

DECEMBER 2019

Focus on farm stress, mental health

The Rock Island County Farm Bureau is partnering with the National Alliance on Mental Illness of Greater Mississippi Valley to host “When Stress Is More Than A Season,” a program on farm stress and mental health. Farming is ranked as one of the highest occupations of stress, depression/anxiety and suicide. Discover what puts farmers at risk, how to identify warning signs, and what you can do to advocate for the health of your local farm friends.

The program will be Tuesday, Jan. 7, from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at WIU QC Riverfront Hall, 3300 River Drive Moline, in rooms 103/104. A light breakfast will be served. There is no cost to attend, but we do ask that



DeSutter
you RSVP. It will begin at 8 a.m. with registration, a light breakfast and welcome.

Our first speaker, Adrienne DeSutter, will begin at 8:30 a.m. Adrienne and her husband Drew farm with his family on a fourth-generation



Walters
corn and soybean farm. They have a small herd of beef cattle, and a small herd of children (two young daughters, their most precious commodity). A former school counselor and nationally certified counselor, Adrienne earned a master's degree in counseling in 2011, and has years of research experience focusing on rural psychology and education. She currently works off the farm as a behavioral health consultant in agriculture wellness, partnering with farm agencies to combat farmer suicide and provide education on behavioral health in agriculture. She also writes a wellness column for Illinois Farm Bureau, presents workshops throughout the country, and has been interviewed by local, state and national

media on related topics. Adrienne will present on signs and symptoms to look for, what to do if you or someone you know is showing any of these signs and symptoms, and what resources are available.

Our second speaker is Vicki Walters of the National Alliance on Mental Illness of the Greater Mississippi Valley. Vicki joined NAMI in 2004 as a volunteer when she took the Family to Family signature education program. As an adult child of a mother who was undiagnosed with a mental health condition for over 25 years and not knowing what she did not know, Vicki found HOPE and the help to help her mother receive the right diagnosis and work toward recovery for herself. In

2004, she became an instructor to teach this program to other family members and caregivers dealing with this same experience. In 2008, she became a state trainer and board member of our local affiliate and has been paying it forward for the past 14 years. In 2018, Vicki became a paid staff member as programs coordinator for our local affiliate, NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) of the Greater Mississippi Valley. She will speak about recovery and supporting family with mental health, self-care and NAMI/community resources.

RVSP to the Rock Island County Farm Bureau at (309) 736-7432 or tmayhew@ricofarmbureau.org by Jan. 2.

Calendar of Events

DECEMBER 2019

2	District Resolutions Meeting
7-10	IAA Annual Meeting
16	RICFB Board of Director's Meeting; 7 p.m.
24-25	Office closed for Christmas
31	Office closed for New Year's Eve

JANUARY 2020

1	Office closed for New Year's Day
7	When Stress is More Than a Season, program on farm stress and mental health; WIU QC Riverfront Hall
17-22	AFBF Convention; Austin, TX
19-21	QC Farm Show; QCCA Expo Center
Jan. 31-Feb. 1	Young Leader Conference; East Peoria, IL

FARM GATE

Tree memories glow brightly

By JOANIE STIERS

Six Christmas trees help set the holiday mood in our home. My husband keeps a different tally, pointing out that our indoor forest calculates to a few dozen evergreens when you count the 12-inch trees atop the kitchen cupboards and the backdrop to our Nativity display. Don't forget the tabletop trees that surround my Christmas barns, or the set of trees cut from aged barn wood displayed on our bathroom counter. In the kitchen, we decorate a pencil tree with old family cookie cutters, a personal favorite.

I love Christmas trees. In fact, they seem to make all of us happy, so we planted a short-needed evergreen in our front landscaping last year. Their presence and meaning bring together some of our most favorite things. Family time, farm influences and rustic decor intertwine with a Christian holiday, making our hearts and minivan

radio break into Christmas songs.

This time of year, I most especially enjoy staying home in our tree-filled retreat, anticipating the moments when programmed timers cue the Christmas lights throughout the house. Our family gathers next to the lit living room tree to watch Christmas movies. I fall asleep by tree light in our bedroom. I savor the peace of early morning, rolling out cinnamon rolls before dawn with the glowing Christmas tree.

Consistent with the memories of my childhood, we shop the Christmas tree farm right after Thanksgiving, connecting with families growing a different crop for a different harvest season. We walk the farm and take a family vote for the best nine-foot fir. This tree, the only real one in our home, bears the gifts, the Christmas star, and the most sentimental ornaments.

Five other trees, all six-foot artificials,

take on our family's personalities through themes of hunting, fishing, the farm and our alma mater.

My husband should have predicted my obsession for needed trees upon marriage to me, a farmgirl born on Christmas Eve. At our September wedding reception in the farm shop, guests placed gifts under a 12-foot, fresh-cut pine, a gift itself from the local tree farm.

A few tree tribulations since have tested the marriage. Most notably, my husband tells the story of cutting a board from the unfinished garage wall to improve the “cheap tree stand” he says that I purchased for our first Christmas together. Without elaborating, the story ends well. We've celebrated 17 Christmases since.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Joanie Stiers' family grows corn, soybeans and hay and raises beef cattle in West-Central Illinois.

How to help ensure ag's future

Remember the RICFB Foundation in your charitable giving toward the end of the year. Over \$150,000 in scholarships have been given since 1998, with over \$130,000 being distributed since 2002, when the foundation was started. Our 501c3 status works, thanks to the charitable minds of our donors.

The annual budget for the foundation is \$22,000. Each year over 50 percent goes to scholarships and 50 percent goes toward Agriculture in the Classroom and Market Outlook/Education programs. No dollars are spent on staffing salaries.

The RICFB Foundation's mission statement is to promote production agriculture and the food, fiber and fuel system through quality agriculture literacy efforts in the schools and communities of Rock Island County. The farm population represents less than 1 percent of the 125,000

total population. Our opportunity to educate the non-farm public is tremendous and provides a wealth of opportunity to break down agriculture's myths and open the public up to the tremendous benefits agriculture has to offer.

The foundation's passion also comes from a desire to provide a thorough understanding of where food comes from. Two ways we communicate that philosophy is through involvement in the schools and special events with media and key community leaders. One way we support the community is by investing in Quad City teacher training. Annually we reach over 50 teachers through in-service/onsite training as well as week-long graduate credit courses.

If you'd like to donate to the Rock Island County Farm Bureau Foundation, call us at (309) 736-7432 or follow our website's PayPal link: www.ricofarmbureau.org/about.html

2020

Save the Date

YOUNG LEADER CONFERENCE

JANUARY 31- FEBRUARY 1

Embassy Suites Riverfront Hotel & Conference Center East Peoria, IL

DREAM MAKERS

"Never give up on your dreams."

- Jim "The Rookie" Morris

Keynote speaker

10th Annual BUSHELS FOR HUNGER

2018-2019 Donation \$24,175

Grand total Since 2010 \$227,000

Tell your participating elevator that you would like to donate.

Proceeds benefit the River Bend Foodbank.

Sponsored by the Henry, Mercer, Rock Island, and Whiteside County Farm Bureaus

GIVE THE GIFT OF Membership THIS CHRISTMAS

WWW.MYIFB.ORG • 309-736-7432

We would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!