

THE FARMER'S REPORT

The Mendota Reporter

Established in 1854
The Amboy News
The Depot Museum

Wednesday, June 29, 2022



Rooted in the heartland, the heart of agricultural innovation

MENDOTA – There is a certain nostalgia in the air that reminds Josh Beetz why he's proud to be a farmer.

"I love the smell of spring in the morning. It just makes me want to get outside and work," he said.

For fifth-generation farmer Peter Pratt, it's the culture of community that keeps him going.

"Everybody looks out for everyone, no matter who you are," he said. "That's what makes what we do so special."

One thing is certain. Throughout history, the success of our nation's farming industry has been built on the raw characteristics of grit and passion – on its people. But just as the seasons change, so do the seasons of the agricultural business. The ever-changing nature of one of our country's oldest professions continues to reveal unprecedented ambiguity for those who live to roll up their sleeves in the field.

Risky business

The challenge for farmers today is not the long hours or the physical labor – it's the uncertainty.

"It's becoming increas-

ingly difficult to predict input supplies, cost, what's happening in the export market, renewable fuel standards or even weather," said Pratt. "Every day is like a black swan event."

For Beetz, the pressure to provide for his family only adds to the risk.

"I have a big family, so the older I get the more I worry about stability for them," he shared.

Both farmers rely heavily on their equipment to weather the changes with them, from the topsoil to the technology. Return on enormous investments into the latest models year after year is only realized when those systems evolve with the operator's needs. In a world constantly redefining the intersection of technology and talent, man and machine, the city of Mendota is home to a company that remains focused on finding the right balance.

Small town, big ideas

The mission of Mendota, a small Midwestern city located in northern Illinois, is to revere the past and find hope in the future – a familiar sentiment for local company, HCC, Inc., a leading

manufacturer in agricultural harvesting equipment for more than 100 years.

The unassuming town with a population of just 7,000 is named after the American Indian word meaning "crossing of trails," a fitting title for a place that finds itself at an important crossroad of innovation. Early settlers welcomed the railroad in 1853 and took advantage of this cutting-edge tool to transport agricultural equipment and resources more efficiently to the area.

Today, embracing the same forward-thinking mindset that drove regional development more than a century ago, HCC, Inc. is responsible for over 80 patented inventions that have transformed the agricultural industry, including the first commercial grain weigher, the H.D. Hume pickup reel and the floating cutter bar.

Accelerating autonomy

HCC Inc.'s latest invention, SieveSense™: Autonomous Louver Positioning, is a hyper-accurate louver position sensor that enables automatic cleaning shoe adjustments to maximize harvest efficiency by utilizing closed-loop sensing



Utilizing closed-loop sensing technology, the SieveSense maximizes harvest efficiency through autonomous louver position adjustments on the fly.

technology to account for variable crop conditions. Requiring no involvement by the operator, the small part is proving to make a big impact on the way farmers work.

With the increasing cost of machine operation, every second in the field matters. SieveSense allows the equipment to autonomously account for terrain, crop condition, shoe shake and other variables a farmer would otherwise be unable to detect that may impact the cleaning shoe louver position. The result? Increased productivity and profitability.

"With more control over grain cleaning in the back, I could probably increase my typical ground speed of 3.2 miles per hour by half a mile. Over just one 12-hour day with two machines, the ability to move at a faster speed saves me almost a full day of time," explained Pratt. "SieveSense provides a level of certainty in our work that we didn't have

before. The more data I can get that is accurate and relevant, the better I can be at my job."

SieveSense also utilizes an internal accelerometer to monitor overall system health and flag irregularities, eliminating the potential for expensive repairs and unwanted downtime. And with multi-season, vigorous lab and field testing complete, SieveSense has proven to remain reliable even in the harshest farming environments.

For Beetz, who feels most fulfilled by the long working hours of his trade, it's an emotional transformation that impacts endurance. He finds comfort in having a new set of eyes on the back of his machine that eliminates the guessing game.

"This new technology gives me peace of mind because I no longer have to guess, I just know," Beetz said.

Unlocking the unknown

For farmers like Beetz

and Pratt, their families are their business. The simplicity of the SieveSense technology breaks down generational divides in skill and knowledge and highlights the power that comes from enabling people and machines to work together.

"You can't make good decisions without good information, and SieveSense opens the door for us to keep advancing and finding smarter ways to do our job," said Pratt.

As we look to the future, it's clear that the heart of agriculture will continue to rest in our farmers while the innovators of the heartland will not rest in their pursuit to support them.

"This story is especially great for Mendota," said Beetz. "I love living in town, knowing that the parts I work with every day and these new ideas are made right here in my backyard."

For more information about HCC Inc., visit www.hccincorporated.com.



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Welcome To The LaSalle County

4-H SHOW & JUNIOR FAIR

Thursday, July 14 – Sunday, July 17, 2022

LaSalle County Junior Fairgrounds • Ottawa

Thursday, July 14

8 a.m. General 4-H projects judging
 9:30 a.m. Children's Hospital of Illinois
 2 p.m. Fashion Revue, Exhibit Hall III
 Exhibit Hall III includes "Just for Fun"
 5 p.m. Dog Show
 7 p.m. Illinois State Pullers Truck and Tractor Pull

Friday, July 15

8 a.m. Swine judging
 8 a.m. Poultry judging
 11 a.m. Dairy Show
 1 p.m. Sheep Show
 4 p.m. Cat Show
 4 p.m. 3x3 Basketball
 5 p.m. Public presentation, & Talent Show 4-H Club activities throughout the week

4 - 7 p.m.
 7 p.m.

Gypsy Queen Karaoke
 Broken Horse Rodeo

7 p.m.

Extension & 4-H
 Ramer Race Promotions
 Demolition Derby

Saturday, July 16

8 a.m. Horse Show
 8:30 a.m. Beef Showmanship contest followed by Purebred & Market Beef judging
 8:30 a.m. Rabbit Show
 11 a.m. - 2 p.m. 4-H Pop Up Tent Activities
 Bicycle Rodeo:
 1 p.m. 5-8 years old
 2 p.m. 9-12 years old
 Funny Magic Guy - Rob Thompson:
 3 Shows: 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 3 p.m.
 4 p.m. Basketball court games
 4 - 7 p.m. Dawn May Face Painting
 4:30 p.m. Fair Auction, Friends of

Sunday, July 17

8 a.m. Horse Show, Horse Arena
 8 a.m. Goat Show
 10 a.m. Master Showman contest
 11 a.m. Cow Pie Bingo with North Stars 4-H Club
 Closing ceremonies honoring 4-H and Cloverbud graduates, Hall of Fame recognition

TBA

Vaessen Bros. Chevrolet
 Hwy. 52 • Sublette • 815-849-5232 or 800-227-5203

Ridley Feed Ingredients
 1609 First Ave. • Mendota • 815-539-9321

LaSalle County Farm Bureau
 4201 N. Columbus St. • Ottawa • 815-433-0371

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 1503 W. Washington Street • Mendota • 815-539-7801

Sullivans Foods
 1102 Meriden St. • Mendota • 815-539-9341

Mahoney Environmental Solutions, LLC
 448 N. 3973rd Rd. • Mendota • 815-539-5633

N.L. Morton Buildings, Ltd.
 Route 251 S. • Mendota • 815-539-9325

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 Member NCUA-ESI

Midland States Bank
 801 Washington St. • Mendota
 815-539-9346
 Member FDIC

Peru Waltham Mutual Insurance
 1724 Peoria St. • Peru
 815-223-4414

Corrigan Cattle Farm
 Farm raised beef and pork
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 815-719-2171

Nutrien Ag Solutions
 1793 Steward Rd. • Steward
 815-396-2248

Cantln Law Firm
 760 E Etna Rd. • Ottawa
 815-433-4712

RSG Millwrights Inc.
 149 E. US Hwy 34 • Mendota
 815-343-1224

HCC, Inc.
 1501 1st Ave. • Mendota
 815-539-1850

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 One coupon per customer, per visit. Not valid with any other offer. Only redeemable at McDonald's in Mendota.
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Cover crops not enough to improve soil after decades of continuous corn

URBANA – Although about 20% of Illinois cropping systems are planted to continuous corn, it's nearly impossible to find fields planted this way for decades at a time. Yet long-term experiments like one at the University of Illinois, including over 40 years of continuous corn under different nitrogen fertilizer rates, provide incredible learning opportunities and soil management lessons for researchers and farmers alike.

That's particularly true for studies of the soil microbiome, including two led by Nakian Kim, a doctoral graduate from the Department of Crop Sciences at U of I. For Kim, the long-term experiment provided a unique, biologically stable setting to explore baselines and observe microbial responses to the inclusion of cover crops, a change in management introduced in 2018 and supported by a USDA-NIFA award to Maria Villamil's team.

Importantly, Kim found short-term use of cover crops can't undo decades of soil microbial dynamics in response to continuous corn and heavy nitrogen fertilizer use.

"In the Midwest, our soils are healthy and resilient, but we shouldn't overestimate them. A soil under unsustainable practices for too long might reach an irreversible threshold," Kim says.

In his first study, published in *Agronomy*, Kim characterized shifts in microbial communities at the genus level, a far higher taxonomic resolution than previous studies. The more detailed view of the microbial community revealed indicator genera representing critical aspects of soil health and function.

"Most studies have looked at the microbes very generally, at the phylum level. But even a single phylum may have incredibly vast microbial diversity. Analysis at such levels could not provide insights with enough details, so I looked deeper," Kim says. "Genus-level responses or stasis can tell us how a soil and its microbial community are responding to soil management practices."

For example, he found both long-term fertilization and cover crops favored microbes that could increase the risk of nitrous oxide emissions. Meanwhile, cover crops also enhanced soil biodiversity, as microbes with more diverse niches and functions were associated with this practice. Details like these – especially that cover crops can have both positive and negative effects on

soil microbes – may have been missed with the broader microbial analyses of the past.

In a second study, published in *Frontiers in Microbiology*, Kim focused on nitrogen cycling by identifying microbial functional genes in soil, rather than characterizing microbes themselves.

"Applying a lot of nitrogen fertilizers definitely disrupted nitrogen cycling communities," Kim says. "Ammonia-oxidizing archaea decreased significantly with fertilization, but bacteria were not that responsive. Within denitrification communities, those harboring the nitrite-reducing *nirK* gene were not as sensitive, while others with the *nirS* gene were negatively affected."

Kim found two years of cover crops had no impact on microbes' rates of potential nitrification and denitrification, indirect indicators of nitrate leaching and nitrous oxide emission.

"If a system is exposed to disruption of nitrogen-cycling microbial communities long enough, it may develop resistance to conservation practices," Kim says.

In other words, two years of cover cropping may not have been enough to undo the damage of 36 years of continuous corn and nitrogen fertilizer application. But Kim is keen to test the effects of longer-term cover crop management.

Villamil, professor in the Department of Crop Sciences and co-author on both papers, says, "Our Midwestern soils are resilient in ways that we might not have anticipated. A closer scrutiny reveals microbial communities are reacting dynamically to unsustainable practices and adapting to the resulting soil conditions. Reverting these changes may take tremendous effort and time, and cover cropping should be one of many strategies we deploy to increase the spatial and temporal diversity of our agricultural systems to protect our soils and our future on this planet."

Both studies were funded by the USDA-NIFA Award [AG 2018-67019-27807], "Understanding shifts in the microbial N cycle with inclusion of cover crops into long-term agricultural experiments and their links to soil health and productivity."

The Department of Crop Sciences is in the College of Agricultural, Consumer and Environmental Sciences at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Local farmers among Illinois Soybean Association "20 Under 40" award winners

BLOOMINGTON – After undergoing a rigorous judging process, 20 farmers were identified as the first class of Illinois "20 Under 40" award winners.

From a corn and soybean farmer in Viola to a beef farmer in Lawrenceville, there was no shortage of variety among the 2022 winners. They're agricultural leaders, exceptional community citizens and role models for their generation and the next. They're upholding traditions, starting their own and helping their neighbors out along the way.

Among the 20 winners are Sarah Tweet Landers of Mendota, Michael Ganschow of Walnut and David Murphy of Tiskilwa.

Young farmers are our future, and no state's future in agriculture is brighter than that of Illinois. Illinois is brimming with farmers of all specialties who truly operate in a league all their own.

Following the nomination window

this spring, judges sifted through more than 50 young farmer applications from across the state who were nominated for their efforts and activities to better their farming operations and communities.

"We're honored to have the opportunity to recognize exceptional Illinois young farmers in collaboration with the Illinois ag family," says Rachel Peabody, Director of Communications at Illinois Soybean Association.

The Illinois Soybean Association checkoff program had support from the following partner organizations: Illinois Beef Association, Illinois Corn, Illinois Farm Bureau, Illinois Fertilizer & Chemical Association, Illinois Grain & Feed Association and Illinois Pork Producers Association. Busey Bank and John Deere were corporate sponsors of the program.

Learn more about the 2022 Illinois "20 Under 40" award winners and the program at il20under40.com.

Report dives into carbon sequestration potential of conservation practices

For agricultural soils in the Midwestern U.S. to continue to be productive, conservation practices must be widely implemented, according to a new report from the Center for Rural Affairs.

"Conservation on working lands provides many ecosystem services, including water quality and soil health improvement, wildlife habitat, and reduced operation cost," said Kayla Bergman, senior policy associate at the Center. "Not covered as often, however, is the carbon sequestration and greenhouse gas emission reductions these practices provide."

Authored by Bergman, the report "Conservation Practice Impact on Carbon Sequestra-

tion" takes a closer look at that lesser-advertised benefit. Bergman said soil organic matter is an important indicator of soil health and affects the soil's physical, chemical, and biological properties.

"Healthy soil with high levels of organic matter and soil organic carbon provide many benefits to those using the land for productivity, including water-holding capacity, aggregate stability, and nutrient availability," she said.

In addition to looking at the benefits of healthy soil, the report provides information on conservation practices—often called climate smart agricultural practices—that increase soil organic carbon while still using

the soil for agricultural production, as well as tools for evaluating carbon sequestration and funding available from the U.S. Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service.

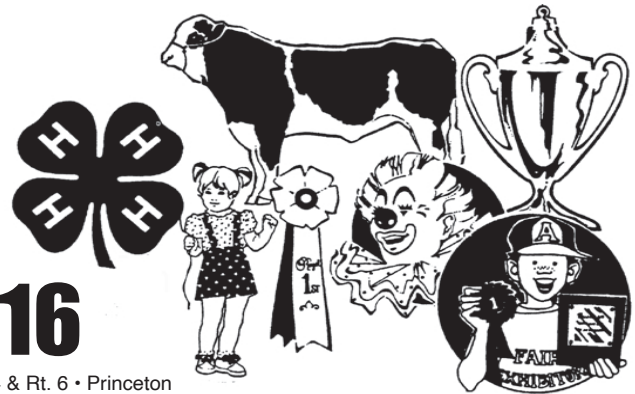
For more information or to view "Conservation Practice Impact on Carbon Sequestration," visit cfra.org/publications.

Established in 1973, the Center for Rural Affairs is a private, non-profit organization working to strengthen small businesses, family farms and ranches, and rural communities through action oriented programs addressing social, economic, and environmental issues.

COME TO THE BUREAU COUNTY 4-H FAIR

July 14-16

Bureau County 4-H Fairgrounds • Rt. 34 & Rt. 6 • Princeton



Thursday, July 14

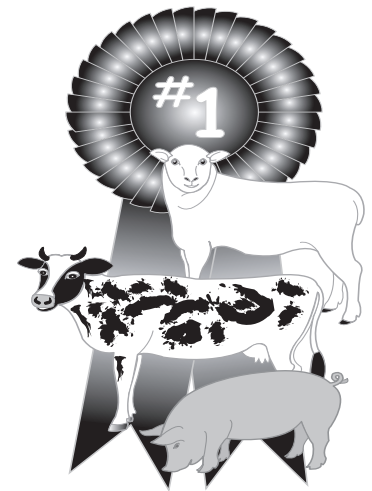
7:30 a.m. Club leaders set up booths
9 a.m. Foods Judging begins
Morning judging will include:
Foods, Crops, Horticulture,
Natural Resources, Wildlife,
Floriculture, & Weather
12 - 1:15 p.m. Judge/Superintendent Lunch Break
1:15 p.m. Photography, Computer, eSports,
& Exploratory judging
1:30 p.m. Communications/Journalism,
Video/Filmmaking, Animal
Science, Woodworking, & Vet
Science judging
1:45 p.m. Theatre Arts, Robotics,
Electricity, & Interior Design
judging
2:30 p.m. Health judging
5 p.m. Dog Show/Dog Obedience Show
7 p.m. Fashion Revue

12 - 1 p.m. Visual Arts Judges will meet after
lunch to determine trophy winners/
state fair delegates
1:15 p.m. Cloverbud Judging Begins
1:30 p.m. County-only Projects judging &
Aerospace judging begins
2 p.m. Intercultural/Childcare judging
2:30 p.m. Welding judging begins & Cat
Show in Hospitality Building
2:45 p.m. Leadership judging begins
3 p.m. College & Career Readiness
judging, Aerospace launch
(weather permitting), Tractor
judging, Bicycle judging, & Sheep
& Goat Weigh-In
4 p.m. Sheep & Goat Show
4:30 p.m. Beef Weigh-In
6 p.m. Swine Show
Master Showmanship Contest following Swine Show

9:30 a.m. Market Beef Show
11 a.m. Breeding Beef Show, Bucket Calf
Show, Beef Showmanship
1 p.m. Waterfowl & Pigeon Show

All judging will be Conference (interview) judged.
4-H'ers must be present during the judging, unless a
Special Accommodation Request has been made prior
to the Fair.

Club booths cannot be taken down or projects removed
until the end of the awards ceremony.



Friday, July 15

8:30 a.m. Visual Arts judging begins
12 - 1 p.m. Judges/Superintendents Lunch
break

Saturday, July 16

8 a.m. All livestock due in pens
8:30 a.m. Dairy Show
9 a.m. Horse Show, Poultry Show, Rabbit
Show

First State Bank of Van Orin
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\$1.00 off ANY McCafe Drink
(includes med milk shakes and hot chocolate excludes
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One coupon per customer, per visit. Not valid with any
other offer. Only redeemable at McDonald's in Mendota.
Expires 08/31/2022
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USDA begins 2022 Agricultural Resource Management Survey

SPRINGFIELD – The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) is collecting data from approximately 3,000 Illinois farmers and ranchers for its annual Agricultural Resource Management Survey (ARMS). The survey looks at all aspects of U.S. agricultural production, the well-being of farm households, farm finances, chemical usage, and various farm production characteristics. The survey also collects detailed information on production practices, costs, and returns for different commodities on a rotating basis. In 2022, the survey will take a closer look at wheat production in the United States.

"The annual data from ARMS are used to gauge the financial health and resource use of today's producers," said NASS Illinois State Statistician Mark Schleusener. "The information gives us an annual snapshot of the role of the farming industry in the U.S. economy."

The information producers provide through the survey will inform national and state policy decisions. In addition, ARMS data are used to calculate the farm sector portion of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), which is an important measure of the U.S. economy.

The survey is conducted in three phases from May 2022 through April 2023. The current (first) phase screens participants to ensure they have the commodities of interest that are needed to accurately represent the entire U.S. farm sector. During the second phase, NASS will collect information on production practices and chemical use for specific commodities. In the final phase, NASS will survey producers on farm income and production expenditures.

"We strongly encourage every producer contacted for ARMS to participate, as their response represents not just their own farm but many other similar operations across the country," added Schleusener. "For maximum convenience, producers should complete the survey online at accounts.usda.gov with the survey code mailed to them. Online reporting is fast and secure. Producers may also mail or fax their completed questionnaire to us."

All information from respondents is kept confidential, as required by federal law, and reported so that no individual operation or producer can be identified. For more information on how NASS protects information, visit www.nass.usda.gov/confidentiality.

ARMS is a joint effort of NASS and USDA's Economic Research Service. For more information about the Agricultural Resource Management Survey, visit nass.usda.gov/go/ARMS.

For more information, contact the NASS Heartland Regional Field Office at (800) 551-1014 or nassrfohlr@usda.gov.

Rural residents at disadvantage with mental health services

By TAMMIE SLOUP
FarmWeek

The sea of dark purple on a map of Illinois counties told a concerning story.

Most of the counties were dark purple, indicating a shortage of mental and behavioral health providers in those areas. Only a handful of counties, mostly in Cook County and the collar counties, had no shortage or partial shortages.

But it's not just an Illinois issue. Mental health care in rural areas throughout the U.S. is in crisis.

Heather Whetsell, Southern Illinois University Medicine Population Science & Policy administrative director, presented findings of a yearlong study into mental health care in rural areas during the National Rural Health Association's (NRHA) Annual Rural Health Conference. The research was conducted by the NRHA Rural Health Fellows mental health workgroup.

Barriers to mental health care in rural America are driven by three factors: availability of health care, access and acceptability, the fellows found.

"There are a lot of efforts going into trying to recruit and retain providers in these areas, but as you know, it's an uphill battle," said Janessa Graves, associate professor of nursing, Washington State University, who grew up in central Illinois.

When it comes to acceptability, the fellows are specifically referring to stigma.

"It's a documented problem in rural communities; mental health stigma both for discussing issues but then also accessing services," Graves said. "Also, health literacy is an issue and then lack of privacy. I live in a town of 2,000 people and everyone knows when I go get my hair cut, much less if I'm frequenting a mental health care provider in my town."

The report was not all doom and gloom, as part of its policy brief includes recommendations as well as innovative projects already in the works.

A heavy emphasis was placed on workforce recruitment and retention, including stipends and paid internships for rural providers, expansion of loan repayment programs, salary and bonus incentives and equitable grant making so all government funding isn't going to larger, urban health centers with experienced grant writers.

The health and wellness of the workforce also must be maintained and even enhanced for mental health providers to stay in rural areas.

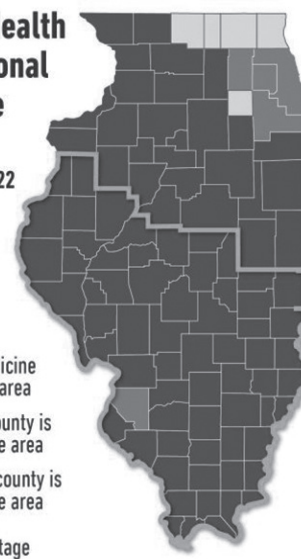
"You can't pour from an empty cup," said Brenda Mack, assistant professor of social

MENTAL HEALTH IN RURAL ILLINOIS

Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas

by County, 2022

SIU Medicine service area
All of county is shortage area
Part of county is shortage area
No shortage



Source: U.S. Health Resources and Services Administration, January 2022

- Mental health care is in crisis in rural Illinois.
- Rural regions face a staggering lack of mental and behavioral health care providers.
- This lack of workforce is magnified by a mental and behavioral health system that is disconnected, inefficient, poorly funded and outdated.

Heather Whetsell, Southern Illinois University Medicine Population Science & Policy administrative director, presented findings of a yearlong study into mental health care in rural areas during the National Rural Health Association's Annual Rural Health Conference. (Screenshot of presentation by Tammie Sloup of FarmWeek)

work, Bemidji State University. "If we are emotionally exhausting our mental health care providers, they're not going to have anything else to give to the patients."

Other recommendations to address barriers included co-locations of services, expanding prevention programs, Medicare expansion for mental health providers and community engagement activities.

Mack hosts a monthly project called Cultivating Resiliency for Women in Agriculture, which is essentially a virtual coffee chat with an emphasis on wellness and well-being.

"We have folks who are joining us from their tractors and from their barns," she said.

In Illinois, Whetsell outlined the Healthy Hillsboro project, which launched when a frightening trend of youth suicide attempts emerged in the community.

The Partnership between SIU Medicine Department and Hillsboro Area Hospital won the 2022 NRHA Outstanding Rural Health Program Award for developing an assessment of contributing factors to the trend while involving a coalition of community members to best choose programs to meet the needs of local youth.

"One major benefit that we've seen already is a decrease in stigma around mental health," Whetsell said. "And getting the youth to talk about it."

(This story was distributed through a cooperative project between Illinois Farm Bureau and the Illinois Press Association. For more food and farming news, visit FarmWeekNow.com.)



2022 SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

(Event times and dates are subject to change)

For more information, call Lee County Fair Association (815) 857-2603. www.leecounty4hcenter.com

WEDNESDAY, JULY 27

3-8 p.m. Livestock may enter fairgrounds
5-9 p.m. Rabbit Department Check-in – Rabbit Barn
6-7 p.m. Horse Department Check-in – Fair Office
7-8 p.m. Vet available to stamp health papers – Fair Office
10 p.m. All rabbits need to be in place

THURSDAY, JULY 28

8-11 a.m. Non-livestock project check in
9-11 a.m. Swine Weigh-In
10-12 p.m. 4-H Amazing Race starts
11 a.m.-12 p.m. Vet available to stamp health papers – Fair Office
11 a.m. All Livestock must be in place
Noon Gate opens to public; Jr. Show Crops Judging – Commercial Building; 4-H Healthy Living & Nutrition Judging – Commercial Building; Rabbit Judging – Rabbit Barn
12:30 p.m. 4-H Crops Judging – Commercial Building; 4-H Floriculture / Horticulture Judging – Commercial Building
2 p.m. Goat Judging – Show Barn
2:30 p.m. Cat Judging – Auditorium
4 & 4:30 p.m. Learn to Dance w/ Starlight Dance Studio – Entertainment Tent
4 p.m. Pony Rides & Petting Zoo & Midway Open – Midway
4:30 p.m. Bingo – Vendor Tent
5 p.m. Italian Beef Dinner by Lee Co. Young Farmers – Patio
5:30 p.m. Starlight Dance Studio – Entertainment Tent
6 p.m. Garden Tractor/Tractor/Truck Pull – Track
7 p.m. Rope Pull – Show Barn

FRIDAY, JULY 29

7 a.m. Gate Opens to Public

7-10:30 a.m. Pancake Breakfast by Teen Turf – Patio
9 a.m. Swine Judging – Show Barn; 4-H Creative Arts: Visual Arts Judging – Commercial Building; 4-H Creative Arts: Photography & Communication Judging – Auditorium; Jr. Show Woodworking Judging – Auditorium
10 a.m. 4-H Creative STEM (Clothing & Interior Design) Judging – Auditorium; 4-H Animal Science Judging – Auditorium
11 a.m. Kids' Korner – Entertainment Tent
12 – 8 p.m. Axe Throwing – Midway
1 p.m. Midway open; Poultry Judging – Poultry Barn
2 p.m. Dairy Judging – Show Barn; Kids' Korner – Entertainment Tent; Magic by Cory strolling show – Midway; Pony Rides Open – Midway
5-7 p.m. Pork Chop Dinner by Lee Co. Pork Producers – Patio
4 p.m. Magic by Cory Show – Entertainment Tent
4-7 p.m. Pie Sale by Lee Co. HEA – Auditorium
5 p.m. Awards Ceremony and Ambassador Announcement – Auditorium
6 p.m. Quality Meats & Baked Goods Auction – Auditorium
6:30 p.m. Tractor/Truck Pull – Track
8 p.m. Pin Dodge Ball – Show Barn

SATURDAY, JULY 30

7 a.m. Gate opens to public
7-10:30 a.m. Pancake Breakfast by Teen Turf – Patio
8 a.m. Sheep Judging – Show Barn; Jr. Show Mechanical Sciences Judging – Auditorium; Horse Performance & Halter Judging – Arena
9 a.m. Jr. Show Visual Arts Judging – Commercial Building; 4-H Environmental Sciences Judging – Commercial Building; 4-H Global Civic Engagement, Career, & Leadership Judging – Auditorium; 4-H STEM: Mechanical

9:30 a.m. Sciences Judging – Commercial Building; 4-H Woodworking Judging – Commercial Building
10 a.m. Beef Show – Show Barn
11 a.m. Farm Scene Contest Open – Commercial Building; Cloverbud Judging – Auditorium
12 - 4 p.m. Kids' Korner – Entertainment Tent
12 - 8 p.m. Whimsy Pixie Paint – Entertainment Tent
12 p.m. Axe Throwing – Midway
1 p.m. Petting Zoo & Pony Rides – Midway
2 p.m. Midway (rides and games) open
3:30 p.m. Kids' Korner – Entertainment Tent (mud pies)
4:30 p.m. Ben's Bubble Show – Auditorium
5 p.m. Ben's Bubble Show – Auditorium
Awards Ceremony & Cloverbud Graduation – Auditorium
6 p.m. Master Showmanship Contest – Show Barn
7 p.m. Broken Horn Rodeo – Track

SUNDAY, JULY 31

7 a.m. Gate opens
8-11 a.m. Pancake Breakfast by Teen Turf – Patio
8 a.m. Horse Novelty Classes – Arena; Shooting Sports w/ Rock River Chapter of NWT
10 a.m. - 3 p.m. Marketplace Vendor Fair
11 a.m. Midway open; Pedal Pull – Show Barn
11 a.m. - 3 p.m. Whimsy Pixie Paint
1 p.m. Donkey Races – Grandstand
2 p.m. Big Wheel Races – Show Barn (following Donkey Races)
3 p.m. Release Time (non-livestock)
4 p.m. Release Time (livestock & small animals)

County Fair Speedway

Join us for the races:

Thursday: 3 & 5 p.m.

Friday: 12, 2, 4 & 6 p.m.

Saturday: 12, 2, 4, & 6 p.m.

Sunday: 12 & 2 p.m.

Carriage House Electric

105 12th St. • Mendota • 815-538-5598

Sublette Farmers Elevator Co.

100 W. Main St., Sublette • 815-849-5222

First State Bank

706 Washington St. & and 1403 13th Ave. • Mendota

815-538-2265 • Member FDIC

Sink Hollow Farm

Cathe and Randy Harvey
1781 Sink Hollow Rd. • Dixon

sinkhollowfarm@live.com

HCC, Inc

1501 1st Ave. • Mendota

815-539-1850

Specialty Body & Paint

1503 W. Washington St. • Mendota • 815-539-7801

Vaessen Bros. Chevrolet, Inc.

Hwy. 52 • Sublette • 815-849-5232 or 800-227-5203

Leffelman & Associates Inc.

Sublette 849-5219

Amboy 857-2125

LaMoille 638-2171

Financial Plus Credit Union

1905 13th Ave. • Mendota

815-539-3444

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The Mendota Reporter

703 Illinois Ave. • Mendota • 815-539-9396

McDonald's

2 Mendota Locations: 2701 12th St. & 1501 13th Ave.

\$1.00 off ANY McCafe Drink

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One coupon per customer, per visit. Not valid with any other offer. Only redeemable at McDonald's in Mendota.

Expires 08/31/2022 **NOW HIRING EOE**

\$3.9M USDA NIFA grant funds 'Farm of the Future'

URBANA – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced that it is funding a new collaboration between two institutes and a research center at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign that will create an integrated farm of the future in the U.S. Midwest.

Titled "I-FARM: Illinois Farming and Regenerative Management," this \$3.9 million, three-year project is funded through the USDA's National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA). The Illinois-led study will develop an 80-acre agricultural testbed, where commodity crops (corn and soybean) and livestock are farmed using synergistic and sustainable practices.

"We will accelerate creation, maturation, and adoption of new management technologies that are fundamentally more sustainable, profitable, affordable, and scale-neutral. The new practices will be enabled by maturing digital agriculture technologies developed in wide-ranging research efforts at the University of Illinois," said Primary Investigator Girish Chowdhary, Associate Professor of Agricultural & Biological Engineering and Computer Science.

NIFA's "Farm of the Future" proposal process was extremely competitive, and only one was awarded from across the nation, said Co-Investigator and Center for Digital Agriculture (CDA) Co-Director Vikram Adve, the Donald B. Gillies Professor of Computer Science.

"This grant is a major endorsement of our growing strengths in digital ag," Adve said.

The I-FARM is a unique

partnership between CDA, the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), and the Institute for Sustainability, Energy, and Environment (iSEE) at the U of I. Over three years, the I-FARM testbed will feature improved precision farming with remote sensing; new under-canopy autonomous robotic solutions for cover-crop planting, variable-rate input applications, and mechanical weeding; and artificial intelligence-enabled remote sensing for animal health prediction, nutrient quantification, and soil health.

"With the data gleaned from this project, the MyFarm app will provide farmers with an integrated dashboard that can be customized to the needs of their farm," Chowdhary said. "Our focus on scale-neutral technologies can provide a solution to the worsening labor crisis for small farms and improve the sustainability of large and spatially heterogeneous farms."

I-FARM technoeconomic simulations and farmer surveys will clarify barriers and incentives to adoption of sustainable technology to industry and farmers. Integrated extension activities will be conducted in a research space that is open to farmers, with demonstrations and training, easing the adoption of new technologies and opening new markets. The I-FARM team will also help the ag industry create new data-driven products and services for farmers, and an Industry Advisory Board and a Farmer Advisory Board will help the optimize impact on farming practices.

"Together, this integrated suite of solutions will

lead to sustainable ways of meeting growing demand for agriculture in a changing climate," said Co-PI and iSEE Interim Director Madhu Khanna, the ACES Distinguished Professor of Agricultural & Consumer Economics. "The CDA, iSEE, and NCSA built the strongest research proposal by reaching across disciplines and bringing together expertise from all over the University of Illinois — from computer science to economics to crop science and animal science, we are exploring as many aspects as possible as we seek to build a farm of the future."

"We look forward to a fruitful collaboration with this project — and similar multidisciplinary work in the future because it is the best way to solve most of the wicked problems this world will face."



I-FARM technoeconomic simulations and farmer surveys will clarify barriers and incentives to adoption of sustainable technology to industry and farmers.

As the only "Farm of the Future" nationwide, "all eyes will be on this project as we lay the foundations for the future of agriculture," Adve said. "We are excited to begin this venture and grateful for the support from across campus."

The Illinois team will partner with Olga Bolden-Tiller, Dean of the College of Agriculture, Environment and Nutrition

Sciences and Professor of Animal Sciences, and Gregory Bernard, Assistant Professor of Plant and Soil Sciences, at Tuskegee University.

"This is an exciting time to embark on this project, and it is a credit to our team, their expertise, and the thriving research programs we can bring to bear," said Chowdhary, who also holds affiliations with Electrical

& Computer Engineering, Aerospace Engineering, and the Coordinated Science Laboratory at Illinois. "I want to thank the institutes, CDA, our departments and colleges, and our Tuskegee partners for their help, the College of ACES for securing us the farm space, and especially those from the farming industry who graciously offered letters of support."



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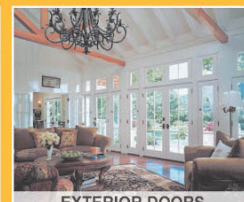
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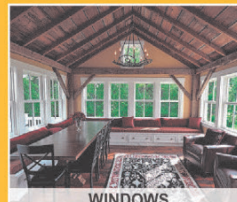
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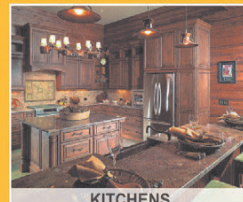
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