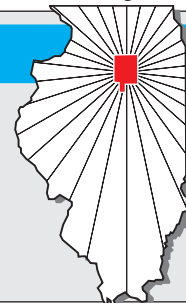


LaSalle County

# Agri-Source

Supplement to FarmWeek for LaSalle County Farm Bureau members and GRAINCO FS, Inc. patrons



May 2011

**Programs + Services + Benefits = Farm Bureau memberships**

## Second annual LaSalle County Farm Bureau call-a-thon a success

For the second year in a row, the LaSalle County Farm Bureau (LCFB) Call A Thon was a huge success.

On March 15, LCFB Directors called membership, soliciting ideas about what their organization could be doing to better serve them. While ideas were offered to guide the Board of Directors on local, state, and national issues, the general attitude of the membership was that the Farm Bureau is doing a great job.

According to Bob Beutke, Viewpoint Committee Chair for LCFB, the calls from Direc-

tors were appreciated and even requested!

"This year, there were even people calling the office asking Jeff to be sure they received a call on March 15!" laughed Beutke. "Who would have ever guessed that a Call A Thon would be in high demand?"

The Board made an effort to call new members, those that had joined in the past year, and were encouraged to hear mostly positive comments about the work Farm Bureau is doing as well as recruit some new volunteers.

The top issues brought up

by membership were EPA over-regulation, state budget and income tax concerns, and the spreading of municipal sludge.

In regards to EPA over-regulation, many were concerned about proposed regulations that will severely impact farmers, their ability to do their jobs, and their bottom line. Most all were happy to hear of the action the Illinois Farm Bureau is taking on the issue, through programs like the Leaders to Washington and also through opportunities to testify at EPA hearings in Washington, DC. Some wondered how the EPA gained so much authority and why agriculture wasn't involved much sooner.

Beutke said that the Directors heard two sides to this story. Everyone had concerns, some were happy with what Farm Bureau was doing to fight it and some were upset that Farm Bureau hadn't gotten involved sooner.

On a state level, budget



LaSalle County Farm Bureau Board Member Fred Seville calls members of the LCFB during the March 15 Call A Thon. The goal of the Call A Thon was to seek input and advice from the membership on key local, state, and national issues.

and taxing issues were the biggest concerns.

"The Call A Thon was held right around the time that we were scared we'd lose tax exemptions on farm inputs so of course, that issue was a top priority and in the forefront of their minds. IFB's action request to call, write or email your state representatives and

senators has been effective so far at maintaining ag tax exemptions," Beutke said.

IFB and LCFB plans to keep on top of this issue, recognizing that it is a huge concern to every farmer and every farm that the state not try to balance its budget on the backs of farmers.

**Continued on page 4**



Donna Jeschke of Mazon, Illinois represented the Illinois Corn Marketing Board during the LaSalle County Farm Bureau annual Media Breakfast on March 22. She discussed priority issues for Illinois corn farmers such as a lack of understanding between farm and non-farm consumers and burdensome regulations.

### Connections made at Ag breakfast

Given the lack of understanding between people who live on the farm and people who don't, the LaSalle County Farm Bureau (LCFB) hosts an annual media event, hoping to open the lines of communication between LaSalle County farmers and the members of the local media.

This year, the March 22

breakfast was attended by John Harris, WCMY; Rick Koshko, WCMY; Chuck Stanley, The Times; and Josh Ellerbock, Ottawa Delivered as they seek to learn more about agriculture and get to know local resources a little bit better.

"Our annual media event is a great time for local media to

**Continued on page 4**

## Infrastructure and free trade agreements key issues during Colombia/Panama tour

David Myer of Marseilles accompanied an Illinois farmer delegation to Colombia and Panama on March 8-15. The tour, hosted and sponsored by the Illinois Farm Bureau, was part of an annual effort to educate Illinois farmers about international market opportunities and challenges.

A tour of this nature is especially important for Illinois farmers, as Illinois' position on the Mississippi, Illinois, and Ohio River system makes exports a huge market and a competitive advantage for Illinois agricultural products.

According to Myer, a key take home message of the tour was that the U.S. is falling behind on investments in infrastructure.

"Panama has committed to spend billions of dollars to expand their lock and accommodate larger vessels and we're falling behind because we can't even commit a much smaller dollar amount to upgrade our system," he said. "Our country just isn't doing anything. Our locks and dams are ancient and

we need to improve them to increase productivity and get more products up and down the river more efficiently."

Not only are Panama and Colombia seeing the value of investing in infrastructure and committing to that goal, other end users like China and Europe are investing in both countries. Even U.S. exporters are

making needed investments in technology and infrastructure to better meet growing demand and changing needs.

Myer said that the group was troubled that the U.S. cannot find the leadership to invest in its infrastructure when 78 percent of Panamanians voted to expand the Canal. Also frustra-

**Continued on page 4**



During a visit to the Zen-Noh Elevator in Louisiana, David Myer and other Illinois farmers confirmed what they already knew: U.S. investments in infrastructure are not keeping pace with foreign countries. The United States must repair and rebuild locks and dams on the Mississippi River or become less competitive in global markets. (photo courtesy of Illinois Farm Bureau)

### Attention baseball fans: Cubs vs Brewers

Please join the LaSalle County Farm Bureau on June 14 when the Cubs take on the Milwaukee Brewers at Wrigley Field. Cost for the trip is \$85 per member and \$95 per non-member if paid before May 20. After May 20, cost increases to \$90 and \$100, respectively.

The group will leave the LaSalle County Farm Bureau parking lot at 3 p.m. on June 14.

Tickets are limited and are assigned on a first come, first served basis. Please call the LaSalle County Farm Bureau at 815-433-0371 for more information or to reserve your tickets.



# From the President

**By Monty Whipple  
President  
LaSalle County Farm Bureau**

Every ten years, the United States government conducts a nation wide census. From that information, we learn how our nation is growing and where it is growing. Locally, the census shows that LaSalle County's population grew to about 114,000 people with small shifts in population densities.

With the changes in population numbers and densities comes the reapportionment of districts both at a county and state level. Likewise, whole states will gain or lose members in the House of Representatives based upon the new population figures. In Illinois' case, we will actually lose a voting member in the U.S. House. Senate members, of course, remain at two for every state.

LaSalle County, like all counties, has been in the process of reapportioning its board districts. Their first decision though was to decide on the number of county board members by which the county would be divided.

The present number of county board members is 29.

There has been discussion about reducing that number. An advisory referendum six years ago supported reduction



**Monty Whipple**

of the county board from the present number to 11. If the board size is to be reduced, now would be the time to do it while the district is being reapportioned

Our LaSalle County Farm Bureau Board recently voted again in favor of keeping the country board size at 29. We understand the need for cost cutting and efficiencies. However, we believe we have sound and practical reasons for supporting the current size of the county board.

We assume the county board will continue efforts to phase out insurance and benefit packages for remaining board members. We support those efforts, but even so the money saved on a per meeting basis is small. The total cost for all meetings of the county board is less than \$2 per taxpayer. Cutting the board to 11, or 15, or 21 members will save less than \$1 per tax bill.

Most likely, remaining members will be paid more to compensate for having to cover extra meetings.

Board members per diem income has not changed since the early 1990's. They are due for an increase, especially if they are required to assume additional duties and put in more hours if the board membership is reduced.

Some citizens who support cutting back the size and pay of our county board probably have never considered taking on the job themselves, nor do they have any idea what responsibilities come with being a county board member. I can tell you first hand, the county board members I know and have worked with are dedicated, hardworking and very concerned about spending tax dollars wisely.

Another good reason for keeping the county board membership at 29 is rural representation. The possibility exists that a significantly smaller country board of 11 could more easily be controlled by the special interests from cities and towns where most of the population resides. Let's look at what's happened in our great state of Illinois for example. We "downstaters"

constantly fight to maintain some say in all the lawmaking that goes on in Springfield. We battle huge legislative representation out of Chicago and the neighboring suburbs. Let's face it. The voices of rural America are being silenced by the large and loud majority of people who are urban born and raised.

Here's another thought. A larger county board provides more diversity of thought and expertise. LaSalle is a large county with lots of issues to tackle. The board has designated several special committees to take on all the work that has to be done. 29 board members will likely bring a variety of knowledge, experience, and opinions to the table, and that is good for our county.

Lastly, 29 county board representatives serving a county with a population of 114,000 is not out of line. Let's look at what our neighboring counties are doing. According to The Times newspaper, Bureau County has 26 board members representing 35,000 people; Lee County has 18 members for just 36,000 residents; Livingston County has 24 for 39,000 residents; Grundy has 18 for 50,000 residents; Woodford County has 15 for 39,000 residents. Marshall and Putnam Counties have 12 and 5 respectfully serving only about 1,000 residents per board member. DeKalb County, with 24 members, is on par with LaSalle

County for representatives per resident. Only Kendall County, with 10 board members serving 114,700 people, is vastly different from surrounding communities. My point is 29 LaSalle county board members serving a county this large is not out of line.

We all understand the need to cut costs and be efficient. But until you can convincingly "Show Me the Money" saved will be worth settling for reduced representation, I support the status quo of 29 members. I say this in expectation that the large costs incurred with providing county board members with insurance and other benefits will be greatly reduced or eliminated all together.

The really tough choice in all this is not about the number of representatives on the county board, but the quality of those representing us. It behooves all of us to get involved in the political process whether it be local, state, or national government. Know who your elected officials are, and respectfully make your thoughts and ideas known to them. Or how about this, if you have something to offer, throw your hat in the ring. Do your part to make this a better county, state, country, and world. Don't just be fan who likes to yell at the players. If you can do better, get in the game!

**Monty**

## Agriculture art in the classroom

Allison Kuhn, a fourth grader at Earlville Elementary in Earlville, IL, was selected as the first place winner for the LaSalle County Farm Bureau Young Leaders Committee's annual coloring contest out of more than 450 entries.

For her efforts, Kuhn was given a "Farming: Our American Heritage" sweatshirt along with a coupon to a local restaurant. Her class will also enjoy an ice cream party, courtesy of the Young Leaders Committee.

"This event tends to bring out the best in our LaSalle County fourth graders and in our community," said Bill McDonnell, Young Leaders Committee Chair.

Donnell, Young Leaders Committee Chair. "I am consistently pleasantly surprised at the number of entries submitted and I'm even more excited to know that each of these students has received a positive message about agriculture, the primary industry for our county."

Every fourth grade student within the county is invited to participate and for their hard work and artistic vision, they are rewarded with a restaurant coupon depending on the area and the availability of certain restaurants. The Young Leaders Committee evaluates entries at their committee meet-

ing and determines the first place and second place winner.

According to McDonnell, programs like these create opportunities for local youth to think about their surroundings.

"I'm always encouraged that so many fourth grade teachers take the time to participate in our contest and I really think that the program creates a connection between local farmers and the teachers and students in our schools," said McDonnell. "Those connections between what you're learning in school and what's going on around you make your education so much more valuable."



Allison Kuhn, Earlville Elementary, shows off her award winning agricultural art. Bill McDonnell, Chairman of the LaSalle County Farm Bureau Young Leaders Committee; Mrs. Walder, Earlville Elementary Fourth Grade teacher; and Ron Burdon, LaSalle County Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom Coordinator celebrate Kuhn's coloring contest victory.



The LaSalle County Farm Bureau Young Leaders team enjoys judging the more than 450 entries for their annual coloring contest. Every fourth grade student in LaSalle County is invited to participate in the contest.

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**Ryan Wenzel**  
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**Jim Moehring**  
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**815-224-4170**

Steve Jameson  
Crop Specialist  
**815-343-1430**



# Ag in the Classroom has a heritage in LaSalle County

The LaSalle County Farm Bureau made a point to invest in the education of their future when they hired Ag in the Classroom Coordinator Connie Soulsby in 1999. Though this was the first formal venture into an Ag in the Classroom program, the LaSalle County Farm Bureau Board felt strongly that educating the children in LaSalle County would pay dividends in the future.

They were right. Recent research funded by several Illinois commodity groups and the Illinois Farm Bureau shows that non-farm consumers site childhood ag lessons or field trips and "driving by the farm" as the two most important sources of their information on agriculture.

Obviously reaching children is paramount to developing a voting body that understands where their next meal is coming from.

Soulsby started the effort in LaSalle County by reaching out to all the county fourth grade classrooms and offering a five lesson unit on agriculture to the teachers. The five lessons would cover general agriculture, corn, soybeans, dairy, and livestock.

"It went very well and every year I had more and more teachers that participated. I was very busy going to only fourth grade classrooms all over LaSalle county," Soulsby said.

After three years as Ag in the Classroom Coordinator, Soulsby took a position as an

eighth grade teacher at Northlawn Junior High in Cedar where she has been for the past nine years. At first, teaching history, she didn't have much opportunity to thread agriculture into the curriculum. But when Soulsby was recently asked to teach an enrichment class on anything she wanted, she immediately returned to her agricultural roots.

"I'm an elementary education teacher who married a farmer. And I took an agriculture course at ISU that was aimed at ag teachers. But when my principal asked me to teach an enrichment course on anything I wanted that was fun and interesting, I went back to agriculture because I love it so much," she said.

Now Soulsby is again talking ag four days a week with a group of students that rotates through her four week course. The class covers corn, soybeans, cotton, livestock and various other general ag concepts.

Soulsby indicates that there are some really basic concepts about agriculture that the students don't understand. She focuses on basic science concepts like male and female livestock, male and female parts of corn plants, and different breeds of both livestock and crops.

"The kids really get excited when they realize that boy cows aren't cows and don't have udders. They don't know that a dairy cow is a female that has had a calf. Many of them have

detasseled and have no idea that a corn plant has a male and female part. They think that we are growing sweet corn in LaSalle County instead of field corn. These are basic concepts that we take for granted, but they have no idea."

Since Soulsby's exit from the LaSalle County Ag in the Classroom program, the program continues with new Ag in the Classroom Coordinator Ron Burdon who has served in the capacity since 2002. Burdon also visits fourth grade classrooms within the county with lessons on general ag and various crops and livestock.

If you are interested in an agricultural lesson at your fourth grade classroom, please contact the LaSalle County Farm Bureau office at 815-433-0371.

## Subway Restaurants – Don Trager, owner

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\*Cannot be used in conjunction with any other offer
- Did you know that Subway serves pizzas?
- Our newest sandwich is the Orchard Chicken Salad which will be featured in May as a \$5 footlong. Come try it out!
- Don Trager's Subway Restaurants do a lot for the local high schools, including offering discounts and serving food for different events. He also donates food for Easter Seals events.

## Seed treatments preserve profits

Scott Reel, GRAINCO FS Agronomy Department Manager

Again in 2011, farmers are looking for ways to protect the investment they have in their corn and soybean crops. Insurance programs have been aimed at the crops being produced, but with the investment in higher priced seed technology systems, how do you aid that investment to produce more?

One proven method is to use seed treatments to protect and improve yields. Our GRAINCOAT seed treatment system is designed to allow producers to develop the best treatment system on a field by field basis. The ability to design a seed treatment program is also important when changing varieties. GRAINCOAT is a seed applied fungicide that suppresses many of the diseases that farmers face in Illinois. This fungicide treatment not only improves yields, but it also improves standability.

GRAINCOAT PRO incorporates the use of a systemic insecticide with the base fungicide treatment. Again, this combination treatment will improve the overall protection offered with the program. GRAINCO FS has been offering Optimize LCO, a growth promoter with inoculants, for a number of years. This product has shown exceptional results in improved root growth, faster seedling starts, and better overall plant health.

For the total program, consider using GRAINCOAT PRO

plus LCO. With this program we have seen significant increases in early vigor, faster stand establishment, better standability, faster canopy, and increased yields. Grain commodity prices offer a significant return on investment for treatment.

Talk to your GRAINCO FS Crop Specialist today, for more information on an effective and efficient seed treatment program for your farming operation. We are confident that we will help you increase and preserve profits.

## Spring is good time to soil sample for fall fertilizer applications

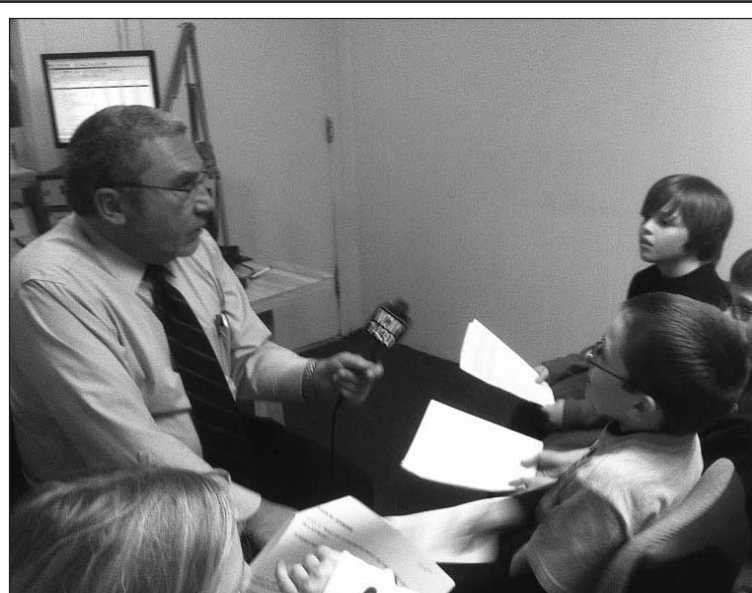
Dave Benson, GRAINCO FS Certified Crop Specialist

The spring is always a very busy time of the year, and no doubt the 2011 spring season will be busier than ever. At this time of the year, it is hard to remember just how busy things can get in the fall.

Looking back on the last two falls, however, it is easy to remember just how slow or fast the season can progress.

Accomplishing even the smallest task in a timely manner can be extremely beneficial. Fall tillage in 2009 was definitely a challenge and fertilizer application was critically important, but in the fall of 2010 tillage was not the problem, but finding limestone to apply could have been. Many producers depend on soil sample results before making fall fertilizer and limestone applications.

More and more farmers have turned to sampling soil in the spring prior to a fall application program. We are encouraging more farmers to adopt this practice, as a way to ensure that the sampling gets done and that the application rates are in line with the needs for the field. Ask your GRAINCO FS Crop Specialist for more information on a spring soil sampling program, beginning in 2011.



WCMY and Program Director Jay LeSeure celebrated National Agriculture week in March by bringing La Salle county fourth graders into the radio station to tell what they learned about agriculture through LaSalle County Farm Bureau's Agriculture in the Classroom program.

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More than 500 FFA members, County Farm Bureau Managers, FFA advisors from 80 Illinois counties attended the 2010 Illinois Farm Bureau & Affiliates Youth Conference, April 4-5 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, Springfield. Pictured (left to right) are: FRONT ROW: Andrew Larson, Serena FFA; James Bernard, Ottawa FFA; Ellen Wiley, Serena FFA; Perry Harlow, Seneca FFA; BACK ROW: John Edgar, President, Illinois Association FFA; John Jenkins, Mendota FFA; Austin Granby, Seneca FFA; Justin Cave, Ottawa FFA; Evan Peach, Mendota FFA. "Lights, Camera, Take ACTION" the theme of this year's conference, offered FFA members in their junior year of high school, a unique opportunity for career and personal development. This year's attendees got the opportunity to visit with representatives about scholarships, internships, leadership programs, and career opportunities from community colleges, universities, agriculture commodity groups, and the Illinois Farm Bureau and its family of companies at a career fair. The conference also provided a series breakout sessions that outlined opportunities in agriculture and provided information about the Illinois Farm Bureau and its family of companies. The annual two-day conference is sponsored by Illinois Farm Bureau and its affiliated companies, which include GROWMARK, COUNTRY Financial, Prairie Farms and the IAA Credit Union. Please visit [www.youthed.org](http://www.youthed.org) or <http://www.facebook.com/ilfbyea> for more information on the Illinois Farm Bureau & affiliated companies Youth Education program.

## Colombia/Panama trip

Continued from page 1

trating is that Panama is spending \$5.25 billion to widen the Canal when the U.S. investment needed for immediate upgrades to the 75 year old locks and dams would only take \$30 million.

Another primary message the Illinois delegation heard loud and clear was the need for Free Trade Agreements with both Panama and Colombia.

"Both those countries want U.S. products," said Myer. "They desperately want to trade with us and were encouraged in 2006 that they worked with the U.S. and got the agreements to the point where they thought both countries agreed. Then we never got the agreement presented to Congress for any

votes."

The U.S. exports to Colombia fell 50 percent in 2008 and agricultural exports are estimated to have declined by \$800 million since that year. Also in 2008, the U.S. sold \$600 million in corn to Colombia and by 2010, U.S. exports fell \$200 million as Argentine and Brazilian corn received more favorable tariff treatment than U.S. corn.

According to Myer, a free trade agreement with Colombia would mean increased exports of soybean meal and flour, corn, feed grains, pork, construction equipment, and various chemicals. This has the potential to impact Illinois drastically given our position on the river, our ability to export, and

our primary industries.

"I would definitely recommend that anyone go on something like this. It was a very good experience," Myer said. "I was impressed because the governmental officials in Colombia came to speak to us. They want a relationship with us and they appreciated the opportunity to talk to us about the barriers we have to trade with their country."

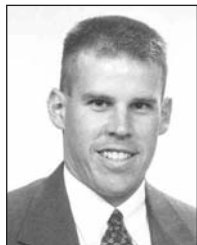
Myer said that the experience of starting in LaSalle County and seeing the CGB River Terminal, visiting New Orleans, and then seeing where that grain ends up in Colombia or Panama was really valuable.

"I feel optimistic that we'll see some movement on the Free Trade Agreements and everyone we talked to says that as soon as they are signed, we'll get these markets back. Where we end up with no investment in infrastructure is another story, but I guess we'll see the outcomes of that soon enough."

## Country agents honored

Every month, the LaSalle County Farm Bureau seeks to honor the COUNTRY agents who increase their membership the most throughout the month.

In February, that honor goes to Joe Starkey for signing five new associate members. A total of 28 new associate members and two new producer members were signed during the month of February. The month ended with a total membership of 6,269.



Joe Starkey



Rick Passow

Brad Passow received the honor for the month of March with nine new associate members signed. All the county

COUNTRY agents together added 43 new associate members and four new producer members, giving LaSalle

County Farm Bureau a total membership of 6,354 members.

A big thanks goes to these agents for their efforts this spring.

## Call-a-thon

Continued from page 1

Spreading of municipal sludge was the biggest local concern. Members were happy for the educational efforts LCFB has gotten involved in and were happy to hear that LCFB has a committee working on the issue. Since the Call A Thon, there has been H.R. 806 introduced by Frank Mautino, co-sponsored by Bob Pritchard and Sue Rezin and

## Tips from Tom

# Gearing up for spring turf maintenance

By Thomas Edgcomb, Certified Turf Specialist

Wow, another great start to spring! But, what a busy time of the year for families, businesses, and our lawn maintenance projects, which all demand time.

As you take a look at lawn improvement maintenance projects, we recommend an application of 16-0-8 fertilizer, with Viper to feed your lawn and weed your lawn at the same time. The addition of Viper to this fertilizer blend allows you to apply a standard broad spectrum herbicide with the fertilizer, and take care of two jobs in one application.

We need to get right on the job of re-seeding those areas of the lawn that need to be thickened. For this job, you will want to use our Deluxe



Tom Edgcomb

Grass Seed mix for the seeding project. Our Deluxe mixture is our highest quality mix and provides an excellent blend of hardy seed for most all applications. Remember to also add a starter fertilizer to the new seeding projects. We recommend the application of a 14-24-9 starter fertilizer.

Also, remember to prepare your seed bed, use a straw bed for the project, and for added erosion control use our erosion control straw blanket. Taking these steps will help provide for an excellent lawn and new lawn start for 2011.

As our temperatures begin to warm, we recommend that you take a look at our Pond products. It will soon be time to consider one of our Pond products for algae and weed control. You will also want to consider one of our Pond dye products to help prepare your pond for summer enjoyment. As always, we welcome your questions and thank you for your business.

## Ag breakfast

Continued from page 1

sit and chat with local farmers and leaders in the Illinois agricultural industry. We offer a relaxed setting and a quick briefing on ag issues which helps local media get a better picture of our industry and the opportunities and challenges that exist for a LaSalle County farmer," said Doug Stockley, LaSalle County Farm Bureau Membership Chairman.

According to Stockley, the LCFB hosts the Media Breakfast every year because every year there seems to be a greater need to teach people what's actually happening on the farm. Reaching out to the public is an LCFB priority.

During this event, media had breakfast with Bob Beutke and Monty Whipple representing LaSalle County Farm Bureau, Pam Janssen representing the Illinois Pork Producers As-

sociation, Fred Baker representing the Illinois Beef Association, Brad Temple representing the Illinois Farm Bureau, and Donna Jeschke representing the Illinois Corn Marketing Board. Each leader was given an opportunity to briefly describe some of the opportunities and challenges that exist within their specific industry and within agriculture as a whole. The resulting discussion between the farmer leaders and the media helped both groups understand how agriculture's concerns and priorities affect consumers and the community as a whole.

Key issues discussed were Illinois state budget concerns, farmer challenges dealing with increasing state and federal regulations, lack of understanding between farm and non-farm consumers, and animal welfare extremists.

"I think the local media really appreciate this event," said Stockley. "Not only do they learn a lot, but I think they walk away with some good story ideas and some good sources. And if nothing else, connecting media with farmers that can tell them the truth and present an authentic and realistic view of food production is definitely a positive thing."

unanimously passed in the House to address the issue.

"Overall, it was a very well accepted event and it's something that we need to continue doing. Next year, I will be more excited about it because I know that everyone I talked to thanked me for calling more than once in the conversation and they were happy to discuss things," he said.