



KANE
COUNTY

CULTIVATOR



Promoting sound Public Policy for the future of agriculture in Kane County.

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Two Special Invites for Local Public Officials

Farm Bureau extends a special invitation to all local municipal, township and county elected officials to join our volunteers for two events in March. Our 24th annual AgDays at Mooseheart and an "Open House and After Hours Mixer" at our award winning Touch-a-Tractor event, at the Farm Bureau, Randall Road at Oak Street, St. Charles.

AgDays

Our 24th annual AgDays will be held March 18, 19 & 20 at the Mooseheart Fieldhouse.

AgDays is an educational "expo" for county 4th graders to learn more about agriculture, farm life, commodities and natural resources.



Judy Klein, one of scores of AgDays volunteers, tells 4th graders about growing and selling vegetables from the family's farm in Burlington at the 2007 AgDays expo. 2008's expo will be held Mooseheart March 18-20.

Buses of students begin arriving each day at 9:00 a.m. and continue thru noon, with students rotating through up to 20 "stations" to learn a different agriculture lesson. And while 4th graders may be the target audience, most of our non-farm volunteers admit to learning quite a bit at the expo while escorting classrooms through the volunteer presentations.

Public officials are welcome to drop by anytime between the hours of 9 and noon on any of the three days.



Farm animals, and tractors, are always a hit at AgDays. Local FFA Chapters assist by caring for the animals.

Touch-a-Tractor

2008, the third year for Touch-a-Tractor, brings a new twist to this successful Farm-City program. A Friday evening "Open House and After Hours Mixer" for local public officials and Farm Bureau's volunteer leaders.

Touch-a-Tractor will be open to the public from 9 -5 on Friday, March 28. At 5:30, we will begin an Open House for public officials, complete with a family style barbeque. The event will replace the Government Affairs committee's annual Harvest Picnic for local officials, which will not be held in 2008, due to the scheduling of the organization's 95th Annual Meeting in September.

Touch-A-Tractor, as the name implies, gives the public the opportunity to see modern and antique farm equipment up-close and personal. It concludes on Saturday with the drawing of a winner in our Foundation's Winner's Choice Tractor Raffle. That winner will choose between a restored 1952 John Deere B, a new Cub Cadet LT1046 riding mower or \$2,500.

Farm trucks; straight and tandem axle, cab-over and conventional semis, and antique farm tractors are being sought for this popular event. Those who provide equipment to display will also receive an invite to the After Hours Mixer. For more information or to volunteer time or farm equipment, see page 3.



Old and new tractors like this antique Farmall H and Case IH STX 530, (left) plus modern farm equipment, like farmer Bruce Nagel's 60 foot wide split row corn and soy-bean planter,

(above) will be on public display March 28 & 29 at Touch-a-Tractor. The event brings a bit of the farm to the city at the Farm Bureau on Randall Road in St. Charles to help our urban neighbors learn more about farms, farmers and where food comes from. Hours: 9-5 Friday, March 28 and 10-4 Saturday, March 29.



43rd Dist Representative Ruth Munson, (R) Elgin

State Rep. Ruth Munson of Elgin will compete in the 7th Food Check Out Challenge February 8 at 10:30 a.m. at Jewel in Batavia. This KCFB effort has donated \$10,000 in groceries to local food pantries since it began in 2001.

www.kanecfb.com

Farm Policy has not failed America **By Stewart Truelsen**

One of the worst times to write a new farm bill is when agriculture is experiencing one of its few periods of comparative prosperity, as it is now. It was a different story during the writing of the 1985 farm bill. A sympathetic *Time* magazine cover story, on Feb. 18, 1985, began, "The hours are long and the work back-breaking. There always seems to be too much of something: rain, sun, insects, sometimes even crops...but somehow the farmer managed to get by."

A Nov. 2, 2007, *Time* cover story had a decidedly different tone. The writer, Michael Grunwald, blasted the farmer for having it too good. According to him, "The government still gives farmers your money – more than ever over the past decade – along with research projects to expand their yields, restoration projects for cleaning up their messes, flood control and irrigation projects to protect and enhance their land, visa programs to supply them with cheap labor, ethanol mandates and tariffs to boost their prices, and tax breaks by the bushel." Farmers are not even farmers to Grunwald but agro-industrialists.

If farmers have it so good thanks to a beneficent federal government, then

there must be a rush to get into this easy and lucrative farming business. Grunwald admitted that isn't the case. In fact, he noted that the average farm family receives 82 percent of its income from off-farm sources – a job in town. It's not just Grunwald or *Time* magazine that has this negative attitude. Many articles and editorials in major dailies similarly attack agriculture and the 2007 farm bill.

If government farm policy has been such a colossal failure, then American farmers should be out of business by now and consumers should be getting their food from foreign countries, but that's hardly the case. If there is one thing Americans can rely on, it is their domestic food supply.

U.S. agriculture, despite all the risk and uncertainty facing farmers, is far more dependable than other major industries. You stand a much greater chance of experiencing a power outage than finding empty supermarket shelves. Your next airline flight may be delayed or cancelled, but your next glass of milk will be there for you – thanks to farmers and dairy cows.

One could understand all the farmer- and farm-program bashing if food was as expensive as health care, or we had to take out an adjustable rate loan to pay the

yearly food bill, but that is far from reality. When it comes to food, the vast majority of Americans have never had it so good.

Nevertheless, the criticism is not going away. Criticism of farm programs actually preceded the programs themselves. In the 1920s, as Farm Bureau sought equality for agriculture and a program to manage surpluses, grain traders and food processors lobbied against farm legislation because they were afraid it would end price speculation or raise their cost of business. The critics today have a different agenda, but generally it's not about guaranteeing the consumer a reliable food supply.

Banking, housing, energy, transportation, labor and other segments of the economy all have government programs, built-in subsidies, favorable legislation and beneficial regulations that far exceed the support provided by farm programs. Unlike farmers, however, they generally are not expected to regularly justify – in *Time* magazine or elsewhere – their need for public investment in the programs that help them serve America.

Stewart Truelsen is a regular contributor to the American Farm Bureau Federation's Focus on Agriculture series.

Lunches to Legislators

Volunteer leaders of the Kane County Farm Bureau and the Kane County Corn Growers will fan out across the county and as far away as down-

town Chicago on Monday, February 11 in what has become an annual effort to build goodwill with



Senator Chris Lauzen meets FB members in his Aurora office during the 2005 "Lunches" program.

local elected officials and to remind them of their role in keeping food affordable. "Lunches to Legislators" is an annual follow-up to the American Farm Bureau Federation's Food Check Out Day. It helps acquaint our volunteer leaders with elected officials serving Kane County as well as their staff members and provides an opportunity to visit in a more relaxed setting, over lunch, without them having to leave their office.

Invites to public officials for the lunches have already gone in the mail. Volunteers who would like to assist with this government relations program effort are asked to call Steve Arnold at 630 584-8660 for further details.

Local Farms—in the movies?



No, but through a link on our website to YouTube, visitors can see local farms and farmers in

action. It's a new addition and we've yet to build our video library, but it's a start of a new way to inform the public about where their food originates. Check it out at www.kanecfb.com.

Farmland Protection the topic of two local meetings

Supporters of Farmland Protection will have two opportunities to learn more at upcoming meetings in February.

The first is the Protecting Farmland in Northeast Illinois 2008 Conference. Sponsored by the non-profit Openlands, the conference will be Friday and Saturday, February 1 and 2, at Siegle Auditorium, Elgin Community College.

Farmers, landowners, elected and appointed officials, citizens and agricultural professionals are encouraged to attend. There will be sessions available to everyone, including the opportunity to learn from case studies and practical examples from Illinois and other states.

For reservation or questions, contact Openlands at 312-863-6250 or visit www.openlands.org.

The second is a public meeting sched-

uled for February 18 at DeKalb County Farm Bureau. J. Dixon Esseks, emeritus professor of public administration at Northern Illinois University, will discuss his findings from a study researching the viability of agriculture in urban communities at an informational program entitled "Farm Viability on the Urban Edge".

Joining Esseks in an explanation of the study findings will be Anita Zurbrugg, assistant director of the American Farmland Trust Center for Agriculture in the Environment at DeKalb. Zurbrugg provides legal and policy research in agricultural land use and conservation issues.

The program will be held in the Farm Bureau theatre at DeKalb County Farm Bureau Center for Agriculture, 1350 W. Prairie Drive, Sycamore. It is open to the public and begins at 7 p.m.



During a July 2007 tour of protected farmland in Kane County, County Board member Mike Kenyon and Board Chair Karen McConaughay unveil a sign to mark permanently protected farmland. Farm Bureau is currently seeking support for two bills in the Illinois General Assembly that would expand local authority and funding sources for farmland protection programs.

Volunteer assistance sought for Farm Bureau's educational and Community Service programs in March.

SPROUTS is a new program of classroom reading for third graders to be held April 2-4. To make this program a success, we are now looking for volunteers to read to the students.

Kane County Farm Bureau will host an informational meeting for volunteers to review the book and learn tips for involving students in discussion on Tuesday, March 4, 2008, at 6:30 p.m. at Salerno's in St. Charles. All members are invited. No experience necessary.

Preliminary plans call for each volunteer to spend about 20 minutes in the classroom, reading and discussing a pre-

selected book before leaving the classroom with a second book to help the school build its library of books about Agriculture.

SPROUTS will help to educate 3rd grade students about agriculture, before they are invited to Kane County Farm Bureau's Ag Days as part of the 4th grade curriculum. In addition, the program will help spread the word about Ag in the Classroom resources, interest teachers in incorporating agriculture curriculum and create goodwill for the farming community. We hope you will join us to make this program a success

Ag Days volunteer help is needed:

To package materials for students (at the Kane County Farm Bureau pizza/soft drinks provided)

Thursday, March 13th 4:00 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.

To chaperone students through exhibits (at Mooseheart, lunch provided)

Tues., March 18th 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Wed., March 19th 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Thurs., March 20th 8:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

To volunteer for any of these times, contact Suzi at Kane County Farm Bureau (630) 584-8660

Help make **SPROUTS** a success.

Please contact me to tell me more information.

Please reserve a spot for me at the March 4 meeting.

I'd like to volunteer to read to a classroom.

(Please check all that apply)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Clip and return to :
Kane County Farm Bureau
2N710 Randall Road
St. Charles, IL 60174

Farm Trucks and Antique Tractors sought for **Touch-a-Tractor**.

Contact me about volunteer opportunities on Fri., Mar 28 Sat., Mar 29

I would like to bring the following farm equipment to display.

Please provide a brief description of the equipment. For tractors/trucks, include year, make, model.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ St _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

Clip and return to Kane County Farm Bureau, 2N710 Randall Road, St. Charles, IL 60174

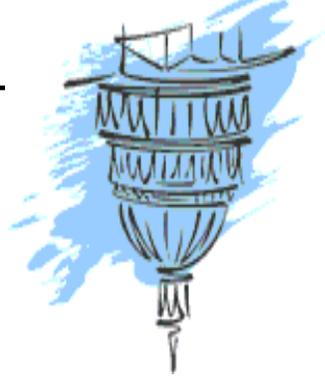
Direct questions, comments about the *Cultivator* to Kane County Farm Bureau at (630) 584-8660 or info@kanecfb.com

OUR MISSION:
ENHANCE THE QUALITY OF LIFE FOR MEMBER FAMILIES,
PROMOTE ALL ASPECTS OF AGRICULTURE AND
ADVOCATE GOOD STEWARDSHIP OF OUR LAND AND RESOURCES.

AFBF Accolades
For the second consecutive year, a Kane County Farm Bureau program was singled out for recognition by the American Farm Bureau Federation (AFBF). 2007's Red or Green Tractor Raffle was recognized as a county "Activity of Excellence" at the 89th AFBF Annual Meeting in New Orleans. The raffle helped the Farm Bureau Foundation fund \$25,000 in college scholarships as well as contributing to the expansion of Agriculture-in-the-Classroom programs.



Farm Credit System Administrator Leland Strom (r) purchases 2008 Raffle tickets at a display at the 89th AFBF Annual Meeting in New Orleans. The Raffle concludes March 29 at FB's Touch-A-Tractor.



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Vertical Farm?

A Las Vegas skyscraper dedicated to crop production may sound far-fetched, but such a plan appears to have the blessing of Nevada officials. Billed as the world's first vertical farm, the 30-story tower could open as soon as mid-2010 if all goes as planned. About 100 crops would be produced in the building and the products would go straight to casinos and resort hotels for immediate consumption. Crop diversification meets (literal) vertical integration. That's local food!

