

# Year At a Glance

## Board Meeting Priorities

<b>January</b>	Legislative Activities Budget Issue Prioritization Young Farmer Conference	<b>July</b>	National Policy Trip County Resolutions adopted Nominating Committee Member Appreciation/ Annual Meeting
<b>February</b>	Legislative Activities Membership County Government Budget Hearings	<b>August</b>	Member Appreciation/ Annual Meeting State Resolutions
<b>March</b>	Membership Legislative Activities National Policy Trip National Ag Week Policy Development	<b>September</b>	State Policy Conference Issue surfacing*
<b>April</b>	Legislative Activities Membership year begins Policy Development	<b>October</b>	Harvest Issue surfacing*
<b>May</b>	Planting	<b>November</b>	Goals & Priorities Committee Appointments Board Orientation and Training Issue surfacing* Legislative Training
<b>June</b>	PD Issue education & discussion Nominating Committee* Member Appreciation/ Annual Meeting	<b>December</b>	Goals & Priorities Membership Plans Issue Prioritization State Annual Meeting

\*Issue surfacing and identifying potential new leaders should occur at each meeting.

# County Activities

Every County Farm Bureau Board makes decisions about activities to engage in during the year. Most activities fall within the five priority program areas.

Policy Development  
Policy Implementation  
Communication  
Strengthen the County Farm Bureau  
Membership

Get the year off to a strong start with a goal setting session (see p. 36) to determine how to best use county Farm Bureau resources—time, talent, and money—to serve the members. Don't get stuck in the rut of doing the same things every year. Work with your Regional Manager on specific activities and ideas, and to access additional assistance. IFBF staff supporting each program area (see p. 29-30) can provide technical assistance and ideas for activities.

Active committees are the most effective way to involve members in carrying out board priorities. A small group of people can focus on the details and bring recommendations to the board. Committees are also the best way to involve non-board members. Involving non-board members shares the workload, helps board members avoid burnout, brings in new energy and ideas, provides a training ground for new leaders, and involves members unable to make the time commitment to a full board position.

At the end of the year, counties report activities through the **County Recognition Program**. Each county can achieve the designation of an Excellent or Outstanding County Farm Bureau by earning the indicated number of points across the first four program areas. To earn the Presidents Incentive trip, a county must achieve its membership goal and the designation of Outstanding County Farm Bureau.

## LEADING LEADERS

Successful issues and activities require three outcomes from leaders: Awareness, Action & Leading Others. Leaders need to **Be Aware** of opportunities, issues, policy, resources available, and people that can help, and what needs to be done. Farm Bureau is fortunate to have many leaders who **Take Action** to get things done: lobby a legislator, write a letter to the editor, attend a budget meeting, recruit a new board member, work membership or run a good board meeting. The next step is to **Lead Others** by taking the initiative, organizing an effort, and getting others to take action. The collective effort of **leading leaders** continues to make each county Farm Bureau and therefore, the Iowa Farm Bureau, strong and effective organizations working for agriculture and rural Iowa.

## Pulling the Policy Pieces Together

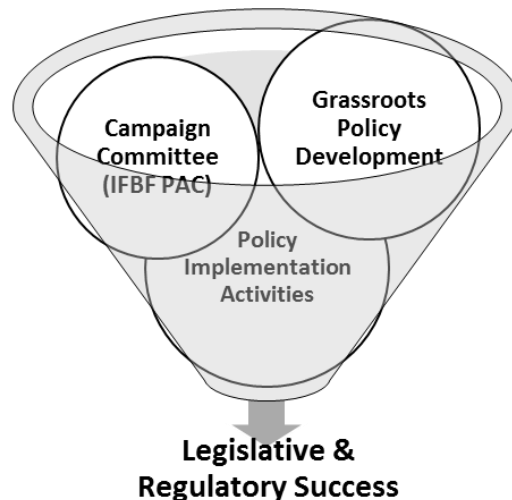
Policy is at the core of Farm Bureau's mission. The three interlocked components of policy work produce results that can lead to positive changes in government for your farm. All three components are central to the activities of every County Farm Bureau.

In the grassroots **Policy Development** process, Farm Bureau members identify issues impacting their operations, laws and regulations that don't make sense, and note how they can be improved to benefit everyone. Members collectively share these ideas, contribute to the discussion to shape the direction of county resolutions, and ultimately results in statewide policy.



**Policy Implementation** activities help bring Farm Bureau policy into reality in the legislative and regulatory arenas. State and national legislative activities are one of the cornerstones to Farm Bureau's long-standing history of influence over public policy. Members also engage in activities to influence the executive branch (e.g. DNR, EPA) as they create rules and regulations that farmers must comply with.

Farm Bureau members spend substantial amounts of time and effort in developing dozens of carefully thought out policies, very few of which can be implemented without the help of elected officials. **Campaign Committee** work increases member involvement and personal political effectiveness by electing candidates in both parties at the state and national level who share a philosophy similar to that of Farm Bureau members. The real strength of the **IFBF PAC** is with Farm Bureau members working for those candidates designated as "Friends of Agriculture."



**All three areas of policy work need attention and action from Farm Bureau leaders so we can be successful.**

# Priority Programs

## Priority Programs

1. **Policy Development (PD)** is the in-depth process of engaging members in identification, education and discussion of local, state and national policy issues, leading to adoption of policy resolutions.



## County Activities

**County PD Activities**, usually chaired by the county vice-president, include determining best methods of gathering input from members (e.g., opinionnaire), issue education, discussion with active farmers and adopting resolutions. Submit and prioritize issues on the IFBF website. (See illustration on p. 42-43).

## FARM BUREAU'S POLICY DEVELOPMENT PROCESS

### 1 Issue Surfacing & Prioritization

- Individual members and members of Farm Bureau's State Advisory Committees contribute to the issue surfacing process by submitting and prioritizing important issues any time at [www.iowafarmbureau.com](http://www.iowafarmbureau.com). By prioritizing an issue, members are indicating their support to elevate the issue for further education, discussion and research in the policy development process. Popular state and national issues will be reviewed and considered by the State Resolutions Committee.

### 5 Resolutions Adopted

- 100 county farmer voting delegates debate and approve state and national resolutions.
- National resolutions are forwarded to the American Farm Bureau multi-state farmer delegate body for debate and approval.

### 4 Draft State Resolutions

- State Resolutions Committee.
- Reviews recommendations from 100 county Farm Bureaus.
- Reviews results from statewide survey.
- Writes the first draft of resolutions for the voting delegates at the **Iowa Farm Bureau Summer Policy Conference**.

### 2 Issue Education & Discussion

- Suggested Statewide Opinionnaire is released by State Resolutions Committee for County Farm Bureau use.
- Policy development topic webinars and issue presentations.
- Spokesman updates during Policy Development Week.
- County education activities.
- County opinionnaire distributed to county members.

### 3 Adopt County Resolutions

- Completed county opinionnaires are gathered and reviewed.
- County policy development committees write proposed resolutions for county policy adoption meeting.
- Proposed resolutions are debated and approved at the county **policy adoption meeting**.
- Approved county resolutions on state and national issues are given to the State Resolutions Committee.



## Priority programs

**2. Policy Implementation** includes activities to engage with local, state and national decision makers (legislative and regulatory) to implement Farm Bureau policy. In election years, the Iowa Farm Bureau PAC gets involved in elections, designating and supporting “Friends of Agriculture.”

## County Activities

**County Action** activities ensure that the actions of local government (e.g., budgets, taxes, zoning, siting, land use, environment) benefit agriculture and rural communities.

**State Legislative** activities for county leaders include pre-session meetings with legislators to review priority issues, hosting/attending local legislative forums, participating on the FB Response team, and visiting the state capitol on Farm Bureau Legislative Days.

**National Policy** activities for county leaders include emailing Congressmen on a priority issue, attending local forums, visiting with district staff, or participating on the FB Response team or participating in the National Policy Trip.

**Political Campaign Committees** complete candidate evaluations (review incumbent voting records, interview if running for new or open seats) for all state legislative, congressional and statewide races, and submit to the IFBF PAC Committee.

## Lobby your Legislators

Contact elected officials by personal visit, weekend meetings in the county, legislative visits to the state capitol, phone call, letter and/or email. Whichever methods you use to influence the direction of legislation and regulatory rulemaking, keep the following in mind:

- ♦ Do your homework on the issues, Farm Bureau policy and status of current legislation. Utilize the tools Farm Bureau provides to stay on top of the issues (e.g., policy book, website, legislative newsletters).
- ♦ Determine how the issues affect you. This is at least as important as knowing all the details and statistics related to the issue.
- ♦ Identify yourself as a constituent. Be sure to inform your legislator you are representing Farm Bureau’s position.
- ♦ Be clear about your position – do you support or oppose the legislation and why. Be specific about what you would like your legislator to do. Avoid ag jargon. Relate the issue to your everyday situation and how the issue impacts you and your operation.
- ♦ ALWAYS be courteous when speaking with your legislators. Disagreement can occur without threats, harsh words or personal remarks.
- ♦ Follow through. Do not stop calling on your legislators, even if he/she disagrees with your position. Build a relationship with your legislators for the next issue.

## Priority Programs

**3. Communications** encompasses activities that connect farmers and consumers, build trust, help the non-farming public or consumers understand and support how you farm today, and position farmers and Farm Bureau leaders as credible sources of information. This program area also includes activities that showcase Farm Bureau's contributions to the local community.

## County Activities

**Public Relations (PR)** includes activities such as speaking to nonfarm groups or hosting educational events. Utilize the media to amplify visibility by covering activities, letters to the editor, and making leaders available for interviews.

**Ag in the Classroom** activities provide schools and teachers with agricultural information to integrate into existing curriculum. Increase the impact of ag fairs, field trips and farm tours by providing materials to be used in the classroom. *Ag in the Classroom* is supported by the new Iowa Ag Literacy Foundation.

### ***Take a page from the F.A.R.M. Team Handbook...***

How well do the people understand the diversity and innovation of agriculture where you live? Today, only 4% of Iowans farm, and myths about agriculture and misunderstanding about agriculture innovation runs wild. It will take better and wider communication between farmers and consumers to bring change.

Begin at home! To build trust, bust the myths of agriculture and build support for farming, engage consumers in your community. There are many ways to share your story and build support for agriculture – even if you're not comfortable doing a media interview or giving a speech. Sometimes, you just need to know how to plan a fun event that is engaging and educational, or maybe you just need to know how to better promote what you're already doing in your community, so more people see agriculture in a new light.

For example, community support in the form of scholarships, sponsorships and donations should be accompanied by publicity to make the County Farm Bureau's involvement highly visible throughout the community. Rather than invite scholarship recipients to a county annual meeting to present scholarships, seek invitation/inclusion to a graduation event, to award the scholarship. Request two minutes to talk about Farm Bureau and how many years/students have received the award. Be sure to use the media to amplify your message and extend your reach throughout the community. Have county leaders ready and willing to talk to the media about who you are, what you are doing, and why.

*Adapted from the Iowa Farm Bureau 2017 Farmer Advocates Reaching Mainstreet handbook.*

# Be an Advocate for Ag!

Agriculture needs more farmers ready and willing to talk about who you are, what you do, and why you do it. Farmers need to talk to non-farmers in their community, to the media, to legislators and other decision makers, to teachers and students, and the list goes on. Putting a face to the facts is at least as important, if not more so, than an in-depth discussion about the scientific and economic details about an issue. Personalizing the issues helps you better connect with others. There are other people and groups telling the story of ag, and not getting all their facts correct!

If this is new to you, start here.

## Your Story

- ◆ Your family:
- ◆ Who you farm with:
- ◆ What you raise/produce:
- ◆ Farm history (years farming, generations, century farm):
- ◆ Community involvement (including with your kids):
- ◆ Why I love farming:
- ◆ Conservation practices used:
- ◆ How continuously improving:
- ◆ Something else unique about your farm:
- ◆ Legacy you hope to leave for the future:

## Tell Your Story

Use the information about yourself, your farm and your role in the community to create and tell your story. Have a short version ready to use when you introduce yourself and initiate a conversation. Weave appropriate parts of your story into a media interview, letter to the editor or on-line comments to a news story. Use a longer version when you get the chance to speak to a group about who you are, or when testifying at a County Supervisor's hearing in support of another farmer or a local issue.

## Priority programs

**4. Strengthen the County Farm Bureau** includes activities that ensure the County Farm Bureau has the right people, programs and priorities that will allow it to serve the needs of members long into the future.

**5. Membership** is the opportunity to invite farmers, agri-businesses and community members to join the County Farm Bureau. A little friendly competition among board members and cooperation with agents rounds out a county's membership campaign.

## County Activities

**Leadership Development** activities include training sessions, annual goal setting and planning, improving board meetings, involving new leaders and volunteers, and sponsoring participants in the Ag Leaders Institute.

**Young Farmer** activities include hosting (county or regional) educational and/or networking activities, sponsoring attendance at the state YF conference, encouraging participation in the Discussion Meet and recruiting those participants to further engage with the county Farm Bureau.

**Nominating Committee** activities include identifying open seats, types of new members needed, potential board candidates and inviting them to get involved. See *Tips* (p. 38).

**Membership Campaign** activities focus on identifying and inviting new people to join the County Farm Bureau. Volunteers also contact members who need to renew their membership. Every year the county works to reach or exceed its membership goal.

### Invite People to Join Farm Bureau

The best "membership pitch" is to talk about why you belong to Farm Bureau, why you stay involved with the county board, and how Farm Bureau contributes to your success. Remember to include local activities that add value to the community, such as scholarships, sports recognition and support for county fair activities.

For example: "Our County Farm Bureau supports the livelihoods of farmers by working to protect the freedom of consumer's choices in the grocery store. We do this by helping consumers learn more about where their food comes from, and making the right choices for their own budgets. We also contribute to the statewide efforts of watching local government spending, property taxes, property rights, and promoting economically sustainable levels of regulation to protect the environment. Are those things important to you? I belong because..... (list your own reasons)."



# County Membership Goals

County goals for 2023 are listed below. In order for a county to achieve its goal and qualify for the Campaign Manager's Trip and/or Presidents Incentive Trip, the county must also earn points for members signed or renewed by volunteers.

County	Goal
Adair	850
Adams	464
Allamakee	1670
Appanoose	481
Audubon	551
Benton	1643
Black Hawk	2946
Boone	1706
Bremer	1775
Buchanan	1602
Buena Vista	1274
Butler	1750
Calhoun	774
Carroll	1732
Cass	567
Cedar	1377
Cerro Gordo	1683
Cherokee	842
Chickasaw	1360
Clarke	539
Clay	835
Clayton	1816
Clinton	2608
Crawford	921
Dallas	2814
Davis	579
Decatur	670
Delaware	2339
Des Moines	1712
Dickinson	714
Dubuque	4645
Emmet	523
Fayette	2381
Floyd	1574

County	Goal
Franklin	1207
Fremont	549
Greene	591
Grundy	1433
Guthrie	537
Hamilton	1037
Hancock	1105
Hardin	1266
Harrison	1038
Henry	1473
Howard	721
Humboldt	948
Ida	693
Iowa	1231
Jackson	1549
Jasper	1711
Jefferson	1243
Johnson	4285
Jones	1822
Keokuk	1003
Kossuth	1387
Lee	1540
Linn	5980
Louisa	804
Lucas	755
Lyon	1144
Madison	1659
Mahaska	1786
Marion	1355
Marshall	1111
Mills	1179
Mitchell	1197
Monona	1064
Monroe	453

County	Goal
Montgomery	831
Muscatine	2166
O'Brien	1105
Osceola	632
Page	841
Palo Alto	588
Plymouth	1880
Pocahontas	664
Polk	10241
East Pott.	620
West Pott.	2007
Poweshiek	1764
Ringgold	647
Sac	948
Scott	3828
Shelby	968
Sioux	1430
Story	2763
Tama	1296
Taylor	651
Union	673
Van Buren	830
Wapello	932
Warren	2453
Washington	1735
Wayne	669
Webster	1898
Winnebago	575
Winneshiek	1777
Woodbury	2840
Worth	652
Wright	975

## **Reasons to work membership**

Every year the county Farm Bureau engages in a membership campaign in which volunteers contact farmers and others involved in the agriculture industry to join or renew their membership. Having volunteers participate in the membership campaign is important because:

- ♦ A healthy organization is a growing organization. Bringing other successful farmers into the organization grows our numbers and enriches the impact Farm Bureau makes in your county.
- ♦ You talk with other farmers about our policy issues. Asking them to join is a natural next step. Policy is our main priority, and it will be the reason they get involved. They just need to be asked.
- ♦ Asking local businesses to join is an effective way to educate them about the economic impact of agriculture. It reminds them of how many farmers support them and offers an opportunity for that business to return that support.

## **Reasons to be a Member of Farm Bureau**

If you need help with your “membership pitch” here are some options to consider and adapt to your story and your own style. Use the messages that you can deliver with the most conviction.

1. *Farm Bureau contributes to a great tradition of support for the youth of this county in scholarships and sports recognition. This county Farm Bureau supports county fair activities, farm safety, and Ag in the Classroom education. Volunteers work with our schools, presenting ag materials to help kids learn where their food comes from.*
2. *Farm Bureau is a unified voice for agriculture and rural Iowa. Farm Bureau is the only organization that has the grassroots infrastructure in each county and the network to be a credible voice for agriculture. Board members meet with county supervisors, state legislators and congressional leaders to work on issues to benefit agriculture.*
3. *Farm Bureau is a strong advocate of property owner's rights and the limiting of state government regulations on business owners. We advocate for smaller government, and less reliance on property taxes to fund government services.*
4. *The county and state Farm Bureaus promote agriculture and make connections with consumers to help them learn more about the food, fuel and fiber that farmers produce. People already like farmers, we need to make sure they trust the food we produce and the way we take care of the environment.*
5. *Our County Board of Directors are volunteers who have dedicated their time and talents to help promote Iowa's number one industry, and we need your help. For our organization to continue its success, we need the support of others and being a member is just one way you can help.*
6. *Prepare a statement about other activities your county does locally to add value to the community.*

## If They Object....

You may run into some tough questions or strong objections about joining. Prepare by reviewing some common objections, and effective responses.

1. I had a bad experience with Farm Bureau Insurance years ago.  
*I understand how an experience like that can have a big influence in how you perceive an organization. I would just ask that you consider the farm organization side separately, particularly as it relates to our work on policy.*
2. I disagree with Farm Bureau's policy on XYZ  
*I can understand that. I doubt you could find a Farm Bureau member who agrees with every policy. Our grassroots policy development process does ensure that every policy comes from our members after extensive research and discussion, and follows the will of the majority of our members. Our county board welcomes differing views on issues and we have some spirited debates. If you are a member you have that chance influence issues that are important to you.*
3. Farm Bureau is just for the big corporate farmers, not for farmers like me.  
*Farm Bureau supports all agriculture large and small. Our policies are developed by farmers from 40 acres to 4000. It's still one family, one vote. Wouldn't you like to vote too?*
4. I'm a Democrat. You all just support Republicans.  
*It's true that Farm Bureau is a conservative organization. We support those legislators and elected officials who support our policy and do not look at party affiliation in those decisions.*
5. Farm Bureau supports factory farms who pollute the environment over healthy small family farms who grow local/organic/etc. food.  
*Farm Bureau does not advocate one system of growing food over another. Instead, we advocate for consumers to continue having the freedom to choose the food which fits their budget and lifestyle goals. Would you join us to help protect that freedom for all Iowans?*
6. I belong to the other commodity groups, I don't need another one.  
*While the commodity groups do a great job of advocating for their specific commodity, the singular nature of that activity does not extend to other areas of regulation and taxation which affects all of agriculture. Farm Bureau is the organization looked upon by legislators as the "go to" voice of credibility. We need your voice to be added with ours. Would you join us?*