

Ties to the Land Newsletter

July 2015-September 2015



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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
www.fsa.usda.gov

UNDERSTANDING USDA FARM LOANS

FSA's Direct Farm Operating loans are a valuable resource to establish, maintain and strengthen your farm or ranch. Under its direct loan program, FSA loan officers are responsible for every aspect of the loan application process, and funding is provided through Congressional appropriation.

Microloans are direct farm operating loans with a shortened application process and reduced paperwork designed to meet the needs of smaller, non-traditional, and niche type operations. Apprentice and mentorship programs, non-farm business experience, and farm labor experience are acceptable alternative solutions for helping to meet farm experience and managerial requirements. Operating loans may be used to purchase items such as:

- Livestock and feed
- Farm equipment
- Fuel, farm chemicals, insurance and other operating costs, including family living expenses
- Minor improvements or repairs to buildings
- Refinance certain farm-related debts, excluding real estate

Operating loan funds cannot be used to finance nonfarm enterprises, including earthworms, exotic birds, tropical fish, dogs or horses used for non-farm purposes (racing, pleasure, show and boarding).

There is no minimum loan amount. The maximum loan amount for a Microloan is **\$50,000**. The maximum loan amount for a Direct Farm Operating Loan is **\$300,000**. There is no down payment requirement.

We encourage you to contact Kristin at the Racine Kenosha Milwaukee Service Center to learn more about our programs and the information you will need for a complete application.

IT IS COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION TIME

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.

Do you know of someone who might be interested in serving on the FSA County Committee? We are currently taking nominations for the 2015 County Committee Election. The Local Administrative Area (LAA) up for election is LAA 1. LAA 1 consists of the townships of **Waterford, Norway, Rochester, Burlington, and Dover**.

The COC nomination period runs through August 3, 2015. Election of the 2016 COC member will take place by mail in November. For more information contact the FSA office at 262-878-3353.

JULY 2015 INTEREST RATES			
COMMODITY LOAN	1.250%	7-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	2.000%
FARM OPERATING-DIRECT	2.500%	10-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	2.250%
FARM OWNERSHIP-DIRECT/CONSERVATION LOAN	3.375%	12-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	2.375%
FARM OWNERSHIP-DOWN PAYMENT	1.500%		

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Kenosha Land & Water Conservation
Dan Treloar - County Conservationist
19600 - 75th St., Suite 185-3, Bristol, WI 53104
(262) 857-1900 FAX (262) 857-1920
Website: <http://www.kenoshacounty.org/index.aspx?nid=676>

CURIOUS ABOUT APICULTURE

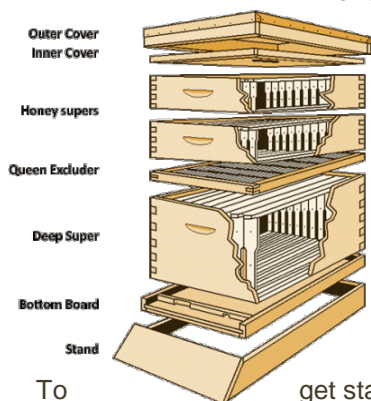
Livestock can be fun to raise, but if I were a rural landowner I'd choose honeybees. You never have to shovel any bee manure. You don't need to keep a water trough thawed out in the winter and you never have to get up at the crack of dawn to pull on any bee udders. The fact is honeybees practically take care of themselves.

RACINE/KENOSHA BEEKEEPER'S ASSOCIATION



The Racine/Kenosha Beekeeper's Association is dedicated to being a forum for the discussion of beekeeping practices in Southeastern Wisconsin and adjoining areas. Their mission is to promote beekeeping in the local community and disseminate information relating to the practice and benefits of beekeeping. Membership is extended to all parties with an interest in beekeeping within and adjoining Racine and Kenosha County Wisconsin. Current membership rates are set at \$5 per family. Attend one of their regular open meetings – all are welcome! Meeting dates are first Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM. See the events calendar for specific meeting dates and location. <http://www.rkbeekeepers.org/>

A FEW BEE FACTS



Honeybees live in complex communities that may contain as many as 100,000 members. The vast majority of these are unfertile females, known as workers. They run the hive, feed and clean the queen, gather nectar (which gets converted into Honey), pollen and water, feed developing larvae, and make the beeswax they use to construct the cells of the honeycomb.

During the peak of the season, a worker bee lives only about six weeks and during that time she will have gathered enough nectar to make 1/12 of a teaspoon of honey. There are also a few hundred male, or drone, bees in a hive. They don't do any work. They just eat honey, and lie around and waiting for an opportunity to mate. Such unions occur rarely, only when a new queen goes on her mating flights, one mating can last the queen for years. The queen is the heart of the hive and the royal egg layer. She can produce as many as 1,500 eggs in a single day.

To get started you'll need a beehive and some honeybees. An 8 frame beehive starter kit and simple beekeeping supplies cost about \$200.00 (plus S+H and assembly), like the Langstroth Beehive in the picture. Each frame should produce 3-5 lbs. of honey. Starter bees can be purchased in a 3 lb. package with a queen for another \$100. Package bees are produced in the southern states and shipped to northern beekeepers who wish to strengthen weak colonies or establish new colonies in the spring. Packages are available in 2-, 3-, or 5-pound sizes, each pound represents about 3,500 bees. A newly mated queen is included in the packages to be used for developing new colonies.

Beekeeping Suppliers

Capital Bee Supply, LLC
201 Acacia Ln
Madison, WI 53716
(608)444-1493
<http://www.capitalbeesupply.com/>

Dadant & Sons Inc
W2763 East Gate Drive, Watertown, WI 53094
(920) 261-5363
<http://www.dadant.com/>

Honey Bee Ware
N1829 Municipal Drive (Hwy 76)
Greenville, WI 54942
(920) 779-3019
<http://www.honeybeeware.com/Home.php>

USDA POLLINATOR HABITAT INITIATIVE PROGRAM

The Pollinator Habitat Initiative is a Conservation Reserve Program designed to provide habitat for honeybees and native pollinator species. Participants of newly enrolled pollinator habitat practices may be eligible to receive:

- Annual rental payments
- Cost share payment covering up to 50 percent of the cost of establishing the pollinator practice
- A one-time CRP Sign-up Incentive Payment for each Continuous CRP acre enrolled. These payments are not available for land enrolled through general CRP signups.
- Cost share payment covering 50 percent of the cost of mid-contract management.

Contact your local FSA office at (262) 878-1243 or go online at www.fsa.usda.gov for more information.



LOCAL WORK GROUPS

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in Wisconsin has announced the schedule for 2015 Local Working Group (LWG) meetings. Twenty one meetings will be held across Wisconsin in July and August to gather input and help set priorities for USDA conservation programs under the 2014 Farm Bill.

Local Working Groups offer a seat at the table for interested individuals and groups to advise NRCS on how best to set priorities and locally implement conservation programs. Members are diverse with an interest and focus on local agriculture and natural resource issues. Farmers representing a variety of crops and livestock raised within the local area, private woodland owners, representatives of agricultural and environmental organizations, and representatives of other agriculture and natural resource agencies are welcome and should be represented.

The main program discussed at the meetings will be the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), the primary federal conservation program for agricultural and forest lands. EQIP offers technical and financial assistance to help landowners with needed conservation practices for water quality, soil health, wildlife and other natural resources.

Racine, Kenosha, and Milwaukee Counties are a part of the Southern Lakes Local Work Group. Anyone interested in becoming a member can contact their local NRCS office in Union Grove at 262-878-1243 ext. 3. The meetings are open to the public.

PROGRAM SIGNUPS

Producers will want to plan ahead and sign up early this year for USDA conservation funding for 2016. If you are interested in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), applications must be received by October 2, 2015.

By getting applications in early, we have time for staff to go out to the farm to plan all the needed practices for the particular field. It's easier to do an accurate plan before the snow flies, when you can see the actual landscape.

Producers who are interested in practices that may require permits, such as manure storage or streambank restoration, should begin planning and seeking permits as soon as possible. Applicants with shovel-ready projects (with designs completed and permits obtained) will receive higher priority.

STAFFING UPDATE

There are some changes underway with NRCS staffing. Beginning July 27th Brandi Richter will become the District Conservationist in Walworth County as well as Racine, Kenosha, and Milwaukee Counties. She will be splitting her time between the Elkhorn and Union Grove NRCS offices. The best way to reach her will be via e-mail at brandi.richter@wi.usda.gov or cell phone at 414-303-0266.

If you stop in the NRCS office in Union Grove you may see a new face. We welcomed Nick Goetsch as a temporary employee for the summer. Nick is a UW-Milwaukee student majoring in Geography with a GIS minor. Nick's story is attached.

Local Work Groups
May 2015



FROM ONE “FIELD” TO ANOTHER

Back in 1995, Nicholas Goetsch was a high school graduate with a plan to go into the Armed Services “field” by joining the Army Infantry and make it a career. Things didn’t quite work out as he had planned; 5 ½ years later he was honorably discharged, but his start in the Army has encouraged him to continue on a federal career path. The Farm Service Agency and Natural Resources Conservation Service in Wisconsin have been the lucky recipients.

Nick was born and raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. He moved to Lac Du Flambeau, Wisconsin as a teen and graduated from Lakeland Union High School in Minocqua. After his 5 ½ years with the Army, Nick moved to Georgia and became a patrol officer with the Cobb County Police

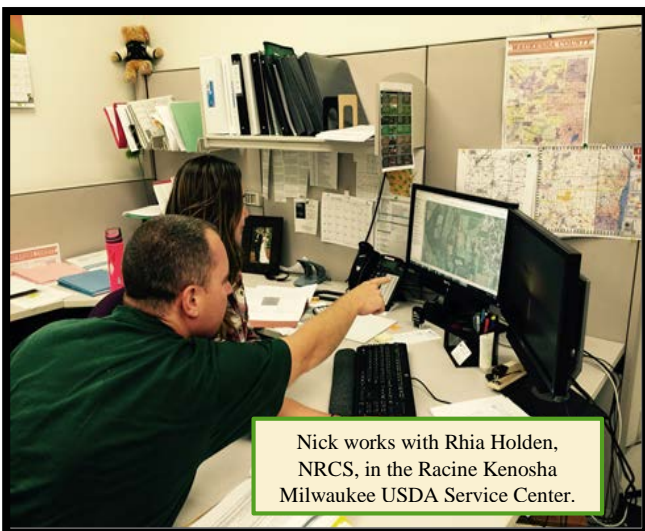
Department. He met and married his wife, and after a few years and a couple of kids, they both agreed that Wisconsin was a beautiful state, so they packed up and moved to West Allis.

After discussing his career options with a few police departments in Wisconsin, he decided that he would like to choose a different career path. He enrolled at University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee (UWM) majoring in Geography with a GIS minor.

Nick would regularly visit the MAVRC- Military and Veteran Resource Center on the campus of UWM to check in and find out if there were any opportunities for Veterans. He happened to stop in on the day Sandy Johnson, and Randy Kunsman, current Wisconsin FSA employees and Veterans themselves, were there for an FSA Career Recruitment Event. Nick discussed federal employment as well as internship opportunities with Sandy, and submitted his resume as an interested candidate for an internship to apply to his Major in Geography.

A few weeks later, Kim Iczkowski, County Executive Director with the Racine Kenosha Milwaukee Farm Service Agency contacted him and discussed what type of activities would be performed while interning over the summer. After review from Nick’s advisor, it was determined that a summer internship with the Farm Service Agency would use many of the GIS skills that Nick has learned during his coursework at UW-Milwaukee.

Nick learned about farms, tracts, and acreage reports in the first few weeks. Kim showed him how FSA uses GIS every day when dealing with farm records, reconstitutions, the Conservation Reserve Program, and acreage reports. Kim also introduced him to the local NRCS District Conservationist, Brandi Richter and his path changed yet again. Wisconsin NRCS was able to direct hire Nick on as an intermittent employee. He has been learning about the role of GIS within the Natural Resources Conservation Service ever since.

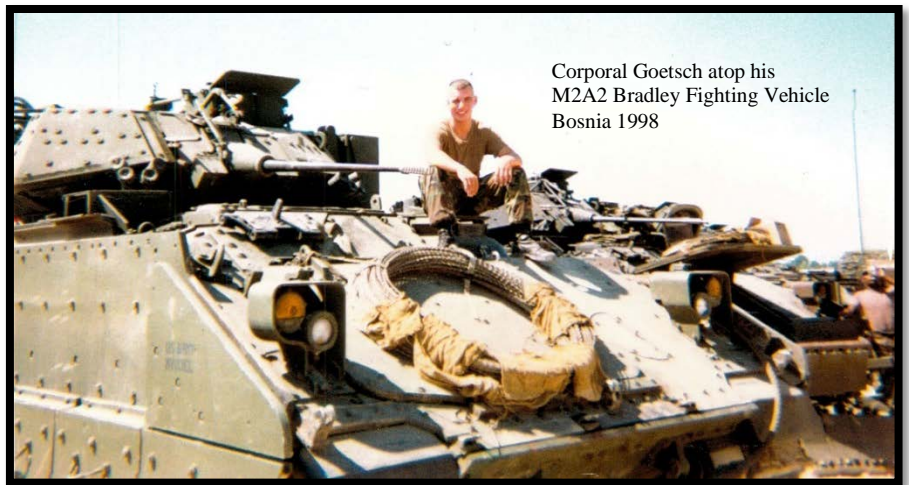


Nick works with Rhia Holden, NRCS, in the Racine Kenosha Milwaukee USDA Service Center.

Not coming from a farming background, his time with the USDA has been a very enlightening experience. He learned the important role the American Farmer plays in all of our daily lives, as well as the role that GIS plays in the programs that FSA and NRCS offer. When asked what he has enjoyed most about this internship with the USDA, he quickly responded, “Meeting the local farmers has been a great experience.”

He, along with his family, joined the FSA Staff at the Racine County Breakfast on the Farm and he continued to talk about the event with family and friends for the next week because of the great experience he had.

Nick will get his Bachelor’s Degree in December 2015. He is hopeful that he can continue his federal career path and end up serving in the “field” of American Agriculture and Conservation.



Corporal Goetsch atop his M2A2 Bradley Fighting Vehicle Bosnia 1998



Racine County Land Conservation

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

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

Land Conservation Staff:

Chad Sampson, County Conservationist
Jonathan Grove, Conservation Specialist
& Kelsey Maynard, Conservation Planner

2015 RACINE COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION TREE AND SHRUB PROGRAM

Thanks to those of you who participated in the 32nd Annual Tree and Shrub Program sale. Our numbers were slightly up from last year selling a total of 27,900 seedlings. The 2016 order forms will be distributed in the fall with an anticipated pick up date of mid-April 2016.



2014 Racine County Land Conservation Booth

RACINE COUNTY FAIR JULY 29TH – AUGUST 2ND

Summer is finally here, which means it's time for the Racine County Fair being held from July 29th to August 2nd. The Racine County Land Conservation staff will be on site at the fair to answer general conservation questions, and discuss project installation procedures and programs currently available. There will also be a display with conservation programs and project photos available for viewing. Handouts detailing several different programs and other helpful conservation information can also be found at our booth. While there don't forget to sign up for the 2015-2016 tree program mailing list. See you at the fair!

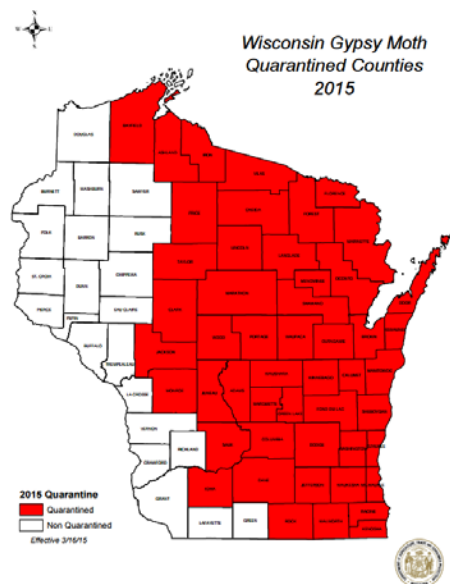
GRASSED WATERWAYS IN 2016?

Our office is seeing a continued high demand for grassed waterways over the past few years. Gullies can be repaired with technical and cost-share assistance. During this process, staff will visit the site, survey elevations, note existing tile issues, and interpret the best management practice for your location. Planting winter wheat during the fall allows the staff to easily conduct these procedures. Staff can put together a construction plan while you have an opportunity to sign all necessary contracts, permits, and related documents to prepare for 2016 construction.



Waterway

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

UPDATED REPORT ON WISCONSIN AGRICULTURAL LAND PRICES

"Wisconsin Agricultural Land Prices 2008-2014", compiled by the Center for Dairy Profitability, finds that the average price of agricultural land sold in Wisconsin in 2014 reached \$3,935. This was a 5% increase from 2013. Strong dairy prices and low interest rates helped to create new record highs. The total acres sold declined by 5% and the number of sales were down by 8%. Read the detailed report, including county-specific figures at <http://www.cdp.wisc.edu/Whats%20New.htm>.

2015 FARM FRESH ATLAS™ OF SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN AVAILABLE ONLINE



The Farm Fresh Atlas™ of Southeastern Wisconsin is a regional food guide that includes farms, farms, farmers' markets, restaurants, stores and other businesses that sell local food and use sustainable production and business practices. The Atlas is now available online at www.farmfreshsewi.org. Interested in listing your farm, market, or business in the 2016 issue? Contact Leigh Presley, UW-Extension Agriculture Educator in Racine and Kenosha Counties at 262-767-2905 or 262-857-1948 or leigh.presley@ces.uwex.edu.

PRICING HAY? TRY THE NEW UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EXTENSION APP

Farmers and landowners can get help identifying the price of hay, and/or negotiate the sale or purchase of standing hay through a new smartphone app that can quickly find hay price information. Users of this app can also enter projected hay yield, cutting schedule and harvest costs to calculate a standing value per acre according to the app developer, Greg Blonde, University of Wisconsin-Extension Waupaca County agriculture agent. "This new mobile tool helps farmers and rural landowners access the latest hay market information on the go, plus gives them a simple tool to help estimate field value when considering buying or selling standing hay," Blonde said.

The app is free and available for Android smart phones and tablets on the Google Play store by searching for "Hay Pricing" or www.play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.smartmapsconsulting.haypricing.

WISCONSIN FARM TECHNOLOGY DAYS: DANE COUNTY, AUGUST 25-27, 2015



Host Farm: Statz Brothers, Inc., Sun Prairie

The Wisconsin Farm Technology Days is the largest agricultural show in Wisconsin and one of the largest in the nation. 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. Learn more about the 2015 Farm Technology Days at <http://www.wifarmtechnologydays.com/>

Walworth County will be hosting the 2016 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days at Snudden Farms in Lake Geneva.