DEKALB COUNTY FARM BUREAU

Soil, Seed, Success... Celebrating 100 years.

daily chronicle
A Century of Progress

Thank You to the DeKalb County community for your support!
SYCAMORE – It has been a milestone year for the DeKalb County Farm Bureau.

“It has been a rewarding year for the organization, because it’s a milestone that not many businesses or organizations reach,” manager Greg Millburg said. “It’s remarkable to look back 100 years ago and to see the business community and the ag community come together and form an organization that’s still in existence today,”

The DeKalb County Farm Bureau has used “Soil, Seed, Success” throughout its centennial year to honor its long-standing partnerships in the community.

“We started 100 years ago, in 1912, because the farmers and business leaders came together and determined there was a need for this organization,” said Mark Tuttle, the Farm Bureau’s 15th president.

In 1926 the SIA changed its name to the DeKalb County Farm Bureau. Throughout the decades the Farm Bureau has provided a variety of services to its member farmers. In the 1930s it provided refrigeration services to livestock producers who did not yet have electricity on their farms. It has provided fuel and insurance services that were tailored to meet farmers’ needs, and it established a subsidiary corporation to export agricultural commodities produced in DeKalb County.

“It’s one of the first in the country and absolutely the most successful in the nation,” said Eric Mogren, author of the 2005 book “Native Soil: A History of the DeKalb County Farm Bureau”.

Today the county organization boasts a membership of 6,500 but much of the Farm Bureau’s focus is not on educating farmers, but on educating the public, business leaders, and government officials on public policy issues that are important to agriculture and rural America.

“I think some government legislation is a real hindrance,” Tuttle said. “Working with government is going to be a big part of what we do over the next couple of decades.”

The Farm Bureau regularly alerts its members when public policy matters that affect agriculture are under consideration. Its members lobby policymakers on issues like taxation, environmental and energy regulations, and food safety. It also informs the public about controversial and sometimes misunderstood issues like “pink slime”, ethanol, and high fructose corn syrup.

Tuttle feels that increasing agricultural literacy and educating the public about the vital role of agriculture is one way for the Farm Bureau to give back to the community that has supported it for a century.

“This is a way for us at the Farm Bureau to say thank you to the community. Any service we can provide to the community, we are happy to look at and do,” Tuttle said.
The leading ag products in DeKalb County are: corn, soybeans, hogs and cattle.

DeKalb County benefits from the economic stability provided by the county’s agricultural base. The value of agricultural production in DeKalb County totals more than $447 million annually.

Contributing to this value are the leading ag products. Corn is grown on two-thirds of the farmland acres and soybeans are raised on one-fourth of the acreage. DeKalb County is the second largest hog producing county in the state with 506,000 hogs marketed each year. About 28,000 head of cattle are marketed annually.

DeKalb County also is home to a number of specialty farm operations producing a wide range of ag products such as dairy, sheep, wheat and hay, Christmas trees, apples, and pumpkins.

The county’s rural agricultural base is noteworthy, with 88 percent of the land used for farmland. There are 930 farms with an average size of 1,166 acres. The total amount of farmland in DeKalb County is 370,772 acres.
A generous donation from the DeKalb County Farm Bureau in 1972, was just enough to allow construction of Kishwaukee Community Hospital to move forward. Our histories will always be linked for the betterment of the communities we both serve.

Congratulations, Farm Bureau, on your 100-year milestone.
By Curtis Clegg
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When DeKalb County Farm Bureau’s Board of Directors designed the Center for Agriculture, which opened in 1996, they wanted the building to be more than just a headquarters for their organization.

“They wanted it to be a one-stop shop for farmers,” said Mariam Wassmann, director of information for the DeKalb County Farm Bureau.

The spacious building at 1350 W. Prairie Drive in Sycamore, at the intersection of Peace and Bethany roads, is home to a handful of other agriculture-related organizations.

The building is home to Farm Business Farm Management, a cooperative educational-service program to assist farm operators with record keeping and management decision-making.

Also in the building is the University of Illinois Extension, DeKalb County which is responsible for most of the county’s 4-H activities, educational programs, and the county’s master gardener program.

Two United States Department of Agriculture offices are in the center as well - the Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service, along with the county’s Soil and Water Conservation District.

Farmers’ unique financial needs can be met by 1st Farm Credit Services, as well as an office of the farm department of National Bank & Trust Company.

Finally, COUNTRY Financial can help farmers meet their specialized insurance needs, as well as provide financial advice.

Greg Millburg, manager of DeKalb County Farm Bureau, said that the various tenants in the building reflect the vital partnerships that have developed between Farm Bureau and local businesses over the last century.

“They were ideas that came from the Farm Bureau membership,” Mark Tuttle, Farm Bureau president said. “It started in the ‘20s - the farmers were having trouble buying fuel so they put together a co-op and they began buying gasoline and distillates for the farm. That’s how FS (Farm Supply) originated.”

A new addition to the building during the Farm Bureau’s centennial year was a series of hand-crafted display cases built by Michael Holtz of Sycamore that house photographs and artifacts from the organization’s past.
“That was another great idea that came from our 100 year anniversary committee,” said Tuttle. “We put these show cases in – they were hand-crafted right here in DeKalb County. The idea is to share with our membership and visitors what has happened over the last 100 years. There is a lot of great information in there, and histories that people have forgotten about.”

Millburg said that the display cases are for the benefit of the entire community, noting that outside groups often use the facility’s meeting rooms and auditorium for community events.

“The goal when we developed the history cases was for the benefit of Farm Bureau and the community surrounding us,” Millburg said. “Thousands of people a year utilize this facility for various meetings and this was one way that we could share with them the story of agriculture and also the story of Farm Bureau.”
A century old, the DeKalb County Farm Bureau has been well represented by hundreds of farmers serving in leadership roles. Considered the backbone of the organization, farmers have served on the board of directors, been involved in ag task forces and chaired various committees, working to better production agriculture.

As farmer volunteers, they have embraced the premier agricultural organization in the county which they refer to as their “voice for agriculture.” Farm Bureau lobbies for agriculture in county, state and national issues speaking on behalf of farmers.

In the 100-year history, the county Farm Bureau has had 15 presidents:

1912-1923  Dillon S. Brown
1923-1924  Henry H. Parke
1924-1928  Henry J. White
1928-1931  Aaron J. Plapp
1931-1933  L.D. Sears
1933-1946  E.E. Houghtby
1946-1950  George Bark
1950-1956  Lloyd B. Waldee
1956-1974  Howard Mullins
1974-1977  Donald Chaplin
1977-1986  Allan Aves
1986-1997  Ken Barshinger
1997-2002  Vince Faire
2002-2012  Paul Rasmussen, Jr.
2012-present Mark Tuttle

In the past 35 years, five presidents have served as leaders of Farm Bureau. They and their presidential terms are: (from left) Mark Tuttle, 2012; Paul Rasmussen, Jr., 2002-2012; Vince Faivre, 1997-2002; Ken Barshinger, 1986-1997; and Allan Aves, 1977-1986.
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**Dekalb County Farm bureau 100th anniversary**

Congratulationsto The DeKalb County Farm Bureau for 100 Years of Leadership, Commitment & Success!
By CURTIS CLEGG
cclegg@shawmedia.com

SYCAMORE – When it comes to agricultural literacy, DeKalb County Farm Bureau has a big job to do.

“The need is huge,” said Rhodora Collins, ag literacy coordinator, about the need for agricultural education. “Even in an agricultural county, our ag in the classroom volunteers will stop by and I’ll ask how their presentations went, they’ll say, ‘I was really surprised when I asked students to raise their hands if they were raised on a farm, and only one or two did.’”

Despite DeKalb County’s heritage as an agricultural community, fewer and fewer county residents are living on farms or participating in agriculture, leading to a dearth of knowledge about the very livelihood that continues to grow in scope and size each year. However, due to the ever-increasing role of science and technology in agriculture, there are about 300 career options that are directly or indirectly related to agriculture.

“It’s not just being on a tractor,” Collins said. “It’s being a scientist or working in the food industry or transportation. There are areas of the industry that are hurting for good, skilled people.”

Throughout the school year, a team of volunteers give presentations to 165 classrooms in DeKalb County, teaching almost 4,000 students about the role of agriculture in their lives.

“Our ag literacy program is a way to bring the knowledge of agriculture into the schools so people do become more informed about it, because we are three and four generations removed from people who were born and raised on the farm,” said Mark Tuttle, president of DeKalb County Farm Bureau. “Not every kid has grandpa’s farm any more. Now we have kids that have never been on a farm.”

Much of the ag literacy program emphasis is within DeKalb County classrooms, developing curricula for both children and adults in the community, and sponsoring field trips. Time is also spent developing lessons about the origins of food and food production, often with hands-on activities for the students like planting corn and soybeans and making ice cream.

The Farm Bureau organization also tries to dispel popular misconceptions about farming and agricultural practices in person and online.

For example, Farm Bureau recently launched its Agricultural Literacy Facebook page and a YouTube channel, plus updated its website as additional ways to reach the community, students, and their parents.

“One of Farm Bureau’s objectives when we are reaching out to the children is to reach out to their parents as well,” Collins said. “We hope the kids will take the information home and say ‘Hey Mom, look what I learned today.’”
Teachers and students benefit from Farm Bureau Ag Literacy Program. DeKalb area farmer Jamie Walter explains the purpose of a riparian filter strip, a 120-ft. native plant border adjacent to a stream which runs through the ground he farms.

Photos from top to bottom:
Summer Ag Institute teachers learned about soil and water conservation practices during tours of local farms. DeKalb area farmer Jamie Walter explains the purpose of a riparian filter strip, a 120-ft. native plant border adjacent to a stream which runs through the ground he farms.

Second graders learn about dairy farming and make ice cream during the “From Cow to Ice Cream” lesson. Volunteer Kevin Faire serves freshly-made ice cream to students at Cortland Elementary. Faire was one of 100 volunteers who visited classrooms this year.

Ag in the Classroom volunteer and area farmer Ed Peterson helped Malta third graders construct corn stalks and discover uses of corn during an “It’s an Earful” presentation.
Significant Events in Farm Bureau History
Timeline

1912
Jan. 5 1912  First organizational meeting to establish Soil Improvement Association
Jan. 20, 1912  Newspapersmen, bankers, farmers organize SIA at second meeting
March 27, 1912  SIA is incorporated with the state of Illinois
May 2, 1912  SIA Bylaws adopted, 29 directors seated, annual membership dues $5
May 15, 1912  SIA membership totals 700.
May 17, 1912  Dillon S. Brown, Genoa banker, elected first SIA president
June 1, 1912  William G. Eckhardt, university scientist, hired as first farm adviser, works out of office at N. 3rd St., DeKalb

1913-1929
1913  SIA holds first Annual Meeting at County Farm
1914  “DeKalb County Farmer” bulletin printed
1914  Smith-Lever Act creates Extension Service
1916  Illinois Agricultural Association forms
1917  SIA Board approves purchase of second office, 320 N. Grove St., DeKalb
1917  DeKalb County Agricultural Association established
1917  SIA joins Illinois Agricultural Association
1917  Charlie Gunn hired for corn research
1919  SIA Membership reaches 2,024
1919  American Farm Federation forms
1920  William Eckhardt resigns, Tom H. Roberts becomes SIA farm adviser
1920  Boys & Girls 4-H Club works begins
1923  Henry H. Parke elected second SIA president
1926  SIA officially changes name to DeKalb County Farm Bureau
1926  Farm Bureau Board comprised of 19 Directors & 19 Associate Directors
1927  Country Mutual Insurance Company forms in county
1928  DCFB annual membership dues are $10
1928  Farm Supply Company organizes in county
1929  Country Life Insurance Company established

1930-1949
1930  Tom H. Roberts resigns from DCFB, manages DeKalb County Agricultural Association
1931  Russ Rasmussen hired as DCFB farm adviser
1936  Farm Bureau annual membership dues are $15
1936  DeKalb County Rural Youth begins
1936  Farm Bureau-Farm Management Service offered
1937  Home Bureau organizes
1937  DeKalb County Locker Service opens
1937  Kishwaukee Service Company incorporated
1941  Lee Mosher hired as first DCFB organization director/livestock specialist
1943  DeKalb County Producers Supply forms
1945  DCFB Soil Lab built
1949  DeKalb County Grain Company established
1949  DCFB membership reaches 2,911

1950-1979
1951  DCFB builds/moves in third office building, 315 N. 6th St., DeKalb
1954  Farm Bureau and Extension separate
1956  First high school Senior Scholarships granted
1956  Women’s Committee organizes
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Thanks to all and congratulations to DeKalb County Farm Bureau

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The DeKalb County Farm Bureau Foundation has recently launched An ACRE for Agriculture, a new initiative to provide donors with an opportunity to help fund agriculture education efforts.

“The Foundation was developed in 1986, so it has been around for many years,” said Mark Tuttle, 15th president of DeKalb County Farm Bureau. “An ACRE for Agriculture was just one concept within the Foundation to provide for future funding through a legacy campaign for ag literacy. That’s our outreach to the community to share what agriculture is all about.”

“An ACRE for Agriculture was an idea that came from our board, it’s basically for agriculturists – farmers, landowners and others interested in agriculture– to endow the Foundation with a gift,” said Greg Millburg, manager of DeKalb County Farm Bureau. “The money goes back to education through our Ag in the Classroom program.”

The DeKalb County Farm Bureau Foundation was established to accept tax deductible donations which will be used to carry out charitable, scientific, literary and educational work in the field of agriculture.

Recent Foundation-supported projects have integrated agriculture education into classroom programs with students and teachers, provided scholarships for people studying agriculture and related fields, encouraged research and education that improved crop and livestock production, and documented historical developments of DeKalb County Farm Bureau and the agricultural industry for the organization’s centennial this year.

The Foundation will accept charitable contributions of money, property and securities from anyone. Legacy endowments to provide future funding for educational efforts will also be accepted in memory of a family member or other loved one.

For more information about the Foundation and An ACRE for Agriculture, visit DeKalb County Farm Bureau’s website at www.dekalbfarmbureau.org or call 815-756-6361.
To be effective, I rely on the Farm Bureau.

Whether it’s gathering the facts, finding the right expert to testify or helping educate my urban colleagues, the Farm Bureau is the Voice of Agriculture in Springfield.

Happy Anniversary, DeKalb County Farm Bureau. Keep up the effective work in the next 100 years.

Bob Pritchard, State Representative
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Congratulations on your 100 Year Anniversary!

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