief of Staff Michelle and Senator Cappel for coordinating the tours and taking the time to meet with our group and listen to our conversation! We appreciate the opportunity to connect, learn, and continue building strong relationships.

About the Adopt-A-Legislator Program

The Illinois Farm Bureau Adopt-A-Legislator®



Program was developed with the purpose of building long-term personal relationships between urban state legislators and farmers from across the state. The goal of the program is to educate urban legislators about agriculture, our state’s largest industry, and rural life, while also helping our members better understand the needs and concerns of an urban district. Legislators are matched with a “downstate” County Farm Bureau (which “adopts” the legislator).

BACK TO SCHOOL

It is officially back to school for all students! We would like to wish everyone a safe and healthy school year from the Ford-Iroquois Farm Bureau. Teachers, make sure to contact our Ag in the Classroom coordinator for great resources that will add to your curriculum and teach your students where their food comes from. Email Gracie at gracies@illinois.edu to get your resources or schedule a visit and check out our website to learn more about the Ag in the Classroom program at fifarmbureau.com.



IT'S OK TO NOT BE OK



POPSICLES AT THE COUNTY FAIR

The one thing you can count on during the Ford and Iroquois County fair is that it is going to be HOT. Ford-Iroquois Farm Bureau wanted to help the 4-H and junior exhibitors beat the heat by passing our free popsicles and popsicle holders as they are showing off their amazing projects. We walked around the fairgrounds at both Ford and Iroquois county fairs to offer a sweet and cool treat to anyone we could find. This was such a hit and we especially appreciated our repeat customers.



FIFB Manager, Kacie Claire and Summer Intern, Brynn Boundy, in action as they passed out popsicles in the goat barn at Iroquois County Fair.

CAMP 911 SEEKING DONATIONS

Camp 911 is currently seeking donations to help offset the cost of the program and t-shirts we provide the kids. Last year, we reached 455 students in 10 schools throughout the two counties. If you are interested in supporting this program, please send you donations to Camp 911 at 1380 S Crescent St-Suite A, Gilman, IL 60938. Any financial assistance you can provide will greatly support this worthwhile camp; there is no amount too small! Those who donate \$150 or more, will get their name on the back of the t-shirt that each student receives in their bag.

Camp 911 is a 501(c)3 organization offering a safety program offered to 3rd grade students in Ford and Iroquois Counties.



St. Paul's Woodworth 3rd Graders pose with their t-shirts after a successful Camp 911 program.



DISTRICT DISCUSSION MEET WINNER

Tony Dupuis from Clifton was named the District 6 Young Leader Discussion Meeting winner on July 28th at the Kankakee County Extension Office. He will go on to compete at the state level in Chicago on December 12th at the IAA Annual meeting. We are very proud to have him represent Iroquois County at the state level and we wish him the best of luck!

SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE PREVENTION MONTH

Mental health matters, especially in agriculture, where stress and isolation are common. National research shows farmers and ranchers experience suicide rates 2-5 times higher than the general population due to unique pressures like financial uncertainty, weather challenges, and long hours.

During Suicide Prevention Month, we want to remind you that support is available:

Farm Family Resource Initiative Helpline:

1-833-FarmSOS or 1-833-327-6767 | Serves farm families across the entire state of Illinois

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

1-800-273-TALK (8255)

Crisis Text Line:

Text TALK to 741-741 | Text with a trained counselor from the Crisis Text Line for free, 24/7

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

National Helpline:
1-800-662-HELP (4357)

Farm Aid Farmer Hotline:

1-800-FARM-AID (1-800-327-6243)

Avera Farm and Rural Stress Hotline:

1-800-691-4336

Illinois Warm Line:

1-866-359-7953 (call) or 1-866-880-4459 (text) More resources here: <https://www.ilfb.org/resources/farmer-rural-resources/mental-health-wellness/>.





RAFFLE WINNER

Congratulations to Colton Miller for being the lucky winner of our raffle drawing in our shed at the Iroquois County Fair! Throughout the week, we encourage fair goers to come by our building to enter to win a raffle. This years "Day at the Beach" basket included: 4 tickets to Indiana Beach, a JBL speaker, a 24-can cooler, 4 beach towels, a pool float, nerds gummy clusters and freeze-dried skittles.



YOUNG LEADERS SCAVENGER HUNT

The Ford-Iroquois Farm Bureau Young Leaders hosted their July meeting at the fairgrounds, where Young Leaders members and prospective members teamed up for a fun scavenger hunt. Participants followed clues and riddles throughout the grounds, searching for landmarks, livestock, exhibits, and other unique fair attractions to photograph along the way.

The event provided a great opportunity for friendly competition, teamwork, and fellowship among participants. Congratulations to the winning team, and a special thank you to Heritage FS for generously providing prizes for the winners. We appreciate their support in helping make the event a success and look forward to a rematch next year!

LIVESTOCK JUDGING CONTEST

On Thursday of the Iroquois County fair, we held our 3rd Annual Livestock Judging Contest in cooperation with the Iroquois West FFA Chapter. We had around 50 contestants judge four different species-- cattle, swine, sheep, and goats-- for the chance to win a banner and belt buckle for the highest-scoring individuals. Here are our age division winners:

BEGINNER DIVISION AGES 9 AND UNDER:

- 1st place: Trace Schwartz
- 2nd place: Brayden Brammer
- 3rd place: Sawyer Johnston

INTERMEDIATE DIVISION AGES 10-13:

- 1st place: Ben Clifton
- 2nd place: Carroll Prince
- 3rd place: Rhett Grabow

NOVICE CHAMPION: Ben Clifton

JUNIOR DIVISION AGES 14-16:

- 1st place: Pyper Johnston
- 2nd place: Ashtyn Hurliman
- 3rd place: Kempton DeOrnellas

SENIOR DIVISION AGES 17 AND UP:

- 1st place: Callie Dietrich
- 2nd place: Alivia Porter
- 3rd place: Nathan Brammer

VARSITY CHAMPION: Pyper Johnston

Thank you to everyone who showed up to compete as well as those families who let us use their livestock for the competition. Congratulations to our winners!

