Minnesota Farm Bureau is an advocate for agriculture driven by the beliefs and policies of our members.
Dear Farm Bureau Member,

We hope you and your families are well in this changing world. Times have been challenging and agriculture has not been spared. Like so many other segments of our economy, agriculture has stepped up to provide essential products and services. Minnesota farmers are #StillFarming, and Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) continues to be there for you, especially during these incredible financially and emotionally challenging times.

In Minnesota, we are blessed with a diversity of agriculture from what we grow to how we grow it to what size farm we have. This diversity also means that various agriculture sectors are being hit hard at different times and in different ways. From a decline in gasoline impacting ethanol to trade uncertainties hitting pork and soybeans to major disruptions in key markets for meat, milk, produce and eggs, very few aspects of agriculture have gone untouched.

Just as work on the farm and every aspect of food production has continued, Farm Bureau has been hard at work throughout this crisis. We wanted to take this opportunity to report to members from the “boots on the ground” perspective from our membership. We've appreciated all the staff at MFBF for their dedication to their work and commitment to our members. We also want to thank our county Farm Bureau leaders for the flexibility they have shown to make sure that the work that Farm Bureau does every day continued even if things looked a little different. Whether it was checking in on your neighbors through social distancing, discussing important issues over Zoom, or thinking creatively on how to reimagine programming, Farm Bureau leaders stepped up to the plate and continued to serve their local members and communities through challenging times.

All of this work gets done because you make it happen. Thank you for being a member. Thank you for your tireless hours you put in all year long to supply healthy, affordable food to be processed and packaged so stores can restock shelves, produce bins, and meat and dairy cases. We know working together works. We will get through this together. Stay safe.

Sincerely,

Kevin Paap
President

Karin Schaaf
Executive Director
MFBF worked closely with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security to make sure that those in Minnesota's food supply system were deemed essential, allowing anyone from farmers to truckers to processors to grocers to farm markets and greenhouses to continue the important work of keeping food available. We provided a template for essential workers traveling to and from work during the Stay at Home orders. On the federal level, we pushed hard to make sure H2A workers were deemed critical, and the consulates expanded the pool of applicants eligible for interview waivers. This ensured employees could still get into the country. This work continues as we work to ensure that we have access to a stable workforce and the ability to keep workers safe.

MFBF advocated for support for farmers and ranchers impacted by COVID-19 through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program, with $16 billion in funding, including assistance in the Small Business Administration's Paycheck Protection Program and Economic Injury Disaster Loan program; and a critical infrastructure designation for meat processing plants to ensure a market for livestock producers and a stable meat supply for U.S. consumers. MFBF worked with our livestock commodity organizations and with the MDA as farmers face livestock market challenges and depopulation. These asks included logistical and financial support as farmers made difficult decisions to depopulate as well as proactive steps such as opening up CRP and DNR state lands for emergency haying and grazing.

MFBF worked at the state and federal level to ensure waivers for hours of service and weight limits for trucks delivering critical supplies, including food and groceries, were granted. This alignment with the existing agricultural hours of service exemption and weight limit variance relieved one less barrier to the already stressed food supply system.

Farm Safety
- Safety on the farm is a top priority for all farm families. The Minnesota Legislature passed legislation to increase funding for farm safety grants and outreach efforts, as well as requiring the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and the Farm Safety Advisory group to develop recommendations regarding how to best provide financial and technical assistance to Minnesota farmers.
- MFBF worked closely with authors of the legislation and testified before the Legislature in support of safety efforts to reduce farm injuries and deaths through engineering, education, and voluntary practices.

Rural Finance Authority
- The RFA received $55 million in critical funding from the Legislature to ensure it maintains important resources to continue to offer eligible farmers affordable financing options through a wide variety of loan programs. MFBF supported funding for this important entity.

Full Conformity of Section 179
- Included in the 2020 Bonding bill was conformity to Section 179 expensing effective for tax year 2020. The bill also provides for Section 179 expensing retroactively for tax years in which the like-kind exchange changes under the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act were effective for federal purposes. The bonding portion of the bill included many local bonding projects that are important for local communities.

Political Action
MFBF has a state and a federal Political Action Committee. Our endorsement process includes face to face candidate interviews with local Farm Bureau members, with the final endorsement decisions made by the State PAC Committee. In 2020, MFBF field staff led the coordination of Farm Bureau volunteers to complete nearly 250 candidate evaluation interviews. The State PAC meeting resulted in final endorsement of interviewed candidates siting strong support of agriculture and Farm Bureau policy.
The numbers below highlight actions taken by the nearly 30,000 Minnesota farm families that make up our organization.

180 Farm Bureau members from 59 counties attended three Day on the Hill visits in St. Paul.

67 county Farm Bureaus participated in the Adopt-a-Legislator program reaching 67 urban state legislators.

13,693 people received weekly Impact e-newsletters.

Nearly 170 Farm Bureau leaders, elected and appointed officials attended the Council of County Presidents.

An Action Alert was issued via the Minnesota Farm Bureau Action Alert Center with 674 messages sent to more than 80 state legislators.

Multiple state and federal legislators visited local farms, attended County “Breakfast on the Farms” and county annual meetings.

During Farmfest, candidates for federal office in Minnesota participated in multiple forums that included questions from Farm Bureau leadership.

23 elected officials, including Minnesota Governor Tim Walz, attended the Minnesota Farm Bureau’s 101st Annual Meeting.

45 county and multi-county policy development meetings were held throughout the state.

Conducted in-person legislative updates in more than 35 counties.

MFBF staff testified more than 10 times at the state legislature on priority issues.

MFBF has a seat on 20 state boards and task forces to provide a voice for our members on a variety of topics from pollinators to noxious weeds to organic and county management to water quality and everything in between.

The Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) strives daily to communicate with our members, to effectively engage in meaningful conversations with consumers and influence food system stakeholders.

Our goal is to provide consistent, timely, intriguing information to members and media regarding MFBF and at the same time share the food to farm story with consumers.

**Promotion and Education Committee**

MFBF worked closely with our local Promotion & Education (P&E) Committees and with the state P&E Committee “to assist in developing agriculture literacy programming, engaging consumers and promoting a positive image of agriculture”. The MFBF P&E Committee met to determine their goals and activities for the year and reviewed them quarterly at their meetings. The education program goal is to surface and engage new and current members by providing leadership, educational and networking opportunities to enhance involvement within the Farm Bureau organization and to create videos that tell their personal farm and Farm Bureau stories to post on social media.

**Food Awareness**

It is estimated that over 18,300 people were reached by Food Awareness messages in Minnesota. 48 County Farm Bureaus held events, donating 13,100 pounds of food and donating 47,000 meals and $37,200 in cash.

**Ag Promotion Grant Program**

The grant program was very successful and allowed Farm Bureau members to engage with nonmembers. Approximately $40,000 was distributed to 49 county Farm Bureaus. The final reports submitted by the counties, indicated more than $28,178 in additional funds was leveraged from outside partnerships such as FFA, 4-H, local agriculture businesses, and other organizations. Approximately 6,000 people were directly impacted by the programs.

**Ag in the Classroom events**

Volunteers reached approximately 34,250 students in the past year through ATIC type programs. With approximately 24 schools being reached by volunteers. By reaching students; volunteers are improving consumer awareness and creating an opportunity to inform parents in the community. The MFBF P&E Committee itself worked with 12 classrooms. We had 18 county Farm Bureaus with approximately 69 volunteers that have reached hundreds of students in the past year through Agriculture in the Classroom programs. While this number was down significantly due to COVID-19, our members did work closely with MN Department of Agriculture on virtual farm tours for teachers and students.

**Ag Safety and Awareness Week (ASAP Week)**

To date, over 280 volunteers have taught valuable safety messages at 18 events. We estimate these volunteers have reached over 2,400 youth and 470 adults were reached with safety education this year. Our committee engaged in ASAP week messaging that was used on social media and on radio stations across our state significantly increasing our outreach.

**Minnesota State Fair**

Even though the state fair was cancelled this year that did not stop the Minnesota Farm Bureau from providing some fair like experiences virtually. We created fun videos that allowed our farmers and ranchers to share their story of how the things we consume at our dinner table trace back to the farm. We also created a video that promoted our volunteer engagement with consumers that included a MN Farmers Care t-shirt toss video. We created a video that announced our 2020 Sesquicentennial Farms, along with infographics that provided more detail on each farm that was awarded this designation. Each day of the fair, we promoted an agriculture book and gave one away to a lucky winner.
The Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation (MFBF) strives to create new leaders stronger than themselves and works to develop strong leaders that will effectively serve our organization, their communities and their families. There are a wide range of programs offered through the state and counties.

**County Chairs**
There are 65 Farm Bureau YF&R chairs and 63 county Farm Bureaus P&E chairs, many of which participated in the LEAP Conference held in January. They had the opportunity to gain hands-on experience to increase their effectiveness as agriculture ambassadors with network with other farmers and ranchers.

**Council of County Presidents**
Sixty-eight Farm Bureau leaders learned more about buffers, water quality and other hot policy issues impacting rural Minnesota. Approximately 66 legislators joined the participants at the event for networking and dinner.

**Competitive Leadership Contests**
At the state level, 14 members competed in the Discussion Meet contest for a chance to be selected as one of the Top 8 at the AFBF Fusion Conference and placed in the Sweet Sixteen. We continued to host six competitions at college campuses and the finals will occur this year through a virtual experience.

**Speak for Yourself**
The “Speak for Yourself” program funded and lead by the Minnesota Farm Bureau in cooperation with other organizations trains farmer leaders to present their farming story to consumers. Each farmer participant attends a training session where they learn the latest about connecting with consumers, creating and preparing their farm story and how to present it to their audiences. The farmer speakers are then scheduled to present their stories to civic organizations, church groups, schools, colleges and dieticians. An evaluation form is completed by the audience members to ensure the program is meeting the objectives of connecting with consumers. To date, 75 farmers have been trained. These farmers have presented to over 730 different key influencer groups across the state. They have reached over 5.9 million consumers through presentations and media outreach.

**Sesquicentennial Farms**
This project was started in 2008 by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. They transitioned the long-term program into Farm Bureau’s hands. To date over 410 farms have reached the 150-year milestone and received recognition. In 2020, 40 recipients were recognized. Since our state fair was cancelled where the recognition was traditionally held, we created a Sesquicentennial Bureau’s hands. To date over 410 farms have reached the 150-year milestone and received recognition. In 2020, 40 recipients were recognized. Since our state fair was cancelled where the recognition was traditionally held, we created a Sesquicentennial Farms recognition video and detailed infographics on each farm that were posted during what should have been our state fair week. This project was started in 2008 by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture. They transitioned the long-term program into Farm Bureau’s hands. To date over 410 farms have reached the 150-year milestone and received recognition. In 2020, 40 recipients were recognized. Since our state fair was cancelled where the recognition was traditionally held, we created a Sesquicentennial Farms recognition video and detailed infographics on each farm that were posted during what should have been our state fair week.

**Century Farms**
This project is managed jointly with the Minnesota State Fair. We coordinate with the county fairs (agricultural societies) and the county Farm Bureaus to recognize Century Farm families. Since the program’s inception more than 10,600 family farms have been recognized. One hundred and fifty-four farmers were recognized in 2020.

**LEAP Conference**
We have improved the quality of speakers and increased networking with nearly 240 attending this year. The state committees decide the dates and location as well as chooses speaker topics and tour ideas. The ag literacy “Make and Take” session provides a hands-on training. During this event, more than $3,500 was raised as a service project along with 789 Food Shelf donations.

**MFB FOUNDATION BOARD OF DIRECTORS**
The Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors serve as the leadership of the organization and the representation of the grassroots members of the county Farm Bureau organizations.

Kevin Paap, President
Dan Gleeson, Vice President
Karina Schaefer, Secretary
Dave Johnson, Treasurer
Keith Allen, District I
Bob Roelefs, District II
Carolyn Olson, District III
Nathan Collins, District IV
Fran Miron, District V
Linda Kuchel, District VI
Shayne Isane, District VII
Rachel Connell, Young Farmers and Ranchers
Peter Bakken, Promotion and Education

**MINNESOTA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION STAFF**
The Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation staff is committed to assisting county Farm Bureau organizations achieve our mission of being an advocate for agriculture driven by the beliefs and policies of our members.

**Administration**
Karina Schaefer, Executive Director
Madison Muir, Communications Specialist
Libby Knoebel, Office Manager

**Finance**
Dave Johnson, Director of Operations
Lori Wiegand, Accounting Associate

**Membership and Marketing Team**
James Dodds, North Membership and Marketing Specialist
Virginia (Westley) Magyar, Southeast Membership and Marketing Specialist
Dennis Sabel, East Central Membership and Marketing Specialist
Amanda Revier, Southwest Membership and Marketing Specialist

**Public Policy**
Amber Glaser, Director
Josie Lonetti, Associate Director

**Foundation/Leadership Development**
Ruth Linkenmoyer Meirick, Foundation Director
Rachael Peterson, Leadership Development Coordinator

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Farmers are dedicated to feeding America.
We are stronger together. #StillFarming