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MACON COUNTY FARM BUREAU

AG CLASS IN SESSION



JOSEPH RESSLER, HERALD & REVIEW

Teachers Megan Pistorius, Susan Mattingly and Brittany Peters pick up agriculture posters for their classrooms during the Macon County Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom program at Perfect Pair in Warrensburg on Thursday, July 10, 2025,

Teachers get a lesson in agriculture, opportunities for school year

DONNETTE BECKETT
donnette.beckett@lee.net

WARRENSBURG — For Our Lady of Lourdes kindergarten teacher Kathy Barringer, the recent Macon County Farm Bureau Ag in the Classroom program was as special for her as it would have been for her students.

“It’s like Christmas,” she said.

Approximately 25 local educators participated in the program, which was held at Perfect Pair in Warrensburg, ready to learn how agriculture agencies can help them in the classroom.

“They have it once a year in the summer,” Barringer said. “It’s like a summer institute for us.”

Each year the teachers are given new agriculture-related information. Last year Barringer learned about dairy cows. This experience encouraged her to invite a cow to meet the kindergarten students.

“A lot of these children have never seen a dairy cow,” she said.

The cow is brought to the school, allowing the students the opportunity to pet the cow and learn more about the process of getting the milk they drink and eat.

“But they do not get to milk the cow,” Barringer said.

The Macon County Farm Bureau invited the educators, ranging from pre-kindergarten to high school teachers, to the event. After learning about past agriculture programs for her students, Susan Mattingly, Warrensburg-Latham kindergarten teacher, said she has learned some of the agriculture concepts as well.

“They learn a lot of facts about cows and calves that I personally didn’t know,” she said. “Living in a rural area, it’s important for them to know those things.”

Speakers at the event provided information on the various breeds of cattle, such as

Angus, Hereford, Simmental and Shorthorn, as well as the difference of each type of cow.

“A heifer is one that hasn’t had a baby; a cow has had a baby; a bull is a male; and a steer has been castrated,” said Olivia Hoots with the Illinois Beef Association.

More information on dairy cows was presented by Midwest Dairy. Snack time was mixed with craft time with the butter the participants learned to make.

Manufacturers use various dairy products to make high-protein meals, according to Haley Bode with Midwest Dairy.

“Three glasses of milk contains the exact same amount of nutrients as four large hard boiled eggs, 7 cups of raw kale, 3 cups of cooked red kidney beans, 3 cups of sliced red peppers, and 15 sardines,” she said.

Although learning more about livestock was interesting, the participants were

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COLES COUNTY

Bystanders help save horses from Coles Co. Fairgrounds fire

ROB STROUD AND SCOTT PERRY
JG-TC Staff Writers

CHARLESTON — Bystanders joined together to rescue some 40 horses from a burning barn Friday night at the Coles County Fairgrounds.

Andrea Hooper of Charleston said she was driving by the fairgrounds along State Street/Illinois 316 around 9:15 p.m. when she saw what appeared to be a fire at the north end of one of the horse barns.

Driving onto the fairgrounds, she said she observed a hay bale ignite and the fire quickly spread. After calling 911 and a family member who is on the fair board, she went to work with other people on the grounds to save the horses.

“As many as we could get out, we got them out,” fair board president Mark Grant said. The 40 horses had been housed in barn No. 3, the site of the fire, and in adjacent barns No. 1 and 3.

Those three barns and others on the fairgrounds house horses that compete in summer harness racing events at area fairs, including at the upcoming Coles County Fair on July 27-Aug. 3.

While some of the horses were contained in nearby livestock pens, show rings and trailers, others made their way to the midway and at least two were believed loose on the nearby Lincoln Prairie Grass Trail bike path.

Five horses located in the fire-involved structure were found deceased during the primary and secondary searches.

Kenneth Lucas of Mattoon said he was headed home from Walmart when he noticed flames coming from one of the barns. Lucas said he pulled into the fairgrounds and ran in to help horse owners Chris and Jill Brown, who were trying to keep the fire

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ROB STROUD, JG-TC

Coles County 4-H youth Olivia Thoele tends to one of the horses, Raptor, that was evacuated during the horse barn fire Friday, July 11, 2025, at the Coles County Fairgrounds. The horse belongs to Jill and Chris Brown, whose horses Olivia has cared for in the past. She said Raptor was doing really good considering what he went through.