

Farm Bureau Families Raise Record Funds for America's Hungry

WASHINGTON, D.C., February 26, 2010—The farm and ranch families of Farm Bureau last year raised more than \$213,000 and donated more than 4.8 million pounds of food to hungry Americans as part of Farm Bureau's "Harvest for All" program. Combined, the monetary and food donations provided the equivalent of nearly 5.3 million meals through Feeding America-affiliated food banks.

The money raised last year was a record and broke the prior record of \$160,000 in 2008. Farm Bureau's Harvest for All program began in 2004, and the program has continued to build momentum since then.

Members of Farm Bureau's Young Farmers & Ranchers program spearhead the Harvest for All program across the nation, but all facets of Farm Bureau contribute to the effort. The joint effort between Farm Bureau and Feeding America is a national community-action program through which farmers can help ensure that every American can enjoy the bounty produced by the nation's farm and ranch families.

"In these difficult economic times, Harvest for All is all the more important," said Will Gilmer, AFBF YF&R chairman and a dairy producer from Lamar County, Ala. "As farmers and ranchers, we are blessed to work every day, feeding America and the world. Harvest for All is a great way to share our many blessings with those less fortunate than we are."

Aside from raising food and funds for the initiative, farmers and ranchers tallied 5,449 volunteer hours assisting hunger groups through the Harvest for All program.

“We are so grateful to Farm Bureau for the dedication to fighting domestic hunger with Feeding America and our network of more than 200 food banks across the nation,” said Vicki Escarra, president and CEO of Feeding America. “The Harvest for All program makes a tremendous difference in our efforts to provide food to millions of people struggling with hunger year after year. We thank the Farm Bureau for its ongoing dedication and generosity.”

The Illinois Farm Bureau took top honors for raising the most funds in 2009 at \$92,112. The New York Farm Bureau was number one in food donated at 3.65 million pounds. The top honor for volunteer time went to Michigan Farm Bureau at 2,754 volunteer hours. Each YF&R Committee from the three winning states received a \$1,500 grant from the American Farm Bureau Federation to donate to the food bank of their choice.

Second place winners were Indiana for funds donated at \$46,894; Pennsylvania for food donated at 631,748 pounds of food; and Illinois for volunteer time at 1,854 volunteer hours. Second place winners received a \$1,000 grant from AFBF to donate to the food bank of their choice.

In addition, five state YF&R committees received \$500 grants for “most innovative” programs. The winners are Indiana for “Piggy Bank Promotion;” Michigan for “Chicken Project;” New York for “Feed the Hungry;” Pennsylvania for “Lady Moon Farm Project;” and South Dakota for “Great PETA-Inspired Milk Donation.”

The awards were presented this week, during AFBF's YF&R Conference in Tulsa, Okla.

Since Harvest for All was launched seven years ago, Farm Bureau families have gathered more than 20 million pounds of food, logged more than 35,000 volunteer hours and raised nearly \$1 million in donations. Combined, the food and monetary donations amount to nearly 24 million meals.

AFBF President Bob Stallman said support for Feeding America through Harvest for All will remain a priority for Farm Bureau.

“We are proud to partner with Feeding America in their hunger relief efforts,” Stallman said. “During this economic downturn, more Americans are relying on food banks to help feed themselves and their families. Farm Bureau’s farm and ranch families are strongly committed to helping those in need.”