

Ties to the Land Newsletter

January-March 2014



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

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

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





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

FSA COUNTY COMMITTEE SEEKS ADVISOR NOMINATIONS

The Racine Kenosha Milwaukee Farm Service Agency (FSA) office is currently searching for minority and female producers interested in serving as an advisor to the FSA County Committee. **It is recommended that interested groups or individuals send advisor nominations to the FSA Office by February 14th, 2014.**

The purpose of the Advisor is to insure that the problems and viewpoints of underrepresented groups are understood and considered in local FSA actions and to increase awareness and participation in FSA activities including elections.

Other duties of the County Committee advisors include:

- Attending each committee meeting, including executive sessions.
- Participating in all deliberations, although advisors do not have voting rights.
- Helping to develop interest and incentives in female and minority group members for considering FSA work as a career.
- Actively soliciting candidates from underrepresented groups for nomination during the committee election process.
- Performing special duties at the County Committee's request.
- Appointments are for a 12-month period. For 2014, Advisors are expected to be appointed sometime between March 1st and April 1st.

County Committee members and advisors make decisions that are important to farmers and agricultural landowners throughout the county. As a representative of the U.S. government entrusted with this responsibility, each committee member and advisor must make sure all producers are treated fairly.

If interested in serving as an advisor to the FSA County Committee for 2014, please contact Kim Iczkowski at Kimberly.iczkowski@wi.usda.gov or 262-878-3353.

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NEW COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION BALLOTS TO BE MAILED

The County Committee Election ballots that were mailed to producers in November were incorrectly printed with the producer's name and address on the back of the ballot. County Committee elections must use a secret ballot so the misprinted ballots cannot be used. Please destroy or recycle the misprinted ballot. If you have already voted, your ballot will be destroyed unopened.

New ballots were mailed to producers on December 20, 2013. These ballots will indicate that they are the corrected ballot in several places, including on the outside of the mailing, on the ballot and on the outside of the return envelope.

The corrected ballot must be returned to the Racine Kenosha Milwaukee County FSA Office or be postmarked by January 17, 2014. Ballots will be counted at the FSA Office on January 22, 2014 at 9:00 a.m. All newly elected county committee members will take office February 18, 2014. All county committee members whose term expires on December 31st will have their term extended to January 31, 2014.

County committee members are an important component of the operations of FSA and provide a link between the agricultural community and USDA. Farmers elected to county committees help deliver FSA programs at the local level, applying their knowledge and judgment to make decisions on commodity price support programs; conservation programs; incentive indemnity and disaster programs for some commodities; emergency programs and eligibility. FSA committees operate within official regulations designed to carry out federal laws.

To be an eligible voter, farmers and agricultural landowners must participate or cooperate in an FSA program. A person who is not of legal voting age, but supervises and conducts the farming operations of an entire farm may also be eligible to vote.

More information on county committees, such as the 2013 fact sheet and brochures, can be found on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or at our office.

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2014 ACREAGE REPORTING DATES

Producers now have until January 15, 2014 to report crops that had a November 15, 2013 reporting deadline without paying a late-file fee. Crops under this waiver include alfalfa, perennial forages, wheat, fall-seeded small grains and pasture. The Risk Management Agency (RMA) did not grant a waiver so producers need to consult their crop insurance agent for deadlines for insured crops.

In order to comply with FSA program eligibility requirements, all producers are encouraged to contact our office to file an accurate crop certification report by the applicable deadline.

The following are the applicable acreage reporting dates:

January 2, 2014:	Honey
January 15, 2014:	Alfalfa, perennial forages, wheat, fall-seeded small grains and pasture
February 1, 2014:	Maple Sap
July 15, 2014:	All other 2014 crops



The following exceptions apply to the above acreage reporting dates:

If the crop has not been planted by the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 15 calendar days after planting is completed.

If a producer acquires additional acreage after the above acreage reporting date, then the acreage must be reported no later than 30 calendar days after purchase or acquiring the lease. Appropriate documentation must be provided to our office.

If a perennial forage crop is reported with the intended use of "cover only," "green manure," "left standing," or "seed," then the acreage must be reported by July 15th.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) policy holders should note that the acreage reporting date for NAP covered crops is the earlier of the dates listed above or 15 calendar days before harvesting of the crop begins.

Late filed acreage reports can be accepted after the established deadlines but a late-filing fee will be assessed. At a minimum, this fee amounts to at least \$46.00 per FSA established farm number.

For questions regarding acreage reporting please contact our office at 262-878-3353.

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FARM PROGRAM AVAILABLE FOR FARMERS WITH DISABILITIES



Easter Seals Wisconsin, the University of Wisconsin Extension Service (UWEX) and AgrAbility of Wisconsin (AAW) are partnering to provide farmers with disabilities resources and opportunities to continue farming. The program, called Farm Assessment and Rehabilitation Methods (FARM) is available throughout the state of Wisconsin and is changing farmers' lives.

FARM Program staff offer farmers with disabilities assessments to determine what "assistive technology" may be available to help them continue farming. The FARM Program does not have direct funding for the assistive technology; however, the FARM staff can connect farmers to potential funding sources for technology, equipment or support that will allow them to farm independently. Assistive technology, job restructuring, stress management, peer support, farm safety, and health care coordination are just some of the options this program offers to help farmers continue to grow their business.

The program is available for any farmer, new or existing, with a disability that limits them from completing their farm work. A wide number of limitations qualify for the program, including: limb amputation, back injuries, arthritis, stroke, and damaged knees, shoulders or other areas of the body that experience impairments from years of repetitive use. There is no cost to the farmer to participate in the FARM Program and all information is confidential.

Initially farmers provide basic information about their impairment, as well as their agricultural operation. Farmers are paired with FARM staff to connect them to resources and schedule an on-farm visit with a FARM Rehabilitation Specialist. These specialists have a farming background and use their experience to conduct an assessment of the operation and daily work activities. This assessment will be used to determine the needs of that individual and design a customized assistance plan for the farmer and the operation. Any interested participants should contact AgrAbility by calling 608-262-9336 or by emailing them at aaw@mailplus.wisc.edu.

COMMODITY LOAN REMINDERS

MAINTAINING THE QUALITY OF LOANED GRAIN

Bins are ideally designed to hold a level volume of grain. When bins are overfilled and grain is heaped up, airflow is hindered and the chance of spoilage increases.

Producers who take out marketing assistance loans and use the farm-stored grain as collateral should remember that they are responsible for maintaining the quality of the grain through the term of the loan.

UNAUTHORIZED DISPOSITION OF GRAIN

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producer's name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. Always call before you haul any grain under loan.

ALWAYS REMEMBER FARM SAFETY

Flowing grain in a storage bin or gravity-flow wagon can be fatal. It takes less than five seconds for a person caught in flowing grain to be trapped.

The mechanical aspects of grain handling equipment, also presents a real danger. Augers, power take offs, and other moving parts can grab people or clothing.

These hazards, along with pinch points and missing shields, are dangerous enough for adults; not to mention children. It is always advisable to keep children a safe distance from operating farm equipment. Always use extra caution when backing or maneuvering farm machinery. Ensure everyone is visibly clear and accounted for before machinery is engaged.

FSA wants all farmers to have a safe and productive farming operation, and that begins with putting safety first.

JANUARY INTEREST RATES	
COMMODITY LOAN	1.125%
7-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	2.250%
10-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	2.875%
12-YEAR FACILITY LOAN	3.000%
FARM OPERATING-DIRECT	1.875%
FARM OWNERSHIP-DIRECT/CONSERVATION LOAN	4.125%
FARM OWNERSHIP-DOWN PAYMENT	1.500%

FSA Upcoming Dates to Remember	
January 15, 2014	Deadline to report alfalfa, perennial forages, wheat, fall-seeded small grains and pasture (Normal deadline is November 15 th . This is an extension or 2014 ONLY)
January 17, 2014	Final date to return County Committee Election ballot to FSA Office
January 20, 2014	USDA Service Center closed in observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Day
February 17, 2014	USDA Service Center closed in observance of President's Day
March 15, 2014	Deadline to purchase crop insurance (through private insurance agent) or Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP- through FSA) coverage on all spring-seeded crops such as corn, soybeans, cabbage, tomatoes, carrots, broccoli, cucumbers, garlic, greens, onions, pumpkins, etc.
March 15, 2014	Final date to obtain a Marketing Assistance Loan on small grains (oats, barley, wheat)
May 15, 2014	Final date to obtain a Marketing Assistance Loan on coarse grains (corn, soybeans)
May 26, 2014	USDA Service Center closed in observance of Memorial Day
July 15, 2014	Deadline to report spring seeded crops including corn, soybeans, and newly seeded hay



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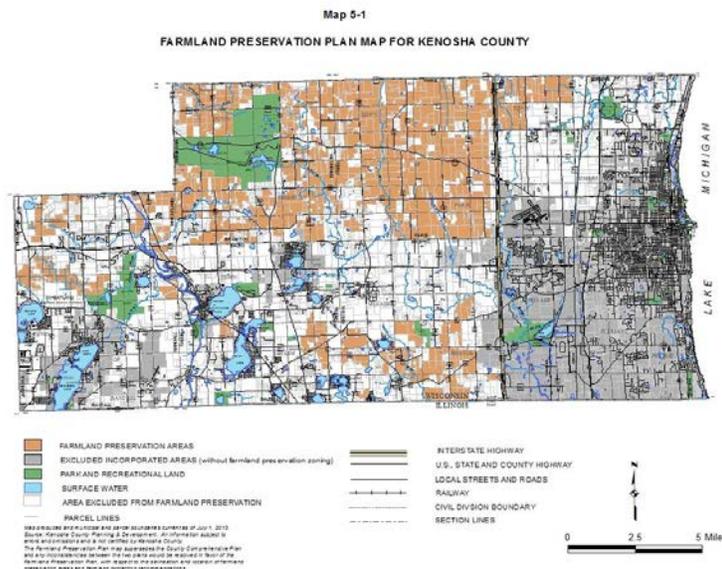
Kenosha County Farmland Preservation Plan – 2nd Edition Officially Adopted

On November 19, 2013, the Kenosha County Board of Supervisors adopted a comprehensive rewrite of the *Kenosha County Farmland Preservation Plan* to meet new state standards under Chapter 91, Wisconsin Statutes. This plan will guide county's farmland and agricultural industry and preserve agricultural land and natural resource areas into the future. Kenosha County intends to use land use planning, zoning regulations, and the development of potential agricultural enterprise areas to preserve farmland and support the economic contributions of the agricultural industry. *The Multi-jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Kenosha County: 2035* will be amended in 2014, to include the text and Farmland Preservation Areas Map adopted in the *Kenosha County Farmland Preservation Plan*.

The *Kenosha County Farmland Preservation Plan* delineates Farmland Preservation Areas (FPAs) throughout Kenosha County. An FPA is an area that is planned primarily for agriculture use or agriculture-related use. Map 5-1 below shows the Farmland Preservation Areas identified under the *Kenosha County Farmland Preservation Plan* (FPP). Designated Farmland Preservation Areas meet the recommended prime agricultural land mapping criteria or are areas of local significance as identified by local officials and farmers. The Farmland Preservation Areas encompass a total area of approximately 38,519 acres, or 61 square miles. This represents approximately 25 percent of the total area of the County. Farmland Preservation Areas are identified within five Kenosha County townships and the Village of Bristol, except for the Town of Randall and the Village Pleasant Prairie.

The *Multi-jurisdictional Comprehensive Plan for Kenosha County: 2035* was used to determine if a parcel was eligible to be in an FPA. If the comprehensive plan designated an area for potential development the parcels in that area were not included on the farmland preservation map. For a landowner to be eligible for State farmland preservation tax credits in 2014, lands must first be located in a Farmland Preservation Area. (Note: as long as your land is still considered agricultural for assessment purposes, you should still be eligible for "use value assessment," regardless of how your property is depicted on the farmland preservation plan map.)

Visit <http://www.kenoshacounty.org/index.aspx?nid=732> to access the full FPP or view large scale farmland preservation maps.



CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM OFFERS PAYMENTS FOR FARM AND FOREST LANDS

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting new applications for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). Farm and forest landowners may apply by February 7 for possible 2014 funding. CSP encourages agricultural producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt additional ones on their operations.

Applications can be made at any time at all USDA Service Centers, but only applications received by February 7 will be ranked for funding in 2014. The program is open to all farmers, regardless of size or type of operation. In 2013, 308 Wisconsin farmers and forestland owners enrolled in CSP, **with an average payment of \$5,408 per contract.** Over \$1.6 million in payments will be made to those farm families this year and over \$8.3 million over the course of the five-year contract.

For many farmers, CSP offers reward and recognition for the conservation they are already doing, plus a little extra incentive to try a few new practices. We encourage interested farmers to apply now to be considered for funding. Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, non-industrial private forestland, and tribal agricultural lands. For the 2013 sign up, average payments in Wisconsin were \$19 per acre for cropland, \$13 per acre for pasture, and \$4 per acre for woodland. Payments are made annually for each of the five years of the contract. CSP is open to small and large operations, with farms already enrolled ranging from just a couple of acres to over 4,000 acres of cropland. Farmers will need to document their current and proposed conservation practices which will be used to rank applications and determine payments. NRCS field staff will also conduct on-site field verifications of applicants' information.

For more information, visit www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov. You may also contact Brandi Richter or Nick Besasie by phone at 262-878-1243 x 3.



THINK AHEAD- GET YOUR REQUESTS IN NOW!

Did you find broken tile during the fall harvest? Do you have tile to replace, ditches to clean out or new tile to add to a field? Winter is the perfect time to get your wetland determination requests in. Start the process with FSA. You'll complete a determination request form and mark up a map. It's very helpful if you know location, size and depth of your tile or ditches. NRCS will then refer your request to our Wetland Determination Team in Juneau. The team is using the winter months to get a head start on office work that needs to be done prior to completing a site visit. **Starting the process now may increase your chances of your project being shovel ready this spring.** Please don't wait until you have a contractor on site, start the process now!



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



WILDLIFE DAMAGE PROGRAM APPROVED

In December, the Racine County Board approved a 5 year contract renewal accepting residents to be eligible for the Wisconsin Wildlife Damage, Abatement and Claims Program (WDACP).

The county is contracted with USDA-APHIS – Wildlife Services to provide program assistance.

If you have crop damage due to deer, geese, turkeys, or cranes then contact USDA-APHIS – Wildlife Service at 1-800-433-0663. **All crop damage must be reported within 14 days of the first damage each year.**



NEW FARMLAND PRESERVATION PLAN ADOPTED

The Racine County Board recently adopted an update to the Racine County Farmland Preservation Plan. The plan identifies “prime farmland” in Racine County. The plan also identifies areas zoned for the prime farmland tax credit and new zoning rules. The A-1 zoning areas allow farmers to be eligible for the Farmland Preservation Program tax credit of \$7.50 per acre. The tax credit is available for the farmers that receive an annual certification form from the Land Conservation office and are in compliance or on a schedule of compliance with the Agricultural Performance Standards. If you want to be part of the program, please contact us at 262-886-8440.

RACINE COUNTY RIPARIAN BUFFER PROGRAM



We are still accepting applications for riparian buffers on Racine County farmland. Does your cropland border a ditch, canal, or river? Are you located east of Hwy 45? Would you like to receive \$3000 per acre for a 15 year “set aside program” contract? Then, call our office at 262-886-8440 for more details and to find out if you are eligible for buffers!

Riparian Grass Buffer Established along a creek

ANIMAL WASTE MANAGEMENT ORDINANCE

In 2012, the Racine County Board of Supervisors adopted an animal waste management ordinance. The ordinance regulates storage, stacking and spreading of manure. A permit is needed if you are planning to build a new manure storage structure, substantially alter an existing structure, or abandon an unused structure. The ordinance also requires all cropland to have a nutrient management plan. The nutrient management plan must be followed and updated according to the certified standards. Please contact our office with any questions or further details regarding the ordinance.



RIGHT: Manure Storage Abandonment (Removal)



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

UW EXTENSION HOSTING NEW WORKSHOP SERIES IN ELKHORN FOR SMALL BUSINESSES AND FARMERS

Beginning January 22, the UW-Cooperative Extension offices in Kenosha, Racine and Walworth Counties in cooperation with the UW Center for Dairy Profitability and Annie's Project are sponsoring What Every Small Business Should Know workshop series for small business owners and farmers.

The series of three workshops will be held on **Wednesdays, January 22, February 12, and Thursday, March 13 at the Walworth County Government Center in Elkhorn**. This series is for farmers and other business owners dealing with self-employment and management issues.

The What Every Small Business Should Know series workshops include:

Jan. 22, 2014, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm: Retirement Planning for the Self-Employed. This workshop will include strategies for qualified and nonqualified retirement plan options including 401ks, Roth 401ks, IRAs (traditional and Roth), profit sharing plans and executive deferred comp plans. It will also cover plans for businesses with employees and those without. Speaker: W. Ryan Zenk, JD, CFP®, Family Wealth Advisors, LLC

Feb. 12, 2014, 9:30 am – 12:30 pm: Exiting Gracefully: Business Successions and Exits. Even though many small business owners plan to work until their final days, this is not the reality for most. How can you start planning now to exit gracefully, turn the reins over to the next generation of managers and shift gears to a slower pace but still feel productive in your later years. Speakers: Joy Kirkpatrick, UW Center for Dairy Profitability & Martin Grosse, WDATCP Farm Center.

March 13, 11:30 am – 2:30 pm: Tech Tools for Business. This workshop will provide the latest in information technology tools, internet security and great productivity pointers for incorporating technology into your business. Speaker: Dennis Deery, Irish Rose Consulting

The cost of each workshop is \$15/participant, which provides materials, speakers and a light lunch. If you register for all three workshops by January 15, the total fee will be \$40, a \$5 savings. A brochure and registration information can be found at: <http://kenosha.uwex.edu/2013/10/25/what-every-small-business-owner-should-know/> Questions about the program can be directed to Rose Skora at 262-857-1945 or rose.skora@ces.uwex.edu.

QUICKBOOKS AND BEYOND WORKSHOP

An Introduction to QuickBooks and Beyond, for Farm Financial Recordkeeping workshop using QuickBooks software will be offered at the Walworth County Government Center in Elkhorn on **Thursday, March 20th from 9am to 3pm and Friday, March 21st from 9am - noon**. In this hands-on computer workshop you will develop a set of farm financial records and reports. You will learn how QuickBooks is structured, how it files work, and how to navigate in the system to tailor your financial recordkeeping for your farm business. Registration is \$25.00 and includes lunch, and materials. For registration information, please contact Peg Reedy with Walworth County UW Extension at peg.reedy@ces.uwex.edu or 262-741-4961 or Rose Skora with the Kenosha or Racine County UW Extension offices at rose.skora@ces.uwex.edu or 262-857-1945 or 262-767-2929. Space is limited to 20 people so please register early. Please note full payment for the workshop is required to guarantee a spot. The brochure is also available online at: <http://kenosha.uwex.edu/category/agricultural-news/>

This QuickBooks workshop is sponsored by UW-River Falls, Center for Dairy Profitability and UW-Extension in Kenosha, Racine, and Walworth Counties as well are partially funded through a grant from the USDA Risk Management Agency.