

2023

# IMPACT REPORT



AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®

COVER CREDITS: GETTYIMAGES, MO/MEGAN RICHER, WI/ABBY SCHULTE, MO/LAURIE LINK, ALABAMA FARMERS FEDERATION, AFBF/PHILIP GERLACH



CREDITS: GETTYIMAGES, NM/TARA VANDER DUSSEN, MT/DYLAN DAVIDSON, AFBF/PHILIP GERLACH, NC/KAMAL BELL, MONTANA FARM BUREAU

America's farmers and ranchers have an unwavering commitment to ensuring our nation's food, fiber and renewable fuel supply remains secure and sustainable. They rise each day to meet the twists and turns that come with being a farmer or rancher, from coping with weather challenges and volatile markets to navigating complex regulations and trade disputes.

Farm Bureau® is proud to continue working on behalf of the families who keep our pantries stocked, the cotton shirts on our backs and the biofuel in our cars. We serve our communities in a multitude of ways that range from alleviating hunger to sponsoring local sports teams. Our shared values help showcase who we are and demonstrate how we are better together — not just in Farm Bureau and agriculture but across our communities.



Ensuring a bright future for agriculture is something we take seriously. The thousands of farmers and ranchers across all 50 states and in Puerto Rico who actively participate in our grassroots policy development process and engage with their representatives in Congress and policymakers at all levels are critical to our success.

Encouraging passage of a new farm bill was a major focus during the last year. In 2024, we'll continue to ask Congress to protect the security and independence of farmers and ranchers by helping us ensure a safe and abundant food supply for all Americans through this important legislation.

For many farm families, farming is all about sustainability for the next generation. Today's farmers are leading the way in climate-smart practices that reduce emissions, enrich the soil and protect our water and air, all while producing more food, fiber and renewable fuel than ever before. I encourage you to take a look at the good work happening in each state on our growing interactive map of videos with sustainability stories of farmers and ranchers ([fb.org/issue/sustainability](https://fb.org/issue/sustainability)).

As you'll see in this Impact Report, the work of American Farm Bureau goes beyond advocacy and building awareness. We're committed to engaging the next generation of farmers and helping them develop as leaders. We encourage rural entrepreneurs solving real-world agriculture problems through the Ag Innovation Challenge, and we give back to those in need through the award-winning Harvest for All program and many other initiatives.

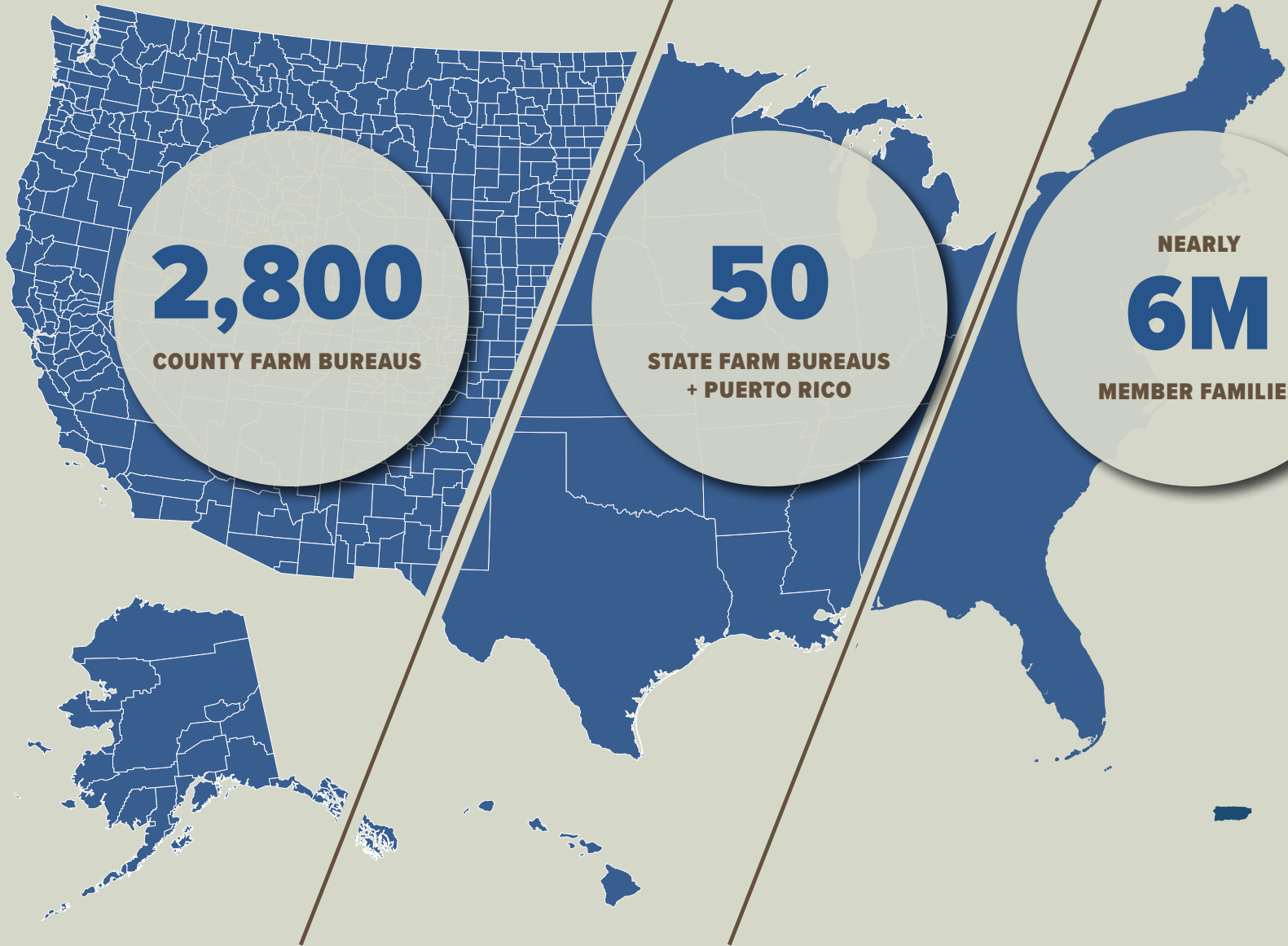
To our Farm Bureau leaders reading the 2023 Impact Report, I hope you are proud of our organization's accomplishments, and I thank you for all your work to get us here.

To our partners and supporters, I look forward to finding ways we can have an even greater impact together.

If you're not already involved in Farm Bureau, consider the Impact Report your personal invitation to join us in working together to build a sustainable future for agriculture.

God bless,

ZIPPY DUVALL, PRESIDENT



**2,800**

**COUNTY FARM BUREAUS**

**50**

**STATE FARM BUREAUS  
+ PUERTO RICO**

**NEARLY  
6M**

**MEMBER FAMILIES**



# 2023 IMPACT REPORT

## The American Farm Bureau Federation is the Voice of Agriculture®

We are farm and ranch families working together to build a sustainable future of safe and abundant food, fiber and renewable fuel for our nation and the world.

## BUILDING STRONG AGRICULTURAL COMMUNITIES SINCE 1919

Farm Bureau is a non-partisan, independent, non-governmental, voluntary organization governed by and representing farm and ranch families. Farm Bureau is local, county, state, national and international in its scope and influence.



AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®

**Active and engaged farmers and ranchers are the power behind the American Farm Bureau Federation.**

Our influence is unmatched when state and county Farm Bureaus and grassroots members unite with us to advocate for public policies that advance agriculture and strengthen rural communities. Their voices are also critical to telling agriculture’s story at a time when the public is more curious than ever about where their food comes from.

AFBF has a long and proud history of analyzing policy proposals, including their potential benefits, drawbacks and unintended consequences. Our respected policy experts provide deep insight to members of Congress and federal agencies as they develop and implement policy.

Since its inception in 1919, AFBF has been defined by a true grassroots policy development process. Every January, farmer and rancher delegates set AFBF’s formal policy agenda after deliberation on and anticipation of the challenges and opportunities facing agriculture in the coming year.

## 2023 ACHIEVEMENTS

AFBF’s 2023 goals were advanced through a mix of in-person and virtual meetings, which enabled members to interact with Farm Bureau staff and state and national elected officials regardless of where they were. Action alerts spurred grassroots advocacy, and Farm Bureau’s priorities were shared through media engagement and digital amplification. Highlights of achievements, progress and advocacy for 2023 follow.

### FARM BILL PRIORITIES

Lawmakers faced expiration of one of the most consequential pieces of legislation for farmers and ranchers in 2023 – the farm bill. After considerable efforts by state Farm Bureau staff and member input through the grassroots Farm Bill Working Group, AFBF advocated for its priorities with more than 60 released recommendations over multiple titles of the farm bill including reference price increases

for commodities, more transparency for milk checks, funding for conservation programs and rural development and streamlining of nutrition programs for families in tough times.

AFBF demonstrated its leadership with the creation of “Farm Bill for America’s Families: Sustaining Our Future,” a campaign to highlight the broad reach of the farm bill and urge Congress to modernize and renew it. The campaign has more than 100 members and seeks to engage consumers, leaders and lawmakers on the importance of the farm bill by highlighting five core objectives: food security, job creation, conservation, risk management and addressing hunger.

AFBF economists highlighted each title of the farm bill in a series of Market Intel reports. This economic analysis provides context for lawmakers, journalists and consumers who are curious to learn more about this important piece of legislation.



A series of videos featured members explaining the impact of farm bill programs on their farms.

CREDIT: AFBF



AFBF and other agricultural, environmental, forestry, wildlife, nutrition and hunger advocates launched the “Farm Bill for America’s Families: Sustaining Our Future” campaign to urge passage of the 2023 farm bill.



**Our Mission**

- Food Security
- Job Creation
- Conservation
- Risk Management
- Addressing Hunger



More than 150 farmers and ranchers from across the country traveled to Washington, D.C., to meet directly with lawmakers and discuss priorities for the 2023 farm bill during the AFBF Advocacy Fly-In in June. (L to R): AFBF President Duvall, Senate Agriculture Committee Chairwoman Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), House Agriculture Committee Chairman Glenn “GT” Thompson (R-Penn.) and Senate Agriculture Committee Ranking Member John Boozman (R-Ark.).

CREDIT: AFBF/PHILIP GERLACH

**WOTUS**

America’s farmers and ranchers scored a significant victory in the Supreme Court in *Sackett v. EPA*, which struck down the “significant nexus” approach to Waters of the U.S. regulation. The ruling is discussed further in the Legal Advocacy section on page 12.

Following the ruling, AFBF advocated for a new approach by EPA that would ensure clean water and

clear rules, including by providing more context around implementation of the “relatively permanent” test. The Environmental Protection Agency failed to do this, instead squandering the opportunity to write a clear WOTUS rule that is fair to farmers.

AFBF is maintaining pressure on the Administration to deliver a rule that provides more clarity and doesn’t require a team of attorneys to interpret.



CREDIT: ALABAMA FARMERS FEDERATION

**RIGHT TO REPAIR**

The right to repair issue has been a concern of farmers for years. When a piece of equipment breaks down it can cause major disruptions on the farm. Members asked AFBF to find a private-sector solution to the right to repair issue. AFBF worked for several years and successfully negotiated memorandums of understanding with several major agricultural equipment manufacturers.

The MOUs ensure farmer access to error codes, specialty tools and information on how to fix problems while protecting companies’ intellectual property rights. Farmers and independent repair facilities can also directly purchase diagnostic tools from the manufacturers at a reasonable price, which enables them to repair equipment on or near the farm.

Farmers can also provide feedback on issues they have with a manufacturer that signed an MOU. AFBF and the manufacturers meet regularly to review the agreements and to address concerns.



**Right to Repair MOUs**  
 Approximately 75% of agricultural machinery in the U.S. is covered by MOUs with five major manufacturers.

- AGCO
- CLAAS of America
- CNH Industrial (Case IH & New Holland)
- John Deere
- Kubota



## FEDERAL MILK MARKETING ORDERS

Ensuring confidence and fairness regarding the way dairy farmers are paid within the Federal Milk Marketing Order system is a priority of AFBF. Farm Bureau led the way in engaging across the dairy industry, holding a Federal Milk Marketing Order Forum in Kansas City, Missouri, in October 2022, which became a catalyst for 2023 action. At that meeting consensus was found across the industry and especially among farmers on a wide range of issues, including switching back to the “higher-of” Class I mover and the need for any make allowance changes to be based on mandatory and audited surveys of dairy processors.

In 2023, AFBF’s groundwork led USDA to hold the first national FMMO hearing in more than a decade. During the summer and into the fall in Carmel, Indiana, USDA heard testimony on 21 admitted industry proposals related to milk price formulas, giving farmers and other stakeholders the chance to testify in person. USDA included four of AFBF’s nine proposals in the scope of the hearing. AFBF supports five additional proposals made by other organizations. AFBF carefully analyzed proposals to ensure our members’ voices were represented throughout the multi-week hearing.

We are optimistic that all of these efforts will result in modernized FMMOs in 2024.



CREDIT: AFBF/ MIKE TOMKO

## PFAS

AFBF is working hard to protect farmers from a proposed EPA rule to designate per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) as hazardous materials under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act. America’s farmers share the concerns over PFAS, but as mitigation efforts move forward, it’s important that farmers are not held responsible for PFAS chemicals, which they did not produce or intentionally use.

AFBF asked members to reach out to their lawmakers to voice their concerns over EPA unfairly holding farmers accountable for PFAS contamination. Members responded with almost 7,000 messages to Congress.

## ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT

AFBF continues advocating for Endangered Species Act modernization to protect vulnerable species while ensuring farmers can continue feeding America’s families.

This included urging lawmakers to support Congressional Review Act resolutions on the lesser prairie chicken and the northern long-eared bat. ESA restrictions can prevent farmers and ranchers from making productive use of their land and restrict efforts to care for vulnerable species. Both chambers of Congress approved these CRA resolutions, unfortunately they were vetoed by President Biden.

AFBF will continue to press for a commonsense balance in ESA restrictions.

## TAXES

AFBF continues to advocate for a fair tax code that ensures farmers and ranchers can afford to remain in business and ultimately pass their farms to the next generation. Our tax advocacy in 2023 set the stage for intensified efforts in 2024, ahead of several 2025 expirations. We focused on three key areas: advocating for making the \$11.7 million estate tax exemption permanent as a step toward the eventual repeal of estate taxes; extending the 100% accelerated depreciation provision of the tax code, which enables farm and ranch businesses to invest in capital assets, like machinery and equipment, that power long-term economic growth; and making permanent the 20% deduction for small and individually owned businesses.

**TRADE**

AFBF maintained constant pressure on USDA and the Office of the United States Trade Representative to force Mexico to live up to its commitments under the United States-Mexico-Canada Agreement. Mexico's ban on biotech corn imports is a clear violation of USMCA. America's farmers are upholding our commitments and Mexico must do the same. After months of urging, USTR took a step forward by requesting the establishment of a dispute settlement panel in the case.

We joined others in the agricultural sector in successfully pressing for a dispute resolution panel under USMCA over Canada's dairy import program changes. The U.S. established a dispute panel that sided with Canada. There is no appeal so the Canadian implementation approach will continue. A review of the provisions in USMCA is scheduled for 2026.

AFBF was a partner in the North American/European Union Agriculture Conference in Canada. NA/EU is a biennial event that brings together farm leaders from the European Union and North America to discuss the pressing issues affecting agriculture and to collaborate and share ideas to work toward solutions. Approximately 280 representatives from EU member states, as well as from Canada, Mexico and the U.S., attended.

Under direction from AFBF's board, our Trade Advisory Committee investigated trade impacts on seasonal produce growers. The committee received information

from government and industry leaders and heard directly from state Farm Bureaus on the impacts of imports on seasonal produce growers. The committee's findings will be considered by the board for further action.

In advance of the World Trade Organization Ministerial Meeting in February 2024, AFBF joined other agriculture groups in urging Ambassador Katherine Tai and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack to advocate for outcomes on agriculture, including improvements in global food security and commitments to reducing barriers to market access for U.S. agricultural products.

**FARM LABOR**

AFBF focused intensive efforts in 2023 on finding a pathway forward on the divisive issue of labor reform. We were dedicated to ensuring lawmakers on both sides of the aisle understood the issue and urgency of responsible ag labor reform that provides farmers access to a legal and stable workforce and enables all of agriculture to utilize the guest worker program. This included heavy engagement with lawmakers interested in helping us solve the problem. Farmers value, appreciate and rely upon the men and women willing to do the hard work of farming and AFBF is urging reforms that are fair to farmers and workers. We hope our efforts pay off in 2024 with a bill that brings long-overdue relief by ensuring an adequate workforce. Our newly established Farm Labor Working Group began an in-depth review of this important issue and aims to provide a comprehensive analysis by mid-2024.

**INFRASTRUCTURE**

Working to ensure broadband funding in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act is responsibly allocated was a continuing priority for AFBF during the year. Our outreach to lawmakers emphasized that broadband programs in the rural development title of the farm bill must complement those created through the infrastructure law and that prioritizing resources to target rural communities that are most in need of connectivity is essential.

**ENERGY**

AFBF supported the Biden Administration's adoption of the Greenhouse Gases, Regulated Emissions, and Energy Use in Transportation (GREET) model for the sustainable aviation fuel tax credit, which will allow crop-based feedstocks, including ethanol, to be used for sustainable aviation fuel production. This expansion of the types of crops that qualify for sustainable aviation fuel is good news for America's families and farmers.

**NEPA CHALLENGE**

AFBF drafted and submitted detailed comments opposing government efforts to roll back positive changes that were made to the National Environmental Policy Act in 2020. We also saw success in the courts related to protecting the 2020 changes to NEPA. *See the Legal Advocacy section later in this report for more information.*

## CLIMATE AND SUSTAINABILITY

### SEC RULE

The Securities and Exchange Commission's proposed rule to require Scope 3 emissions reporting triggered our swift and sustained response. If enacted, the rule could create onerous burdens for farmers and ranchers to quantify and report emissions from their farms and ranches.

Unlike large corporations, farmers and ranchers don't have teams of attorneys and accountants to ensure they're compliant with SEC regulations. AFBF asked members to reach out to lawmakers to express their opposition to the proposed rule. Almost 6,000 messages were sent to members of Congress, urging support for S. 391 and H.R. 1018. The bills prohibit the SEC from requiring an issuer of securities to disclose greenhouse gas emissions from upstream and downstream activities in the issuer's value chain arising from a farm.

### PESTICIDES

AFBF continues to work with lawmakers and regulators to emphasize the importance of continued access to safe crop protection tools. Among its efforts, Farm Bureau joined a broad coalition urging swift reauthorization of the Pesticide Registration Improvement Act and offered input on proposed EPA herbicide strategies to protect endangered species.



President Duvall shared about the importance of a new farm bill at a briefing for senior White House officials.

CREDIT: AFBF/TERRI MOORE

### FOOD AND AGRICULTURE CLIMATE ALLIANCE

Launched in 2020 by AFBF, Environmental Defense Fund, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives and National Farmers Union, the Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance membership has grown to more than 80 groups representing farmers, ranchers, forest owners, agribusinesses, manufacturers, the food and innovation sector, state governments, sportsmen and women, and environmental advocates. FACA encourages a voluntary, market- and incentive-based approach to help increase demand for climate-smart farm, ranch and forestry practices, while building trust that the climate benefits are real and verifiable. FACA developed a set of farm bill priorities, which align with AFBF policy, and President Duvall joined other FACA CEOs to brief senior White House staff about the importance of passing a new farm bill. It was the second White House meeting for FACA leaders in 2023. Many congressional offices also turned to FACA for guidance and input, viewing the Alliance and its recommendations as representing areas of agreement among groups with divergent views.

## ANALYSIS

### MARKET INTEL

AFBF's team of economists sets the industry standard for analysis of the factors that affect agriculture markets. Farm Bureau's insight is used by farmer and rancher members across the country, as well as local and national media and policymakers on Capitol Hill. The team of economists generated more than one Market Intel per week in 2023, dissecting important issues like inflation, farm bankruptcies, labor and dairy reform. A special focus was placed on farm bill priorities with a series of Market Intels dedicated to each title of the legislation.

### MARKET INTEL BY THE NUMBERS

**50+**  
MARKET INTELS  
IN 2023

**300+**  
MENTIONS IN  
STORIES ACROSS  
THE U.S.

**30M**  
IMPRESSIONS

**AFBF is the leading national advocate for U.S. farmers and ranchers in the courts and that was never more apparent than in 2023 with numerous victories achieved in court rulings.**

As the Voice of Agriculture, AFBF initiates or joins litigation to shape many of the laws that affect the ability of farmers and ranchers to conduct their operations. Farm Bureau member dues support AFBF's legal advocacy efforts to maintain a functional U.S. legal and regulatory climate so farmers and ranchers can be productive stewards of our natural resources.

#### **Promoting. Preserving. Defending.**

- AFBF promotes strong protection of property and privacy rights.
- AFBF preserves access to biotechnology and pesticide products.
- AFBF defends against regulatory overreach.

#### **WOTUS – WIN**

America's farmers scored a major victory in the Supreme Court in *Sackett v. EPA*. The Supreme Court unanimously found that EPA and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers overreached in their assertion of jurisdiction in their definition of "waters of the United States" under the Clean Water Act. Significantly, the Court rejected the ambiguous and subjective "significant nexus" test and established a clear definition of WOTUS based on the language and intent of Congress. In fact, the position adopted by the Court is the same one AFBF advocated the Court to adopt in our amicus brief.

Based on the *Sackett* decision, EPA was forced to revise WOTUS to remove "significant nexus." But the revisions failed to go far enough, so AFBF's litigation challenging the revised 2023 WOTUS Rule is ongoing. The lawsuits filed by AFBF and others have already blocked the 2023 rule from going into effect in a total of 27 states. AFBF will continue the legal battle for a clear and lawful definition of WOTUS.

#### **EMINENT DOMAIN – WIN**

AFBF helped secure a win for hundreds of farmers along the Missouri River whose lands were intentionally and permanently flooded by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The appellate court ruled that the farmers were owed compensation for their lost crops.

#### **NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY ACT – WIN**

The Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed to dismiss environmental groups' challenge to the 2020 NEPA Rule based on the speculative nature of the environmental and procedural injuries asserted by the groups ("ripeness" in legal terms).

#### **CHLORPYRIFOS TOLERANCES – WIN**

AFBF and several other agriculture organizations sued EPA, asserting the agency failed to follow the law when it revoked chlorpyrifos tolerances – effectively banning the pesticide. The Eighth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed and granted a major victory to farmers when it overturned EPA's decision and ruled the agency must base its decisions on sound science and the law.



CREDIT: IL/ERIC KELSEY

### **SULFOXAFLOR REGISTRATION – WIN**

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals agreed to keep sulfoxaflor registration in place while EPA fixes errors it made in registration. Sulfoxaflor is an insecticide first registered in 2013 that targets difficult pests, such as aphids and tarnished plant bugs (lygus), on a variety of crops. The court agreed with AFBF that vacating the registration would cause significant disruptions to farmers, as well as environmental harm.

### **SWAMPBUSTER – ONGOING**

AFBF filed an amicus brief urging the Supreme Court to consider a South Dakota farmer's challenge to the Natural Resources Conservation Service's swampbuster regulations. The regulation at issue establishes additional requirements that a farmer must follow to obtain review of a prior NRCS wetland certification. A favorable decision on the NRCS Review Regulation would help prevent NRCS from weaponizing wetland certifications against farmers.

### **EUROPEAN UNION MAXIMUM RESIDUE LEVEL REGULATIONS – ONGOING**

AFBF intervened in a challenge to an EU regulation that effectively bans the use of two neonicotinoids on commodities sold in Europe. The law not only amounts to a protectionist barrier for American farmers, but it also regulates farmers extraterritorially and supersedes EPA regulations.

### **AGENCY DEFERENCE – ONGOING**

AFBF led an industry coalition and filed an amicus brief in the Supreme Court to support fishermen seeking to overturn *Chevron* deference. For decades, *Chevron* has given federal agencies almost unbridled power to interpret the statutes they implement. A ruling to overturn *Chevron* deference could have far reaching consequences for regulations facing farmers.

**When the government overreaches or fails to rely on science in its decision-making and is unwilling to change course, litigation is sometimes necessary.**

**In 2023, AFBF achieved multiple successes in the courts to ensure fair treatment of farmers and ranchers.**

Part of AFBF's mission is to serve as the Voice of Agriculture. This requires a clear focus and strategy to earn media coverage.

**In 2023, AFBF appeared in more than 25,000 print and broadcast stories.** An aggressive outreach effort and commitment to telling agriculture's story at a time of high public interest in food prices, inflation and right to repair led to more than **27 billion impressions.**

**AFBF was mentioned by top-tier media outlets such as Fox News, CBS, NPR, the New York Times, Politico and NBC.**

### STRATEGIC CAMPAIGNS

AFBF ramped up our farm bill strategic communications campaign in 2023. Our multifaceted advocacy launched in 2022 and grew to include a variety of member video testimonials about the impact of farm bill programs on their farms. Additional elements of the campaign included graphics/social media posts, radio news stories and a flagship video that encourages lawmakers to rise above partisanship and work together again to pass legislation that protects food security for all Americans and the future success of farmers and ranchers.

As noted on page 7, our strategic communications included the creation of the Farm Bill for America's

Families campaign that closed the year with more than 100 member groups. We organized a media briefing about the campaign at the National Press Club led by President Duvall, who was joined by Feeding America CEO Claire Babineaux-Fontenot and FMI President and CEO Leslie Sarasin. The event generated coverage in Politico Pro and several top-tier agricultural outlets including RFD-TV, Successful Farming, Fencepost Magazine and Iowa Agribusiness Network.

AFBF also continued its multiyear sustainability campaign, which aims to increase awareness among consumers and food system stakeholders about the commitment of farmers and ranchers in caring for the environment, as well as the outstanding progress to date. A frequently updated interactive map depicts where and how farm and ranch families across the country are working to build a sustainable future of safe and abundant food, fiber and renewable fuel for our nation and the world.



CREDIT: ID/JASON FELLOWS

Visitors to AFBF's website can use a frequently updated interactive map to find farm and ranch families and learn how they are working to build a sustainable future of safe and abundant food, fiber and renewable fuel for our nation and the world.

### FARM DOG OF THE YEAR & PEOPLE'S CHOICE PUP

Our very popular Farm Dog of the Year contest, which includes a People's Choice Pup competition with public voting on social media, provides consumers with a glimpse into farm life. The contest attracts tens of thousands of digital engagements each year and has reached nearly a half million people.

A TikTok reel about the Farm Dog of the Year contest went viral, garnering nearly 1.5 million views. This is significant not only in building awareness of Farm Bureau, but also because the Farm Dog of the Year competition helps to provide a window into the world of agriculture through a shared value: the love of pets.



Desired attributes in the Farm Dog of the Year include helpfulness to the farmer and his/her family, playfulness and obedience. Nestlé Purina PetCare has supported the contest since its inception in 2019.



Tough, 2023 Farm Dog of the Year, with owners Denny and Donna Ashcraft of Kansas.

CREDIT: AFBF, BIG FOOT MEDIA

### DIGITAL

AFBF's digital platforms continue to outperform industry averages, with continued audience growth. Video continues to be a strong driver in overall audience growth and engagement. We continue to explore new platforms and iterate across digital channels. Our new website helps visitors easily learn about the challenges and opportunities in agriculture, as well as AFBF's mission and programs.



Homepage of FB.ORG

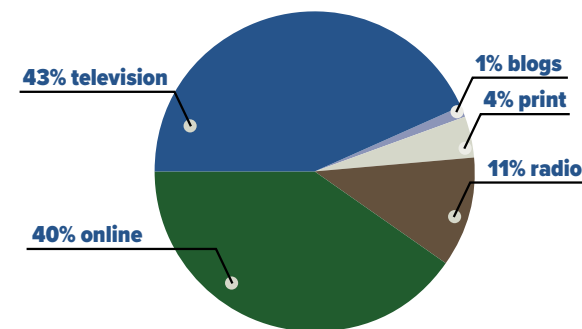


### HOLIDAY MEAL COST SURVEYS

Our widely covered holiday meal cost surveys serve a valuable purpose beyond providing interesting food price data and context. They establish American Farm Bureau as a trusted source of information and provide a platform to put policy priorities and agricultural realities in context for consumers.

We leveraged the July survey to discuss the farmer's small share of the food dollar and we leveraged the Thanksgiving survey to highlight the importance of the farm bill. Coverage included more than 400 positive references to the farm bill.

### TYPE OF COVERAGE – THANKSGIVING



AFBF's programs and initiatives in the policy arena and beyond enrich the rural communities where grassroots farmer and rancher members live and work. These farm and ranch communities are the backbone of America, playing an important role in our nation's economy.

Continuing to work together to find creative ways to support these rural communities, which are home to 14% of the U.S. population, is important for future generations. In 2023, that commitment included sharing resources to address farm stress and mental health concerns, engaging with young people who are interested in agriculture and related careers, encouraging rural entrepreneurs, and supporting Field to Market: the Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture.

Read on for more details about these programs and initiatives.

### SUSTAINABILITY

AFBF represents farmers in Field to Market: The Alliance for Sustainable Agriculture, an organization that brings together a diverse group of grower organizations; agribusiness; food, beverage, apparel, restaurant and retail companies; conservation groups; universities; and public partners to define, measure and advance the sustainability of food, fiber and fuel production in the U.S.

AFBF also holds a seat on Field to Market's board of directors and Education & Outreach Committee and completed a term co-leading the Innovative Finance Committee, which was tasked with exploring mechanisms and value-added strategies to support U.S. farmers in scaling conservation practices and delivering sustainable outcomes.



### RURAL MENTAL HEALTH

An AFBF-hosted grassroots engagement campaign called Small Gestures, Big Impact focused on reaching out to neighbors and friends with small gestures that can make a big difference in someone's life. The campaign ran through the month of May with a different call to action for each week of the month.

A new Farm State of Mind Sounding Board launched by AFBF draws on the expertise of state Farm Bureau staffers and members dedicated to supporting the success of the Farm State of Mind campaign. Closely related, AFBF coordinated the formation of the Farm Bureau Mental Health Advocate Network, which includes state Farm Bureau staffers and member advocates and aims to offer an opportunity for connection, idea sharing and learning, with the goal of promoting farmer mental health wellness through strong grassroots efforts.

AFBF promoted World Mental Health Day and National Prescription Drug Take Back Day in October, in collaboration with other organizations and stakeholder groups.







CREDIT:AFBF/ PHILIP GERLACH

FFA, 4-H and Junior MANRRS members receive free Convention registration from AFBF.

### YOUTH AND DIVERSITY

In 2023, AFBF continued to engage young people through ongoing partnerships with FFA, 4-H and the National Society for Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences. Fourteen student members of MANRRS attended the Farm Bureau FUSION Conference in March as part of a new AFBF fellowship program.

Strengthening the agriculture industry through leader development for college students and young professionals is the focus of a new collaboration with Agriculture Future of America.

These partnerships strengthen membership value for each of the organizations.



AFBF prioritizes supporting the next generation of agriculturalists.

CREDIT:AFBF/ PHILIP GERLACH

### AG INNOVATION CHALLENGE

Rural entrepreneurs competed for a total of \$165,000 in startup funds in the 2023 Ag Innovation Challenge, a competition that focuses exclusively on U. S. rural entrepreneurs launching agriculture- and food-related businesses. The 2023 winner, Kansas-based NORDEF, developed technology to produce diesel exhaust fluid at the point of use and won \$50,000.

MycoLogic LLC of Georgia, a top four finalist, won the People’s Choice Award, which is decided by public vote, and received a total of \$15,000. The company developed technology farmers can use to improve efficiency when growing large quantities of mushrooms. The People’s Choice Award winner is selected from among the 10 semi-finalists.



CREDIT: AFBF/MICHAEL LOBIONDO

Austin Hausmann, a Farm Bureau member from Kansas, explains 2023 winner NORDEF’s technology and business model to a panel of judges.



Katie Olthoff, team lead with Iowa-based ChopLocal, a final four competitor in the 2023 contest.

CREDIT: AFBF/MICHAEL LOBIONDO



Ben Johnson, chief information officer with Nebraska-based Grain Weevil Corporation, 2022 winner.

CREDIT: AFBF/MICHAEL LOBIONDO

Americans remain engaged in learning how their food is produced and who produces it. This public interest in sustainability continues to drive rapid change, which is why it's critical that farmers and ranchers feel comfortable engaging with the public, policymakers and the media.

AFBF provides intensive leadership development and effective outreach training, strengthening the ability of farmers and ranchers to connect with others in an impactful manner. The effectiveness of our online advocacy training program was recognized with a gold award at the 2023 Salute to Association Excellence national awards.

The skills members learn are applied at the local, state and federal level, including through FB Advocacy, the network developed to help members of Congress and the administration understand how public policies impact farmers, ranchers and agriculture as a whole, as well as consumers.

**GRASSROOTS OUTREACH (GO) TEAM**

The hundreds of farmer and rancher members on the Grassroots Outreach Team participate in focused advocacy efforts throughout the year, tapping into their high-level AFBF training to engage with consumers and the media, as well as with lawmakers and regulators at all levels of government on the many policy issues affecting agriculture. In addition, GO Teamers are self-starters who find their own advocacy outlets such as newspaper columns, school engagement opportunities and regular television appearances. GO Team members were featured in more than 50 news stories in 2023.



GO Teamers of the Year demonstrated an unwavering commitment to advocating for farmers and ranchers, serving as the industry's voice in media inquiries and articles, participating in legislative and regulatory meetings, and actively engaging with lawmakers. (L to R): Glenn Brunkow, Kansas; Linda Pryor, North Carolina; and Kaye Peterson, Kentucky.

**WOMEN'S COMMUNICATIONS BOOT CAMP & AG ConnectHER**

Hosted by the national Women's Leadership Committee in partnership with AFBF staff, the Women's Communications Boot Camp is an intensive four-day course conducted for 15 agricultural leaders. Two boot camp sessions conducted in 2023 featured hands-on sessions on public speaking, working with the media and policy engagement. Since 2006, 284 Farm Bureau women have completed this training.

New in 2023, the committee launched Ag ConnectHER to elevate and celebrate dynamic and

successful women leaders in agriculture by showcasing their leadership journeys, connecting them through online events with Farm Bureau women from across the country. The initiative aims to inspire women in agriculture to discover their potential and succeed in leadership. Guest speakers included Dr. Jackie Applegate, president, North America Crop Science, Bayer; Beth Bechdol, deputy director-general, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations; and Jennifer Sirangelo, former president & CEO, National 4-H Council.



Boot Camp graduates put their training to use in a variety of ways including participation in local media opportunities to support Farm Bureau's policy work, sharing information with elected officials and joining social media campaigns that feature positive messages about agriculture.

CREDIT: AFBF/PHILIP GERLACH

## PROMOTION & EDUCATION

AFBF's Promotion & Education Committee continued its successful "Amplify Agriculture" series, which is open to the public. Topics covered in 2023 included consumer influences on food and farming, consumer perspectives on animal agriculture, advocating for animal protein producers and exploring essential collaborations between farmers and culinary education.

New in 2023, the committee led a collaboration with Auguste Escoffier School of Culinary Arts, the largest culinary school brand in the U.S. The collaboration supports the vital connection between farmers, ranchers and the culinary industry with education-focused programs, interactive events and training sessions.



A new alliance with Escoffier opens the door for AFBF to cultivate meaningful relationships with aspiring chefs and culinary thought leaders while sharing advances and innovations in farming.

CREDIT: AUGUSTE ESCOFFIER SCHOOL OF CULINARY ARTS

## YOUNG FARMERS & RANCHERS

AFBF's commitment to highlighting the talent and successes of the next generation of leaders is embodied in our Young Farmers & Ranchers competitive events – Achievement Award, Excellence in Agriculture Award and Discussion Meet. The 2023 American Farm Bureau Convention showcased the competitive events to attendees.



(L to R): Stacie Anderson, Excellence in Ag winner; AFBF President Zippy Duvall; 2022 YF&R Chair Alisha Schwertner; and Melissa Bufford, account supervisor, Ford.

CREDIT: AFBF/MICHAEL LOBIONDO

## IFARM IVOTE 2023 ELECTION RESOURCE

A one-stop webpage ([fb.org/advocacy/vote](https://fb.org/advocacy/vote)) created to encourage Farm Bureau members to vote in fall 2022 elections was updated with comprehensive information for the 2024 election cycle. Visitors can learn the latest about voting in their state, including how to register to vote and information on federal, state and local candidates.



Farm Bureau members encouraged other rural voters to learn about the issues and make their voices heard on election day.

CREDIT: IL/CORRINE CRAWFORD

## PARTNERS IN ADVOCACY LEADERSHIP

AFBF's Partners in Advocacy Leadership is one of the most intensive training programs offered to farmers and ranchers. PAL class members complete four learning modules over two years. Members of the 11th class will graduate in March, at the 2024 Young Farmers & Ranchers Leadership Conference, where they will also create and deliver workshops for attendees. AFBF applauds class members' commitment to effective engagement and celebrates the inroads they are making in their communities, with the media and as advocates on the local, state and national levels.



CREDIT: AFBF/JOHANNA MILLER

PAL Class 11 members visited Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., as part of their experience. Row 1 (L to R): Megan Richner, Missouri; Heather Lifsey, North Carolina; Dana Stewart, Arkansas; Rachel Harmann, Wisconsin; Eileen Jensen, New York; Laura Haffner, Kansas; Row 2 (L to R): Jason Fellows, Idaho; Russ Kohler, Utah; Ben Menges, Arizona; Seth Earl, Michigan

The spirit of farm communities has long embodied working together and giving back. Across the Farm Bureau family, members rise to meet the challenges facing their communities. Since the organization’s founding more than 100 years ago, volunteers at the county, state and national level have given time and resources to provide meals, help rebuild from disasters, and offer support to those in need.

Farmer and rancher members continued that tradition in 2023 through a broad range of activities and outreach. This included extending a helping hand in select local communities that hosted Farm Bureau gatherings.

### HARVEST FOR ALL RECOGNITION



AFBF earned a Power of Associations Summit Award from the American Society of Association Executives for its successful Harvest for All

initiative. ASAE honors only six association programs with this award each year.

Harvest for All helps address hunger in rural America

by harnessing the collaborative power of grassroots farmer and rancher members, county Farm Bureaus, state Farm Bureaus and AFBF. Members involved in the organization’s Young Farmers & Ranchers program take the lead in planning, coordinating and executing the initiative, often with involvement from local community leaders and supporters.

Historical totals for the program, launched 22 years ago, are impressive – 408.5 million pounds of donated food, \$11 million and 229,207 volunteer hours.

2023 YF&R Chair Matt Fimon (far right) and AFBF staffers accepted the ASAE Summit award for Harvest for All on behalf of AFBF. With Fimon are (left to right) Margee Wolff, Vice President, Leadership, Education & Engagement; Roman Waskiewicz, Assistant Director, Member Engagement; Marty Tatman, Senior Director, Member Engagement; and Jessica Cabrera, Managing Director, Member Engagement.

CREDIT: GREG GIBSON PHOTOGRAPHY



For more than 20 years, young farmers and ranchers have worked together to help provide food to those in need across the U.S. through the Harvest for All campaign.

CREDIT: NEW YORK FARM BUREAU

## HELPING THOSE IN NEED WITH FOOD AND OTHER ESSENTIALS



The national Women’s Leadership Committee and state Farm Bureau Women’s Leadership programs annually raise tens of thousands of dollars to support Ronald McDonald Houses, which provide a “home away from home” for families with critically ill children. During the 2023 Convention in January, the committee assembled and delivered toiletry kits to Ronald McDonald House of San Juan, Puerto Rico.



YF&R Committee members who completed their term in 2023 packed essentials for Cradles to Crayons in Boston, Massachusetts.

CREDIT: AFBF/MARTY TATMAN

AFBF partnered with national member benefits provider Grainger to make a significant safety-focused donation to the Fishermen Congress of Puerto Rico during Convention. The organization of commercial fishermen welcomed the donation of 3,500 units of emergency safety kits and supplies.



From L to R: Grainger representatives Alex Inesta, Manager, Supply Chain & Customer Experience Puerto Rico, and Micah Colley, Senior National Accounts Manager; Fishermen Congress members Victor Garcia, Miguel Maldonado and Roberto Silva; Puerto Rico Farm Bureau President Hector Cordero; and AFBF President Zippy Duvall.

CREDIT: AFBF/MICHAEL LOBIONDO

Also during Convention, AFBF donated 135 boxed lunches to El Comedor de la Kennedy, a nonprofit focused on providing food to children and older adults.

Members attending the 2023 FUSION Conference in Jacksonville, Florida, donated 300 cotton t-shirts to local nonprofit ReThreaded. They also assembled and donated packages of Ag Mags to an elementary school.

YF&R Committee members who completed their term in 2023 packed essentials for Cradles to Crayons in Boston, Massachusetts, helping local children in need thrive at home, school and play.

Clients of El Comedor de la Kennedy in San Juan, Puerto Rico, welcomed a donation of boxed lunches. Extending a helping hand in local communities that host Farm Bureau gatherings is a longstanding Farm Bureau tradition.

CREDIT: EL COMEDOR DE LA KENNEDY

YF&R Committee members led an effort encouraging National FFA Convention attendees to write notes of appreciation to military service veterans, thanking them for their service to our nation. Attendees wrote nearly 800 notes.



The American Farm Bureau Foundation for Agriculture® strives to build awareness, understanding and a positive perception of agriculture through education. This outreach includes offering a variety of fun and engaging standards-based activities at all grade levels for educators, volunteers and families.

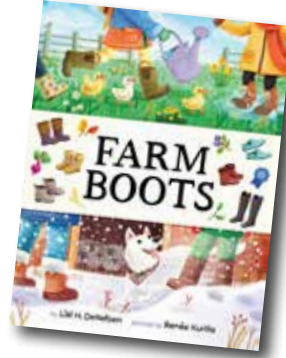
Foundation-created resources include games, lesson plans, activities and videos about agriculture. Resources are well-researched, written by education specialists and reviewed by subject matter experts, which means educators and parents can be confident in their relevance and accuracy.

Educational opportunities for teachers are offered through trainings, farm tours, grants and scholarships to attend the National Ag in the Classroom Conference.

### FEEDING MINDS PRESS™

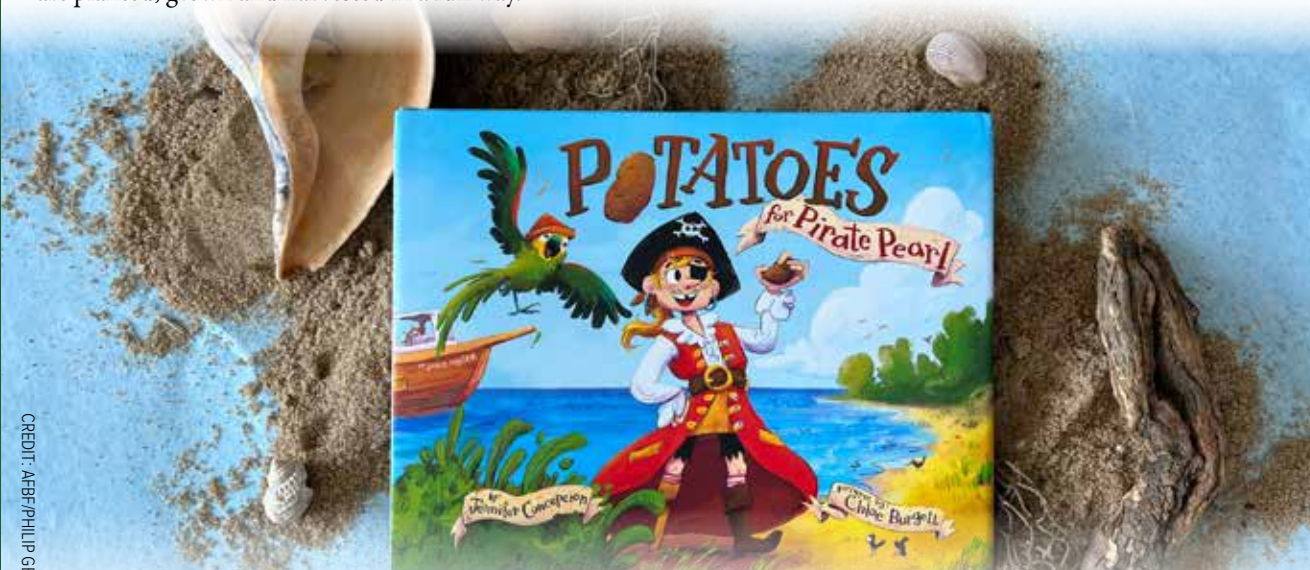
Through Feeding Minds Press™, the Foundation is leading the way in engaging young learners about where their food comes from by publishing accurate books about agriculture.

New books “Farm Boots” and “Potatoes for Pirate Pearl” delighted readers. “Farm Boots” is a beautifully illustrated book that tells the story of several farm families as they work and play throughout the year, in boots for every kind of weather and activity. Moon Beam Children’s Book Awards honored “Farm Boots” with gold in its picture book pre-K category. “Potatoes for Pirate Pearl” introduces young readers to how potatoes are planted, grown and harvested in a fun way.



“I Love Strawberries,” published in 2022, won several publishing industry awards including Foundation 2023 Book of the Year, Indiana Farm Bureau 2023 Book of the Year, gold in the picture book category in the Independent Book Publishers Association Benjamin Franklin Award program, Hindi’s Libraries: 2023 Females of Fiction Best Cover and Best Overall Picture Book, and Penelope’s Prize: 2023 Children’s Book Awards Judge’s Selection.

In 2023, nearly 50,000 books by Feeding Minds Press found their way into the hands of young learners across the country.



CREDIT: AFBF/PHILIP GERLACH

## ON THE FARM STEM

The On The Farm STEM program brings together teams of educators with experts in science education and agricultural science to envision a model for science learning that will inspire today’s students – our next generation of scientists and citizens – to take action and feel empowered to use agriculture to improve society.

STEM Experience events took place in Colorado, Florida, Michigan and Oregon. Educators toured dairy and beef farming operations and university laboratories and research facilities, learning how the skills they teach in the classroom are applied in agriculture. More than 150,000 students are served by the educators who participated.

A new free virtual workshop series launched as part of On The Farm STEM included virtual farm tours, answers to commonly asked student questions, explanations of agriculture phenomena and more.



Agriculture and food systems have a forward presence as the context for On The Farm STEM experiences, but primary attention is placed on informing and advancing science education through Next Generation Science Standards.

CREDIT: AFBF/PHILIP GERLACH; AFBFA/DANIEL MELOY



An agriculturally literate person understands how the agricultural industry works – not just where food comes from, but who grows it, agriculture’s effect on the economy, environment, technology, lifestyle and its relationship to livestock.

CREDIT: AFBF/PHILIP GERLACH

## WHITE-REINHARDT FUND FOR EDUCATION

The White-Reinhardt Fund for Education is a special project of the Foundation established in cooperation with the AFB Women’s Leadership Committee that provides grants focused on increasing agricultural literacy.

In 2023, the White-Reinhardt Scholarship Program provided funds for 10 educators to attend the National Agriculture in the Classroom Conference.

Twenty county and state Farm Bureau projects were funded by the White-Reinhardt Grant Program that focuses on increasing agricultural literacy for students in grades K-12.

## ADDITIONAL FOUNDATION ACTIVITIES IN 2023

The Farm Bureau Foundation Fellows launched four free Applied Digital Skills lessons dedicated to helping students learn about food, fuel and fiber. The lessons were developed with support from Grow with Google to make digital skills and agricultural literacy more accessible to students across the country, with a focus on rural classrooms.

Christina Sue Lilja Resource Grants were provided to 120 educators (\$100 each) to purchase agricultural literacy resources from the Foundation store for their classrooms. These grants honor the work and legacy of the late Christy Lilja, a long-time AFBF staff member and former Foundation executive director.



Four free Applied Digital Skills lessons help students learn about food, fuel and fiber.

CREDIT: AFBF/PHILIP GERLACH



**AMERICAN FARM BUREAU FEDERATION®**

600 Maryland Ave. SW | Suite 1000W | Washington, DC 20024

JOIN FARM BUREAU

[www.FB.org/about/join](http://www.FB.org/about/join)

BECOME A SPONSOR

[info@fb.org](mailto:info@fb.org)

LEARN MORE ABOUT FARM BUREAU ISSUES

[www.FB.org/issues](http://www.FB.org/issues)

CONNECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

[f](#)@FarmBureau

[X](#)@FarmBureau

[@FarmBureau](#)

[@FarmBureau](#)

[www.fb.org](http://www.fb.org)

CONTACT US

**202.406.3600**

