



## VOICE OF AGRICULTURE AGENDA

January 23-24, 2026 | The Westin Hotel, Southfield

### Friday, January 23rd

11:00 a.m. Registration opens

11:30-1 p.m. Promotion & Education chair luncheon

Mission-Driven Leadership: Fueling Farm Bureau's Future

1:45 p.m. Tours

Cultivating Innovation at the Henry Ford Museum -50 people

This tour will explore the intersection of agriculture and innovation through a unique experience at the [Henry Ford Museum of American Innovation](#) in Dearborn.

Participants will enjoy a special presentation from [Michigan Soybean](#), sharing insights into their partnership with the Henry Ford Museum and their efforts to showcase how modern agriculture drives technological advancement. The presentation will highlight how Michigan farmers are embracing innovation to shape the future of food and farming.

Following the presentation, members will have time to explore the museum's exhibits at their own pace, discovering stories of American ingenuity, including agriculture's role in powering progress from past to present.

Barnyard to Classroom – A Day at Bowers School Farm - 50 people

This tour will head to Bloomfield Hills for a hands-on look at how agriculture and education come together at Bowers School Farm.

Operated by Bloomfield Hills Schools, this 93-acre working farm connects thousands of students and visitors each year to the world of agriculture through interactive learning and real farm experiences. From livestock care and greenhouse

2  
0  
2  
6

# VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

growing to maple syrup production and farm-to-table lessons, Bowers School Farm offers a dynamic blend of tradition and innovation.

Participants will tour the barns, gardens, and educational spaces that bring agriculture to life for urban and suburban audiences—and see firsthand how the farm is cultivating curiosity, sustainability, and the next generation of ag advocates.

This is a kid-friendly tour with the option to enjoy the sledding hill at your own expense. Please bring a coat, hats and gloves as a portion of the tour will be outdoors! Kids must be registered or under two and ride as a lap child. Anyone under 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

## Growing Opportunity in the City – Detroit Agriculture

This tour will journey into the heart of Detroit to explore how agriculture, education, and community come together to grow opportunities in the city.

At the Detroit Partnership for Food, Learning and Innovation (DPFLI), participants will see Michigan State University's commitment to urban agriculture in action. The site focuses on teaching, research, and outreach related to food production, soil health, and community engagement—demonstrating how innovative growing techniques can thrive in an urban setting.

Next, Planted Detroit will highlight the future of fresh, local food production through advanced indoor vertical farming. Participants will learn how this company is combining technology, sustainability, and community partnerships to make nutrient-dense greens available year-round in Detroit's neighborhoods.

The tour will conclude with Detroit Horse Power, where the power of horses and equestrian education are transforming young lives. Founded by a Detroit schoolteacher, this nonprofit provides inner-city youth with life skills through riding and horse care, while developing plans for a new urban equestrian center that blends recreation, responsibility, and growth. This portion of the tour will include viewing the construction site of Detroit Horse Power and hearing directly from the organization's founder.

Please bring a coat, hats and gloves as a portion of the tour will be outdoors!

# 2026 VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

## Ports, & Plants – A Detroit Discovery Tour

This tour offers an exciting blend of Michigan agriculture, innovation, and urban creativity through two dynamic stops in Detroit.

The experience begins at the Port of Detroit, one of the largest inland ports in the nation. Participants will get a behind-the-scenes look at how Michigan's agricultural products and raw materials move through this vital hub, connecting local farmers and industries to markets around the world.

Next, the group will visit CWO Farms at the Marygrove Conservancy, an innovative urban agriculture project bringing fresh perspectives—and produce—to the city. Participants will enjoy a fun, hands-on class exploring the versatility of agriculture in Detroit. This interactive session highlights the intersection of creativity, sustainability, and Michigan agriculture in a truly memorable way.

Please bring a coat, hats and gloves as a portion of the tour will be outdoors!

6:30 p.m. Dinner Banquet & Keynote Speaker, Brandi Buzzard

### Saturday, January 24<sup>th</sup>

6:30 a.m. Registration opens

7-7:30 a.m. Buffet Breakfast

7:30-8:30 a.m. District Meetings

8:45-9:30 a.m. Breakout Sessions-Round 1

#### Taste the Learning: Exploring Local Agriculture Through Food

Bring learning to life with food! This fun, hands-on session shows how simple food tastings can help children connect with local farms, crops, and food systems. You'll get easy ideas, tips, and inspiration to help children explore where their food comes from—one bite at a time. Ideas will also be shared on who to match food tastings with accurate agriculture books.

2  
0  
2  
6

# VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

## Your Voice, Our Future: Empowering “Non-Traditional” Farm Bureau Leaders

Ready to elevate your Farm Bureau impact? This session moves beyond initial excitement, diving into practical leadership within the Farm Bureau. Heidi and Steve, both self-proclaimed "non-traditional" Farm Bureau volunteer leaders, will share their unique journeys. You'll gain a deeper understanding of responsibilities, increase confidence, learn to navigate programs, mobilize members, and engage communities, directly boosting Farm Bureau's mission for farmers and consumers.

## Coming Home Safe and Sound: Preventing Injuries and Deaths on the Farm

Farming is rewarding—but it's also one of Michigan's most dangerous industries. This session unpacks the most common farm injuries, who's most at risk, and where they occur. More importantly, we'll explore practical strategies, safety plans, and hands-on “tool box talks” to help ensure every farm family makes it home safe and sound.

## Farm Labor: Thinking Outside the Box

Labor is one of the toughest challenges facing Michigan farms today. Could H-2A be part of the solution? In this session, you'll hear real-world experiences from farmers who have embraced the program and their lessons learned, do's and don'ts, and practical advice. Together, we'll explore how H-2A can help farms of all sizes think differently about meeting labor needs and sustaining success.

**ROUNDTABLE:** Project REDS, Ag Awareness Days and Fairs: What activities is your county Farm Bureau doing?

9:30-9:45 a.m.      Networking Break

9:45-10:30 a.m.      Breakout Round 2

## Cultivating Connections: Partnering for Powerful Agriscience Education

Discover how Farm Bureau members can play a vital role in strengthening agriscience education across the state by partnering with local FFA chapters and schools. Led by two FFA advisors, this interactive session will highlight ways to connect with students, promote agricultural literacy, and create or enhance educational programs in your community. Learn how these efforts can help grow Farm Bureau's visibility, recruit future members, and cultivate the next generation of agricultural leaders.

2026

# VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

## Protecting Your Farm From Cybersecurity Threats

Cybercrime is a problem that affects businesses, governments, and individuals alike. The solutions to mitigate the threats posed by hackers, identity thieves, and other economically-motivated criminals are not appropriate to every person or business type. This presentation will explore different cyberthreats reported against agricultural producers in a research study conducted by Michigan State University, and discuss how you can better protect your business from different forms of cybercrime.

## Translating Farm to Food for Tomorrow

How can you bridge the gap between agriculture and dietitians, consumers, or your next door neighbor? Talking about contentious issues such as animal welfare, chemicals, GMO, and antibiotics can be intimidating for even the most experienced advocates. Michele will lead you through an active session with examples how to translate farm and food issues to the 98.5% of the population that's not in our business - and show you about A.I. can help you understand issues of the future. She'll also illustrate ways agriculture needs to serve as the source of information for technology of tomorrow.

## From Farm to Fun: Ag-Themed Make & Takes

Bring agriculture to life with hands-on, ag-themed make & take activities! In this interactive session, you'll explore simple, creative projects that connect students to farming, food, and natural resources. Whether you're in a classroom or a community setting, these activities are easy to implement and fun to share. Come ready to create, learn, and leave with ideas you can use right away!

**ROUNDTABLE:** Direct marketing your farmstand/farm products.

10:30-11:00 a.m. Break-Hotel Check-out

11:00-11:45 a.m. Breakout Round 3

## Communicating with Farmers

This interactive session will equip you with practical skills to communicate effectively, recognize the warning signs of suicide, and connect others with local resources. We'll work together to build confidence in having tough conversations that foster hope, resilience, and support across our farm communities.



# 2026 VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

## Worms in the Classroom

A plastic tub filled with dirt and worms can unlock a whole new world of learning! Setting up a worm farm in the classroom is a fun and engaging way to introduce younger students to important topics like recycling, food waste, and life cycles. Even older students can benefit from worm farms as they explore journaling, graphing scientific observations, and understanding the environmental impact of food waste.

## Precision, Prediction and Perception: Leveraging AI tools to Advance Agriculture and Increase Consumer Trust

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly transforming the way we farm—enhancing sustainability, improving animal care, boosting food safety, and driving smarter decision-making on the ground. In this session, Nate will unpack current and emerging uses of AI in agriculture and explore how these technologies are shaping the future of our industry. More importantly, we'll explore how to effectively communicate these advancements to consumers. Join us for a thoughtful look at how AI is not just a tool for efficiency, but a story worth telling.

ROUNDTABLE: Grant Writing/Finding Funding for local events.

11:45- 12:00 p.m.      Networking Break

12:00 p.m.              Lunch

12:30-1:30 p.m.      Lunch Banquet

1:30-1:45 p.m.        Networking Break

1:45-3:00 p.m.        Workshop

**Level Up Your Leadership: 5 Habits of Successful Farm Bureau Leaders**  
What makes grassroots leadership truly effective? In this interactive session, we'll explore five practical, easy-to-remember leadership practices that drive engagement and strengthen local boards and committees. You'll gain clarity on what grassroots leadership looks like in action—and leave with tools to inspire, empower and lead with purpose in your county or state Farm Bureau.

2026

# VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

## Communicating Science for Agriculture's Future

Do you want to grow understanding about the scientific process of agriculture? What can you do to build belief in the science of food? This interactive workshop will equip you to develop more personal connections as you approach the non-farm public with science. Michele will challenge you to find hot buttons, be more comfortable in talking through science and how to simplify it - rather than complicate the conversation. You'll walk away prepared to communicate science with your personal story and understand some of the psychology behind science illiteracy. Each workshop registrant will receive a copy of Science Story Speak, a workbook to help you craft your action plan at home.

1:45-2:15 p.m.

## Mini Breakouts

### Teaching Youth Farm to Table

In this session, we'll highlight the engaging activities we use to help young people understand where their food comes from. Through hands-on learning and real-world examples, youth discover how food is grown, raised, and processed—and why it's safe, nutritious, and essential to our daily lives.

### Building Partnerships with Local and Statewide 4-H Programs

Growing your county engagement with 4-H programs is an avenue to grow your future leaders of your county Farm Bureau membership and board. In this session you will have the opportunity to learn about the educational initiatives that 4-H is focused on as they build youth members who are "Beyond Ready". Discover activities and events that 4-H offers that connect closely with the Farm Bureau objectives of developing leadership and civic engagement skills.

### Connecting Farmers and Consumers: Introducing the "Real Farmers, Real Answers" Booth-in-a-box

Looking for fresh ways to connect with consumers? This session introduces the Ask. a.Farmer.Booth\_in\_a\_Box—a ready-to-use resource designed for consumer-facing events. Learn how to access and customize these materials, explore hands-on activities that spark conversation, and gain tools to build meaningful connections and trust with the public.

2026

# VOICE OF AGRICULTURE

2:15-2:30 p.m.      Networking Break

2:30-3:00 p.m.      Mini Breakouts

**Protecting Your Peace: Practical Strategies for Inner Calm & Balance**  
Feeling overwhelmed or drained? This workshop helps you reclaim your peace. Learn practical strategies to set boundaries, manage digital noise, and prioritize self-care. Discover your "peace stealers" and gain tools to protect your energy, enhance focus, and build resilience. Perfect for anyone seeking more balance and tranquility in a demanding agriculture-based lifestyle.

**Connecting Through Consumers: Michigan Ag Council Business Membership**  
Today's consumers are asking more questions than ever about food and farming—and the Michigan Ag Council is answering them. This session explores how business membership creates opportunities to collaborate across the ag industry, engage directly with consumers, and showcase your commitment to transparency and trust. Learn how your organization can be part of shaping the story of Michigan agriculture.

**How to bring FARM Science Programs to your community**  
This session will share strategies to partner with agents, counties, or MFB or community partners to secure funding to bring the FARM Science Lab or Van to your community. Strategies include the Agents for Change grant, agent co-op, county support and an opportunity to brainstorm other outreach methods with the group.

3:10-3:45 p.m.      Closing Remarks by Michele Payn & Send Off