

Ties to the Land Newsletter

July-September 2014



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

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FARM SERVICE AGENCY COUNTY COMMITTEE NOMINATION PERIOD ENDS AUGUST 1ST

The nomination period for 2014 Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Committee elections ends on August 1, 2014.

To be eligible to serve on an FSA county committee, a person must participate or cooperate in a program administered by FSA, be eligible to vote in a county committee election and reside in the local administrative area where the person is nominated. This year's election is being held for the townships of Paris, Somers, Bristol, and Pleasant Prairie which comprise local administrative area #4.

Farmers may nominate themselves or others. Organizations representing minorities and women also may nominate candidates. To become a candidate, an eligible individual must sign the nomination form, FSA-669A. The form and other information about FSA county committee elections are available at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections. Nomination forms for the 2014 election must be postmarked or received in the FSA office by close of business on August 1, 2014.

FSA will mail ballots to eligible voters beginning in early November. Ballots will be due back to the local county office either via mail or in person by December 1, 2014. Newly elected committee members and alternates will take office on January 1, 2015.

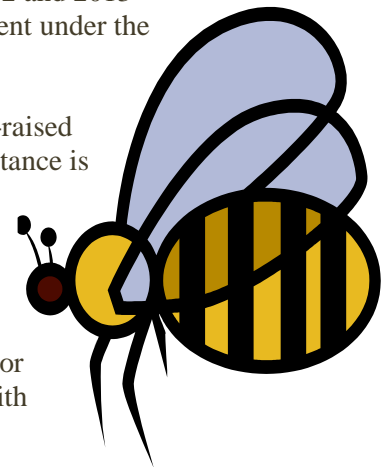
Contact the Racine Kenosha Milwaukee County office at 262-878-3353 if you are interested in serving on the local FSA County Committee or know someone who is interested.

2012 & 2013 ELAP LOSSES MUST BE FILED BY AUGUST 1, 2014 FOR HONEYBEE, LIVESTOCK AND FARM-RAISED FISH LOSSES

Producers who suffered eligible livestock, honeybee or farm-raised fish losses during the 2012 and 2013 program years have until August 1, 2014, to submit a notice of loss and application for payment under the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP).

ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish that have losses due to disease, adverse weather, or other eligible conditions. ELAP assistance is provided for losses not covered by the Livestock Forage Program (LFP) and Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP). For 2014 program year (October, 2013 through September, 2014) losses, the notice of loss and an application for payment must be submitted by November 1, 2014.

For more information, producers can review the ELAP Fact Sheet on the [Farm Bill webpage](#) or contact Angie at 262-878-3353 x 103. Producers are encouraged to make an appointment with their local FSA office to apply for these programs.



JULY 2014 INTEREST RATES

COMMODITY LOAN	1.125%	7-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	2.125%
FARM OPERATING-DIRECT	2.125%	10-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	2.625%
FARM OWNERSHIP-DIRECT/CONSERVATION LOAN	3.875%	12-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	2.750%
FARM OWNERSHIP-DOWN PAYMENT	1.500%		

WATCH FOR FUTURE DETAILS ABOUT FARM BILL INFORMATIONAL MEETINGS

The Agricultural Act of 2014 was signed into law on February 7th, 2014. The new Farm Bill means that there will be new rules and regulations to understand when participating in USDA programs. The Racine Kenosha Milwaukee County office, in cooperation with neighboring offices, plans to hold informational meetings for operators and landowners to better understand their options if they choose to participate in USDA programs. The meetings will be held in a number of locations throughout the area, so please watch future correspondence and farm papers for confirmed dates of the meetings. At this time, the expected timing of the meetings will be late-fall or winter 2014. If you would like to be added to the GovDelivery email distribution list, please contact Kim Iczkowski at kimberly.iczkowski@wi.usda.gov or [CLICK HERE](#) to subscribe for email newsletters, press releases, and bulletins from anywhere in the nation.

PROGRAMS TO CONSERVE SENSITIVE LAND AND HELP RETIRING & BEGINNING FARMERS

Farmers and landowners committed to protecting and conserving environmentally sensitive land may sign up for the continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). The Secretary also announced **that retiring farmers enrolled in CRP could receive incentives to transfer a portion of their land to beginning, disadvantaged or veteran farmers through the Transition Incentives Program (TIP).**

CRP provides incentives to producers who utilize conservation methods on environmentally-sensitive lands. For example, producers are monetarily compensated for establishing long-term vegetative species, such as approved grasses or trees (known as “covers”) to control soil erosion, improve water quality, and enhance wildlife habitat.

CRP consists of a “continuous” and “general” sign-up period. Under continuous sign-up authority, eligible land can be enrolled in CRP at any time with contracts of up to 10 to 15 years in duration. In lieu of a general sign-up this year, USDA will allow eligible producers with general CRP contracts expiring this September to have the option of a one-year contract extension. In addition, the new grassland provisions, which will allow producers to graze their enrolled land, will enable producers to do so with more flexibility.

The Transition Incentives Program provides two additional years of payments for retired producers who transition expiring CRP acres to socially disadvantaged, military veteran, or beginning producers who return the land to sustainable grazing or crop production. TIP funding was increased by more than 30 percent in the 2014 Farm Bill, providing up to \$33 million through 2018.

As part of the 2014 Farm Bill, participants meeting specific qualifications may have the opportunity to terminate their CRP contract during fiscal year 2015 if the contract has been in effect for a minimum of five years and if other conditions are also met.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, contact Jeanette at 262-878-3353 x 100 or go online to www.fsa.usda.gov. [TIP Net](#) is a website that is available to help connect retiring farmers with beginning, disadvantaged, or veteran farmers. Please take the time to visit www.fsa.usda.gov → [Online Services](#) → [TIP Net](#) and enter your information if you are any of the eligible participants listed above.



VARIETY OF JOB OPPORTUNITIES THROUGHOUT THE STATE

The Wisconsin Farm Service Agency is hiring a number of positions throughout the state. The positions are both permanent and temporary, and are located in a variety of the county offices throughout the state. If you would like to learn more about the permanent positions open in Wisconsin, please visit www.usajobs.gov and search for “Farm Service Agency” in “Wisconsin.” Please contact your local FSA office to find out if there are any temporary positions available.

VISIT FARM COMMONS FOR RESOURCES AND LEGAL INFORMATION TARGETED TO FARMERS

Excerpt taken from the most recent Farm Commons Newsletter:

"How can I find out if someone has a long-term lease on a piece of farmland?"

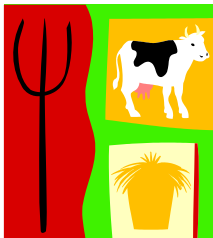
"What can I do to protect my long-term farmland lease?"

As the Executive Director of Farm Commons, I take a lot of phone calls. Whether from Illinois, Washington, Vermont, Maryland, or right at home in Wisconsin, farmers call me from all over the country. We talk through all sorts of interesting questions – it's a highlight of my job. Recently, I talked with farmers on two different issues that had the same answer. The other day, I got a call from a gal who was interested in a piece of farmland near her home. She needed to do a little background research. Although she knew the farmland owner, she didn't know who was currently farming it. **She called Farm Commons to ask if I knew of any way to determine if the land was currently leased to someone.** At the same time, a Farm Commons client needed a long-term farmland lease. To protect the farmer's investment in the land, he needs to make sure the lease is binding on anyone who buys the land from the landowner. **How can we let future purchasers know that the land is under a lease?**

**Please feel free to visit
Farm Commons for legal
resources geared
directly to farmers.
www.farmcommons.org**

Farmland leases may be registered with the county register of deeds. All counties have a register of deeds for managing real estate transactions. They will put the lease on file and anyone investigating the piece of property will see that a lease goes with. The gal calling Farm Commons, who is interested in the farmland down the road, can try looking at the county land records to see if a lease is recorded. If the lease is for a short time, it's not likely that anyone would record it but it's possible. In the case of Farm Commons' client, we highly recommended that the farmer record the lease. This protects the farmer's ability to enforce it. In some states, it's essential to record leases of several years if the tenant wants the lease to be binding on anyone who buys the land from the landowner.

SAVE THE DATE: RURAL LANDOWNER WORKSHOP SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 1ST



Mark your calendars for the 8th Annual Rural Landowner Conference being held Saturday, November 1st from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Kenosha County Center located at the intersection of Highways 50 & 45. The conference will offer opportunities for rural landowners and small farmers as well as individuals who are considering a farm enterprise. The workshop will have a slightly different format this year; there will be a number of 1 hour and 15 minute sessions to choose from in the morning and one 3 hour session the 3 topics to choose from in the afternoon. Topics that are planned this year consist of:

1 hour 15 minute sessions

- Starting a small business- what to consider
- USDA Funding Opportunities
- Hay Production
- Animal Well-being
- Rabbits for Meat Production
- Raising Dairy Goats

3 hour sessions

- Writing a Business Plan
- Beekeeping
- Making Sausage



In addition to the educational sessions, an electronic waste collection will be held in conjunction with the conference from 8:00 a.m. to noon. Electronic waste includes computers, cell phones, TV's, electronic toys, and anything with a cord. This year refrigerators, freezers, and dehumidifiers can also be collected. All electronics except TV's will be accepted at no charge. There is a fee of \$10 for each TV collected to cover the cost of correctly recycling hazardous materials in the TV's. Electronic waste will be collected in the parking lot. To learn more about the events, please visit the Kenosha County UW-Extension website at <http://kenosha.uwex.edu/agriculture> . Details will be added soon!

GIVE COVER CROPS A TRY

If you are looking to control soil erosion and suppress weeds while improving your soil quality, consider planting cover crops. Interest in planting cover crops in Wisconsin has grown in recent years. Commonly producers wrestle with where to insert cover crops within their rotations and the short planting window between harvest of a prior crop and end of the growing season. However, farmers across the state are finding “niches” within their farming systems where integrating a cover crop is relatively easy and adds value to their overall farming operation. The table, at right, contains examples of the niches where farmers have been most successful in utilizing cover crops within their farming systems.

Potential Wisconsin Cover Crops		
Following Corn Silage	Following small grains	Following vegetables
Winter rye Oats Radish	Winter rye Clovers Vetch Radish Other legumes	Winter rye Clovers Vetch Radish Other legumes

No matter where a cover crop may fit into your rotation it can improve soil health and organic matter enhancement - cover crops can serve other very practical purposes:

- Reduce soil erosion – plants minimize impact of falling raindrops.
- Slow surface water runoff – plants create obstacles, slowing speed of moving surface water.
- Emergency forage - this fall or next spring.
- Weed control - close growing cover competes with and displaces weeds.
- Scavenge soil nutrients - plants utilize leachable nitrate N, return it as stable organic matter.
- Bio-tillage – active root growth disturbs and loosens compacted soil layers.
- Enhance infiltration - decomposing roots leave pores in the soil, improves water infiltration.

Cover crop establishment costs will be in the neighborhood of \$65 /ac (\$30 /ac to chisel plow, finish and drill + \$30-40 /ac for seed. Choosing which plant species to use as a cover crop depends on the desired use, expected planting date, next year’s crop plan, and seed availability.

Emergency Forage – Table 1 shows cover crops that are best for producers who have low forage supplies. Note: Before planting on fields with crop insurance, verify if, and when harvest can happen. Full prevented plant scenarios limit harvest and grazing until late fall; partial prevented plant scenarios have flexibility to use cover crops as late summer forage.

Table 1: Cover Crops for Emergency Forage

	Millet	Sorghum	Soybeans	Sudangrass	Winter Grains
Individual types	Foxtail Japanese Pearl	Forage Grain Sweet	Forage Grain	BMR	Barley Rye Triticale
Advantages	Fast grower	Fast grower	Provides N next year	Fast grower	Spring forage
Disadvantages	Seed availability	Potential high nitrates when frozen	Potential soil erosion	Potential high nitrates when frozen	No forage this year
Recommended seeding date	June 1 to July 15	June 1 to July 15	Up to July 4	June 1 to July 15	August 1 to October 1
Seeding rate (lbs/ac)	15 to 35	25 to 40	60 to 100	25 to 40	50 to 110
Seeding depth (inches)	½ to 1	1 to 2	1 to 2	½ to 1	¾ to 1 ½
Dry matter (ton/acre)	2 to 3	3	1.5 to 3	2 to 2.5	3 to 4

Soil Erosion Protection and Weed Control – Table 2 shows cover crops that are ideal for idle fields or areas that will not be harvested this year. To maximize cover crop benefits, plant a mixture of nitrogen fixing species with other species

Table 2: Cover Crops for Soil Erosion Protection and Weed Control

	Annual Grains	Clovers	Peas	Brassicas	Winter Grains
Individual types	Barley Oats	Berseem Crimson Red	Field Winter	Radish Canola Turnip	Rye Triticale Wheat
Advantages	Economical	Fast grower	Vigorous growth	Loosens compaction	Option to use as spring forage
Disadvantages	May produce seed	Will die in droughty soils	Establishes slowly	Establishes slowly	Can attract spring pests
Recommended seeding date	Up to late August	Up to mid-August	August to mid-September	Late July to mid-August	August 1 to October 1
Seeding rate (lbs/ac)	60 to 100	10 to 25	40 to 100	4 to 10	50 to 110
Seeding depth (inches)	½ to 1	¼ to ½	1 to 2	¼ to ¾	¾ to 1 ½
Nitrogen credit (lbs/acre)	0	50 to 160	50 to 100	0	0
Nitrogen scavenger	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Winterkills	Yes	Depends on type planted	In most years	Yes	No

Is a Cover Crop Right for You?

Individual producers need to evaluate a number of factors to determine whether or not a cover crop is right for them, considerations include:

- Finding time to plant cover crops in the fall can be a challenge in some years;
- Adding cover crops to a farming system requires increased management of already complex systems;
- In years with a dry spring, winter hardy cover crops can deplete soil moisture for the following crop;
- Planting cover crops add cost to the farming system and the economic return can be hard to define.



Cover crops can provide protection for the soil during critical times when cropland is more vulnerable to nutrient and sediment losses.

Reprinted UW-Discovery Farms factsheet July 2013. For more information: www.uwdiscoveryfarms.org



Get Started with NRCS

Do you farm or ranch and want to make improvements to the land that you own or lease?

Natural Resources Conservation Service offers technical and financial assistance to help farmers, ranchers and forest landowners.

1 Planning

To get started with NRCS, we recommend you stop by your local NRCS field office.

We'll discuss your vision for your land.

NRCS provides landowners with free technical assistance, or advice, for their land. Common technical assistance includes: resource assessment, practice design and resource monitoring. Your conservation planner will help you determine if financial assistance is right for you.

2 Application

We'll walk you through the application process. To get started on applying for financial assistance, we'll work with you:

- To fill out an AD 1026, which ensures a conservation plan is in place before lands with highly erodible soils are farmed. It also ensures that identified wetland areas are protected.
- To meet other eligibility certifications.

Once complete, we'll work with you on the application, or CPA 1200.

Applications for most programs are accepted on a continuous basis, but they're considered for funding in different ranking periods. Be sure to ask your local NRCS district conservationist about the deadline for the ranking period to ensure you turn in your application in time.

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3 Eligibility

As part of the application process, we'll check to see if you are eligible.

To do this, you'll need to bring:

- An official tax ID (Social Security number or an employer ID)
- A property deed or lease agreement to show you have control of the property; and
- A farm tract number.

If you don't have a farm tract number, you can get one from USDA's Farm Service Agency. Typically, the local FSA office is located in the same building as the local NRCS office. You only need a farm tract number if you're interested in financial assistance.

4 Ranking

NRCS will take a look at the applications and rank them according to local resource concerns, the amount of conservation benefits the work will provide and the needs of applicants.

5 Implementing

If you're selected, you can choose whether to sign the contract for the work to be done.

Once you sign the contract, you'll be provided standards and specifications for completing the practice or practices, and then you will have a specified amount of time to implement. Once the work is implemented and inspected, you'll be paid the rate of compensation for the work if it meets NRCS standards and specifications.

To find out more, go to: www.nrcs.usda.gov/GetStarted

Racine County Land Conservation



14200 Washington Avenue
Sturtevant, WI 53177
262-886-8440

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

Land Conservation Staff: Chad Sampson,
Jonathan Grove & Kelsey Maynard

RACINE COUNTY FAIR JULY 23 -27

It's officially summer which means it's time for the Racine County Fair. From July 23-27, Racine County Land Conservation staff will be on site at the fair to answer general conservation questions, discuss project installation procedures and programs currently available. There will also be a display of Conservation program and project photos available for viewing. Handouts detailing the next Rural Landowner Workshop can be found at our booth, and while there don't forget to sign up for the 2014-2015 tree program mailing list. Even with the late start this year through our tree program Racine County Land Conservation sold a total of 29,500 trees. Thanks to all the new and returning residents that bought trees this year, with your sustained support this program continues being a success. See you at the fair!

NON-METALLIC MINING



Non-Metallic Mining Reclamation Site

Racine County adopted the non-metallic mining ordinance created May 22, 2001, and revised on May 7, 2007. This 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.

Nonmetallic mining is the extraction of stone, sand, rock or similar material from natural deposits. The LCD staff conducts reclamation plan reviews, on-site mine reclamation inspections, and plan related analysis in reference to non-metallic mining compliance. To date there is approximately 230 acres of reclaimed non-metallic mining property.

Once a site is reclaimed and returned to proposed post-mining condition, the site becomes a valid asset for agriculture, wildlife habitat, or residential/commercial/industrial development. The Reclamation Plan developed is based on the desired future use. Without proper site reclamation, this scarred land could be left in an undesirable state of overburden stockpiles, dangerous vertical slopes, unwanted substances, and potentially polluted surface and ground water offering no benefit to the Racine County residents.

GYPSY MOTH INFESTATIONS & INVESTIGATIONS

The Wisconsin DNR Gypsy Moth Suppression Program is a voluntary partnership involving State, Counties, municipalities, and landowners in a state-organized aerial insecticide treatment to suppress damaging gypsy moth populations; which can cause heavy tree defoliation. The suppression program sprays are completed in May and June; areas are determined in the previous fall.

The gypsy moth has four distinct developmental stages: egg, larva, pupa, and adult. Each life stage looks and behaves very differently from the other stages. Eggs and pupae appear lifeless, but undergo dramatic changes internally. Larvae eat and accumulate fat that is used when they are adults to find a mate and reproduce.

If you are having gypsy moth problems on your property within Racine County and would like to apply for the DNR's Suppression Spray Program and setup an inspection to determine the severity of infestation, contact **Chad Sampson at 262-886-8440**, Racine County Land Conservation. For further information on gypsy moths: www.gypsymoth.wi.gov or 1-800-642-MOTH.

What to look for:

ADULT



EGG



PUPA



LARVA
(Caterpillar)





Cooperative Extension
University of Wisconsin-Extension
Kenosha & Racine Counties

Kenosha County
19600 75th St., Ste. 2
Bristol, WI 53104
262-857-1945

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

2013 CUSTOM RATE GUIDE NOW AVAILABLE

As part of an on-going cooperative arrangement with the agriculture industry, NASS-Wisconsin Field Office (WI FO) conducts a Custom Rates Survey every three years. This 2013 summary is a result of a mail survey which collected rates paid by farmers for custom work performed in 2013. The figures are based on reports by farmers who hired custom work, custom operators and farmers who performed custom work, and machinery dealers who rented out equipment. There were 889 reports compiled.

Most of the rates in this release include the cost of hiring a machine with fuel and operator, but exclude the cost of any materials. No attempt was made to distinguish between rates charged by custom operators who perform these operations as their main source of income and those who do custom work as a secondary source of income. In general, rates charged by custom operators and implement dealers were more likely to be higher than average. This summary makes no effort to evaluate fairness of rates being charged.

Included in this release are statewide average rates and typical ranges for those averages. The rates and ranges in this release are based on actual reported data and should not be viewed as official estimates. The ranges provided for each custom operation encompass at least 90 percent of the reported values. Rates are typically influenced by fuel costs, soil conditions, topography, field size and shape, traditional practices in an area, and type, age, and availability of equipment. Reports were edited to remove items for which the respondent's figures were widely outside the range of other respondents' replies. Certain items may have appeared on the questionnaire, but were not summarized due to an insufficient number of responses. Price changes for machinery, fuel, and labor should be taken into account when using this 2013 data for subsequent years. To review the 2013 Custom Rate Guide, please visit the Wisconsin NASS Website at www.nass.usda.gov/wi or [CLICK HERE](#) to be taken directly to the guide.

WISCONSIN FARM TECHNOLOGY DAYS: PORTAGE COUNTY AUGUST 12-14



The Wisconsin Farm Technology Days is the largest agricultural show in Wisconsin and one of the largest in the nation. The three-day outdoor event showcases the latest improvements in production agriculture, including many practical applications of recent research findings and technological developments. Each year, it is held in a different Wisconsin county - on a different host family farm.

Wisconsin Farm Technology Days provides visitors the opportunity to see and talk with more than 600 commercial and educational exhibitors in Tent City who are eager to visit with them about their machinery, equipment, facilities, products, and service needs. A wide variety of agricultural products and services used in today's dairy, livestock, and crop production systems in Wisconsin will be on display. In addition, specialists and county extension agents from the University of Wisconsin and state and federal agencies are on hand to answer questions. Educational exhibits, special interest displays, and field machinery demonstrations provide something of interest for everyone.

Since the first show held in Waupaca County in 1954, the Board of Directors of the Wisconsin Farm Technology Days, Inc. - a tax-exempt, educational organization- has guided the annual show. The Board is comprised of representatives of state and federal agencies involved in agriculture and natural resources, the University of Wisconsin, and the agribusiness/industry and farming sectors.

Virtually all activity at the host county level is coordinated and managed by the county's University of Wisconsin-Extension Office in cooperation with the county's Farm Technology Days committee and 700-1000 volunteers. In 2014, we are proud to have Blue Top Farms & Feltz Family Farms host Wisconsin Farm Technology Days in Portage County. To learn more, visit the Farm Technology Days website at <http://www.wifarmtechnologydays.com/>.