

## Get to Know Us



'Get to Know Us' is a feature of some of our Farm Bureau Young Leaders and volunteers. We hope to share what agriculture means to those featured, share the variety of agricultural jobs/careers in our surrounding areas, and have our communities get to know us a little better! This month's feature is on: Gayle Baker.

### **Tell us about yourself:**

I am an Iowa dairy girl that followed a boy I met at Iowa State to Illinois. I work full time for Maurer-Stutz, Inc., an engineering firm based in Peoria, IL, as an agricultural engineer. My husband, Jacob, and I farm outside of Kirkwood, but live in Berwick. We have a daughter named Brooke who will be two in November.

### **Did you grow up in agriculture?**

I grew up in northeast Iowa on a 120 hd dairy farm, primarily milking grade Holsteins. I showed dairy through 4-H and purchased registered Brown Swiss and Jersey cattle for showing. I was active in my county and state 4-H program and was also my county and alternate state Dairy Princess.

### **Where did you go to college? What is your degree in?**

I attended Iowa State University and received my Bachelor of Science degree in Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering, with a concentration on Structures and Environment. I am now a licensed professional engineer (PE), which means that I have the required experience, passed both 8-hour tests, and complete continuing education requirements each renewal period. Being a PE allows me to sign and stamp plans in states where I am licensed.

### **How many years of experience do you have in agriculture? What areas of the industry have you worked?**

During college I did research on Anaerobic Digestion of manure and helped write two research papers. After graduation from Iowa State, I worked as engineer for USDA-NRCS for four years designing soil and water conservation practices such as waterways, terraces, constructed wetlands, and grade stabilization structures. Projects I was involved in that I am proud of were designing two-10 foot overfall block structures and a 6 foot overfall aluminum toe wall structure with tie backs. I primarily worked in northeast Illinois, from Bloomington up to the collar counties, but also spent a year in central Illinois, based out of Decatur.

I have been with Maurer-Stutz since 2014. I primarily work with livestock waste facility planning and design for beef, dairy, swine and poultry throughout Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, and Indiana. We assist with state permitting, which varies from state to state, developing NRCS conservation plans as well as design and construction phase services, and assistance with EPA regulations for nutrient management plans.

### **What advice would you give students considering a career in an agriculture related field?**

Do It! The amazing thing about agriculture is even though you may go to school for one major, doesn't mean that you won't be able to find opportunities that lead you to different careers in agriculture.

Picking your major is one thing but knowing that you picked the right major is another. The only way to know if you are going to like the jobs your major provides, is to do them. Get involved with professors on campus if your major involves research or apply for internships/coops.

### **What benefits do you get from the Farm Bureau Young Leaders?**

NETWORKING: meeting people and making connections in the county and across the state. Getting to know people and the farming issues or triumphs they are facing opens the door for more knowledge and opportunities.

If anyone has any questions or comments for Gayle, or would like to learn more about Farm Bureau and our Young Leader committee, please give us a call at 309-734-9401 or email [whfb@whfarmbureau.org](mailto:whfb@whfarmbureau.org).