

Champaign County Farm Bureau News

Vol. 85 No. 3

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March 2007

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USDA proposes 07 Farm Bill

Now that 2007 has arrived, the need to write a 2007 Farm Bill has taken on new urgency. Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns outlined the Bush administration's proposal for a new Farm Bill last month, increasing discussions about what provisions the new bill will actually include.

The Bush proposal calls for reforms such as revenue-based safety nets, modernizing the Marketing Assistance Loan Program and tightening payment limits.

According to USDA, farmers who experience crop loss are often under-compensated under a price-based program while those with high production tend to be over-compensated.

The proposed bill would convert the current price-based countercyclical program to a revenue-based program that would respond to actual conditions by factoring in U.S. crop yield when determining crop payments.

The proposed plan also calls for reforming the Marketing Assistance Loan Program for program commodities by basing the loan rates on a commodity's average price. Under the current law, loan rates or price floors are

set at a high level by law. The new proposal would set loan rates at 85 percent of the 5-year Olympic average, which is the average of the last 5 years excluding the highest and lowest years.

The goal of this change is to minimize market distortions and encourage farmers to plant crops based on market prices instead of the level of the subsidy payment, according to USDA.

Bush's plan sets the subsidy payment limit for individuals at a total of \$360,000. To receive commodity payments, producers must also meet a limit on Adjusted Gross Income (AGI), which includes wages and other income minus farm expenses and depreciation.

Currently the AGI limit is \$2.5 million, but the proposal would set the limit at \$200,000. Under this plan a producer with an annual adjusted gross income of \$200,000 or more would no longer be eligible for commodity payments. However, Internal Revenue Service (IRS) data for 2004 indicate that 97.7 percent of all American tax filers have an AGI under \$200,000.

In addition to commodity payment reforms, the proposal called for an additional \$7.8 billion to

protect natural resources through conservation programs, more than \$1.6 billion in new renewable energy funding and \$1.6 billion to complete the rehabilitation of more than 1,200 current Rural Critical Access Hospitals.

In response to Johanns' announcement of the Bush administration's plan, Illinois Farm Bureau President Philip Nelson acknowledged the Secretary's efforts to listen to farmers.

"Illinois Farm Bureau shares the Secretary's goal to write a farm bill that is trade compliant. We believe his focus on direct payments, a new revenue-based safety net and increased funding for conservation, rural development, research and farm-based renewable fuels are steps in the right direction," Nelson said.

The administration's proposal is being considered by Congress, but the final bill will ultimately be written by the House and Senate.

For more information about the Farm Bill proposal from USDA, visit the USDA web site at www.usda.gov and click on the 2007 Farm Bill icon.



Plant a seed ... grow a mind

Roger Read, general manager of Illini FS, presented Robbie Berg, Earth Partners coordinator, with a check for over \$400. Through the Plant a Seed...Grow A Mind program, a portion of the proceeds from the sale of FS seed corn and FS HiSOY soybeans sold during the 2005-2006 sales season was donated to benefit local and state agriculture education efforts. "There was a time when children grew up on or around farms and knew agriculture was the source of their food and fiber," said Read. "But times have changed. Today, most children don't know their food comes from the farm or the importance of agriculture. We are working to change that."

Earth Partners thanks Illini FS for their various donations throughout the year and their participation in the Plant a Seed ... Grow A Mind program.

Come share your ideas and opinions at the
Viewpoint Meeting

Friday, March 9

11 a.m.

Philo Tavern

Meeting is free and open to the public.
Lunch will be provided.

**Mahomet Aquifer
Information Meeting**

Tuesday, March 20

7 p.m.

Tony Noel Center, Parkland College

Meeting is free and open to the public.

Aquifer research advances with formation of committee

The Mahomet Aquifer lies beneath 15 counties in central Illinois and supplies water to hundreds of thousands of people for personal and industrial consumption. Despite its importance, relatively little is known about the aquifer such as how it recharges or its current capacity.

To address these research needs, the Mahomet Aquifer Consortium (MAC) was formed in 1998 as an effort to study and develop a management plan for the Mahomet Aquifer. MAC members include representatives from water authorities, water companies, government agencies, well drillers, irrigators, the general public as well as the Illinois Farm Bureau.

In January 2006, Governor Rod Blagojevich issued Executive Order 2006-1 calling for the formation of state and regional water supply plans. As part of the fulfillment of that order, the MAC is facilitating the selection of the Committee on Re-

gional Water Supply Planning for East Central Illinois.

Committee members will look at current and future water supplies and evaluate options for the management of both surface water and groundwater supplies. The first major task of the committee, with the assistance of a consultant, will be to develop water demand scenarios for East Central Illinois to the year 2050.

To form this planning committee, the MAC accepted applications from 68 interested individuals from across the region. The selection process, which will be finalized by the MAC Board of Directors, is now underway for the 12-member committee that will represent the following interests: agriculture, small business, the public, water authorities, water utilities, municipalities, counties, environment, rural water districts, industries, soil and water conservation and electric generating utilities.

The selection process will also attempt to form a geographically balanced committee by evenly appointing members from each of the three regions within the 15-county area included in the MAC. The regions are divided into West: Mason, Tazewell, Logan, Menard, Cass and Sangamon counties; Central: McLean, Macon, Dewitt, Piatt and Woodford counties; and East: Champaign, Ford, Iroquois and Vermilion counties. The committee is appointed to a three-year term.

Once appointed, the planning committee will work with the Illinois State Water and Geological surveys and Illinois Department of Natural Resources Office of Water Resources to obtain information on the available water supply. They will also have resources from the MAC. Funding for this project is being provided by a grant from the Illinois Department of Revenue through the Executive Order.



President's Report

By Scott Bidner

How do you measure success? The answer, of course, depends on the issue or event. Last year the Fighting Illini basketball team was successful. That is an easy one to measure. How would you measure success for the Farm Bill? If you count current high commodity prices, favorable exports, and low consumer food prices, it would be fair to say that those things sound pretty good.

During my school days I worked as an intern in the USDA's Economic Research Service. At that time the branch I worked for was called "Food and Agricultural Policy." I was told that on a regular basis the name of that office would change to reflect current political winds, and was alternately called the "Agriculture and Food Policy" branch. You'll notice that the only change was the order in which "Ag" and "Food" appear. Each year we celebrate an astounding success in this country, how little Americans spend on food as a percent of their income. So for that important measure the Farm Bill, and other social programs that make up a large percentage of the USDA budget, is a resounding success.

For this reason, it is my view that it is time to change the name on the door back to the Agriculture and Food Policy branch. Farm Bureau, corn growers, and others around the country, including the USDA Secretary of Agriculture, are talking about the Farm Bill that will be written this year. Perhaps the most important question that all should ask is "What is success?" Most

support affordable food, some want a greener more sustainable Farm Bill, some end users want conservation acres to come back into production to lower commodity prices, and still others want more money for energy research.

Whatever the final composition of the Farm Bill, the primary measure of success should be how many family farms will continue to survive, or perish, as a result of farm policy. The argument in favor of keeping the remaining farms in this country viable goes like this: more farmers mean more families on the land, which means more sales and tax dollars in rural communities. Maintaining farm numbers means that competition survives. If the farmers in the future all fit into one room, they won't need the universities for research; local business for loans, equipment, inputs and vehicles; and they certainly won't have time to serve on county boards, church councils, or coach softball. According to a recent American Farm Bureau Foundation report, **15,000 farmers now account for 80%** of agricultural production in the entire United States of America. Think about it.

There are 435 Congressmen in the U.S. House. Each district contains approximately 650,000 citizens. The number of farmers that produce the vast majority of farm products isn't enough to constitute even a single congressional district. Now might be a good time for us to think about the future of family farms in the United States. This is the real deal.

Nearly 100 attend 1st Equine Affair

From dressage to driving and from saddlery to shoeing, equine activities and needs cover a broad spectrum. The Champaign County Farm Bureau Equine Committee attempts to address those many needs through educational programs throughout the year.

Last month, the committee teamed with a local chapter of the Old People's Riding Club to hold the first annual Champaign Equine Affair. The event was intended to be a "horseless" horse fair to let people know about the diverse activities available with horses and to educate attendees about different aspects of horse care.

Linda Gerlach and Sara Rhoades chaired the event that was held in the Farm Bureau building. More than 18 vendors and horse-related organizations set up booths and 12 experts spoke on subjects related to equine activities and horsekeeping.

Nearly 100 people participated in the event. Organizers say they hope to expand the event next year.



Linda and Dave Sadler of Fithian spoke to the crowd about driving. The Sadlers participate in driving competitions across the region. Linda is modeling typical dress for driving shows, including a hat and Dave is shown with the helmet he wears.

Equine Garage Sale

Saturday, April 14

9 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Farm Bureau auditorium

A 20% commission will be charged on consigned items. Please mark items for sale with your name, address, phone number and price. Items can be brought to the Farm Bureau on: Friday, April 13th 3:00-6:00PM Saturday, April 14th 7:00-8:30 AM

Prime Timers give, learn about Foodbank

At their December meeting, the Prime Timers invited Eastern Illinois Foodbank Director Jim Hires to give the program. Hires explained the role of the Foodbank in collecting, sorting and distributing food to food pantries across East Central Illinois.

Following his presentation, Prime Timers Chair Ken Roellig (right) presented Hires with a check for \$500 to benefit the Foodbank. The Foodbank can use every dollar donated to buy 10 dollars worth of food.



Feb 4-10 celebrates affordable food

The cost of food in America remains affordable. According to the latest statistics compiled by the Agriculture Department's (USDA's) Economic Research Service, American families and individuals currently spend, on average, just under 10 percent of their disposable personal income for food.

Applying that statistic to the calendar year means the average household will have earned enough disposable income — that portion of income available for spending or saving — to pay for its annual food supply in about 36 days.

In recognition of this, the Champaign County Farm Bureau celebrated Feb. 4-10, 2007, as Food Check-Out Week. The Farm Bureau partnered with the Champaign County Chamber of Commerce to bring awareness to the week by holding a grocery race between the cities of Champaign and Urbana. Mayor



Jerry Schweighart of Champaign and Alderwoman Heather Stevenson of Urbana each had five minutes in Jerry's IGA at the Round Barn Center to gather as many groceries as they could. The groceries they grabbed went to needy families through the Center for Women in Transition.

The affordable, high-quality food we enjoy as consumers is a product of our successful food production and distribu-

tion system, as well as America's farmers and ranchers continued access to effective and affordable crop protection tools.

Compared to food, Americans work longer each year to pay for their housing, federal taxes and medical care. According to the Tax Foundation, Americans must work 52 days each year to pay for health and medical care, 62 days to pay for housing/household operation and 77 days to pay their federal taxes.

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CHAMPAIGN COUNTY FARM BUREAU

Hours: 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday-Friday
Manager -- Bradley Uken

Administrative Assistant -- Brenda Cole
Membership Director -- Deidra Gibson
HMO Administrator -- Donna Huxtable
Bookkeeper -- Amanda Hesterberg
Information Director -- Karen Hertz
Foundation Director -- Debby Rehn

Contact us at (217) 352-5235
www.ccfarmbureau.com



Foundation Corner



By Debby Rehn

Contact: debby@ccfarmbureau.com

Brackets, hardwood, benches, boards...I'm not referring to a work bench... March Madness is upon us! Illinois is home to the original March Madness and what an exciting time of year it is. Collegiate basketball teams will be battling it out for the right to play in Atlanta and Cinderella teams will find their way into your heart. But we also have something quite exciting going on in Champaign County. Scholarship applications have been completed and the Foundation will soon be awarding them to Champaign County students pursuing a career in agriculture and related fields!

Speaking of basketball, our Orange & Blue Hoopenanny events raised enough money for six scholarships! Thank you to all who attended and a big thank you to our sponsors, **COUNTRY Insurance & Financial Services, Grand Prairie Coop & Illini FS**. I would also like to thank **Billy Barooz** for being a wonderful host for our game watches. With delicious food and half-time give-aways, a great time was had by all. **Go Illini!**

While only one basketball team will win the Big Dance, 47 stu-

dents were awarded scholarships this past year. The process for the upcoming school year is just beginning. If you have been contemplating the idea of sponsoring a scholarship, now is a great time to take action.

I know donating can easily be pushed to the bottom of your priority list, but why not fund a scholarship and see firsthand the difference you are making? Perhaps you are not in a position to fund a full scholarship—every donation counts! This past year we earned enough money for 15 scholarships simply from many of you tacking on an additional \$5 or \$9 to your member dues—that's incredible!

Maybe you are not involved in farming and think funding "ag" students only relates to that profession. Did you know that agricultural careers can also include catering director, environmental engineer, financial planner, teacher, adoption counselor, food engineer, floral shop manager, golf course superintendent, accountant, and much more? What a diverse industry we are supporting!

I am thrilled to be back in Champaign County and serving as your new Foundation Direc-

tor. If I have not stopped by to introduce myself yet, please do not hesitate to contact me and introduce yourself! James Naismith said, "I am sure that no man can derive more pleasure from money or power than I do from seeing a pair of basketball goals in some out-of-the-way place." Our joy comes from donors seeing the value of supporting the future of agriculture. So as you are filling out your brackets and picking your Final Four, I hope the Foundation winds up on your "champion line."

■ Lunch with the Bunch is approaching in early April. This is an event that the Foundation puts on for donors and recipients to enjoy lunch together. The recipients have a chance to express their appreciation and also do some networking!

■ Looking for non-traditional ways to support the Foundation? You can purchase an engraved brick for Legacy Lane (located at the entrance of the CCFB building) or donate grain through "Bushels For Our Future" (call the office for a contribution card and your elevator manager and CCFBF will handle the details).

GM offers FB member rebate

Your Farm Bureau membership just became more valuable. Two new offers from GM can help members save on their next vehicle.

GM is providing a \$500 offer toward the purchase or lease of most GM vehicles¹. They are also offering \$750 off the purchase or lease of any GM E85 FlexFuel vehicle (E85 is a blend of 15% gasoline and 85% ethanol). E85 is a cleaner-burning, renewable fuel source made primarily from U.S.-grown biomaterial, such as corn or other grain products. To learn about

E85 and find an E85 station near you, visit livegreen.goyellow.com.

These two private offers are available through January 3, 2008. To redeem, show your Illinois Farm Bureau membership card at your GM dealership. Members are welcome to combine either offer with most current incentives², including GM Business Choice³.

GM is using advanced technology to make vehicles more efficient and safe with Active Fuel Management™, one-year stan-

dard OnStar® service⁴ and StabiliTrak®. GM is also leading the way with over 2 million E85 FlexFuel vehicles on the road, including pickup trucks, SUVs, vans and sedans.

The GM 100,000-mile/5-year transferable limited powertrain warranty⁵ with no deductible is now standard on every 2007 GM car and light-duty truck. Plus, GM tacks on 24/7, 100,000-mile/5-year roadside assistance and courtesy transportation⁵.

For more details, visit gmfleet.com/ilfb.

*Members must provide membership card to receive this offer. Member must be a member for at least 30 days prior to date of delivery to be eligible for this private offer. \$500 or \$750 private offers valid toward the purchase of eligible new 2006, 2007 and 2008 model year GM passenger car and light-duty truck models. Customers must take delivery by January 3, 2008. The vehicle being purchased or leased can be in the name of the Farm Bureau member or the name of the member's business. These offers are transferable only to an individual residing in the same household. If transferred, proof of transferee's residency must be verified with current driver's license or state identification.

These private offers are in addition to most eligible consumer incentive programs in effect at time of delivery. Incentives are subject to change. Vehicles sold or leased to qualified fleet customers are eligible for the National Fleet Purchase Program (FVX), plus the \$500 or \$750 private offers. Not stackable with other private offers. These private offers may not be received as cash. Not available on prior purchases. See your dealer for complete program details.

1) Excludes Cadillac XLR, XLR-V and STS-V; Chevrolet Corvette Z06 and SSR; HUMMER H1, Saturn SKY, Pontiac Solstice and medium-duty trucks.

2) Incentives are subject to change and these offers are not available with other private offers.

3) GM Business Choice Program runs from October 1, 2006 through September 30, 2007. To qualify for the 2007 GM Business Choice Program your vehicle must be part of the day-to-day operation of your business and you must provide proof of your commercial business. See dealer for complete details.

4) Call 1-888-4ONSTAR (1-888-466-7827) or visit onstar.com for system limitations and details.

5) Whichever comes first. See dealer for details.

WDWS Newstalk 1400 and Earth Partners Annual Coffee Shop Tour

Come bid on a basket full of Illinois agriculture products. It's that time of year and we need your help to make this fundraiser a success again! Come and pledge your contribution at any or all of these sites. Call your area chairperson to register your pledge or bid.

Auctions begin at noon.

FISHER, Esther Flessner - Tuesday, March 20

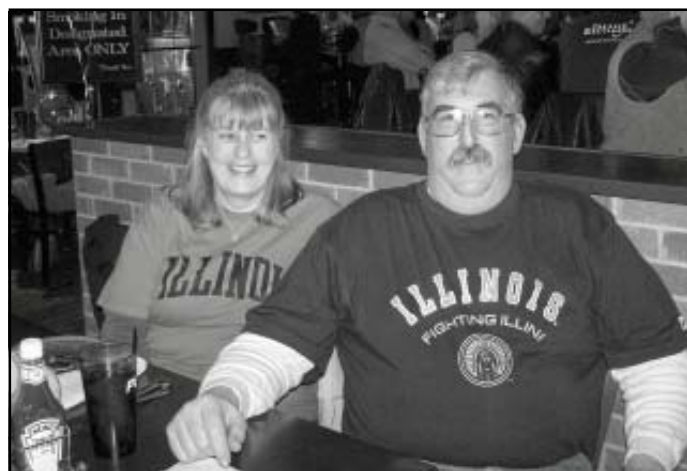
WDWS Newstalk 1400
MAHOMET, Hideaway of the Woods - Wednesday, March 21

Chris Karr 687-2602

WDWS Newstalk 1400
PHILO, Philo Tavern - Thursday March 22
Dick Miller 684-2221

WDWS Newstalk 1400
GIFFORD, Main Street Cafe - Friday, March 23
David Hood, 397-2289

For more information, contact Robbie Berg at 352-5235.



Hoopennans provide fun and funds

Supporters of the Fighting Illini basketball team and the Champaign County Farm Bureau Foundation showed their spirit by attending one of the three Orange & Blue Hoopenannys hosted by the Foundation to raise money for scholarships. Above, Marguerite and Larry Zahnd of Champaign cheered on the Illini at Billy Barooz.

Does your membership make you work faster and smarter?

It should!

As an Illinois Farm Bureau member, you can expand and customize your business needs, and save while you're doing it! It's easy, when you use your Dell discount of up to 12% - on top of other special pricing! You also get:

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- Discounts on customized systems
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Go to www.dell.com/ilfb/members or call 1-800-695-8133. Use your Member ID: PS6577730

For more member-only benefits, visit www.ilfb.org or call your county Farm Bureau.

member-only HOME & BUSINESS VALUE PACK



FBVBA05TJ1036

The Women's Committee invites you to

"Sip into Spring" with Spring Fling



Wednesday, April 11

Doors open at 10:30 am

Fun begins at 11:00 am

Morning Speaker - Judy Eggett,
Painting china

Afternoon Speaker - Larry Kanfer,
Photography

Please call 352-5235 to reserve
your place.

The Champaign County Farm Bureau Women's Committee, the Carle Center for Rural Health & Farm Safety and Health Alliance are sponsoring a

Health Fair

Thursday, March 22

5:30 - 7:00 p.m.

Farm Bureau auditorium

Meal provided

Screenings and information on hearing, weight management, respiratory care, Carle Arbores, cholesterol, blood sugar and much more will be available. For best results, fast for several hours before screenings.

Please RSVP so we have an accurate meal count.

Calendar of Events

March

- 1 Young Ag Leaders, 7 p.m., Jillian's on Neil Street
- 5 Marketing Club, 7 p.m.
- 8 Prime Timers, 10:00 a.m.
- 9 Viewpoint meeting, 11:00 a.m., Philo Tavern
- 11 ALOYTT Dinner Theater, 6 p.m., Round Barn Banquet Centre - Reservations required
- 12 Women's Committee, 9:30 a.m.
- 12 Lady Landowners, 11:30 a.m.
- 12 WILL Outlook meeting, 7 p.m., Room C118 at Parkland College
- 13 Legislative Committee, 7:30 a.m.
- 13 Land Use Committee, 9:00 a.m.
- 15 Board of Directors meeting, 7 p.m.
- 19 Congressman Johnson at Parkland College, 9 a.m.
- 20 Mahomet Aquifer meeting, 7 p.m., Tony Noel Center at Parkland College
- 21 Coffee Shop Tour, 12 p.m., Mahomet
- 22 Coffee Shop Tour, 12 p.m., Philo
- 22 Health Seminar, 5:30-7 p.m.
- 23 Coffee Shop Tour, 12 p.m., Gifford
- 26 District 12 meeting, 6:30 p.m. at the Community Building in Tuscola

All meetings are in the Farm Bureau auditorium unless otherwise noted. Please call the Farm Bureau at 352-5235 with any questions.

Congressman Tim Johnson to speak at Parkland

Congressman Tim Johnson will report on national agriculture legislation, particularly the upcoming Farm Bill, and how it will affect central Illinois.

March 19 at Parkland College

8:15 a.m. Continental Breakfast

9:00 a.m. Presentation and time for questions

Andersons Room in the Tony Noel Technology Applications Center on the west side of the Parkland campus.

This event is free and open to the public.

Please register in advance by calling

(217) 351-2464.

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Simply walk into any participating Sherwin-Williams store, show them your Illinois Farm Bureau membership card and receive a whopping 25% off any purchase!

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- ✓ Brushes & Rollers
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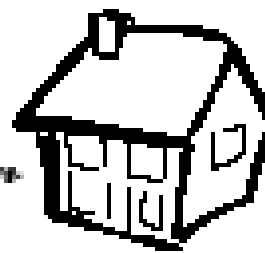
- ✓ Ladders
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For project pictures and home decorating tips go to www.sherwin-williams.com.

For more Illinois Farm Bureau membership discounts go to www.illfb.org.

Circle Director Page

Illinois Farm Bureau



Burke retires as Ludlow director

Joe Burke (left) was recognized at the Champaign County Farm Bureau Board of Directors last month for his service as director of Ludlow Township. Joe reached his tenure as a director, but will continue to serve as Chair of the Marketing Club.

FREE CLASSIFIEDS

Two ads per membership per year. Ads will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. Ads must be to the Farm Bureau by the 20th of each month. Commercial ads will not be accepted.

FOR SALE - 1993 Chevy Silverado 2500 HD. 5.7L 4-speed auto, tilt, cruise, AC, Power windows & locks, AM/FM. Trailer hitch, 5th wheel hitch, dark gray, gray interior. Service records, 133,000 miles. Excellent condition. \$3995. Call 863-2003.

FOR SALE - Large size electric lift chair. Used 4 months. Light brown. \$900 new, asking \$450. Call 367-8506.

Committee Happenings

Lady Landowners

The Lady Landowners will host a luncheon and program with the Women's Committee at 11:30 a.m. on March 12 in the Farm Bureau auditorium. The topic will be "Approaching legal issues" with Steve Ayers of Uof I Extension and James Ayers, attorney.

Women's Committee

The Women's Committee will meet at 9:30 a.m. on March 12 at the Farm Bureau. We will make agriculture product flower pots so please bring wrappers and packaging to use as "flowers."

Young Ag Leaders

The Young Ag Leaders will meet at 7 p.m. on March 1 at Jillian's on Neil Street. Dinner will be provided.

Marketing Club

The Champaign County Corn and Soybean Marketing Club

will meet on March 5 at the Farm Bureau. The speaker will be University of Illinois Extension Agriculture Economist Gary Schnitkey talking about crop insurance.

The WILLAM 580 Spring Outlook will be on March 12 at 7 pm in Parkland College room C118. Speakers include Curt Kimmel of Grainfield Marketing, Chuck Shelby of Risk Management Commodities, Bill Mayer of Roach Ag Marketing, and Wayne Nelson of L & M Commodities.

Prime Timers

The Prime Timers will meet at 10:00 a.m. on March 8. The speaker and entertainment will be Scott Schwartz, archivist for the University of Illinois bands.

The cost to attend is \$4.00. Call the Farm Bureau at 352-5235 to RSVP. The cost to attend is \$4.00. Call the Farm Bureau at 352-5235 to RSVP.