

Ties to the Land Newsletter

April-June 2014

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

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

NEW FARM BILL PROVIDES PERMANENT LIVESTOCK DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS

The 2014 Farm Bill, formally known as the *Agricultural Act of 2014*, makes the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) permanent programs and provides **retroactive authority to cover eligible losses back to Oct. 1, 2011**.

LFP provides compensation to eligible producers who suffered grazing losses due to drought and fire. LIP provides compensation to livestock producers who suffered livestock death losses in excess of normal mortality due to adverse weather and attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the Federal Government or protected by Federal law, including wolves and avian predators.

USDA is determined to make implementing the livestock disaster programs a top priority and **plans to open program enrollment by April 15, 2014**.

As USDA begins implementing the livestock disaster assistance programs, producers should record all pertinent information of natural disaster consequences, including:

- Documentation of the number and kind of livestock that have died, supplemented if possible by photographs or video records of ownership and losses
- Dates of death supported by birth recordings or purchase receipts
- Costs of transporting livestock to safer grounds or to move animals to new pastures
- Feed purchases if supplies or grazing pastures are destroyed
- Crop records, including seed and fertilizer purchases, planting and production records
- Pictures of on-farm storage facilities that were destroyed by wind or flood waters
- Evidence of damaged farm land.

Many producers still have questions. USDA is in the process of interpreting Farm Bill program regulations. Additional information will be provided once the enrollment period is announced. In the meantime, producers can review the [LIP and LFP Fact Sheets](#). Thanks for your patience as USDA works diligently to put Farm Bill programs into action to benefit the farmers and ranchers of rural America.

FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOAN PROGRAM ENHANCED FOR FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PRODUCERS

The Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL) has been enhanced to include 23 new categories of eligible equipment for fruit and vegetable producers and now makes it easier to finance the equipment needed to grow and expand.

The FSFL program was previously in place to provide low-interest financing for producers to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities. Eligible structures previously included cribs or bins, oxygen-limiting structures, flat-type storage structures with permanent floors and bulkhead, safety equipment, drying and handling equipment, hay storage structures, biomass storage structures, and fruit and vegetable cold storage buildings.

Producers with small and mid-sized operations, and specialty crop fruit and vegetable growers, now have access to needed capital for a variety of supplies including sorting bins, wash stations and other food safety-related equipment.

A new more flexible alternative is also provided for determining storage needs for fruit and vegetable producers, and waivers are available on a case-by-case basis for disaster assistance or insurance coverage if available products are not relevant or feasible for a particular producer. Additionally, Farm Storage and Facility Loans security requirements have been eased for loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000. Previously, all loans in excess of \$50,000 required a promissory note and additional security, such as a lien on real estate. Now loans up to \$100,000 can be secured by only a promissory note.

To learn more about the Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL), please visit the FSA FSFL webpage at: <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=prsu&topic=flp-fp>

This is part of a broader effort to help [small and mid-sized farmers and ranchers](#), as announced by Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack. More information about tools and resources available to small and mid-sized farmers will be rolled out in the coming months, including information about access to capital, risk management, food safety, and locating market opportunities on [USDA's Small and Mid-Sized Farmer Resources webpage](#).

APRIL 2014 INTEREST RATES			
COMMODITY LOAN	1.125%	7-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	2.125%
FARM OPERATING-DIRECT	2.000%	10-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	2.750%
FARM OWNERSHIP-DIRECT/CONSERVATION LOAN	4.000%	12-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	2.875%
FARM OWNERSHIP-DOWN PAYMENT	1.500%		

Want to know more about
the 2014 Farm Bill?
Visit www.usda.gov/farmbill
to stay up to date with USDA details.

WHAT'S IN THE FARM BILL FOR FARM SERVICE AGENCY CUSTOMERS?

To learn more about what the Farm Bill has in store for Farm Service Agency programs, click here: [FSA Farm Bill Fact Sheet](#)

Some of the highlights are:

- DCP and ACRE repealed and replaced by two new programs: Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC)
- Commodity loans remain mostly unchanged
- Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) remains with an annually decreasing enrolled acreage cap through 2018.
- Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP) is expanded to include protection for specialty crops at higher coverage levels similar to buy-up provisions offered under federal crop insurance
- Livestock disaster programs renewed to cover losses starting in October 2011
- Direct and Guaranteed loan programs are improved and expanded
- Premium assistance for crop insurance will be considered a benefit subject to compliance with Highly Erodible Land Compliance (HELC) and Wetland Compliance (WC)

MICROLOAN PROGRAM

FSA developed the Microloan program to better serve the unique financial operating needs of beginning, niche and small family farm operations.

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 specialty crop producers and operators of community supported agriculture (CSA).

Eligible applicants 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.

Individuals who are interested in applying for a microloan or would like to discuss other farm loan programs available should contact Kristin at 262-878-3353 ext. 104.

2013 AVERAGE CROP REVENUE ELECTION (ACRE) PROGRAM

If you participated in ACRE for the 2013 program year, you are required to report production for planted acres on the farm **by July 15, 2014**. Failure to report production for those covered commodities and planted on ACRE farms will result in contract termination. If the contract is terminated, all payments, including direct payments previously received plus interest will be required to be refunded! If you have any questions please feel free to contact Lori at 262-878-3353 ext. 105.

THIRD PARTY REQUESTS

Now that spring is here, our office is receiving more requests for farm information. Please be aware that if you want access to information like cropland, bases, yields, or other information on a farm that you don't own or that you aren't operating FSA is limited in what can be given to you unless you meet specific requirements (FSA must have evidence of your authority to operate on file – an example of evidence being a rental agreement). Requests that are made by people who do not own or operate the farm are considered third party information requests.



If you are visiting the FSA office to request information pertaining to another individual or entity (third party information request), you will be required to provide the following **BEFORE** any information will be reviewed for release:

1. A signed, original signature, statement from the records owner granting FSA permission to release such information. The statement must be specific as to the information/documents to be released. The specific program documents/information, farm number (or description if FSA number is unknown) crop year and the person to whom the information may be released must be included.
2. YOU must provide a request to receive information pertaining to the individual/entity. Your request must be specific as to the information/documents you wish to receive. The specific program documents/information, farm number (or description if FSA number is unknown) and crop year must be included.
3. Fees will be calculated as follows:
\$1.00 per map (original or photocopy)
\$0.20 per side photocopy

REPORT FARM RECORD CHANGES

As we prepare for the implementation of the new Farm Bill programs, it's important to notify FSA of any changes to your farming operation to ensure your records are accurate and ready for signup. Changes may include changes to producers with an interest on the farm, new land broken out, sales of land, new leases or changes to lease arrangements, formation of new entities or changes to entity members, etc. Please contact your local FSA office now to update this important information. Producers in Racine Kenosha or Milwaukee should call 262-878-3353 Ext. 2.



DAN TRELOAR - COUNTY CONSERVATIONIST

KENOSHA LAND & WATER CONSERVATION

19600 - 75TH ST. BRISTOL, WI 53104

(262) 857-1900 FAX (262) 857-1920

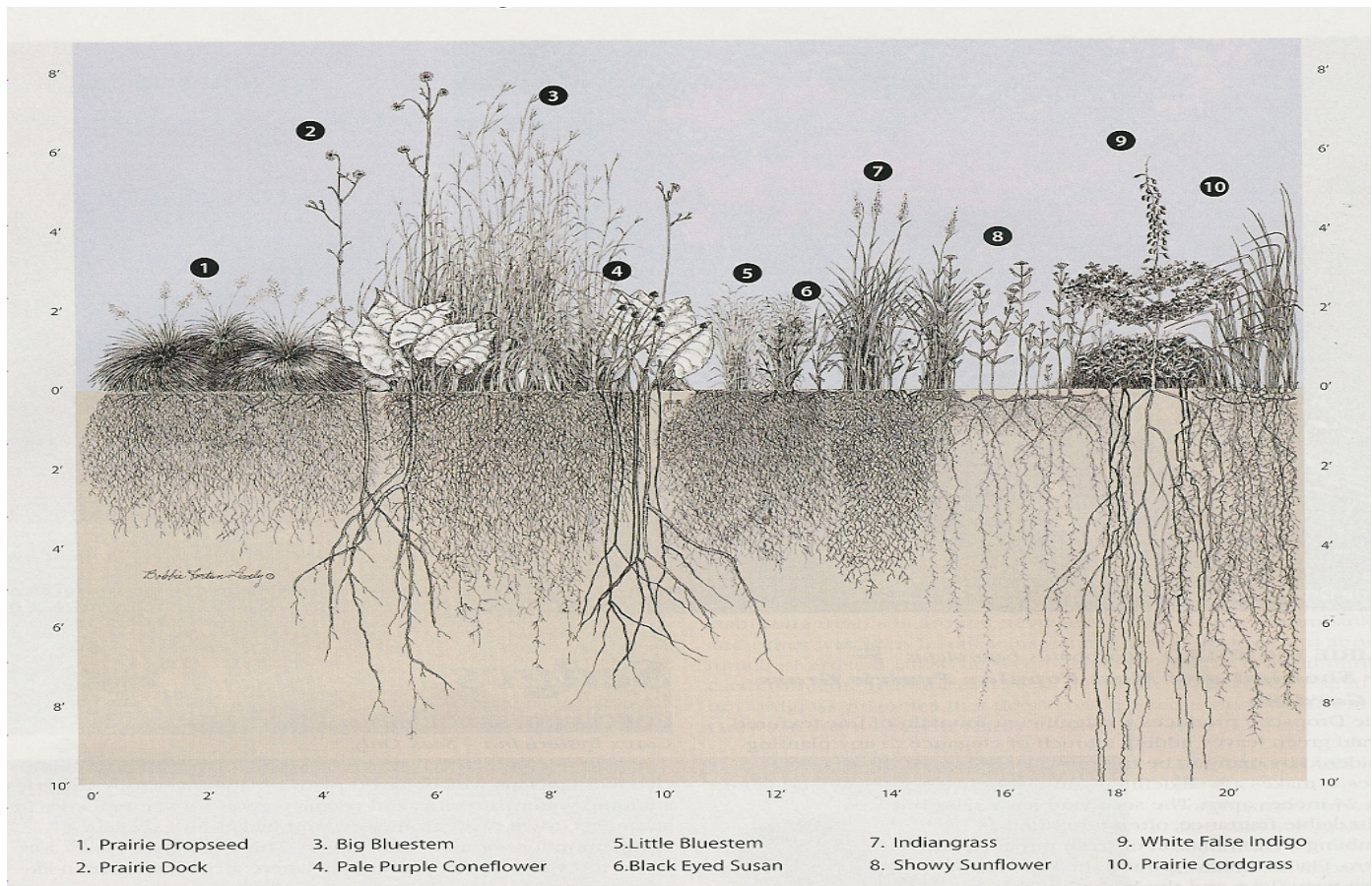
Email: dan.treloar@kenoshacounty.org

Website: <http://www.kenoshacounty.org/index.aspx?nid=676>



THE BENEFITS OF NATIVE PLANTS

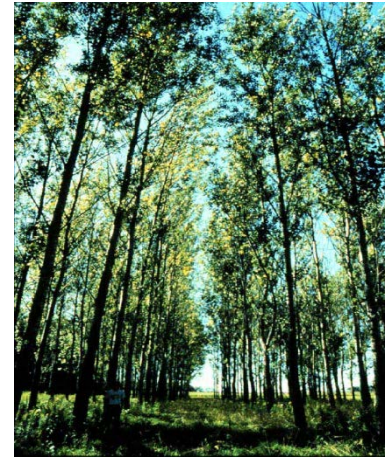
Many of our conservation practices recommend the planting of warm season grasses like brome and timothy or native grasses and flowers like Big Bluestem and Black Eyed Susan, buffer strips in particular are encouraged to use native species. Why? Native plants are typically deep-rooted, long-lived, and promote infiltration of rainwater; therefore, they do a better job at holding soil and filtering pollutants than the shallow-rooted, short-lived cool season grasses. How do they do it? Did you know that approximately 70 percent of the average prairie plant is roots? Why? Because plants have to survive in an environment that is among the most extreme in the world: The American Midwest. With summer heat and drought, temperatures at the soil surface that can exceed 110° F. and winter temperatures on Wisconsin prairies that dip well below 0° F. These plants must have hefty underground "bank accounts" to weather the bad times that would put lesser plants out of business for good. During the summer droughts, the deep-rooted prairie plants draw moisture and nutrients from deep in the soil. Some prairie plants are known to have roots that exceed 20 feet in depth! This allows them to continue to grow even under extremely dry conditions. Prairie plants evolved with bison, antelope, deer, as well as many smaller animals that eat vegetation. They are able to tolerate this grazing and browsing because they store water and food underground and can regenerate from their established root systems. The roots of prairie plants actually help to build the soil. One third of the roots of average prairie grasses die at the end of the growing season. These dead roots decay into organic matter in the soil, becoming natural compost. This adds to the fertility and water-holding capacity of the soil and helps to heal depleted farmland. The dense prairie roots are like a giant sponge, greatly increasing the infiltration of rainwater. This reduces runoff and flooding and recharges our groundwater resources. Think about the benefits of native plants when you are choosing a buffer seeding, planting a rain garden, or just landscaping your yard. They are great for conservation and pretty too! For more information visit <http://www.prairienursery.com/>



SHORT ROTATION WOODY CROPS – THE HYBRID POPLAR

With liquid propane (LP) costs hitting an all-time high and LP in short supply more and more homeowners will be turning to alternative heat sources - it may be time to consider establishing a Poplar plantation. With proper preparation and maintenance, commercial pulpwood and small saw-timber rotation ages of 12 to 15 years (or less) can be achievable in Wisconsin. Hybrid poplars, in particular, have been selected for rootability, adaptability to site conditions, high growth rates, good form, fiber and wood qualities, and pest resistance. Older poplar varieties were often considered "weed trees" because of their messy flowers, heavy seed production, tendency to sucker (producing new shoots from roots), poor form, and susceptibility to disease. Hybrid poplars are selected to avoid the bad habits of their predecessors. For example, most hybrid poplars are either sterile or are male, thus there is no messy "cotton." They also seldom sucker and are disease resistant. Their most desirable trait is their rapid growth, allowing trees to grow as much as 6 to 8 feet in height and an inch in diameter in a single year in Wisconsin.

Planting and maintaining a poplar plantation is very similar to the practices of many agricultural crops. As with more traditional crops soil properties should be carefully considered when deciding where to plant poplars. Characteristics such as soil moisture and drainage, pH, texture, and aeration must be evaluated. A properly prepared site will enhance root development, tree growth, and the effectiveness of weed management.



Poplar plantations are established by planting dormant stem segments called "cuttings." Always select varieties known to perform well in your area. Spacing of 8 - 10' apart (within and between rows) is recommended. Special care to maintain uniform distances between trees will facilitate cultivation for weed control. Weeds must be kept out! Young hybrid poplar trees simply cannot out-compete weeds for nutrients, water and light! As the trees grow and the canopy fills in, weeds will be unable to thrive in the shade. Numerous insects and diseases can damage poplars, reducing growth or causing tree mortality. Use of tested, well-adapted hybrid poplars with multiple pest resistance or tolerance is the best way to avoid serious losses. Hybrid poplars are nutrient demanding; therefore, the more fertile the site, the better the growth response. Analysis of soil or tissue samples will provide adequate nutrient information.

With growing concerns over the economy, the cost of heating fuel and the shrinking number of family farms, attention has turned to farm diversification. By growing a variety of crops, farmers have more options for income. For example, planting trees on marginal land could provide, in time, added farm revenue. Furthermore, there are many environmental benefits associated with growing poplars. Taking land out of annual crop production and planting trees often increases soil stability by adding organic matter, reducing erosion, and renewing soil nutrients. A poplar plantation, large or small, will enhance biodiversity, broaden the producer's income sources, reduce monoculture risks, and potentially generate greater profits than annual crops. Expanding your present operation to include a tree crop will create a more integrated, interesting, and attractive land use system that is environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable.

Kenosha County Tree Pick-Up

If you ordered trees this year from Kenosha County, a receipt will be sent to your home indicating the pick-up date – tentatively Friday May 2nd. If you have any questions about the program, call our office at 262-857-1900 and thanks for ordering.

KENOSHA COUNTY'S HOUSEHOLD WASTE PROGRAM

Everyone who lives in Kenosha County – the city, towns and villages – can dispose of their household hazardous waste, e-waste and refrigerant waste by bringing their waste items to the **Kenosha County Center, 19600 75th Street, Bristol, on Saturday, May 3rd from 8 AM to 1 PM.**

The Kenosha County Household Hazardous Waste Program is a FREE program and a great opportunity for Kenosha residents to dispose of their household hazardous waste in an environmentally friendly way.

The Kenosha County Household Hazardous Waste Program has been expanded this year to include e-waste (electronic waste) and refrigerant waste (items containing Freon). This is the only county-wide household hazardous waste collection date scheduled for this year.

Household hazardous waste items include: household cleaners, aerosol cans, bug sprays, vehicle maintenance related fluids, oil-based paints, paint removal products, fluorescent bulbs, pool chemicals and garden/outdoor related products. Accepted e-waste items include: computers, laptops, fax machines, keyboards, mice, stereos, scanners, iPods, VCR, DVD, CD and MP3 players, printers, phones, copiers, power tools, toner cartridges and electronic toys. **A \$10 fee will be charged for each TV dropped off.** All other items will be taken free of charge. Refrigerant waste items include: refrigerators, water coolers, freezers, air conditioners, water heaters, dehumidifiers, microwaves and other household appliances.

For more information about the event visit: <http://wi-kenoshacounty.civicplus.com/CivicAlerts.aspx?AID=236>



Soil Health - Key Points

1012 Vine St., Union Grove WI 262.878.1243 x 3

What's critical about soil health now?

1. World population is projected to increase from 7 billion in 2013 to more than 9 billion in 2050. To sustain this level of growth, food production will need to rise by 70 percent.
2. Between 1982 – 2007, 14 million acres of prime farmland in the U.S. were lost to development.
3. Improving soil health is key to long-term, sustainable agricultural production.

Soil health matters because:

1. Healthy soils are high-performing, productive soils.
2. Healthy soils reduce production costs—and improve profits.
3. Healthy soils protect natural resources on and off the farm.
4. Franklin Roosevelt's statement, "The nation that destroys its soil destroys itself," is as true today as it was 75 years ago.
5. Healthy soils can reduce nutrient loading and sediment runoff, increase efficiencies, and sustain wildlife habitat.

The 2013 Wisconsin NRCS Annual Report is now online. [Click here to view the report](#) and learn how NRCS in Wisconsin has helped conserve Soil Health!

What are the benefits of healthy soil?

1. Healthy soil holds more water (by binding it to organic matter), and loses less water to runoff and evaporation.
2. Organic matter builds as tillage declines and plants and residue cover the soil.
Organic matter holds 18-20 times its weight in water and recycles nutrients for plants to use.
3. One percent of organic matter in the top six inches of soil would hold approximately 27,000 gallons of water per acre!
4. Most farmers can increase their soil organic matter in three to 10 years if they are motivated about adopting conservation practices to achieve this goal.

Follow four basic soil health principles to improve soil health and sustainability:

1. Use plant diversity to increase diversity in the soil.
2. Manage soils more by disturbing them less.
3. Keep plants growing throughout the year to feed the soil.
4. Keep the soil covered as much as possible.
5. Develop a [soil health management plan](#) with the help of NRCS.

What is a Soil Health Management Plan?

1. It's a roadmap to soil health.
2. It outlines a system of practices needed to enhance crop production and soil function, and improve or sustain water quality, air quality, energy efficiency and wildlife habitat. Some of the recommended conservation practices include: Conservation Crop Rotation, Cover Crops, No Till, Mulching, Nutrient Management, and Pest Management.
3. It provides environmental, economic, health, and societal benefits.
4. It [saves energy](#) by using less fuel for tillage, and maximizes nutrient cycling.
5. It [saves water](#) and increases drought tolerance by increasing infiltration and water holding capacity as soil organic matter increases.
6. It [reduces disease](#) and pest problems.
7. It [improves income sustainability](#) for farms and ranches.
8. It [improves plant health](#).



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

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

Staff Contributions by:
Chad Sampson
Jonathan Grove
& Kelsey Maynard

TREE & SHRUB PICK UP REMINDER

For those of you who ordered trees, shrubs, or seed mixes from the County tree sale; **the tree pick up dates have been pushed back due to cold weather and are now scheduled for May 6th from 1 p.m. - 6 p.m. and May 7th from 8 a.m. – 6 p.m. Pickups will be at the Racine County Fairgrounds.** Receipts and pick up instructions will be sent out in the beginning of April. In addition, the County has two tree planters available for rental, starting at \$30 per planter. Contact us today to reserve one.

FARM EQUIPMENT AND ROAD INTEGRITY

Maintaining the public road system is important to citizens. As farms increase in size, so does the farm equipment utilizing the roads. There are a few important measures that farmers, farm workers and custom equipment drivers need to keep in mind while traveling on State, County and Town highways.

1. Do not travel on the edge of the asphalt. The shoulder of the road is often the weakest part of the road. If the weight pushes the gravel in the shoulder out, then the asphalt underneath loses its support.
2. Use the existing farm access roads to the fields. Do not travel off the roads onto shallow ditches for easier field access.
3. Do not move over for slower traffic. The natural instinct for the driver is to move large equipment over to allow traffic to pass more easily. As the farm equipment moves over the edge of the asphalt onto the gravel, this compromises the integrity of the road edge.

The goal of these three things is to continue to extend the usable life of the existing highway system.



Liquid Manure Semi Tanker

NEW STAFF WITH RACINE COUNTY



Hello Racine County, my name is Kelsey Maynard and I am a new employee at Racine County Land Conservation in Ives Grove. I was hired to Racine County as Consultant Conservation Planner. I was born and raised in Eugene, OR moving to Wisconsin in 1999. I graduated with an Associate's degree in Civil Engineering with a concentration in Public Works and am continuing my education for a degree in Sustainable Management through the UW-system, attending UW-Milwaukee and Parkside. I have worked for eight years in private sector civil engineering starting in Construction Management Services eventually ending in the Water Wastewater department. I worked primarily on SSES and II, studies which help eliminate infiltration and inflow into the sanitary & storm sewers, lakes, rivers, even in your basement. My experience as a field technician and many years of experience working with water runoff and water management lends well to my understanding of many aspects of this job. I also understand and appreciate the beauty, recreational, and economic value of the land and water right here in Racine County. I look forward to helping conserve and enhance our extremely valuable land and water.

I currently reside in Union Grove where I have lived for a majority of my time in Wisconsin. I enjoy sewing, quilting, knitting, crocheting, gardening, playing pool and enjoying the outdoors through hiking, biking, camping or just going on walks. Living in Oregon made me love nature due to its beautiful lush landscapes and plethora of interesting areas to explore, packed full of waterfalls, mountain top views and many other exciting experiences. I look forward to getting to know more of you in the future. To contact me call 262-886-8440 or email me at Kelsey.Maynard@goracine.org.

NEW Racine County LCD Phone Number

As of January 1, 2014 the old phone number associated with the Racine County LCD no longer works; you will need to use our new phone number 262-886-8440.



Cooperative Extension
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Kenosha & Racine Counties

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

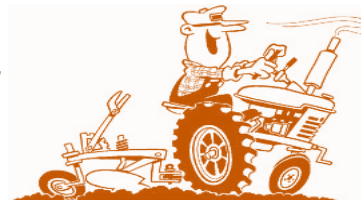
Racine County
209 N Main Street
Burlington, WI 53105
262-767-2929

2014 YOUTH TRACTOR CERTIFICATION COURSE

Offered by Kenosha, Racine and Walworth Counties UW Extension

The Tractor Certification Course is a 24-hour program designed to teach safety as it relates to driving farm implements on public roads, offering both classroom and hands-on tractor driving experiences, for youth under the age of 16 and over the age of 12.

When: June 23 – 27 & June 30, 2014
Time: 8am – Noon
Where: Burlington High School
Cost: \$50/participant



This course meets the Wisconsin Act 455, Section 10, Section 346.925 "Operation of agricultural machinery by youthful operators" law that states...

"...After April 30, 1996 no person may direct or permit a child under the age of 16 years to operate a farm tractor or self-propelled implement of husbandry on the highway unless the child has been certified as successfully completing a tractor and machinery operation safety-training course..."

For More Information Contact:

Peg Reedy, Walworth County UW Extension: 262-741-4961, peg.reedy@ces.uwex.edu OR
Rose Skora, Kenosha/Racine Counties UW Extension, 262-857-1945 (Kenosha) or 262-767-2929 (Racine),
rose.skora@ces.uwex.edu

Please send registration form and payment to:

Walworth County UW Extension, Tractor Safety Program
100 W Walworth Street, PO Box 1001
Elkhorn, WI 53121-4362

Registration Deadline: Monday, June 16, 2014

2014 Tractor Safety Registration Form

Name of Youth: _____ Birth date: _____ Name of
Youth: _____ Birth date: _____ Name of
Parent(s)/Guardian(s): _____ Mailing Address:
City, State, Zip: _____ Phone:
E-mail:
of Youth _____ x \$50 = _____ Total Enclosed

An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and American with Disabilities (ADA) requirements.

Ties to the Land Calendar April - June 2014



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		APRIL 1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11 First day to plant corn under crop insurance provisions	12
13	14	15 Tentative Signup start date for livestock disaster assistance programs through FSA	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26 First day to plant soybeans under crop insurance provisions
27	28	29	30	MAY 1	2 Tentative- Kenosha County Tree Pick-up Date Kenosha Co Center	3 Kenosha County Hazardous Waste Collection Kenosha County Center 8 AM -1 PM
4	5	6 Racine County Tree Pickup 1 pm to 6 pm Racine Co Fairgrounds	7 Racine County Tree Pickup 8 am to 6 pm Racine Co Fairgrounds	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19 Spring seeded crop acreage reporting starts at FSA	20	21	22	23	24
25	26 Memorial Day USDA Service Center Closed	27	28	29	30	31 Final date to plant corn under crop insurance provisions
JUNE 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15 Final date to plant soybeans under crop insurance provisions	16 DEADLINE to register for Youth Tractor Certification Course through UW-Ex	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
	Youth Tractor Certification Course Mon-Fri: 8 AM to Noon Burlington High School					
29	30 Youth Tractor Cert Course 8AM-noon Burlington HS					