

2025-2026
DONOR & CONTRIBUTOR REPORT

BUREAU COUNTY FARM BUREAU® FOUNDATION

BUREAU COUNTY AG FAIR

To demonstrate to all the fourth graders in Bureau County the importance of agriculture in their lives, the Bureau County Farm Bureau Women's Committee held its 30th Annual Ag Fair on March 19, 2026. The Ag Fair is a daylong event at the Bureau County Fair Grounds in which students make timed stops (9 minutes at each station) to 14 different learning centers. These stations range from dairy, embryology, safety, pork, corn, seed science, conservation, beef, soybeans, pollinators, ag technology, equipment, large animals, and small animals.



Following the Ag Fair, each student was given a bag of goodies that the committee put together which contained items donated by each of the presenters, from coloring books to balloons and pencils. The teachers were given an evaluation that will assist not only the committee, but also the presenters next year. As a follow up, the committee is sponsoring a thank-you card drive for all the volunteers for the event. Students are encouraged to draw about their favorite part of the educational event.

Thank you to all the volunteers that helped with this year's Ag Fair!! A teacher attending a past Ag Fair best sums up the event, "Ag Fair is the best-kept secret in Bureau County." This year approximately 345 students from 20 classrooms attended the Ag Fair.





MASTER SHOWMANSHIP CONTEST

The annual Bureau County Master Showmanship Contest was held Friday, July 10, at the Bureau County 4-H Fair. The Master Showmanship Contest tests individuals' skills and knowledge of showing beef, swine, and sheep. Contestants were judged on their visual showmanship skills and were also asked questions about each of the species. The Master Showmanship Contest is hosted by the Bureau County Farm Bureau Foundation and the University of Illinois Extension.

Recognition was given to the top showman of each of the three species and a Grand Champion Overall Master Showman was awarded the top honors. Congratulations and best wishes to Toby Behrends, this year's Bureau County Master Showman!

Along with the title, Toby was awarded a $100 gift card and buckle from the Bureau County Farm Bureau Foundation and has the opportunity to represent Bureau County in the Illinois State Fair Master Showmanship Contest that will take place Friday, August 14.

The Reserve Overall Champion Showman was Lydia Hardy. Lydia received a $50 gift card from the Bureau County Farm Bureau Foundation and can represent Bureau County at the State Fair if Toby is unable to compete.



2026 Master Showmanship competitors braved the heat at this year's 4-H Fair. Congratulations to this year's participants. L-R: Toby Behrends- Champion Sheep Showman, Champion Beef Showman, and Grand Champion Overall Showman; Owen Cady- Champion Swine Showman; Karlie Schultz; and Lydia Hardy- Reserve Overall Master Showman.

This event would not have been successful without the help of the livestock community. Thank you to judge Slone Windish for donating his time, the livestock owners for allowing the use of their animals, and the showmen for your patience and willingness to try new things!

*Toby Behrends went on to win Grand Champion Overall Master Showman at the 2026 Illinois State Fair against 65 other competitors representing different counties throughout Illinois.



AITC HOSTS REINDEER FEED STORE

Have you ever wondered what Santa's reindeer eat to make the grand trip each year? The Bureau County Ag in the Classroom hosted a table to show attendees of the Princeton Christmas Walk in November what farmers grow to supply the feed ingredients for a well-balanced reindeer ration. Children were able to identify the variety of grains and hay and make their very own feed bag to take home for Christmas Eve.



TEN STUDENTS RECEIVE 2026 FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIPS

Ten Bureau County students will receive financial assistance from the Bureau County Farm Bureau Foundation to help cover costs associated with continuing their education.

For the past thirty-one years, the Bureau County Farm Bureau Foundation has made a financial commitment to assist individuals interested in pursuing a career in agriculture. To date, $148,000 has been provided in scholarships. The Foundation funding is supported by fundraising campaigns, private contributions, including those from Bureau County Farm Bureau members.

Let's meet this year's recipients, receiving $15,000 in scholarships from the Bureau County Farm Bureau Foundation!



TROY ANDERSON,
Iowa State - majoring in Agricultural Engineering. Troy chose this area of study because of his ag background and the abililty to make an impact. He grew up on a family farm and wants to take advantage of the opportunity to leave the world better than he found it. In the future, his goal is to design machinery that is more sustainable and economically efficient while continuing to grow his own family farm operation.



TOBY BEHRENDS,
Black Hawk East Community College – studying Animal Science. Toby grew up surrounded by mentors in the cattle industry and involved in 4-H and FFA which helped shape her academic and career goals toward agriculture. She plans to build a lifelong career in the beef industry, with a focus on cattle research and management.



RYAN CARLSON,
Illinois Valley Community College – he is studying classes in Ag Business and Finance with plans to transfer to a university in the future. Ryan chose this area of study because he grew up on a family farm. His future plans are to work in an ag-related profession using business analysis and risk management, while also expanding his focus in agronomy to help grow and sustain his own farm operation.



LYDIA HARDY,
Princeton High School - She plans to attend the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, IL, to study Animal Science with a minor in Business. She has chosen this area of study because of her involvement in 4-H, Bureau County Farm Bureau, and FFA. In the future, her goal is to obtain a degree in veterinary medicine and utilize her practice as a rural veterinarian specializing in production animals within the Illinois Valley area.



RYAN JAGERS,
Princeton High School - He plans to attend Illinois Valley Community College in Oglesby, IL, to study Ag Business and Farm Management. Ryan chose this field of study because he has always found interest in agricultural technology and machinery. This summer he will intern as a drone operator to expand his knowledge in agricultural technology. In the future, he plans to implement his studies while working alongside his uncle with interest in taking over the family operation one day.



NOLAN KLOEPPING,
University of Arkansas – studying Ag Business with focus in Prelaw. Nolan was involved in FFA and 4-H which helped him decide to further his studies in agriculture. In the future, he plans to attend law school with goals of becoming a lawyer for an agricultural company, specifically a legal defender.



PAYTON MONIER,
Bureau Valley High School – She plans to attend Sauk Valley Community College in Dixon, IL, studying Veterinary Science. Payton has been involved in FFA where she has gained knowledge and leadership experience in the ag industry. She has always looked up to her mom, grandma, and aunt who all worked in vet clinics, and has helped develop her passion for caring for animals. In the future, she wants to become a veterinary technician.



RIGGENS SHAFER,
Bureau Valley High School – He plans to attend Illinois Central College in Jacksonville, IL, to study Diesel Mechanics. Riggens has decided this field of study because he finds interest in working on equipment, especially if it poses a challenge. In the future, he would like to own his own mechanic service truck while staying involved in his family's farm with aspirations to expand into cattle production.



LEAH STAMBERGER,
Mendota High School – She plans to attend Iowa State University in Ames, IA, to study Agricultural Communications. She chose this area of study because she grew up on a family farm where she was exposed to the dedication, hard work, and long hours that go into a successful operation, but she has also seen firsthand the misrepresentation the industry often faces. In the future, she hopes to work for a company that allows her to positively represent the industry on many levels and bridge the gap between producers and consumers.



KATELYN STOLLER,
University of Wisconsin Platteville –studying Ag Business. Growing up, her grandparents farmed and that is where she grew appreciation for the many roles that everyone in the industry plays. She has had the opportunity to shadow her dad, a grain merchandiser, in meetings and through hands-on learning where she discovered a passion for commodity and price analysis. In the future, she would like to secure an entry-level grain business position and advance to grain merchandiser.

FOUNDATION TRACTOR TREK

The 14th annual Bureau County Tractor Trek was held Saturday, June 13th in the northwestern part of Bureau County. This year the event hosted over 50 tractors on the drive. These tractor enthusiasts were from all over Illinois and beyond. With the help of these participants, we were able to raise close to $3,300 for the Bureau County Farm Bureau Foundation which supports agricultural scholarships and the Ag in the Classroom program in Bureau County. Thank you to the sponsors and the supporters of this wonderful event!



SPONSORS:

Snacks, Pop, and Water: Wyffels & Frueh Yorkshires

Ice: Beck Oil

Lunch: Ag View FS, MJ Seed Company, Genuine Seed Solutions, Northern Partners, Nutrien, and Compeer

Tractor Drive Committee: Dave Cook, Doug Cook, Jared Frueh, Larry Lauritzen, Rich Nodine, Jerry Jackson, Gary Peach, Joe Phillips, Ron Teske, Terry Swearingen & David Noord.

Support: Bureau Valley FFA for Breakfast and Lunch, Gary and Becky Peach for our meeting location, the Ronald Reagen Community Center of Tampico for our lunch location, Blackert Farms and Citizens First State Bank of Walnut for our rest stops, and Matt Miller for equipment back up.







AG LITERACY GRANTS

The Bureau County Farm Bureau Foundation awarded $3,000 total to teachers in the fall of 2025 and spring of 2026.

In the fall of 2025, Ms. Harper from PES #115 – Douglas Elementary received funding to host a pumpkin patch field trip for students where they learned more about fall-related produce such as pumpkins, apples, corn, and more. Also awarded was Ms. Murray from Jefferson Elementary for a school garden where students can learn how to grow their own food and the stages each plant goes through.

In the spring of 2026, Ms. Harper from PES #115 – Douglas Elementary received a different grant that would allow her to buy the materials and supplies needed for teaching students the life cycle of a butterfly. Also awarded again was Ms. Murray from Jefferson Elementary for more materials and supplies needed to finish their school garden, which has seen great success since finalizing its start up.

AG IN THE CLASSROOM GOLF OUTING

The 17th annual Bureau and Lee County Ag in the Classroom Golf outing was held on June 18th at the Spring Creek Golf Course in Spring Valley. This year we had 22 teams registered to play. Congratulations to the Linker Seed Agency Team! They were this year's winning team.

Because of the outstanding support from the golfers who attended the event and the corporate sponsorships, nearly $10,000 was raised for the Ag in the Classroom programs within the counties of Bureau and Lee.
Thank you to our sponsors!



Teams: Jason Depenbrock, Central Bank Illinois, CHS, Compeer Financial Team #1 and Compeer Financial Team #2, Farmer's National Bank of Princeton, First State Bank, FS Grain, LLC., Heartland Bank and Trust, Herz Performance Ag, Hickory Ridge Farm, Lee County Farm Bureau Board of Directors, Linker Seed Agency, Malach Farms, NuMark Credit Union, Rustic Oak Farms, Spanky + Friends, Stine Seed Team #1 and Stine Seed Team #2, Tettens Grain, The Cornerstone Agency Inc., and Verns Farm Supply.

Hole in One Contest: Tettens Grain, Inc.

Barn Raiser: Consolidated Grain and Barge

Harvester: Jason Depenbrock, Ag View FS, Compeer Financial, MJ Seed Agency, and The Cornerstone Agency, Inc.

Cultivator: Bartlett Grain, CHS, Eiten Ag Solutions, Farmer's National Bank of Princeton, First State Bank, FS Grain, LLC., Linker Seed Agency, Tettens Grain, and Verns Farm Supply.

Seed Sower: G & W Fabricating, Heartland Bank and Trust, NuMark Credit Union, Pioneer, Russell, English, Scoma & Beneke Attorneys, and Vaessen Brothers Chevrolet.

Lunch: COUNTRY® Financial

Breakfast: Don & Paula Meyer

AG BOOK TO BE DONATED TO PUBLIC LIBRARIES



The Bureau County public libraries will again be expanding their offering of books related to agriculture. This is thanks in part to the donations made by the Bureau County Farm Bureau Women's Committee. For the past several years, the Committee has sponsored a book donation to public libraries.

Visit a local library soon to check out the committee's latest donation, "Seasons on the Farm," by Chelsea Tornetto, illustrated by Karen Bunting, a book that supports agricultural literacy for young readers.

On a farm, each season arrives with new jobs to do, crops to plant, animals to tend to, and fields to harvest. Readers get an insider's look at what spring, summer, fall, and winter look like on a family farm, from adorable baby animals to rumbling tractors and pumpkins to pies. This sweet, rhyming story is perfect for young readers, whether their home is on a farm or not!

Be sure to check out your local library today!

LITTLE FREE LIBRARY BARN

We have a Little Free Library Barn located at our office in Princeton! This unique little library barn is filled with books related to agriculture, covering topics from food and animals to farm machinery and barns. Come check it out!



How This Library Works

Take Books

Anyone may take a book – neighbors, friends, and passerby – the books are always free.



Share Books

Book donations are welcome at this Little Free Library. Find other book-sharing boxes with the Little Free Library world map at LittleFreeLibrary.org/OurMap.

AG IN THE CLASSROOM IN REVIEW

This year, the Bureau County Agricultural Literacy program reached:

- **19** Educational Centers
- **781** classroom programs
- **1,137** teachers
- **12,764** students

AG EDUCATION IN THE COMMUNITY

- Donated "Seasons on the Farm" book to every library in the county.
- Sponsored Champion Backdrop and Banners at the County and 4-H Fairs.
- Hosted Master Showmanship at the 4-H Fair.
- Hosted a Reindeer Feed Store at the Princeton Chamber Christmas Open House.

CONSIDER A DONATION FOR 2026-2027

Here is an example of what your donation could provide in an average year

$25	Send a package of Ag Mags to a Bureau County Classroom.
$50	Purchase consumable supplies for a classroom Magic Kit for a year.
$150	Replace an incubator that is used in classrooms for embryology study.
$200	Provide a donation for College Ag Recruitment/ Career Day for 250 High School Students
$250	Deliver 200 ABC's of Agriculture coloring books and 200 crayons to local emergency rooms.
$350	Distribute agriculture books to 17 local libraries.
$500	Provide lunch for all the 4th Grade Ag Fair volunteers.
$1,000	Support one scholarship for a local student pursuing a degree in an agricultural related field.
$5,000	Subsidize a portion of the salary of the Ag Literacy Coordinator Position for a year.

WANT TO DONATE? *Fill In and Cut Out the Form Below!*

YES! I want to share the truth about farming with local students by supporting the Bureau County Farm Bureau Foundation.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

The Bureau County Farm Bureau Foundation is a charitable 501c3 nonprofit. Gifts to the BCFB Foundation are tax deductible when completed within standard IRS guidelines. Please consult your tax advisor.

BUREAU COUNTY FARM BUREAU FOUNDATION