

Ties to the Land Newsletter

August-September 2013

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Resources for landowners and operators of
Racine, Kenosha, and Milwaukee County

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TIES TO THE LAND" HAS A [FACEBOOK](#) PAGE!

As you are aware, due to budget restrictions we are able to print only one newsletter per year. As an additional way to get useful information to the landowners and operators of Racine, Kenosha, and Milwaukee Counties, the group has created a facebook page to share important information and deadlines. All cooperating agencies will update the page on a regular basis with information regarding programs available and signup deadlines. If you have a facebook page, "Like" us to get great information!"



New for the e-mail newsletter! You can click on any [blue underlined](#) headline or topic in any article to be directed to the website for more information.



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

THE COUNTY COMMITTEE (COC) ELECTION PROCESS IS IMPORTANT!

The election of agricultural producers to Farm Service Agency (FSA) county committees is important to ALL farmers. It is crucial that every eligible producer participate in these elections because FSA county committees are a link between the agricultural community and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

County committee members are a critical component of the operations of FSA. They help deliver FSA farm programs at the local level. Farmers who serve on county committees help with the decisions necessary to administer the programs in their counties. They work to ensure FSA agricultural programs serve the needs of local producers.

FSA county committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws. County committee members apply their judgment and knowledge to make local decisions.

The COC nomination period runs through August 1, 2013. Election of the 2014 COC member will take place by mail in November. For more information contact the FSA office at 262-878-3353.

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UNDERSTANDING WETLAND COMPLIANCE AND PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, they must be compliant with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions. Farmers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan.

Producers should notify FSA prior to conducting land clearing, filling, or drainage projects to ensure compliance. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not jeopardize your eligibility for benefits. ***SPECIAL NOTE***- Compliance is EVERYONE's responsibility associated with the land. If a landowner performs work on land they own, the operators maintains responsibility for program compliance! Simply put, it doesn't matter who does it, if you are associated with the land, you bear *some* responsibility.

Landowners and operators can complete form AD-1026 Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) Certification to determine whether a referral to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary. **Basic Rule of Thumb: If something is going to be altered on the land, contact the FSA office and fill out an AD-1026A!**

For more information on Highly Erodible Land and Wetland Conservation provisions, contact the FSA office at 262-878-3353 or visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov.



INFORMATION ABOUT “SODBUSTING”

Farmers should be aware that if they use highly erodible land for crop production without proper conservation measures, they risk losing eligibility to participate in Farm Service Agency programs.

Before producers clear, plow or otherwise prepare areas not presently under crop production for planting, they are required to file an AD-1026, indicating the area to be brought into production.

If the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) indicates that the area will be highly erodible land, the producer will be required to develop and implement a conservation plan on the affected acreage before bringing the land into production.

PLANNING AHEAD FOR 2014? MICROLOANS ARE AVAILABLE!



The Farm Service Agency (FSA) developed the [Microloan \(ML\) program](#) to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche, small family farm operations, specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

FSA offers applicants a Microloan designed to help farmers with credit needs of \$35,000 or less. The loan features a streamlined application process built to fit the needs of new and smaller producers.

This loan program will also be useful to eligible applicants who can apply for a maximum amount of \$35,000 to pay for initial start-up expenses such as hoop houses to extend the growing season, essential tools, irrigation and annual expenses such as seed, fertilizer, utilities, land rents, marketing, and distribution expenses. As financing needs increase, applicants can apply for a regular operating loan up to the maximum amount of \$300,000 or obtain financing from a commercial lender under FSA’s Guaranteed Loan Program. Interested parties should contact their local FSA office.

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FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOANS (FSFL)

The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program allows producers of eligible commodities to obtain low-interest financing to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. The new maximum principal amount of a loan through FSFL is \$500,000. Participants are now 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. New loan terms of 7, 10 or 12 years are available depending on the amount of the loan.



The interest rate in effect at the time the loan is approved is locked in for the life of the loan. Loans for storage facilities are available on traditional commodities as well as hay, fruits and vegetables, biomass, and honey.

Payments are available in the form of a partial disbursement and the 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.

Applications for FSFL must be submitted to the FSA county office that maintains the farm's records. There is a \$100 non-refundable application fee to apply for a loan. An FSFL must be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

FSA Interest Rates for JULY 2013

COMMODITY LOAN	1.125%
7-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	1.500%
10-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	2.125%
12-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	2.375%
FARM OPERATING-DIRECT/MICROLOAN	1.250%
FARM OWNERSHIP-DIRECT/CONSERVATION LOAN	3.250%
FARM OWNERSHIP-DOWN PAYMENT	1.500%



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BANK CHANGES?

If you changed banks and did not notified FSA, your payment could be delayed. Payments are electronically transferred into your bank account, if we are not aware of changes to your account and routing numbers, there could be problems. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if another financial institution purchases your bank. It is important that any changes in a producer's account such as type account, bank mergers, routing number or account numbers, be provided to the county office promptly to avoid possible payment delay.

ACREAGE REPORTING- REMINDER-NEW DEADLINES FOR FALL-SEEDED CROPS!

After spring planting, producers need to certify their 2013 acreages by the July 15th reporting deadline. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage is required to establish eligibility for most FSA programs and are important to establish potential eligibility for any new programs that may be enacted in the future.

Failed acreage must be reported before disposition of the crop and prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date of the crop.

For crops enrolled in programs like NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program), acreage reports must be completed by the earlier of July 15th or the beginning harvest date of the crop. For this year only, the acreage reporting deadline has been extended to August 2, 2013. In addition, the deadline for reporting certain NAP crops for the 2014 program year will be here in early fall.

The deadline to timely file an acreage report for 2014 perennial forages and fall seeded small grains and wheat is November 15, 2013. This deadline includes all existing hay fields and pastures and any new seeding.

For more information on acreage reporting, including final planting dates for crops, additional NAP reporting deadline or any other information, please contact the office at 262-878-3353.

FSA Dates to Remember:

August 1, 2013: Deadline to fill out nomination form for 2014 COC Election
September 1, 2013: Deadline to purchase NAP insurance for sod, nursery, aquaculture, Christmas trees and controlled environment crops
September 2, 2013: Offices Closed- Labor Day
September 30, 2013: Deadline to purchase NAP insurance for mint and mixed forage
September 30, 2013: Deadline to purchase private insurance for wheat and alfalfa
October 10, 2013: Final day to plant wheat (for insurance coverage)
October 14, 2013: Offices Closed- Columbus Day
November 2, 2013: Rural Landowner Conference- Kenosha County Center/e-Waste Collection
November 4, 2013: Ballots are mailed to eligible voters for County Committee Election
November 11, 2013: Offices Closed- Veteran's Day
November 20, 2013: Deadline to purchase NAP insurance for honey, maple sap, apples, grapes, strawberries and other perennial crops
November 28, 2013: Offices Closed- Thanksgiving Day
December 2, 2013: Last day to return County Committee Election Ballots
December 25, 2013: Offices Closed- Christmas Day



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NEW WETLAND IDENTIFICATION PROGRAM

The WDNR’s new Wetland Identification Program is officially up and running. The Wetland Identification Program consists of two services currently offered to the public. These two services provide the opportunity for land owners and other interested parties to learn if they have wetlands on their property, and where the wetlands are located. The goal of the wetland confirmation service is to provide developers, land owners, and other similar groups certainty that a project's delineated wetland boundaries are accurate before they finalize development plans. The WDNR hopes that these services will prevent unexpected time delays by identifying wetland boundary concerns before final design completion. A brief description about each service is provided below.

Wetland Identification Service is intended for smaller properties and involves a site visit and written evaluation by a member of the WDNR wetland identification team.

A landowner or person who leases land can ask the WDNR to review up to five acres of a property to give them a definite “yes” or “no” whether wetlands are present in the planned project footprint. The service would cost \$300 per acre of land reviewed and the turn-around time would be 60 days or less.

- Limited to 5 acres or less
- Will provide a yes/no as to whether wetlands are present, and an approximate hand sketched wetland boundary
- No flagging or surveying of wetland boundaries, so may not be accurate enough for design or set-back purposes
- Ideal for projects with mapped hydric or inclusion soils and no mapped Wisconsin Wetland Inventory wetlands or other wetland signatures, but other circumstances may be a good fit as well
- Encourage interested parties to contact Wetland ID staff before requesting the service so that limitations of the service can be explained

Wetland Confirmation Service is intended for larger properties where a consultant has already identified wetlands and delineated their boundaries. At the owner’s request, a WDNR wetland identification team member would visit the site and issue a written statement indicating whether the WDNR concurs with the boundaries of a wetland as delineated by the third parties. A fee of \$300 per 20 acres of land reviewed is required for this service, with a turn-around time of 60 days or less.

- Concurrence/Confirmation of wetland boundaries delineated by a consultant or other third party
- Will provide builders, developers, and landowners the option of making sure wetland boundaries are correctly delineated before final designs are completed.
- It is hoped this service will prevent unexpected time delays for projects by identifying wetland boundary concerns before designs/plans are finalized.



The WDNR are currently offering the service in 15 counties (Brown, Dane, Dodge, Fond du Lac, Jefferson, Kenosha, Milwaukee, Outagamie, Ozaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Walworth, Washington, Waukesha, and Winnebago).

For more information or if you have any questions about the Wetland Program contact: Thomas S. Nedland – Wetland Coordinator at (920) 303-5439 or e-mail: Thomas.Nedland@wisconsin.gov

Many other tools are already available to help landowners determine if wetlands are located on their properties. Tools that landowners can use themselves include online maps indicating the presence of wetlands and a checklist of plants and other clues property owners can use to understand if wetlands may be on their property. These tools can be found on the WDNR’s website, <http://dnr.wi.gov/> by searching for “Locating wetlands.”

You can also visit Kenosha County’s newly updated Interactive Mapping System website at <http://www.kenoshacounty.org/index.aspx?NID=673>

Landowners can also hire a private consultant for help with evaluating wetlands.

Look for Farm Conservation Needs

Many farmers don't realize that most of the USDA conservation programs are open for sign-up at any time, continuously, not just for a few weeks each year. Most of the programs offered by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) are open year-round for applications.

Fall is a great time to visit NRCS

With the crops off the field, NRCS staff can see the land and better assess what's needed. NRCS can also help you figure out which program best meets your needs, whether it's the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) or other options.

Both of those programs are open all year for farmers to sign up. Applications are held until an annual ranking date is announced, then all applications that NRCS has received to date are ranked for funding that year.

Conservation for Soil Health and Drought Resiliency

Conservation practices help build soil health and drought resiliency, as seen this summer in the Wisconsin and many other Midwestern states. Cover crops, crop residue management, and other erosion reduction practices will help reduce compaction, build soil structure, increase organic matter content, and improve moisture holding capacity.

Call now for an appointment to talk about conservation options for your farm.

- | | |
|---|---|
| • Environmental Quality Incentives Program | <i>Open all year</i> |
| • Conservation Stewardship Program | <i>Open all year</i> |
| • Wetlands Reserve Program | <i>Open all year</i> |
| • Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program | <i>Signup depends on local easement program</i> |
| • Conservation Technical Assistance | <i>Available free at any time</i> |
| • Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) - USDA Farm Service Agency program | <i>Signup at specific times</i> |
| • CRP variations (CREP, continuous CRP and SAFE) | <i>Open at any time</i> |



For more information contact the NRCS Office
in your local USDA Service Center or visit
www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov



Racine County Land Conservation
14200 Washington Ave.
Sturtevant, WI 53177
262-886-8440

Staff Contributions by:
Chad Sampson, Jonathan
Grove,
& Brian Sadler

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

PLANT AND EARN!

Are you looking for maximum return on your land with minimal hassle? Our grass buffer program is an extremely simple process with minimal requirements, minimal paperwork and very quick payment.

- A. Does your agricultural land border a canal, river, lake, or wetland?
- B. Do you think you may be within the Root River Watershed or Lake Michigan Drainage Area?
- C. Would you like an upfront payment of \$3,000 per acre?



The primary purpose of planting riparian buffers is to reduce erosion and runoff, improve water quality, and increase wildlife habitat. You won't find an easier way to improve local land and water quality and get paid up front for doing it. Want to take part or just need more information please call our office at 262-886-8440.

UPDATE ON FARMLAND PRESERVATION PROGRAM



Farmland Preservation is a program that was put in place to help protect prime farmland through agricultural zoning (A1), Agricultural Enterprise Areas, and Agricultural Easements. Racine County Land Conservation Division conducted two public informational meetings in June regarding Farmland Preservation. The plan is to bring consistency to Racine County's Comprehensive Plan 2035 and land use in the Farmland Preservation Plan. Keeping consistency between the plans will help ensure that areas planned for future development will not compromise areas of prime historical farmland.

MANURE SPREADING STANDARDS

On occasion our office receives input from concerned citizens regarding the location, amount, application or disposal method of manure and fertilizer. New rural homeowners unaccustomed to occasional intense odor from farming operations may wonder if the farmer is following proper manure spreading standards. The Racine County animal waste management ordinance can be found on the Racine County website. The standards for management of animal waste can be found under the NRCS technical standard 590 nutrient management. Concerned citizens call our office at 262-886-8440 with any question about animal waste management.



NON-METALLIC MINING



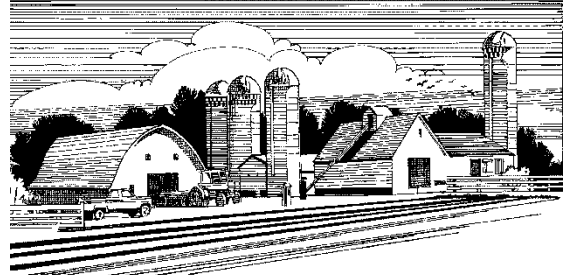
Racine County adopted the non-metallic mining ordinance on May 22, 2001. The ordinance requires all operators of active non-metallic mining sites to have a Reclamation Plan, permit, and financial assurance. The Reclamation Plan must comply with the State Standards in Administrative Code 135. The LCD staff conducts reclamation plan reviews, on-site mine reclamation inspections, and plan related analysis in reference to non-metallic mining compliance. When a site is reclaimed or returned to the proposed post-mining condition, the site becomes a valid asset for agriculture, wildlife habitat, or residential / commercial / industrial development. The

Reclamation Plan is developed based on the desired future use.

UW EXTENSION FARM TRANSITION/SUCCESSION PLANNING WORKSHOP SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER 25

The Farm Transition/Succession Planning Workshop scheduled for Wednesday September 25th is designed to assist farm families with the following:

- Learn tax and legal consequences to different farm transition/succession options
- Learn about the how to start the process of transferring the family farm or developing a succession plan
- Work together with family members to start developing a plan for the family farm



The workshop is scheduled to begin at 8:30 with registration and talks begin at 9am. The following speakers will be at the program:

Susan Crane from *Crane Farms* in Kenosha County will discuss “Communication among the Generations” and will focus on her own family farm and how they worked to incorporate multiple generations on the farm as well as how important good, clear communication helped to make the transitions easier.

Frank Friar from the Farm Center at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection along with Phil Harris, Farm Law Specialist with UW Cooperative Extension will co-present on “The Nuts and Bolts of Farm Transition”. The goal of this session is to provide farm families with enough information to begin the process themselves.

Peg Reedy, Walworth County UW Extension Agriculture Agent will provide information on “How to Structure a Family Meeting” followed by Amy Greil, Kenosha County Community Resource Development Educator talking about “Planning for the Long term”.

After the presentations, farm families will be given the opportunity to begin the process themselves during the workshop.

The program will be held at the Western Racine County Service Center which is located at 209 N. Main Street in Burlington. Costs for the program are \$20/first person and \$15 for each additional person. Lunch and materials will be included in the registration fee.

AGRICULTURAL CLEAN SWEEP COLLECTION SCHEDULED FOR OCTOBER 3 - 4 FOR KENOSHA/RACINE COUNTY FARMERS AND FARMLAND OWNERS

Farmers and farmland owners can take advantage of the 2013 Agricultural Clean Sweep program and properly dispose of chemical waste that may be stored on the farm.

The following materials can be brought to the collection:

- Unused, unwanted, damaged, registration suspended or canceled agricultural chemicals (including DDT, chlordane, lead arsenate and lindane).
- Other agricultural chemicals including: unusable animal medications and vaccines, teat wash, solvents, paint additives, degreasers, rodent baits, lead-based paints.
- Waste antifreeze
- Motor oil
- Vehicle batteries

Because the grant funds that were received for the program are limited, all participants are asked to pre-register for the program. The first 200 pounds of hazardous waste brought to the collection will be free. Charges for over 200 pounds may apply. Antifreeze, motor oil and vehicle batteries are not included in the 200 pound limit.

For registration information or to request a brochure on either of the programs above, please contact Rose Skora with the Kenosha and Racine County UW Extension offices at rose.skora@ces.uwex.edu or 262-857-1945 or 262-767-2929.

The brochures are also available on-line at <http://kenosha.uwex.edu/category/agricultural-news/>