ROCK ISLAND COUNTY FARM BUREAU
NEWS
May 2026 Editor: Tara Mayhew

MARKET OUTLOOK SEMINAR

Kristi Van Ahn Kjeseth, Chief Operating Officer, Van Ahn and Company, Inc., will be the featured speaker on Tuesday, June 30, 2026 at 6:15 p.m. at Lavender Crest Winery, 5401 US Highway 6, Colona. Dinner will be served, followed by the local grain market update from Tom Parchert of River Valley Cooperative. ***Reservations are required and must be made by June 23 to guarantee your attendance.***

Kristi started with Van Ahn and Company, Inc. part-time in 2009 while she finished her last year of college at North Dakota State University. She graduated with a degree in finance and a minor in Ag Business. Kristi is very proud that she gets to carry on a family business and hopes that it continues to flourish for generations to come. Kristi is married with three daughters (just like how she grew up).

A comment from Kristi: "There are many things that I love about my job, but what I love the most is the integral part of relationship building we get to do with our producers for marketing. It is very important to remove the emotion involved in marketing and someone helping you do that along the way, is key."

Cost for the series is $90.00 and a single session is $35.00 (if not pre-registered, cost will be $40.00). To make reservations, please contact the Rock Island County Farm Bureau at (309) 736-7432 or email tmayhew@ricofarmbureau.org.

The Market Outlook Series is sponsored by the Henry, Mercer and Rock Island County Farm Bureau Marketing Committees and the following: Gold Star FS, COUNTRY Financial, BankORION, Alan Davis - COUNTRY Crop Insurance Specialist, Central Bank, River Valley Cooperative, Wyffels Hybrids, Big River Resources, Hertz Farm Management, State Bank of Toulon, IAA Credit Union and Blackhawk Bank & Trust.

KIERNEY MCDONALD JOINS RICFB

Kierney McDonald has been hired as our new Ag Literacy Coordinator and Administrative Assistant! She will begin her career with us on June 1st. Read on to learn more about Kierney:

My name is Kierney McDonald, and I am very excited to serve as the Agriculture Literacy and Engagement Coordinator for the Rock Island County Farm Bureau! I am originally from Taylor Ridge, Illinois, and graduated from Rockridge High School. My passion for agriculture started on our family farm, where we grow corn and soybeans in addition to raising commercial beef cattle. I will be graduating from the University of Wisconsin-Platteville in May with a degree in Agribusiness and an emphasis in Marketing and Communications. I enjoy spending time with friends and family, coaching volleyball, and reading.

HELPING FARMERS TAKE THE INITIATIVE

May is Mental Health Awareness Month, a time to raise awareness about mental health and promote resources and support. This is especially important for farmers, whose mental health is often overlooked and under-addressed.

In recent years, mental health has become a prevalent topic in our daily lives. The constant change and stress, compounded by the pandemic, have left many people feeling depressed or anxious, and farmers are no exception.

Fortunately, help is available through SIU Medicine's program designed to assist farmers and their families. The Farm Family Resource Initiative (FFRI) provides a network of support and resources, including a confidential 24/7 helpline (1-833-FARM-SOS) connecting you to health professionals who specialize in ag-related stress. These medical professionals live in Illinois and can relate to the local economy, weather, and other daily stressors specific to our region.

In addition to text, email, and website services, telehealth counseling sessions are available for those in need of additional support. Up to six individual, couple, or group sessions are available, all at no cost to the farmer or farm family member thanks to grant funding.

FFRI Ag Resource Specialist Karen Stallman understands the challenges that farm families may encounter, having lived on a farm in southern Illinois. "In farming, there tends to be a new challenge each day, and nothing seems easy," Stallman says.

FFRI also offers opportunities for healthcare professionals to learn more about farming-related issues and earn CME credits through its Rural Community Mental Health program. The virtual training illuminates how mental and physical health issues can impact those working in farming and agriculture. To learn more, visit siumed.edu/farm/events-and-webinars.

The AgriSafe Nurse Scholar Program is also available to rural nurses through on-demand webinars, increasing their knowledge in the prevention, identification, and assessment of diseases related to agricultural work exposures. Find more details by visiting learning.agrisafe.org/nurse-scholar-program.

It is crucial to recognize that mental health care is not a luxury and that seeking help is a sign of strength, not weakness. The Family Farm Resource Initiative is just one example of the resources available to those in agriculture who may be struggling with their mental health.

Please check on friends, family members, and neighbors regularly. Spread the word about the Farm Family Resource Initiative and encourage others to reach out and talk to someone. It may save the life of someone you know!

This Mental Health Awareness Month, let us continue to advocate for mental health care and support in the agricultural community and beyond. Let us work together to break down the stigma surrounding mental health and encourage those who may be struggling to reach out for help. Together, we can promote healing and well-being for all. Find more information about the FFRI at siumed.org/farm.

UPCOMING EVENTS

MAY - BEEF & MENTAL HEALTH MONTH

1 ..... RIMSAP applications due
6-8 ..... Managers Outing
15 ..... IVET applications due
18 ..... RICFB Board of Directors meeting
26 ..... Young Leaders meeting

JUNE - DAIRY MONTH

1 ..... Welcome Kierney!
15 ..... RICFB Board of Directors meeting
18 ..... Rep Dan Swanson Ag Day with Boys & Girls Club
23 ..... Deadline to register for Market Outlook
30 ..... Market Outlook with Kristi Van Ahn-Kjeseth

WANT STAY UP TO DATE WITH EVENTS? SEND US YOUR EMAIL TO ACCOUNTS@RICOFARMBUREAU.ORG AND LIKE US ON FACEBOOK!