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### In This Issue

- Local Farmer Profile— Page 1
- Sugar is Sugar— Page 2
- What is Farm Bureau?— Page 1
- Discount Spotlight— Page 1
- AITC Coordinator— Page 2
- Dr. Steven Johnson Mtg— Page 2

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### Our Mission:

“An agricultural grassroots organization-devoted to ensuring the quality of life for our county Farm Bureau members- today and tomorrow.”



### What is Farm Bureau?

Since I began working for the Farm Bureau I've become accustomed to one question in social settings. See, if I told you that I worked at a bank or that I was teacher, you'd have a point of reference to what that was all about, but since most people are several generations removed from the farm I often am asked, "What is the Farm Bureau?"

Lucky or unlucky for them, I'm happy to answer all sorts of questions about Farm Bureau and more importantly about agriculture. The best way to explain what we are is to say that we're like the chamber of commerce for farmers. We're "An agricultural grassroots organization-devoted to ensuring the quality of life for our county Farm Bureau members- today and tomorrow."

### Meet a Local Farmer!

Every day, farm families rise to meet the challenge of feeding and fueling their communities and the world. To these men and women, the land is more than a livelihood – it's a legacy.



Meet Jeffrey Butler. Jeffrey is a 3<sup>rd</sup> generation grain and livestock family farmer from Blandinsville. Alongside his brother, they raise corn, beans, alfalfa and maintain a successful beef operation.

When asked why he wanted to be a farmer, Butler commented, "I grew up working on the farm and wanted to continue. I choose this occupation to be able to provide for my family and to give my kids the same opportunity I had."

Jeff is a graduate of Northwestern High School and holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture from Western Illinois University.

"I love what I do and I do my best at being a good steward of the land and producing the best product," added Butler when asked what he would like to tell consumers about his occupation.

Jeff and his wife Melissa have two children, Evan- 4 and Will- 10 months. When he's not farming, he enjoys grilling, sport shooting and time with his family.

In short, we provide educational opportunities, keep track of local, state and national issues affecting agriculture and promote the agriculture that is all around us.

We're a membership organization and anyone can become a member. I know what you're thinking, "But Sarah, I'm not a farmer." No problem! We have several membership classifications. Individuals with \$2,500 or more of farm income are considered MM or voting members. Individuals without farm income are considered Associate members.

There are lots of benefits to membership! MM members enjoy representation on local, state and national issues, the ability to vote and hold office within the Farm Bureau, a weekly paper called *FarmWeek*, and state and local discount benefits. Associate members receive a quarterly magazine called *Partners* as well as access to the same state and local discount benefits. Do you have membership at the YMCA or eat at local restaurants? You could be raking in the savings and believe me, the membership more than pays for itself!

If you're interested feel free to call, stop by or email me [mcdfb@logonix.net](mailto:mcdfb@logonix.net). I'd love to talk to you about what we do and how you can be a part of it!

*Sarah Grant is the Manager the McDonough County Farm Bureau.*



### Spotlight on Discounts!

Members of the McDonough County Farm Bureau receive discounts from local businesses just like these just for being members and presenting their membership card at the time of purchase!



Free soft drink with any meal purchase.



\$2.00 off a large or family size pizza.

Discounts are not intended as an endorsement. Benefits may change without notice.

## Fast Farm Facts:



- 98% of farms are family owned.
- There are 75,900 in Illinois – nearly 80% of the state's total land area.
- To keep up with population growth more food will have to be produced in the next 50 years as the past 10,000 years combined.
- Today, the average U.S. farmer feeds 155 people. In 1960, a farmer fed just 26 people.
- Today's farmer grows twice as much food as his parents did – using less land, energy, water and fewer emissions.
- American farmers ship more than \$100 billion of their crops and products to many nations.
- U.S. farmers produce about 40% of the world's corn, using only 20% of the total area harvested in the world.
- Farmers are a direct lifeline to more than 24 million U.S. jobs in all kinds of industries.
- In the past five years, U.S. farm operators have become more demographically diverse. The 2007 census counted nearly 30% more women as principal farm operators. The count of Hispanic operators grew by 10%, and the counts of American Indian, Asian and African-American farm operators increased as well.

## Sugar is Sugar

This month the Corn Refiners Association (CRA) petitioned the Food and Drug Administration to allow food and beverage makers to call High Fructose Corn Syrup, or HFCS, simply “corn sugar.” And why shouldn't they? HFCS has certainly – and undeservingly – received a bad rap over the past several years. It's the bogeyman of the sugar world.

While HFCS is a natural ingredient, which the body handles the same as table sugar, critics have still waged an all-out war on the product, in turn providing misinformation to consumers. For example, says CRA, despite the fact that HFCS and table sugar contain the same amount of fructose, nearly 58 percent of consumers believe the corn-based sweetener contains more fructose. Further, research shows that labeling products with “HFCS” is confusing to consumers.

But, says CRA, sugar is sugar.

According to a 2008 report, the American Dietetic Association validated that HFCS is “nutritionally equivalent to sucrose (table sugar),” containing the same amount of calories and “once absorbed into the bloodstream, the two sweeteners are indistinguishable.”

So why is HFCS the scapegoat for America's health and obesity problems? That question goes all the way back to the farm bill. Critics claim that farm subsidies to corn producers are adding inches to America's waistline. Opponents have zoned in on HFCS as a means to discredit the farm bill. Adding to that is the natural food movement, whereby food manufacturers are trying to remain relevant during the growing trend by cutting HFCS and labeling their products as “HFCS-free.”

In a recent editorial in *the Atlantic*, James McWilliams, a professor at Texas State University, goes further to blame food writers “who have set out to deem HFCS the sole harbinger of civilization's decline into epidemical obesity.” McWilliams writes “while I cannot prove it, my strong sense is that food writers are allowing their smoldering disdain for industrial food to undermine the cool-headedness required to accurately report scientific information relevant to it.”

So, the name “corn sugar” is now in the hands of the U.S. government, which could take up to two years to make it official. In the meantime, it's up to farmers and consumers, who stand to lose the taste of some of their favorite products made with HFCS, to educate consumers. Sugar is sugar. And just like table sugar, HFCS is safe in moderation (and especially good in that occasional Twinkie).

*Tracy Taylor Grondine is director of media relations for the American Farm Bureau Federation.*

### **Johnson to present “Managing Crop Margins: Utilizing Risk Management Tools” Program**

Dr. Steve Johnson, Farm & Ag Business Management Specialist from Iowa State University Extension, will be in Macomb on Monday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> at 12 p.m. to present his seminar titled “Managing Crop Margins: Utilizing Risk Management Tools.”

Steve serves as the Farm & Ag Business Management Specialist in Central Iowa for Iowa State University Extension. He presents at more than 100 meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences across the Corn Belt and interacts with more than 10,000 producers annually.

The meeting will be held at the Spoon River College Community Outreach Center; Mid America National Bank Conference Hall, Room A; 2500 East Jackson, Macomb. Lunch will be served starting at 11:30 a.m. with meeting to follow at 12 p.m. Cost is free for MM members and \$10 for Associate and non-members. RSVP is required. Call 309-837-3350 to RSVP by November 18<sup>th</sup>.

### **McDonough County Farm Bureau names Harn new Ag in the Classroom Coordinator**



The McDonough County Farm Bureau has named Margaret Harn as its new Agriculture in the Classroom Coordinator.

“We are very excited to have Margaret as part of our team,” noted Sarah Grant, Manager of the McDonough County Farm Bureau. “Her background as an elementary teacher and knowledge of agriculture will make her a great resource to local teachers.”

Harn will be responsible for providing free agriculture related materials and presentations to schools throughout the county.

Before joining the Farm Bureau, Margaret taught for 34 years and recently retired from the Schuyler- Industry school district. Margaret and her husband Jack reside in Macomb.

For more information about the Agriculture in Classroom program, please contact Margaret at 309-837-3350 or via email at [aitc@logonix.net](mailto:aitc@logonix.net).