

DIGITAL INSIGHT *Brief*

Welcome! We are excited to introduce this new update format alongside our Woodford County Review newsletter. Through Digital Insight Brief, members, community partners, and local leaders can stay informed on important updates, programs, and initiatives impacting agriculture and rural life in Woodford County.

Manager Minute

Like a lot of people, January always feels like a reset to me. I'm not much of a "resolutions" person, but as a self-admitted Type A planner, I do love what a new year brings. It's a chance to look ahead, make a few lists, and start thinking about what this next year might look like.

A few years ago, instead of resolutions, I started picking a word for the year. One year it was "no," because I had a hard time saying it and found myself volunteering for just about everything. This past year, my word was "intention." I wanted the time and energy I put into things to have meaning, including the work we do here at Farm Bureau. That work extends beyond our membership and into the broader community, as we collaborate with local leaders and partners to support informed decision-making and long-term planning for Woodford County agriculture. I wanted everything to tie back to our mission of supporting and advocating for our farmers and rural communities.

That mindset fits this time of year especially well. Winter may feel quieter on the calendar, but it's an important season for preparation. For Farm Bureau, this is when ideas take shape and plans start turning into action. Our winter programming reflects that, with a workshop series focused on practical topics like market outlooks, CRP practices, and agronomy to help support planning for the season ahead.

This is also the time when good conversations happen. The ones that help inform decisions now and shape what the rest of the year will look like, even if the results are not immediately visible.

As I write this, I haven't quite landed on my word for the year yet, but I know it will come. For now, January is about reflection, thoughtful planning, and trusting that progress often starts long before it shows up in the field.

Upcoming Events

- Feb 10 *Business Series Session 2: CRP Best Practices 8:30am*
- Feb 17 *Quarter Auction Fundraiser @ Barn III 5:00pm*
- Feb 19 *Dementia Friends Workshop 6:00pm*
- Mar 3 *Business Series Session 3: Agronomy 101 8:30am*
- Mar 27 *Women in Ag Conference @ Bally's, Rock Island, IL*

**Register for workshops by calling 309-467-2347 or by email woodfordcfb@gmail.com*

**All workshops are held at the FB Building, 117 W Center St, Eureka, IL 61530 unless otherwise noted*

**Unless otherwise noted, events are open to both Farm Bureau members and community partners.*

Government Affairs

Local

The Illinois Institute for Rural Affairs will host the 37th Annual Rural Community and Economic Development Conference in conjunction with the Governor's Rural Affairs Council and Rural Partners on February 25 & 26, 2026, at the Abraham Lincoln Hotel in Springfield. Early bird registration is available through February 5th for \$275. A reduced rate hotel block is available for \$110 (+tax) per night - reservations must be made by February 3rd to receive this rate. The conference highlights opportunities that may exist in your area and how local groups have transformed assets in their own communities into successful development strategies. Upgrading health care, working with youth to find local employment opportunities, enhancing housing and transforming local attractions into profitable tourist adventures are just a few of the topics discussed. More information, including the agenda, registration link and hotel reservations can be found here: <https://iira.org/conferences-trainings-and-workshops/rcedc/>

State

The 2026 Illinois Legislative Session has started. The Illinois Senate briefly returned to Springfield on January 13th for organizational purposes and will return on February 3rd. The House of Representatives convened this week, January 20th, for a few days and will return in February. In the meantime, legislation is being drafted and introduced.

National

Groundwork in Washington, D.C. was being laid for the current funding packages needed to keep the federal government open past the January 31 ending of the Continuing Resolution. This week in the House of Representatives a bipartisan budget package of the remaining appropriation bills was unveiled. Year-round E15 was left out of the final spending package, despite many efforts from agriculture and ethanol groups.

Ag in the Classroom

Ag in the Classroom serves 11 classrooms, K-5, and over 650 students. During 3rd quarter, the students learn the Water Cycle and Watershed and how it impacts Woodford County's agriculture and community. This program helps students in Woodford County better understand the role agriculture plays in their daily lives and local community.

Women's Committee

The Women's Committee works to bring members and the community together while showcasing agriculture and building connections among women in ag. Their next quarterly event will be held Feb. 5 and features a hands-on workshop with Nana's Tallow Skincare to learn how to make tallow lip balm. Limited seats are still available. Planning is underway for the Spring 2026 event, with details coming soon. Interested in helping plan future events? Contact the office or Women's Committee Chair Jenna Nicholson to get involved.

Young Leaders

The Young Leaders group focuses on developing leadership skills, building professional networks, and connecting young adults in agriculture ages 18-35. Next week is Young Leader Conference, featuring keynote speaker Lance Weaver, Business Coach and Legacy Farmer. If you're interested in joining the Young Leaders group or getting involved, please contact our office.

A monthly snapshot of Farm Bureau activity, advocacy, and community engagement in Woodford County.

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