



WOMEN IN AGRICULTURE

More than 200 attend event

March 20th marked the fourth year for the Women in Agriculture event on the Illinois side at Jumer's Casino.

The Women in Agriculture conference is led by Rock Island County Farm Bureau Manager DeAnne Bloomberg and features 11 additional CFB managers in Illinois as well as support from the Scott County Farm Bureau and Scott County Extension, where the event began in 2008.

Once the event moved to Illinois the event doubled in size. Dr. David Kohl (pictured above) was the keynote speaker and focused on "Agriculture: Straight Talk, Straight Actions." Kohl also spoke to guests at a spouse/guest pre-event on Thursday night with a different message – Building Resiliency and Agility.

Kohl overwhelmingly received rave reviews, with many attendees asking for a boot camp talk with Dr. Kohl.

Planning has already begun for 2016, with speakers already being organized.



One of the Women in Agriculture 2015 break-outs was IFB's Lauren Lurkins, who is on staff at home office and dedicates her time solely to environmental regulations and natural resource topics related solely to farming. Lauren brings her lawyer expertise to the Farm Bureau along with a background in environmental law. Her focus has been on water use reporting, nutrient management standards, cover crops, water quality and more.



Rock Island County "women in agriculture" attend the WIA conference. Angela Freyermuth, Jolee Franks, Alicia Bull, Megan Klauer (above) and Dana Fuhr (right) are just a few of the ladies from Rock Island County who attended – but a great snapshot of who was at the conference.



Dear Farming/Voting member:

Beginning June 1, 2015, the Rock Island CFB office will have staffed office hours Monday-Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. This means we will have staff available to answer your member questions, purchase plat books, and other services as necessary from the Farm Bureau. This allows the county Farm Bureau to utilize dollars more effectively as a result of decreased labor costs. At the same time, this allows the CFB manager to allocate their time more efficiently to promote agriculture and farmer's interests at various levels, including dialogues with our farm and non-farm audiences.

Since August 2014, when the combined billing program began, roughly 86 percent of associate/non-farm memberships are now processed through the combined billing program. Voting members are not part of this program at the current time. This has decreased the workload for CFB staff.

The Farm Bureau manager has worked with the RICFB Board of Directors over the past year to prepare for retirements this past January. Walk-in traffic and phone calls have been analyzed and tracked in an effort to understand what a CFB office staff serves. Our website – www.ricofarmbureau.org – has many questions and information related to routine questions – but please understand your service as it relates to farm issues remains the same.

If you have questions or comments – please feel free to contact one of the Farm Bureau director's listed below or contact DeAnne Bloomberg at the office.

President, Marty McManus
Vice President, Stan Woodburn
Secretary, Dennis Van Daele
Treasurer, Fred Nightingale
At Large Executive Member, Phil Fuhr
District 1: Bill Onken, Kevin Oak, David Mueller, Brian Brown
District 2: Andy DeKeyrel, Bradley Erickson
District 3: Brent Riewerts, Mike Sadoris, Mitch Jurevitz, Drew Hohenboken
Manager: DeAnne Bloomberg

ROCK ISLAND COUNTY NEWS

■ **Consumer dialogue:** Knox, Mercer, Henry and Rock Island County Farm Bureaus teamed up to sponsor and host a booth at the KWQC Women's Lifestyle and Health Fair on Saturday, March 7, at the RiverCenter in downtown Davenport. Farmer members worked the booth to hand out flyers on how farmers grow food and free "jar openers" that led ladies to the www.watchusgrow.org website. Over 1,500 pieces were handed out and 750 ladies registered in the door prize drawing. If you are interested in more consumer dialogues, contact DeAnne at the Farm Bureau office or email her at dbloomberg@ricofarmbureau.org.

■ **Media relations:** Directors organized a cookout at WQAD on March 9 to meet with reporters and photogs as a way to answer questions about farming and issues. Media cookouts have been a regular occurrence since 1997 as a way to open up conversation with the news media and farmers. The dialogue helps both parties understand how each of their industries work.

■ **Local affairs:** Rock Island County Farm Bureau board meets with Aaron Tennant of Tennant Truck Lines at March 16 board meeting to discuss the IFTA. Directors have been studying the number of audits conducted on farm plates and how the IFTA works for high-mileage vs. low-mileage operators. Currently the RICFB is working with IFB staff to get further details on the number of audits conducted by IDOR and the relationship to farm plates.

■ **Young farmer development:** Mercer and Rock Island County Young Leaders held a meeting March 11 to make summer plans, including a cookout with elected officials. IFB Associate Director of National Legislation Ryan Whitehouse was the featured guest speaker to talk specifically about young farmer/young leader engagement in the political and governmental process. Rock Island County's young farmer Shea Bieri participated in the first ever District 3 Young Leader Mock Discussion Meet held on Wednesday, March 25, at Wyffels Hybrids headquarters in Geneseo. Four young leaders participated in the event. The event was held to encourage interest in the district and state young leader discussion meet. August will feature the district discussion meeting, with winners advancing onto the December competition at the IAA Annual Meeting in Chicago.

■ **Policy enhancement:** District 3 Policy event held at Rock Island County Farm Bureau on March 10 to discuss IFB policy and ways to improve the content. In addition, board members from each of the four county Farm Bureaus had the opportunity to talk about further legislation opportunities regarding eminent domain as it relates to utility projects.

April Board Meeting moved from April 20th to April 8th to accommodate the busy schedule of spring planting. Have a safe planting season.