

CALENDAR SPOTLIGHT

NOVEMBER 28 – 29, 2024

Thanksgiving Holiday
offices closed

DECEMBER 1, 2024

Crop Insurance PRF Sales Closing and
Acreage Reporting Deadline

DECEMBER 10, 2024

End of Insurance Coverage
(corn/soybeans)

DECEMBER 15, 2024

Crop Insurance Wheat Acreage
Reporting Deadline

DECEMBER 24–25, 2024

Christmas Holiday
offices closed

DECEMBER 31, 2024

New Year's Eve observed
offices closed at noon

JANUARY 1, 2025

New Year's Day
offices closed

JANUARY 15, 2025

Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
offices closed

FEBRUARY 15, 2025

Crop Insurance Area Plan Production
Reporting (corn/soybeans)

MARCH 15, 2025

Crop Insurance Sales Closing
(corn/soybeans)

RMA-published policies and
procedures supersede any information
provided herein. Farm Credit Illinois is
an equal opportunity provider.

DECATUR OFFICE

217-877-3141 | decatur@farmcreditIL.com

Directors Cup — Farm Couples Creating Bright Futures



Pictured above from L to R: Daniel & Constance Herriott of Sidney (Champaign County);
Clint Gorden with wife Ashley of Blue Mound (Macon County);
Neil & Kerri Lange of Oakdale (Washington County)

Three young farming couples were recognized as the 2024 Directors Cup recipients at a ceremony with the cooperative's Board of Directors. This program is in its sixth year of celebrating beginning farmers with a \$5,000 award. Recipients are celebrated for their dedication to personal growth, professional development, and bright futures for their family and farm operation.

Get to know the 2024 Directors Cup honorees:

www.farmcreditIL.com/directorscup

Are you a young or beginning farmer that prides yourself on the work you put into your farm family, business, and community?

Applications for the 2025 Directors Cup are open Jan. 1 – March 1

www.farmcreditIL.com/directorscup

CULTIVATIONS

Post-Harvest 2024 Edition

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Directors Cup Recipients

A Note from the Decatur Regional Office

Andrew Alton, Regional Manager



As another harvest season nears its end, our office extends our gratitude to you and all the farm families we serve. We are genuinely thankful you are part of the Farm Credit Illinois cooperative.

We have also enclosed the 2025 Focus on Farming calendar packed with images and monthly agriculture facts that celebrate the beauty of farm families and rural living. We hope you enjoy the image collection from 334 entries submitted by people across Illinois in this year's Facebook contest.

We are honored to serve you through both the challenging and rewarding cycles of agriculture and look forward to preparing for the upcoming crop season alongside you.

Andrew Alton

Inside this CULTIVATIONS newsletter, you'll find Association updates including information about the next FCI CEO, upcoming learning programs, agriculture scholarships and community improvement grants, and more.



Directors Cup recipient, Clint Gorden



Maroa Livestock 4-H Community Improvement Grant Winners



Maroa-Forsyth FFA Community Improvement Grant Winners





A Season of Transition

Kelly Hunt, CEO Designate

Harvest has been my favorite season since I was a young Champaign County girl taking combine rides with my grandpa and dad, sixth and seventh generation farmers. Later in life, I recognized harvest is not only the completion of one crop year but marks the beginning of planning and preparation for the next one.



Just as harvest is a season of transition on the farm, this fall also brings transition to Farm Credit Illinois. It was humbling to receive the invitation from the FCI Board of Directors to serve as the next CEO of Farm Credit Illinois. In preparing to begin my CEO tenure on January 1, I am committed to ensuring a smooth, seamless transition and leveraging the values that make us strong. We will continue delivering low upfront interest rates, cash patronage, and other member-focused advantages including member learning programs and lending assistance for young and beginning farmers.

During my nine years as FCI's chief financial officer, I was fortunate to be mentored by, and learn from, two remarkable CEOs. The late Tom Tracy recruited me to join FCI with the compelling pitch of working for a cooperative that puts delivering value to members first and focuses on Helping Farm Families Succeed. Current CEO Aaron Johnson has a contagious passion and inspires support for both the farm families we serve and inspiring support for the FCI employee team. Please join me in thanking Aaron for nearly 40 years of Farm Credit career contributions and congratulating him as he begins a well-deserved retirement.

Despite reports of record yields throughout our service area this fall, it appears the farm economy is transitioning toward extended lower commodity prices even as input costs remain high. Fortunately, the Fed has begun lowering interest rates as inflation steadies. Be assured FCI will remain proactive in identifying opportunities to deliver fee-free re-pricings to members with fixed rate real estate and intermediate-term loans priced during the past couple years of higher rates.

As FCI's leadership faces a transition, the Farm Credit mission remains the same. We will continue to support farm families and agriculture with reliable, consistent credit and financial services during both the prosperous and challenging cycles of the farm economy. FCI is well-positioned financially to weather the volatility and potentially tighter margins on the farm. It is a credit to generations of cooperative and beginning farmers.

members who have helped build a strong capital position of more than \$1.29 billion.

While my overriding focus is on protecting the future of FCI, I am often reminded of the past experiences that shaped this association, as well as my own passion for farming. From



being raised in a farm family and the rural St. Joseph-Ogden community, to embracing the value of education at Parkland College and the University of Illinois, to the diverse career experiences as a CPA over the past 25 years, I am grateful for the journey that brought me to the extraordinary opportunity and responsibility of leading your FCI cooperative.

Thank you for your continued trust in Farm Credit Illinois. I look forward to working with you and serving you and the next generation of farm families during this season of transition and beyond.



FARMLAND VALUE STUDY

Values Remain Strong in 2024

Farmland values throughout central and southern Illinois increased 7.49% on average from last year, according to the 2024 study of 22 benchmark farms by the Farm Credit Illinois (FCI) appraisal team. Eighteen of the 22 benchmark farms increased in value while four remained unchanged. Results across all land classes showed considerable variation, reinforcing that agricultural real estate is a location-specific asset. When considering the individual benchmark values, the average year-over-year percentage changes across the four land class categories ranged from +3.6% to +14.05%. The table illustrates the average changes in the four general land classifications.

Land Class	Productive Index Rating	Average Value Range Per Acre	Average % Change 2024 vs 2023
1A	133 - 147	\$17,500 - \$19,400	+3.60%
2B	117 - 132	\$13,000 - \$21,500	+14.05%
3C Central	100 - 116	\$8,200 - \$12,500	+5.61%
3C South	100 - 116	\$5,600 - \$14,000	+6.15%

"Farmland values in 2024 remain strong despite higher interest rates and lower commodity prices," says Kent Reid, Farm Credit Illinois chief appraiser. "Values remain consistent with the peaks set in 2023 due to constant demand for Illinois farmland coupled with limited supply of farms."

The 2024 benchmark update for the Farm Credit Illinois territory shows continued

strength in the farmland market. The economic health of farmers and farm owners remains stable, but there are still pressures on farmers' financial positions. Interest rates, higher cash rents, and lower commodity prices this fall will be a challenge that could affect land values in the upcoming year. Overall, an increase of 7.49% indicates a solid market throughout FCI's 60-county territory. While values as of mid-2024 were at an all-time high, low commodity price this fall and winter will bring challenges to the market that warrant careful monitoring.

Keep up with local markets throughout the year with the Farmland Trends Tracker – a free email report delivered twice a year from FCI's state certified appraisal team. Read more analysis from FCI's chief appraiser in the full benchmark study and subscribe to the Farmland Trends Tracker at www.farmcreditIL.com/trends.



Cultivate Your Farm's Future This Off-Season By Prioritizing You

Insure with Confidence

Foundational workshop exploring the federal crop insurance program and equipping you to confidently select coverage to enhance your operation's risk management plan.

Wednesday, December 11
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Taylorville Regional Office
1155 E 1500 N Rd, Taylorville

Thursday, December 12
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Marion Regional Office
2601 Henry Dr, Marion

Farm Financials 1: Statements & Analysis

Break down the balance sheet and work through example scenarios with FCI staff. Learn how to leverage your numbers and crop insurance coverage to manage the financial health of your farm.

Tuesday, December 3
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Mahomet Regional Office
1100 Farm Credit Dr, Mahomet

Wednesday, December 18
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

The Regency
400 Regency Park, O'Fallon

Thursday, January 23
Noon – 4:00 PM

Crowne Plaza
3000 S Dirksen Parkway, Springfield

Farm Financials 2: Benchmarking & Roadmapping

Dive deeper into understanding financial ratios and best practices of successful operations. Leave equipped with tools to better monitor and forecast your farm's financial trendlines.

Wednesday, December 4
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

The Carriage House
8 W Carriage Ln, Altamont

Thursday, February 15
9:30 AM – 3:00 PM

Mt. Zion Conference Center
1400 Mt. Zion Pkwy, Mt. Zion



FCI Estate Planning: Creating a Lasting Legacy

Break through the complexities of succession planning to create a lasting legacy for your farm and family. Join Brooke Didier Starks with Legacy Legal as she helps you overcome planning paralysis and take actionable steps to get started.

FIELDING FORWARD

CROP INSURANCE

Fielding Forward Crop Insurance Meetings

Hear the latest perspectives on grain and fertilizer markets and timely updates on topics including managing weather risk, ag policy, and maximizing acreage potential. Plus, stay in-the-know on federal crop insurance updates from FCI agents as you consider coverage options.

Thursday, January 9
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Rend Lake Event Center
468 N Ken Gray Parkway, Ina

Wednesday, January 15
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

I Hotel & Conference Center
1900 S First St, Champaign

Thursday, January 16
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

Keller Convention Center
1202 N Keller Dr, Effingham

Wednesday, January 22
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

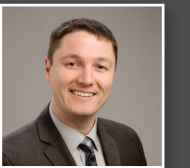
The Woods Event Center
10584 N 600th St, Robinson

Thursday, January 23
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

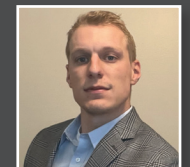
Crowne Plaza
3000 S Dirksen Parkway, Springfield



Matt Bennett
AgMarket.net
JAN 9, 15, 22, 23



Eric Snodgrass
Nutrien Ag Solutions
JAN 15, 16



Kolten Postin
AgMarket.net
JAN 16



Josh Linville
StoneX
JAN 22



Jason Webster
Precision Planting
JAN 23



Learn more and register www.farmcreditIL.com/learning

All programs offer **FreshRoots** learning incentives to eligible borrowers. Lunch included with each program.



YOUTH INVESTMENTS

\$2,500

SCHOLARSHIPS FOR HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS

studying agriculture in college



2024 Scholarship Recipients

Planning for a career on the farm or in the ag industry?

If you're passionate about agriculture, apply to be one of 30 FCI ag scholars.

APPLY BY FEB. 28, 2025 www.farmcreditIL.com/scholarship



\$500

COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT GRANTS

4-H Clubs & FFA Chapters

Make a positive impact in your community by coordinating an improvement project

- + Tree Plantings
- + Landscaping
- + Community Gardens
- + Fairgrounds Updates
- + Park Improvements



APPLY BY FEB. 28, 2025 www.farmcreditIL.com/community



KOHL-LABORATIONS



Reflections from FCI's Inaugural She Grows

Commentary, wisdom, and perspectives from globally renowned agricultural economist Dr. David M. Kohl



FCI's first ever women's conference exemplifies their investment in the future through education. The event gathered a diverse group of women varying in age and agricultural involvement. Attendees were curious about the pulse of the agriculture economy, land values, movement from fossil fuels to green energy, and business financial advice.

This conference was timely as a major wealth transfer of \$68 trillion in the general economy, with up to \$4 trillion in agriculture, is expected between 2025 and 2040. Women currently own about one-third of businesses, and this could increase to

two-thirds by 2040, due to women outliving men by seven years on average and more women owning farm and ranch businesses, documented by the recent census data. Youth organizations like 4-H and FFA reflect this trend with 50 percent of membership and 75 percent of leadership teams being female. Women have a large impact on management decisions and interactions with the non-farming public.

During the conference, we discussed the current state of the agriculture economy facing declining prices and elevated interest rates, thus softening farmland values. However, there is hope as the best business

and financial practices are built during challenging economic times. Another major theme of my presentation was navigating economic cycles by setting business goals and separating business and family living budgets. The importance of financial liquidity and following working capital trends was also emphasized.

Other key takeaways included balancing after-tax profits and capital expenditure decisions, being consistent in livestock and grain marketing, and carefully reading any leases, loans, and contracts.

