

Ties to the Land Newsletter

April 2016-June 2016



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

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FSA REMINDS CRP PARTICIPANTS OF PRIMARY NESTING SEASON REQUIREMENTS

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) participants are reminded that maintenance and management activities on CRP acres must be completed outside of the primary nesting season, which begins May 15th and continues through August 1st.

CRP participants must not engage in any CRP maintenance or management activities during the primary nesting season that is listed in their current conservation plan. Participants with maintenance issues that require attention prior to the end of nesting season must contact the county FSA office for permission prior to performing any spot spraying or spot mowing on CRP acres.

Failure to contact the county FSA office prior to any maintenance on CRP acres during nesting season may result in payment reductions or possible contract termination. For questions or more information about maintenance and management activities of CRP acres, please visit the Racine/Kenosha/Milwaukee FSA county office or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp>.

FSA LOANS AVAILABLE TO ASSIST TRANSFERRING FARMS TO THE NEXT GENERATION

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has loan programs to assist individuals in obtaining annual operating credit, to purchase cattle or machinery, and to purchase or improve farm real estate. FSA can also work with other lenders under joint financing type arrangements when the amount of credit needed by an applicant exceeds the FSA direct loan limits of \$300,000 on operating and/or personal property loans, and \$300,000 on real estate loans. Loans are funded based on the date of application, but during times of limited funding, loans to Beginning Farmers and Underserved Applicants (women and/or minority owned operations) are given priority.

If you or someone you know is thinking about transferring the farm to the next generation, FSA has loan programs that can assist qualified individuals to acquire and own their own farms. Getting new entrants into agriculture can benefit many people and help to provide this nation with a high quality and adequate food supply for generations to come.

For questions regarding any farm loans, please contact the Racine/Kenosha/Milwaukee FSA Office.

IS STORAGE A PROBLEM? FARM STORAGE FACILITY LOANS AVAILABLE

Are you struggling to find storage for your farm product? USDA has a program to help producers build or upgrade a number of farm-storage facilities. The Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides very low-interest financing to assist producers with the construction or rehabilitation of storage structures.

The maximum amount of a loan through the FSFL program is \$500,000 per structure with FSA loaning on up to 85% of the eligible costs. Loan terms of seven years (for loans less than \$100,000), seven or 10 years (for loans between \$100,000 and \$250,000) or seven, 10 or 12 years if the loan is greater than \$250,000 are available.

Currently, the interest rates for loans approved in April are:

- 7 year loan: 1.625%
- 10 year loan: 1.875%
- 12 year loan: 2.000%

*The interest rate in effect at the time the loan is approved is locked in for the life of the loan.

The program is designed to help ensure that producers have adequate capacity to store their harvested production until they feed or sell the harvested crop. Loans are available for bunkers, flat storage, hay barns, bins, grain drying and handling facilities as well as silos and oxygen limiting structures. Loans are also available for fruit, vegetable, honey and biomass storage. ***New this year, loans are also available for butter, cheese, eggs, yogurt, milk bulk tanks, meat and poultry cold storage, and maple sap bulk tanks. Hops, aquaculture, and floriculture storage and handling equipment is now eligible as well.*

A Farm Storage Facility Loan needs to be approved before any site preparation or construction can begin.

Anyone interested in an FSFL needs to contact the Racine/Kenosha/Milwaukee County FSA office **at least six weeks prior to any planned construction to allow for loan processing**. All loans require a \$100 non-refundable loan application fee.

USDA EXPANDS SAFETY-NET FOR DAIRY OPERATIONS ADDING NEXT-GENERATION FAMILY MEMBERS

Dairy farms participating in the Margin Protection Program (MPP) can now update their production history when an eligible family member joins the operation. The voluntary program, established by the 2014 Farm Bill, protects participating dairy producers when the margin – the difference between the price of milk and feed costs – falls below levels of protection selected by the applicant.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) published a final rule which makes these changes effective on April 13, 2016. Any dairy operation already enrolled in the Margin Protection Program that had an intergenerational transfer occur will have an opportunity to increase the dairy operations production history during the 2017 registration and annual coverage election period. The next election period begins on July 1, 2016, and ends on Sept. 30, 2016. For intergenerational transfers occurring on or after July 1, 2016, notification must be made to the FSA within 60 days of purchasing the additional cows. Each participating dairy operation is authorized one intergenerational transfer at any time of its choosing until 2018.

For \$100 a year, dairy producers can receive basic catastrophic protection that covers 90 percent of milk production at a \$4 margin coverage level. For additional premiums, operations can protect 25 to 90 percent of production history with margin coverage levels from \$4.50 to \$8, in 50 cent increments. Annual enrollment in the program is required in order to receive margin protection. The final rule also provides improved risk protection for dairy farmers that pay premiums to buy-up higher levels of coverage by clarifying that 90 percent of production is covered below the \$4 level even if a lower percentage was selected above the \$4 margin.

Earlier this year, FSA gave producers the opportunity to pay their premium through additional options including via their milk cooperative or handler. This rule facilitates those options and also clarifies that the catastrophic level protection at \$4 will always cover 90 percent of the production history, even if a producer selected a less than a 90 percent percentage for the buy-up coverage.

Assuming current participation, had the Margin Protection Program existed from 2009 to 2014, premiums and fees would have totaled \$500 million while providing producers with \$2.5 billion in financial assistance, nearly \$1 billion more than provided by the old Milk Income Loss Contract program during the same period.

For more information, visit FSA online at www.fsa.usda.gov/dairy or stop the Racine/Kenosha/Milwaukee FSA office and ask about the Margin Protection Program.

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Kenosha Land & Water Conservation
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 (262) 857-1900 FAX (262) 857-1920
 Website: <http://www.kenoshacounty.org/index.aspx?nid=676>

FOX RIVER FLOOD MITIGATION PROGRAM

Over the last 20-years the Fox River Flood Mitigation Program has reduced flood damage and the potential for injury to affected persons by acquiring and demolishing residential structures and relocating displaced residents from the 1% annual probability (100-year) floodplain of the Fox River.

The project area for this program is the 100-year floodplain of the Fox River within the Towns of Salem and Wheatland and the Village of Silver Lake in the west central part of Kenosha County. The program has acquired and demolished 104 dwelling and an additional 63 vacant parcels.

The purpose of the program is to reduce the threat to the health and safety of area residents and rescue workers resulting from the frequent and severe flooding of the Fox River. A secondary goal of the program is the removal of blighted and hazardous dwellings.

Funding for this program came from a variety of sources and included; HUD Disaster Recovery, HUD Community Development Block Grant, FEMA Flood Mitigation Assistance, FEMA Hazard Mitigation Assistance, FEMA Pre-Disaster Mitigation, and the WDNR Municipal Flood Control Program. Most of these program were only funded following a State Disaster Declaration.

CREATION OF FUNDING MECHANISM TO ACQUIRE AT RISK FLOODPLAIN PROPERTIES

Beginning with the 2016 fiscal year the Kenosha County Board resolved to allow the Division of Planning & Development to use specific funds from within the Division budget to cover the cost of acquisition and incidental related expenditures of properties that are located within the 100-year recurrence interval floodplain. This resolution will enable the Division of Planning & Development to purchase floodplain residences and vacant floodplain parcels from willing sellers, real estate agents and auction/sheriff sales as they become available.

Kenosha County is also taking applications from landowners who wish to donate their vacant property, in the Fox River Flood Mitigation Program Area or the Floodplain Overlay (FPO) District which encompasses those areas that may be covered by floodwater during the regional flood as shown on the FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps. By donating floodprone lands you will reduce infrastructure maintenance costs, help maintain overbank storage areas along the watercourse, protect water quality, preserve wildlife habitat, provide recreational opportunities and preserve open space.

All floodplain property acquired by Kenosha County under these programs will have certain conditions and restrictions that shall apply in perpetuity to the Property and are attached to the deed and shall be binding upon all subsequent owners of such real estate. The Property shall be dedicated and maintained in perpetuity as open space for conservation of natural floodplain functions. Such uses may include: parks for outdoor recreational activities; wetlands management; nature reserves; cultivation; grazing; camping (except where adequate warning time is not available to allow evacuation); unimproved unpaved parking lots; buffer zones; and other uses consistent with FEMA guidance for open space acquisition. No new structures or improvements shall be erected on the Property.

If you think you might be interested or have any questions about these programs please contact Dan Treloar for more information at 262-857-1900.



KNOW YOUR FLOOD HAZARD

To view the Special Flood Hazard Maps for your property or to discuss Kenosha County floodplain regulations please contact the Division of Planning Operations or visit the Kenosha County interactive mapping website:
<http://www.kenoshacounty.org/index.aspx?NID=673>.

FEMA has also developed the Flood Map Service Center for flood hazard information. To find your official flood map, access a range of other flood hazard products, and take advantage of tools for better understanding your flood risks go to:
<https://msc.fema.gov/portal>.

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PROGRAM SIGNUPS

Producers will want to plan ahead and sign up early this year for USDA conservation funding for 2017. If you are interested in the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), applications must be received by September 2, 2016.

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, streambank restoration, or grassed waterways, 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.

COMPLIANCE TO MAINTAIN USDA PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

With spring finally drawing near, it's time to think about any maintenance activities that may affect your USDA program eligibility so don't forget to fill out a 1026 form when you are at the FSA office.

Wetlands:

If you drain, clear trees, fill, or otherwise manipulate a wetland so that it can be cropped, you will lose eligibility for USDA programs. Before you do any alteration to a wet area, including clearing trees or maintenance of existing drainage, contact NRCS or FSA to request a wetland determination. We recommend that requests are made at least a month ahead of anticipated alterations so that our staff has time to complete the determination. Since spring usually sees a higher rate of wetland determination requests, it could take longer for USDA participants to receive a completed determination.

To maintain eligibility, anyone participating in USDA farm programs, must self-certify that they have not produced crops on wetlands converted after December 23, 1985, and did not convert a wetland after November 28, 1990, to make agricultural production possible.

Highly Erodible Lands:

On highly erodible cropland, farmers must follow an acceptable conservation system. A conservation system is needed for all highly erodible cropland, including any new land being brought into production. Federal law requires that all persons that produce agriculture commodities must protect all cropland classified as being highly erodible from excessive erosion. For compliance, conservation systems must result in a "substantial reduction" in cropland soil loss, defined as 2T or less, with T being the tolerable soil loss level.

Acceptable Conservation Systems, specifically "plans," are required to maintain USDA program eligibility. Farmers self-certify that acceptable conservation systems are being used.

Racine County Land Conservation



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

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

Land Conservation Division Staff:

Chad Sampson, County Conservationist
Jonathan Grove, Conservation Specialist
& Max Perrault, Conservation Planner

\$28 PER ACRE FOR DEVELOPING A NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLAN

Nutrient management is a way for Wisconsin farmers to ensure that their crops receive nutrients at the right rate, time and place to match crop needs and minimize nutrient losses from fields. Nutrient management planning is one of the best practices farmers can use to reduce excess nutrient applications to their cropland and the water quality problems that result from nutrient runoff to lakes, streams and groundwater. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) tracks farms that develop and update their NM plans when NM Plan Checklist forms are submitted to DATCP by farmers, agronomists, and public agency staff.

Farmers can receive \$28 per acre towards establishing a nutrient management plan for eligible cropland. If you are interested in establishing a nutrient management plan for the cropland you rent or own or to find out if your land is eligible to take advantage of the current available funding, contact Racine County Land Conservation at 262-886-8440. Farmers may work with a crop consultant or advisor to write nutrient management plans or they may also qualify to write their own plans by successfully completing a training course every four years. Free software (SnapPlus) is also available for download.



Farmland Preservation Program (FPP) participants will need to start complying with the new performance standards in 2017, having a NM plan is part of the new compliance requirement, at which time; Racine County Land Conservation staff will work with farmers and landowners to add these practices to those they are currently implementing. More information can be found online about establishing a nutrient management plan at: http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Nutrient_Management/index.aspx.

CONSERVATION RESERVE ENHANCEMENT PROGRAM - CREP



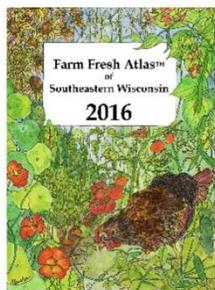
How does earning a guaranteed \$200 per acre sound? If you have cropland adjacent to a stream, canal, river, drainage ditch or even a wetland you may be eligible to earn \$200 or more per acre per year for the next 15 years through CREP by installing grassed buffers along your surface waters.

Contact the Racine County Land Conservation office at 262-886-8440 or contact your local Farm Service Agency office at 262-878-3353 and find out how much you can earn!

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YOUTH TRACTOR SAFETY COURSE SET FOR JUNE

UW-Extension in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth Counties are collaborating to provide a 24-hour tractor safety course for youth ages 12-16. This program meets the requirements of Wisconsin Act 455, which requires youth under the age of 16 to hold a certificate of training in order to operate a tractor or self-propelled implement of husbandry on a public road. It also meets the child labor requirements in agriculture under the Fair Labor Standards Act, pertaining to the employment of youth ages 14-15 on farms not operated by their parents or guardians. Classes will be held **Monday through Friday, June 20th – June 24th, 2016 from 8am – Noon**. Testing will be held on **Monday, June 27th from 8am to Noon**. Youth are required to attend all sessions. The tractor safety course will be held at Burlington High School. This course includes hands-on driving exercises, various hands-on safety demonstrations including first aid, fire safety and pesticide safety. Students will also be required to do homework assignments. The course costs \$50 per participant; snacks will be provided each day. This course is limited to 25 participants. Registration information can be found at <http://walworth.uwex.edu/agriculture/youth-safety/>. Please call Leigh Presley, Kenosha and Racine County UW-Extension Agriculture Educator, at 262-767-2905 or 262-857-1948 if you have any questions.



2016 FARM FRESH ATLAS™ OF SOUTHEASTERN WISCONSIN AVAILABLE ONLINE

The Farm Fresh Atlas™ of Southeastern Wisconsin is a regional food guide that includes 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 2017 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.

IDENTIFYING PLANT DISEASES WITH HELP FROM THE UW PLANT DISEASE DIAGNOSTICS CLINIC

Wisconsin homeowners, businesses and agricultural producers can turn to the Plant Disease Diagnostics Clinic at the University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension for assistance in identifying plant diseases and control recommendations. The clinic does diagnosis on virtually any plant you can imagine, with the exception of turf. If you have a diseased plant you can submit a sample to the clinic, either through your county Extension office or directly to the lab. A diagnosis is determined using a variety of diagnostic techniques, and clients receive a personalized report with the results for their sample(s) as well as supplemental information, like University of Wisconsin factsheets on the disease in question and appropriate control recommendations for clients, emphasizing cultural controls which would reduce possible misuse of pesticides. There are nominal charges for most tests, but there is no fee for testing for late blight. Information about contacting the clinic and submitting samples can be found at <http://pddc.wisc.edu>. The website also provides online resources such as fact sheets about plant diseases and the Wisconsin Disease Almanac which provides weekly updates about plant diseases identified in the clinic.

WISCONSIN FARM ACCOUNT AND RECORD BOOKS AVAILABLE

2016 Farm Account and Record Books are available for sale at the Kenosha and Racine County UW-Extension offices. Books are 8.5" x 11" and cost \$7.00 each.

INTERESTED IN QUICKBOOKS?

Interested in learning more about how to use Quickbooks to improve your farm financial recordkeeping skills? UW-Extension is considering offering a program on the accounting software, tailored for use by farmers. Please call Leigh Presley, Kenosha and Racine County UW-Extension, at 262-767-2905 or 262-857-1948 if you're interested in attending.

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