

# Local Link Farm To Fridge: Students Explore Dairy



**A**t Kilgus Farmstead near Fairbury, sixty Normal West High School students had the chance to experience dairy from farm to fridge.

Kilgus Farmstead operates an on-farm creamery to bottle their own milk, allowing the students to see the entire process from dairy cows to gallons of milk.

“The field trip ties directly into our dairy unit,” says Family and Consumer Science teacher, Traci Verdery. “In class, the students made their own whipped cream, butter and mozzarella cheese.”

The farm tour gives them the chance to see where milk comes from, Verdery says.

The group of ninth through twelfth graders toured the barns, milking parlor and creamery plus enjoyed some ice cream from the on-farm store.

For the majority of the students, the field trip was the first time they visited a farm and had the chance to see dairy cows up close.

Students learned about animal care, nutrition and food safety.

Funding for the dairy field trip was provided by an Ag Science Grant from McLean County Farm Bureau Foundation.

In 2019, the Foundation awarded Ag Science Grants to nine local teachers to incorporate agriculture in their classrooms:

- Katie Buckley, Leroy Jr/Sr High
- Mary Enata, Lexington Jr. High
- Lisa Matejka, Trinity Lutheran Jr. High
- Peggy Modglin, Normal West
- Kelly Reardon, Fox Creek Elementary
- Vanessa Tibbs, Olympia South
- Tina Thomas, Stevenson Elementary
- Angela Trask, Glenn Elementary
- Traci Verdery, Normal West

Grant funds provided learning kits, materials and hands-on experiences for students to learn about the science of food and farming. For more details, visit [www.mcleanaitc.org](http://www.mcleanaitc.org).

## DAIRY FARM FIELD TRIP

Left: Sixty Normal West High School students toured Kilgus Farmstead near Fairbury for a hands-on look at dairy farming and milk production.

Right: Matthew Wheeler, Normal West Junior, had the chance to see Jersey milking cows up close and learn that dairy cows need a balanced diet, just like people.

## McLean County Farm Bureau Foundation

# Golf Outing

**Monday, June 17, 2019 • 9:30 a.m. start**  
**The Den Golf Course**

- \$90 per golfer - golf cart, snacks & ribeye dinner
  - Teams of 4, best ball, Silent auction, raffles & prizes
- Register at [www.mcfb.org/foundation](http://www.mcfb.org/foundation)



**Sunday, July 28, 2019 • 8 a.m. start**  
**at McLean County Fairgrounds**  
Registration & details at [www.mcleancountyfair.org](http://www.mcleancountyfair.org)

All proceeds benefit the educational efforts of the McLean County Farm Bureau Foundation:  
Scholarships • Ag in the Classroom • McLean County Fair • Food & Farm Fun Zone Educational Exhibit



Proud to be an  
*Illinois Farmer*

**BANE FAMILY  
PORK FARM**

Patrick Bane manages the daily operation of Bane Family Pork Farm near Arrowsmith. Bane and his wife Sheri have two grown daughters and two grandchildren. Pictured from left: Sheri Bane, Reese Abbott, Patrick Bane, Lysnie Bane, Knox Abbott, Alyssa Abbott & Clay Abbott.

Raising pigs has been a lifelong endeavor for Patrick Bane, a third generation McLean County Farmer, but not necessarily something he expected to garner him national attention.

Being named America’s Pig Farmer of the Year by the National Pork Board in October 2018, has definitely raised his profile.

“I’ve been raising pigs my entire life,” says Bane, who grew up on a farm in rural Arrowsmith with six brothers and two sisters. “Growing up we had about 250 sows farrow to finish (birth to market weight). We also had beef cattle, sheep and milk cows.”

Today, Bane manages the daily operation of Bane Family Pork Farm, which he owns with two of his brothers. The farm specializes in the care of mother pigs, called sows, and their piglets.

The America’s Pig Farmer of the Year award recognizes a pig farmer who excels at raising pigs while embracing the “We Care” ethical principles to produce safe

food, promote animal well-being, safeguard natural resources, protect public health, care for employees and contribute to community well-being.

“The old saying goes that people don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.” Bane says. “As pig farmers, we care about the health and safety of our animals, the environment and the people who eat our pork.”

Bane’s role as America’s Pig Farmer of the Year focuses on sharing that message with food company executives, policy makers and the general public.

After being nominated for the award by one of his farm suppliers, Bane went through a vigorous vetting process including an on-farm assessment of his farming practices and a series of interviews.

“Pig farming looks different today than it did in the past,” Bane says. “I would describe our farm as clean, healthy and high tech.”

For example, the barns on Bane’s farm





have climate controls that trigger an alarm on his smart phone if there's a power outage or malfunction anytime of the day or night.

To keep the animals healthy, the farm's employees must shower when they arrive each day and put on clean clothes and boots provided by the farm before entering the barns.

"Raising our pigs indoors gives us the ability to control their environment and limit their exposure to disease," says Bane, who earned a degree in animal science from the University of Illinois before returning home to farm in 1981.

Today, his farm is home to 3,000 sows and 1,200 gilts, which are young female pigs who have not yet had piglets.

While technology has transformed many aspects of livestock farming, some things remain the same.

"Animal care still requires a lot of hands on work and you have to have good people," Bane says. "I like to say there's no

app for that."

Bane credits a lot of his success to the farm's eight employees, several of whom have worked with him for more than ten years.

As America's Pig Farmer of the Year, Bane serves as an ambassador representing the nation's 67,000 pig farmers at a variety of events, speaking engagements and conferences across the country.

Bane traveled to Houston, TX to meet with the Retail Advisory Council, a group representing food retailers. He also participated in Harvest Table, an event sponsored by American Humane in Washington D.C. and the South Beach Food and Wine Festival in Florida.

"The thing I've enjoyed the most is all the people I've had the chance to meet," Bane says. "It's been a fun and rewarding experience."

To learn more about today's pig farmers and see a video of Bane Family Pork Farm, visit [www.realpigfarming.com](http://www.realpigfarming.com).

#### COMMITTED TO ANIMAL CARE

Left: Patrick Bane and his employees work to protect the health and well being of each of the animals on the farm.

Right: Gilts (young females who have not yet had piglets) are fed six different diets as they grow from piglet to adult based on their physical needs.

All photos courtesy of the National Pork Board.



## 'We Care' More Than Just a Motto

"As pig farmers, we care about the health and safety of our animals, the environment and the people who eat our pork. It's more than just a motto — it's part of what we do every day."

—Patrick Bane, McLean County Farmer & America's Pig Farmer of the Year, 2018

Visit [www.realpigfarming.com](http://www.realpigfarming.com) to learn more!

# McLean County Fair

July 31 - Aug. 4, 2019



## Grandstand Attractions

Wed., July 31	Big Smoker's Tractor Pull & Local Pickup Truck Pull-Offs
Thurs., Aug. 1	TBA
Fri., Aug. 2	Country Concert feat. Chase Bryant
Sat., Aug. 3	Demolition Derby

Visit [www.mcleancountyfair.org](http://www.mcleancountyfair.org) for details!

## Admission Prices

### Advance & Gate:

5 & under	Free
Child (6-12)	\$4
Adult (13+)	\$7

### Season Armbands:

Child (6-12)	\$10
Adult (13+)	\$16

### Discounts & Specials:

#### Thursday - Young at Heart

Seniors (60+) - FREE until noon

**Pack the Bus** - \$1 admission  
with qualifying donation

#### Friday - Merchant's Day

Age 12 & under FREE with coupon  
from participating local businesses

#### Sunday - Last Day

Child (6-12) \$1

Adult (13+) \$3

## 4-H Show Information

From cooking to small engines and photography to livestock, make sure to check out all the 4-H projects at the fair!

Visit <http://web.extension.illinois.edu/lmw/> or contact the Extension Office at (309) 663-8306 for a full schedule of 4-H activities.

## Fun at the Fair

FREE activities (with fair admission)

- Face painting
  - Balloon artists
  - Rhinestone Roper
  - Live Shark Encounter
  - Dan Mayer, Sword Swallower
  - Moo U Animal Tours
  - Antique Tractors
  - Thursday: Young at Heart Day
- And much more!

## Food & Farm Fun Zone

Animals, Activities & More!



Open 9 a.m. - 9 p.m. Wed. - Sat.

Sun. noon - 5 p.m.

**FREE with fair admission**



Find us on Main Street at the  
**McLean County Fair**



Visit [www.mcleancountyfair.org](http://www.mcleancountyfair.org) or follow McLean County Fair on Facebook!