

Ties to the Land Newsletter

January – March 2012



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**Racine/Kenosha/Milwaukee
FSA Office**
1012 Vine St.
Union Grove, WI 53182
262-878-3353

THE FARM SERVICE AGENCY STAFF AND
COUNTY COMMITTEE AND THE NATURAL
RESOURCE CONSERVATION SERVICE STAFF
WOULD LIKE TO WISH YOU HAPPY HOLIDAYS
AND THE BEST IN 2012.



Front Row, L to R: Brandi Richter (NRCS), Jeanette Held (FSA),
Angie Drews (FSA). **Back Row, L to R:** Kim Iczkowski (FSA),
Meagan Duberstein (NRCS), Andrew Berndt (NRCS), Keith Heineck
(County Committee-COC), Lori Edquist (FSA), Joe Mainus (COC),
Mike Weinkauff (COC), Myron Daniels (COC), Carol Lois (COC).
Not Pictured: Marvin Drissel (COC), Barb Sulik (NRCS)

BEGINNING FARMER & RANCHERS

FSA assists beginning farmers and ranchers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Has operated a farm for not more than 10 years
- Will materially and substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in any loan assessment and borrower training program in production and/or financial management required by the Agency
- Does not own farm acreage greater than 30 % of the median size farm in the county.

If you have any questions regarding farm loans or to find out if you would be eligible, please contact the office at 262-878-3353.

DCP SIGNUP POSTCARDS COMING

Annual signup for the Direct and Counter-cyclical program has been delayed to start on January 23. The county office has appointments scheduled and postcards ready to send, so watch the mail for your appointment time. **Please remember that we need leases or owner's signatures on any land that is new to you or any land that has a new owner. You cannot be added to the farm or sign a contract until we have the owner's signature. Work on this project now while the snow is falling!**

COMMODITY LOANS AVAILABLE

Do you need some short-term operating capital before you sell your grain? Nine-month low interest commodity loans are available at the FSA Office. Commodity loans are a valuable marketing tool by providing operating capital at competitive rates and offering flexible repayment at the time a commodity is sold or marketed.

The December interest rate is 1.125 percent for all commodity loans. Producers may obtain low

DECEMBER INTEREST RATES

Farm Operating-Direct	1.5%
Farm Ownership-Direct	3.375%
Farm Own-Direct, Joint Financing	5.00%
Farm Own-Downpymt	1.50%
Conservation Loan	3.375%
Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL)- 7 yrs	1.5%
FSFL- 10 years	2.125%
FSFL-12 years	2.375%
9 month Commodity Loans	1.125%

WOW!

Look at these rates!

interest, nine-month loans for 2011 crops stored on the farm in an eligible structure or at a public warehouse. The grain must be stored in a facility that is safe and accessible and must be repaid before it is fed. Producers with grain under loan that will be sold can request a Marketing Authorization which gives them permission to sell the mortgaged collateral to a designated buyer before the loan is repaid. Ag bags, silos, and oxygen-limited structures are also eligible storage facilities. Commodity loans will be adjusted for excess moisture.

Commodity loan eligibility also requires compliance with conservation and wetland protection requirements; beneficial interest requirements, acreage reporting and ensuring that the commodity meets Commodity Credit Corporation minimum grade and quality standards.

This marketing tool is a great way to pay-off higher interest notes with low interest money or to purchase next year's inputs at discounted prices. For more information on commodity loans please contact Jeanette at the Racine Kenosha Milwaukee FSA office.

SNOWMOBILES ON CRP ACREAGE

The Racine Kenosha Milwaukee County Committee has determined that trails are allowed to cross acreage enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program. **If this affects any of your CRP acreage, contact your local FSA office to request this particular use prior to allowing a trail on your CRP land.**

NAP COVERAGE REMINDER FOR SPRING-SEEDED CROPS

The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) was designed to reduce financial losses that occur when natural disasters cause a catastrophic loss of production or prevented planting of an eligible crop by providing coverage equivalent to catastrophic (CAT) insurance. Statute limits NAP to each commercial crop or agricultural commodity, except livestock, for which CAT is not available.

The application closing date for Non-Insured Assistance Program coverage on spring-seeded crops is March 15, 2012. This deadline date also applies to producers who have a policy that expires on March 15 and want to renew coverage for 2012.

NAP coverage is available for crops only where insurance coverage is not available under Federal Crop Insurance policies provided by private insurance agents.

NAP is designed to cover losses due to damaging weather conditions. The program covers losses of more than 50 percent of normal yields or the farm's yield calculated using actual production histories. Payments for production lost in excess of 50 percent are paid at 55 percent of the values established for the crop.

The cost per policy is \$250 per crop per producer with a \$750 cap per county. NAP coverage begins 30 days after the application is filed and the \$250 administrative fee has been paid. The \$250 administrative fee is non refundable.

Producers who meet the definition of "Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource," or "Beginning Farmer or Rancher," are not required to pay the filing fee.

Producers with 2011 NAP coverage must remember to complete the following to qualify for benefits:

- Timely file acreage reports and keep track of harvested production using acceptable methods.

- File a "Notice of Loss" within 15 days of when a loss is apparent, due to drought, hail, etc.

For more information on NAP coverage please contact Angie at the FSA office.

COUNTY COMMITTEE ADVISOR NOMINATIONS DUE FEBRUARY 1

February 1, 2012, is the deadline for nominations of the FSA County Committee (COC) Advisor. Advisors are a valued voice for underrepresented groups and socially disadvantaged (SDA) farmers.

Advisor nominees must be actively participating in farming or ranching in the county or area, and evidence their willingness and ability to serve in writing.

SDA farmers are members of a group that have been subject to racial, ethnic, or gender prejudice because of their identity as members of a group without regard to their individual qualities. SDA farmers include African-Americans, American Indians/Native Americans, and Alaska Natives, Asian and Pacific Islanders, Hispanics, and women.

This is a position that is paid for time spent at meetings and mileage to drive to the meeting. For more information or a description of the duties of the Advisor position, interested individuals need to contact Kim Iczkowski at 262-878-3353 x 106.

CHANGING BANKS

Almost all Farm Service Agency payments are made electronically using Direct Deposit. To keep the system running smoothly, it's critical to keep the county office staff up to date on changes you might make in your financial institutions. If you have changed accounts or institutions that might affect the direct deposit of your FSA payments, contact the FSA county office so we can update our files to insure continued uninterrupted service.



ATTENTION HISPANIC AND WOMEN FARMERS

A process to resolve the claims of Hispanic and women farmers and ranchers who believe they were discriminated against when seeking USDA farm loans has been established.

If you believe that the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) improperly denied farm loan benefits to you between 1981 and 2000 because you are Hispanic, or because you are female, you may be eligible to apply for compensation.

For additional information on this and other settlement issues contact:

- **Hispanic and Women Farmer Claims Process:**
www.farmerclaims.gov or call 1-888-508-4429
- **Pigford – The Black Farmers Discrimination Litigation:**
www.blackfarmercase.com or call 1-866-950-5547
- **Keepseagle - The Native American Farmers Class Action Settlement:**
www.IndianFarmClass.com or call 1-888-233-5506

SELLING LAND

If you're planning to sell farmland, there may be some program consequences you should be aware of. For example, if you're planning to sell land that's enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program, the buyer must agree to continue the enrollment. If the buyer doesn't want to continue the CRP contract, you might have to refund all of the payments you've received to date.

Reviewing program implications with your local Farm Service Agency staff before completing a sale of farmland is always a prudent precaution.

FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN PROGRAM AVAILABLE TO PRODUCERS

Producers who may be considering upgrading or adding extra storage space for harvested crops next year may be eligible for the Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program which provides low interest loans for building or upgrading storage facilities.

Filing an application early will ensure the project is completed in time before next summer or fall when additional storage may be needed.

The maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL has increased to \$500,000 per structure. Participants are required to provide a down payment of 15 percent, with CCC providing a loan for the remaining 85 percent of the net cost of the eligible storage facility and permanent drying and handling equipment. Loan terms of 7, 10, or 12 years are now available depending on the amount of the loan. Interest rates for each loan term are different and are based on the rate which CCC borrows from the Treasury Department.

Payments will also be available in the form of a partial disbursement and a remaining final disbursement. The partial disbursement will be available after a portion of the construction has been completed. The final fund disbursement will be made when all construction is completed. The maximum amount of the partial disbursement will be 50 percent of the projected and approved total loan amount. The partial disbursement is only available on the portion already constructed.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. A FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

The following commodities are eligible for farm storage facility loans:

- Corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley or minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain
- Corn, grain sorghum, wheat, oats or barley harvested as other-than-whole grain
- Pulse crops – lentils, small chickpeas and dry peas
- Hay
- Renewable biomass
- Fruits (including nuts) and vegetables – cold storage facilities

For more information about FSFL contact Lori at the Racine Kenosha Milwaukee FSA Office.



NRCS Conservation Program Application Cutoff Dates Announced

Conservation Stewardship Program

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting new applications for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Farm and forest landowners may apply by January 13 for possible 2012 funding. CSP encourages agricultural producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt additional ones on their operations.

For many farmers, CSP offers reward and recognition for the conservation they are already doing, plus a little extra incentive to try a few more or new practices. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland, and tribal agricultural lands.

For the 2011 sign up, average payments in Wisconsin were \$20 per acre for cropland, \$18 per acre for pasture, and \$4.58 per acre for woodland. Payments are made annually for each of the five years of the contract.

Farmers will need to document their current and proposed conservation practices which will be used to rank applications and determine payments. NRCS field staff will also conduct on-site field verifications of applicants' information.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program & Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program

The deadlines to apply for both the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) are Feb. 3, 2012 at all USDA Service Centers in Wisconsin.

EQIP is the primary program available to farmers for farmland conservation work, offering flat-rate payments for over 80 conservation practices. WHIP offers cost sharing to restore wildlife habitat for targeted species.

All eligible applications received by Feb. 3 will be evaluated and ranked for funding. Farmers can sign up at the NRCS office in USDA Service Centers statewide. Last year, Wisconsin received about \$16 million in funds for EQIP.

The Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP) provides technical assistance and cost-sharing to restore wildlife habitat. Depending on the site, streams, prairies and oak savannahs and other types of habitat, including habitat for pollinators, may qualify to be restored. Land restored through WHIP has resulted in excellent new habitat, for trout, grassland and migratory birds, and species in decline.



More information on NRCS programs is available at www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov under Programs.

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Racine County Land Conservation
14200 Washington Ave.
Sturtevant, WI 53177
262-886-8475

<http://www.racineco.com/landconv/>

Staff Contributions by:
Chad Sampson, Jon Grove, & Krystal Freimark



As of January 1, 2012 the Land Conservation Department and all operations currently located within the Planning and Development Department will be merged with the Public Works Department to create the **Public Works and Development Services Department**. Land Conservation offices will be located within the **EASTERN WING** of the Ives Grove building. When entering from the main entrance on the north side of the building, turn left and go through the glass doors, a receptionist will direct you to the Land Conservation offices. All services will remain the same; however, the office location within the Ives Grove Complex will change. Also, changing is the **Land Conservation phone number, which will be (262) 886 - 8475; the fax number will stay the same (262) 886 - 8488**. Due to the merger and budget modifications, Krystal Freimark will no longer be a Land Conservation staff member, but Chad Sampson, County Conservationist, and Jon Grove, Conservation Specialist, will still be on hand to assist you in your conservation needs. Thank you for your patience as we relocate and adjust to our new surroundings.



**New Location of Land Conservation Offices
Within Ives Grove Complex**

**The deadline for placing orders for the 2012
Racine County Tree & Shrub Sale is ...**

FEBRUARY 24, 2012



Order forms were sent out in the fall issue of the Ties to the Land newsletter and to all 2011 customers. If you did not receive a form and you would like one 1) contact the Land Conservation Department and we will mail / fax / email you a copy or 2) download the order form (pdf) from the Land Conservation website. See heading above for contact and website information.

Several new species have been added to this year's sale including: Honey Locust, Kentucky Coffeetree, White Oak, and River Birch. Besides evergreens, shrubs, and hardwoods the sale also includes several different sizes of prairie and wildflower seed. Fertilizer and water gel packets have also been included in the sale for your convenience.

All items should arrive at the Racine County Fairgrounds in Union Grove by mid-April.

Two tree planters are available for rental, starting at \$30 per planter. Contact us today to reserve one.



Farmland Preservation Program

Eligible farmers located in A-1 zoning districts in the Towns of Waterford and Burlington may enter into the farmland preservation program in order to claim the farmland preservation tax credits. The tax credit available for farmers in an area zoned for farmland preservation is \$7.50 per acre. By entering into the program, a farmer agrees to keep the land in agriculture. Any farmer who wishes to be released from the terms of the agreement will need to contact the Racine County Land Conservation office and may be subject to penalties.

Kenosha County
PO Box 550
Bristol, WI 53104
262-857-1945

Racine County
209 N Main Street
Burlington, WI 53105
262-767-2929

Article Submitted by: Rose Skora
rose.skora@ces.uwex.edu

PLOWING THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA OPTIONS: FOR FARMERS AND AGRICULTURAL BUSINESSES

Pondering if it makes sense to use social media to promote your farm or the agricultural industry you are a part of? Twitter, Facebook, Blogs, LinkedIn... what does it all mean and how can I make it work for me?

The University of Wisconsin-Extension Kenosha, Racine, Walworth and Jefferson Counties are offering a program on social media. The program is designed to provide an overview of social media types, as well as advantages and disadvantages of using social media.

While all social media types will be discussed, Facebook will be focused on more than other types. The afternoon will feature Daphne Holterman, who has been using Facebook as a way to promote her family farm, Rosy-Lane Holsteins, LLC.

The program will be held at the Jefferson County UW Extension office in Jefferson. Registration is \$20.00 and includes lunch and materials. For registration information, please contact Rose Skora at 262-857-1945, 262-767-2929 or rose.skora@ces.uwex.edu.



ANNIE'S PROJECT – INVESTING AND ESTATE PLANNING FOR FARM FAMILIES

Beginning on February 9, UW-Cooperative Extension and the UW Center for Dairy Profitability are sponsoring a new *Annie's Project* workshop series for women

farmers and their families. The series of three workshops will be held on Thursdays, February 9, 16 and 23rd at the Walworth Courthouse in Elkhorn. Each workshop starts at 9:00 am and ends at noon. This new *Annie's Project* series offers the fundamentals to investing and protecting your assets.

In the first session on February 9th, Kevin Bernhardt, Farm Management Specialist from UW-Platteville will present information and exercises for developing and interpreting cash flow and income statements for your farm.

On February 16th Randy Benedict, Financial Planner from Ameriprise Financial will set the stage for effective estate planning followed by Phil Harris, UW-Extension Farm Law Specialist will discuss estate planning issues for farm families.

The final day, February 23rd, Stacy Whiteman, a financial planner from Edward Jones will introduce the ABCs of off-farm investing. The last day will also include time for planning next steps for your farm and family.

The cost of the program is \$20 for all three days. For more information contact Rose Skora at 262-857-1945, 262-767-2905 or rose.skora@ces.uwex.edu

HORSE WORKSHOP

A full day equine educational program with an emphasis on horse nutrition will be offered on Saturday, February 11th, 2012 in Bristol, WI.

Examples of some of the session topics include general horse nutrition, managing manure, feeding vitamins and minerals to horses, managing hay, balancing rations, and much more.

The program begins at 8am and runs until 3pm. Lunch will be included with the program fees, which are \$30/person or \$50/2 people and \$15/youth on or before February 3rd. Registration fees increase after the early bird deadline.

Questions should be directed to Rose Skora at the Kenosha County UW Extension office at 262-857-1945 or rose.skora@ces.uwex.edu.

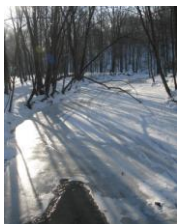


Information on all of the programs listed above can be found on the Kenosha County UW Extension agriculture website at:
<http://kenosha.uwex.edu/category/agricultural-news/>



Pike River Watershed Plan

Root-Pike WIN is partnering with Hawthorn Hollow Nature Sanctuary and Arboretum and UW-Cooperative Extension to lead planning for the Pike River Watershed, also named Pike River Future. This effort is in Phase I, which is focused on engaging citizens and government officials in a series of meetings through May 2012, where we will share information about the watershed and gather input about interests and concerns. In the second phase starting in June 2012, development of a watershed restoration plan will begin with guidance from a citizen advisory group.



The Pike River Watershed Restoration Planning project is focusing on improving one of the most degraded watersheds in Wisconsin. According to WDNR, modifications to streams and wetlands, urban runoff, and stream bank erosion are the priority issues for this watershed. Today the Pike River watershed contains only about 350 acres of its original 4,800-plus acres of wetlands which has greatly reduced its stormwater storage capacity, and is a major contributing factor to the water quality problems and flooding in the watershed.

The planning effort will lead to watershed improvements such as wetland restoration, streambank stabilization, reduced flooding and fewer pollutants and sediments finding their way into Lake Michigan. The plan will also identify ways to restore lost natural connections along the river corridor to enhance wildlife habitat and create new recreational opportunities.

Sign-Up for email notifications of meetings and other events associated with the Pike River Watershed Restoration Planning effort by emailing: susan@rootpikewin.org or call Susan Greenfield at: 262-898-2055. Scheduled upcoming events are listed below:

Thursday, January 26, 2012, 5:30-7:00 p.m.
Managing Agricultural Runoff in Kenosha and Racine Counties at Tallent Hall, UW-Parkside, Somers

Thursday, February 23, 2012, 5:30-7:00 p.m.
 Topic and location pending

Thursday, March 22, 2012, 5:30-7:00 p.m.
Expanding Environmental Corridors and Recreation in the Pike River (location TBD)

Saturday, May 12, 2012, 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
Envisioning Pike River's Future Summit (location TBD)

North Mill Creek/Dutch Gap Canal Subwatershed Plan

The Lake County Stormwater Management Commission has just begun the official public review period for the North Mill Creek/Dutch Gap Canal Subwatershed Plan. Kenosha's Dutch Gap Canal a.k.a. North Mill Creek in Illinois has been identified as having impaired or poor water quality. In addition flood damage is a significant problem along the Des Plaines River downstream. The watershed plan helps to address these problems, as well as identify the high quality natural resources that need to be protected in the watershed as the land continues to be developed. The draft watershed plan is posted at: <http://lakecountyil.gov/Stormwater/LakeCountyWatersheds/Pages/NorthMill.aspx>



Tree & Shrub Program

Kenosha County Tree & Shrub Program has been offered for over 25 years and our office has sold nearly one million trees. The purpose of the program is to encourage area residents to plant native trees and shrubs for the purpose of conservation and wildlife enhancement. The program offers a variety of pines, hardwoods, and shrubs. The sale is open to the public - to get your 2012 tree order form please visit www.co.kenosha.wi.us/plandev/conservation/tree_prgm or call (262) 857-1895. **The deadline for ordering trees this year is Friday, March 2, 2012.** The anticipated tree pick-up days will be mid-late April at the Kenosha County Center in Bristol. New varieties for 2012 were recommended by our UW-Ext – Horticulturalist

Tar Spots

Have you noticed black blobs on your maple tree leaves? If you have, this may be an indication of a fungal leaf spot disease known as Tar Spot. The symptoms of tar spots are small yellowish spots that will eventually become raised and turn black. In Wisconsin, this disease most commonly affects maple trees. Homeowners need not worry, because tar spots will not kill the tree. To reduce or even eliminate tar spots on maples remove the fallen, infected leaves from around the base of the tree in the fall.

