

November 2008Calendar of Events:

November

- 7 Crop Decisions 2009, Clark County Courthouse 1-3 pm
- 13 School for Beginning Farmers, Thorp High School, 11 am—1 pm
- 13 Mead Lake Mtg, Greenwood American Legion, 7 pm

December

- 3 Crop Decisions 2009, Clark County Courthouse 1-3 pm
- 4 Central Wisconsin Forage Council Mtg, Abbyland Truckstop, 10:30 am—2:30 pm
- 4 Soil & Water Nutrient Management Mtg, Eau Claire Expo Center, 10 am—3 pm
- 5 Soil & Water Nutrient Management Mtg, Bevedere Supper Club, Marshfield
- 9 Modernizing for Dairy Heifers, Abbotsford Library Community Room, 10 am—3 pm
- 10 Farm Bill Meeting, Loyal American Legion, 10 am—12:30 pm
- 19 Crop Decisions 2009, Clark County Courthouse, 1-3 pm

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Learning for life

Clark County

Extension Views

MILK QUALITY WHAT IS YOUR SEASONAL PATTERN?

Many dairy farms I've worked with on milk quality call me when their cell count has risen dramatically. While there are things that can be done when that happens it is easier to prevent mastitis than it is to cure it. One thing you can do is know what seasonal pattern your SCC follows. Is it typically higher in the summer or in the winter? Then once you know that, you can look at other changes that are going on in the cows environment during the high season. On

average, cell counts go up in the summer and go down in the winter. Bacteria just love warm temperatures, so summer is prime time for them. However you may find that on your farm winter is the high season. If that is the case then most likely, the winter spike can be managed around and avoided.

The first thing you can do is to identify if there is a certain group of cows that are causing the spike. For instance if you look at your

records and find that fresh cows are causing the spike then look at the fresh cow pen. Often cows calve outside in the summer and in winter they calve on a bedded pack. They could be getting infected on the pack and that is the only thing that would need attention to avoid the winter spike. Or you may find you cannot find a specific group of cows that are the problem and that the majority of cows are experiencing a spike you will want to look at the environment in the barn.

Continued on page 7

CHECK OUT UWEX CALENDAR OF EVENTS

November starts a new series called "Crop Decisions 2009". The program can be viewed in our Distance Learning Room next to our office here in the courthouse. This program will be a webinar presentation, with interaction between the presenters in Madison and the viewer in our county room. The first session will be Nov. 7th at 1:00—3:00 pm., presented by Carrie Laboski on managing high fertilizer cost. A complete list is outlined in the newsletter.

December 4th, at the Abbyland Truckstop, in the back meeting room, 10:30-2:30, will be the meeting of the Central Wisconsin Forage Council. Any producer or person who has an interest in forage production is welcome. The Central Wisconsin Forage Council is open to anyone in the adjoining counties who want to be involved with forage programs and research. Cost is \$10 for a noon meal and handouts. Contact the Clark County UWEX 715-743-5121 to make your reservation.

Deadline is Dec 2nd.

Dick Wolkowski will have a presentation comparing no-till, strip-till and zone-till. We will have an organizational meeting and have a wrap-up of the group's last year's programs.

Please read through the newsletter because there are many programs available. I am just mentioning two that will take place before next months newsletter will be sent out.

GAINING THE COMPETITIVE EDGE: A Dairy Seminar Series 2009

January 8, 2009
Meadowview Golf Course
Owen
10:30 a.m.—3:00 p.m.



Program

- **Farm Business Management Strategies for Uncertain Times**, with current uncertainty in our input and output markets, our old risk management practices may not work. What farm management strategies should we employ in these uncertain times? *Dr. Greg Hadley, Agriculture and Natural Resources Specialist, UW-River Falls*
- **Livestock Gross Margin for Dairy**, a new insurance product available for Wisconsin dairy producers that protects the gross

margin (milk value less feed costs) against unexpected price declines. *Dr. Victor Cabrera, Dairy Management Extension Specialist, UW-Madison*

- **Myth Busting Milk Routines**, the “real scoop” on what research shows about milking routines. Udder preparation and the overall milking routine are important aspects of implementing effective mastitis control. We will bust many of the common milking procedure

myths by presenting the most recent research data. *Dr. Pam Ruegg, Milk Quality Specialist, UW-Madison*

- **Calf Barn Ventilation – A Breath of Fresh Air**, microclimates in individual calf pens can be improved by using positive pressure tubes in naturally-ventilated freestalls. *Dr. Brian Holmes, Ag Engineer, UW-Madison*

Cost \$25 per person. Contact the Clark County UW-Extension for more information or a brochure at 715-743-5121.

Gaining the Competitive Edge Registration Form

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Phone _____

Cost \$25/Person. Registration Deadline: January 2, 2009. Additional \$10 late fee after deadline.

Make check payable to: UWEX and mail to: Dairy Seminar, UW-Extension, 517 Court St Room 104, Neillsville WI 54456.

If you have any questions contact Maria Bendixen, Clark County Dairy & Livestock Agent.



MODERNIZING FOR DAIRY HEIFERS

Clark, Taylor and Marathon County UW-Extension is sponsoring a Modernizing for Dairy Heifers Envisioning Profits on Tuesday, December 9th from 10:00 a.m.—3:00 p.m. at the Abbotsford Library Community Room (1 block NW of Hwy 13 and Business 29).



Heifers are the future of the farm. With

increasing feed prices they are costing more than ever to raise. Many producers are thinking about improving heifer housing to improve feed and labor efficiency, to help offset this increased cost. This program is designed to help producers improve heifer performance through modernization and management. Strategies will be covered from baby calves to springing heifers.

Schedule

Truth and Myths Associated with Rearing Dairy Replacement Heifers

by Pat Hoffman, Marshfield Ag Research Station

What is more important—days on feed, limit feeding, breeding efficiency or

age at first calving?

Professor Hoffman will lead a discussion regarding the perception versus the reality of key heifer management practices.

First Responder Training: Diagnosing Who Is Sick & What Needs to Be Done by Sandy Stuttgen,

Taylor County Agriculture Agent
On your farm you are the first responder when an animal is not doing well but not all of us are trained to handle those situations. Sandy will help you develop a plan of action for animals when “She just doesn't look right Doc!”

Get control of heifer raising costs; or send them to a grower so they can lose money by Maria Bendixen, Clark

County Dairy and Livestock Agent
It is not getting any cheaper to raise heifers should you be investing in a more efficient system? What can you or a grower do to improve the economics of raising dairy replacements.

Heifer facilities- bedded pack/ freestalls- bedding types-barn sizing

by Sam Zimmerman, Northern Wisconsin Dairy Educator

If you are thinking of building or remodeling a heifer facility you will want to make sure it is as convenient

for you to use as it is great for heifers. Sam will offer ideas on heifer barn planning design and workability of facilities.

Calf Barn Ventilation Options: Practical systems for all the seasons

by Brian Holmes, UW-Madison Biological Systems engineering

Tube ventilation in calf barns has been a popular idea the past few years but it has some limitations. Brian will explain what this system can and cannot do as well as offer good design principals for heifer buildings in general.

Virtual Calf Barn tour

Ostrowski's built a new calf barn last year, they farm near Elderon in far eastern Marathon County and presently have over 900 cows milking. The featured calf barn was constructed based on much research from the University of Wisconsin. The Ostrowski's have been in this barn for over one year and we are privileged to have them share their experience with the new barn.

There will also be a virtual tour of the coverall calf barn at Dennis Engel's, Clark Co-Line Dairy, Dorchester: milking 300, raising heifers at home. Built a coverall in 2006, remodeled it with positive pressure tube ventilation in 2008.



Send registration to:
Maria Bendixen
Dairy & Livestock Agent
517 Court St Room 104
Neillsville WI 54456

Modernizing for Dairy Heifers Registration Form

Cost \$15.00 per person Registration Deadline Tuesday, December 2nd
Late registration or at the door \$20.00

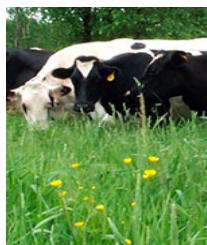
Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Make checks payable to: UWEX

SCHOOL FOR BEGINNING DAIRY & LIVESTOCK FARMERS



For those interested in getting started in the dairy or livestock business, the Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy

and Livestock Farmers (WSBDF) is a great place to get started. But not everyone has the time or resources to spend 15 weeks on the UW-Madison campus.

The 15 week course will begin on **Thursday, November 13; Thorp**

High School, ETN Room (location has been changed); meet once a week on Thursdays from 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m. (except for Thanksgiving week when class is on Tuesday) and finish up after a late December to mid-January break on March 26, 2009.

Classes offer much more than a video feed to Madison. Joining the students at each site will be an on-site instructor (s), as well as successful mentor farmers, grazing specialists, farm business lenders, and graduates of the School who are farming in the area. Real-time speaker PowerPoint

presentations and live audio connection join the off-campus students with the classroom in Madison.

The curriculum covers a variety of topics from farm selection, design and remodeling to animal and grass management to business planning.

Cost is \$140.00 per person.

The deadline for registering is November 10th. Those interested in taking the course should contact Maria Bendixen, Clark County Dairy & Livestock Agent at 715-743-5121.

Date	Topic
Nov. 13	Principles and opportunities for starting a dairy or livestock business. Two successful dairy farms start-ups: one confinement and the other pasture-based.
Nov. 20	Farm selection & grazing system layout. Stray voltage and infrastructure considerations.
Tues., Nov. 25	Setting realistic goals for your start-up farm business.
Dec. 4	Feeding the dairy cow on pasture.
Dec. 11	Pasture-based beef production and marketing strategies.
Dec. 18	Dairy goat production and management & Dairy sheep and diversified farm enterprise.
Jan. 22	USDA FSA Beginning farmer loan opportunities. DATCP Farm Center services; enterprise budgets and record keeping.
Jan. 29	A successful business start-up model. Farmer-driven marketing strategies.
Feb. 5	Farm business start-ups: Lessons Learned
Feb. 12	Low-cost milking parlor design; and dairy/livestock wintering strategies.
Feb. 19	Principles of organic dairying and herd health
Feb. 26	Farm and grazing management and environmental stewardship.
March 5	Emerging markets: Biomass for the renewable energy market. Organic and grass-based markets.
March 12	Bringing it all together: farmer perspectives on start-up dairy/livestock businesses

2008 SOIL, WATER & NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT MEETINGS

The Department of Soil Science will offer Soil, Water, and Nutrient Management Meetings at eight locations in 2008. Each meeting will begin at 10:00 a.m. and end at 3:00 p.m. Dick Wolkowski, Carrie Laboski, Matt Ruark, John Peters, Sue Porter, Sara Walling, and John Panuska will present current soil & water management and soil fertility information. All speakers may not be present at all meetings. A \$35.00 registration fee (which includes lunch) will be charged for the meeting. Certified Crop Adviser CEU credits (2 hours in soil and water management and 2 hours in nutrient management) have been requested.

Discussion Topics

- Introduction and Demonstration of the Online 590 Nutrient Application Restriction Maps – Sara Walling
- Subsurface Drains: Principles and Practice—John Panuska
- Consider the Strip-tillage Option—Dick Wolkowski
- Identifying the Dominant Critical Soil for Nutrient Management—Sue Porter
- Fertilizer and Nutrient Management Considerations in a High-cost Environment – Carrie Laboski
- Nutrient Management and tile Drainage – Matt Ruark
- SNAP Plus Update – Sue Porter
- What's New with Manure – John Peters

Schedule

Eau Claire

Thursday, December 4
Eau Claire County Expo Center
Main Exhibit Bldg
5530 Fairview Dr
S of 93 & I 94
Contact Mahlon Peterson, 227 1st Street West, Altoona WI 54720 or call 715-839-4712

Marshfield

Friday, December 5
Belevedere Supper Club
3 miles N on Hwy 97
Don Genrich, 569 N Cedar St Suite 3, Adams WI 53910 or call 608-339-4237

SPRING 2009 MASTER GARDENER PROGRAM

The Spring 2009 General Master Gardener Program will be delivered by UW specialists and other presenters. The program will be broadcast live from the UW-Extension Pyle Center on the UW-Madison campus to a number of sites throughout the state via fiber-optics, or Wisline/CD power-point.



Dates for the program which are scheduled on Tuesday evenings from 6:00–9:00 p.m. beginning February 3rd and continuing weekly through April 21st.

Please contact the Clark County UW-Extension office at 715-743-5121 if interested in participating in this program. The deadline to register is Friday, January 2nd.

Participant cost will be \$110 and class participants are expected to return 24 hours of volunteer service to their community in exchange for the 36 hours of training they receive. This fee will be used to cover materials, electronic and other overhead costs.



Program Schedule

Feb

- 3 Introduction to the MG program vegetable crops
- 10 Introduction to turf management
- 17 Plant pathology
- 24 Backyard wildlife

March

- 3 Weeds & pest management
- 10 Entomology
- 17 Fruit crops
- 26 Using native plants
invasive plants
- 31 Woody landscape plants

April

- 7 Soils and fertility
- 14 Plant propagations
- 21 Herbaceous annuals and

CROP DECISIONS 2009 SERIES

The following 4 sessions will be the first of a 9 session series related to crop production. University Extension specialists from WI and other states will be participating in each series.

November 7th

How to Manage Expensive P and K Fertilizer

With the expensive fertilizer prices, it is a continued challenge to maximize your profit per acre. This seminar will address cost savings options for growers to consider in relation to phosphorous and potassium fertilizers.

Host: Carrie Laboski, UW Extension Soil Fertility Specialist



December 19

Selecting economical N rates & other management considerations for 2009

Host: Carrie Laboski, UW Extension Soil Fertility Specialist

December 3

Corn Hybrid Selection Workshop

Due to the huge number of transgenic traits marketed in corn hybrids today, it is a significant challenge for farmers to wade through all of the information, including seed costs, to select adapted hybrids for their farm that will maximize profit. At the conclusion of the workshop, producers will have a short list of hybrids to choose from for their farm.

Host: Joe Lauer, UW Extension Corn Specialist

January 7th

Glyphosate performance & weed resistance

Speaker to be announced



Time: 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Location: Distance Education Room Clark County Courthouse

CCA CEU credits are available for the professional agronomy person.

For more information and/or to register, contact Richard Halopka, Crops & Soils Agent 715-743-5121.

MILK QUALITY WHAT IS YOUR SEASONAL PATTERN? (Continued from page 1)

This can also be a milking system or teat end health issue so check those too. One farm that I have worked with had a seasonal spike in the fall when one of their kids who milked cows all summer went to school. He was very careful and made sure cows were clean and his replace-

ment was not as excited about milking cows and the SCC suffered in the fall for two years before they figured it out!

This year avoid your seasonal spike in SCC. Milk prices do not seem to be improving so a SCC premium

might be the difference between cash flowing or not this year. If you would like to have another set of eyes look at your seasonal SCC pattern or possible causes call Maria at the Extension office at 743-5121.

SOIL SAMPLES BEST WAY TO HELP FARMERS WITH FERTILIZER PRICES!

Many fertilizers have doubled, if not tripled, in price over the last few years. It is not uncommon for fertilizers that were \$400 per ton to now be \$1,000 per ton. This can break down to \$1 per pound of actual nutrients. This isn't economical for a farm field; it's hardly even economical for a small garden! Many farmers are now caught between two bad choices: Go into debt to pay for all of this fertilizer or use less fertilizer and risk lower yields? Either option can lead to a serious loss in profitability. Do you say to yourself, "That's just how it is and there's nothing we can do about it?" or do you find another solution? Ultimately, your fields need to be balanced as tight as your checkbook, with no overdrafts and no money spilling out on the way to the bank!

The best solution is to reduce fertilizer on all fields that you can without reducing productivity. The first step toward accomplishing this is to get manure to the fields that need it most. After that, you want to take advantage of extra credits from manure and legumes. The last step is to only pay for the fertilizer and starter that you really need, with no extras.

The only way to know what is sitting in your "soil bank account," is to take good soil samples. This is a good time of the year to take your samples. If you get soil samples before the ground freezes, you will still have time to decide what you need before it is time to pre-order fertilizer. After you have the soil samples to tell you what is in your "bank account" you can develop a budget by writing a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP). Now is the time to borrow a soil probe and get sampling bags, air photo maps, and instructions from the Clark Co. UW-Extension or Clark Co. Land Conservation.

Representative soil samples made up of one composite sample per five acres are needed in order to complete an NMP and will be needed for the NMP writing classes that will be offered in January.

Contact the Clark County UW-Extension 743-5121 or the Clark County Land Conservation Dept at 743-5102 for info on correct soil sampling procedures or Nutrient Management Planning.

Article reprinted from Steve Oberle, Taylor County Land Conservation.

FARM BILL MEETING

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 10
LOYAL AMERICAN LEGION
10:00—12:30 P.M.

TO SEE HOW THIS BILL WILL AFFECT YOU, COME TO THIS MEETING TO FIND OUT SOME OF THE CHANGES TO THE 2008 FARM BILL. SEE HOW IT WILL HAVE A DIRECT EFFECT ON THE PROFITABILITY AND VIABILITY OF YOUR OPERATION.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLANNING WORKSHOPS

Clark County Land Conservation Department will be offering Nutrient Management Planning Workshops at the Northcentral Technical College.

The idea of soil and crop fertility management is not new. However, what is new is Nutrient Management, the name given to fertilizer programs, and the development of qualified Nutrient Management Plans. The qualified Nutrient Management Plan is a best management practice that serves as a tool to help make sound management decisions. These decisions can lead to maximized production and profit. As of January 1, 2008, the state of Wisconsin is requiring that all farms that apply nutrients implement a qualified Nutrient Management Plan.

For the most current information, please plan on attending a Nutrient Management class. The class will cover plan implementation, using SNAP-plus software or an option to

create a handwritten plan. Upon completion of the class, producers will have a qualified plan that meets state requirements, as well as available cost-share opportunities.

- Become a WI Dept of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection (DATCP) qualified Nutrient Management Planner for your farm operation.
- Develop your own Nutrient Management Plan that meets regulatory standards for your 2008 farm operation growing season.
- Learn how to best manage your crop nutrients by maximizing farm productivity and protecting natural resources while increasing profitability.
- Utilize Nutrient Management Software to improve efficiency and record keeping or develop your own handwritten Nutrient Management Plan.

Cost of the workshop is \$130.

Workshops

Abbotsford City Hall
Mondays, Jan. 5–Feb. 2, 2009
1:00–3:00 p.m.

Abbotsford City Hall
Mondays, Jan. 5–Feb. 2, 2009
7:30–9:30 p.m.

Citizens State Bank, Loyal
Wednesday, Jan. 7–Jan. 21, 2009
10:00 a.m.–3:00 p.m.

Thorp Library
Thursday, Jan. 8–Feb. 5, 2009
7:30–9:30 p.m.

For class information or registration information contact the Clark County Land Conservation Department at 715-743-5102.

SIGN UP FOR 2009 CONSERVATION PRACTICES

EQIP (Environmental Quality Incentives Program) funds for 2009 will be available for many conservation and water quality practices. Signup starts now and may end as soon as late December.

Practices include:

- Barnyards, Grassed Waterways, Heavy Use Areas
- Prescribed Grazing, Access Roads, Stream and Waterway Crossings
- Wells, Well Decommissioning
- Nutrient Management/Comprehensive Nutrient Management
- Waste Storage/Alternative Waste/Waste Treatment, Milkhouse Waste Treatment
- Solid –Liquid Waste Separation
- Cover Crops, No-till, Buffer Strips
- Other practices are offered

Call NRCS at 715-743-3164, Ext 3 to set up an appointment.

MEAD LAKE NEEDS YOUR IDEAS

A meeting to discuss solutions for the restoration and protection of Mead Lake will be held at the Greenwood American Legion on Thursday, November 13, at 7:00 PM. Anyone interested in discussing the future of Mead Lake is invited to attend.

Mead Lake is listed on the state's impaired waters list, meaning that the lake does not meet water quality standards. Most residents are aware of the water quality problems when they see the lake turn green in the summer months. The green color and decreased water quality are caused by rapid growth of algae, known as an algal "bloom". This growth is the result of excess nutrients (mostly phosphorus) and sediment flowing into the lake from

its tributaries, the main one being the South Fork Eau Claire River. Algae blooms are unsightly, they rob the lake of oxygen (which can harm fish and other aquatic life) and produce unpleasant odors. Some types of algae known as blue-green algae produce toxins that are harmful to animals, pets and people, and can cause sickness, and in extreme cases, death. Research by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) has shown that by decreasing the amount of nutrients and sediment that enter the lake from the watershed, the water quality should improve over time.

In an effort to address these nutrient and sediment issues, the Clark County Land Conservation

Department, University of Wisconsin Extension, WDNR, and local citizens are organizing local stakeholders to discuss solutions to the water quality problems in Mead Lake. The first step in this process is to have a public meeting to discuss this challenge and organize a group of local citizens to lead the effort. **The meeting will be held in Greenwood at the American Legion- 108 South Main Street. The doors will open at 7 PM on Thursday, November 13, 2008.** Discussion will begin shortly thereafter. People interested in protecting and restoring Mead Lake, for us and future generations, are welcome. If you have any questions, please call the Land Conservation Department at 715-743-5102

LEARN TO MAKE YOUR OWN FERTILIZER RECOMMENDATIONS

Many farmers in Clark County already write their own nutrient management plan (NMP). Historically, farmer training classes were offered at no-cost to the participant. In 2009, the Clark County Land Conservation and UW-Extension Departments have teamed up with Northcentral Technical College in order to provide a more formalized training atmosphere, where farmers will not only learn how to create their own nutrient management plan, but also leave the class with a completed NMP that meets the State of Wisconsin requirements. The class costs \$130 per farm; multiple attendees from the same farm may participate in the training at no

additional cost. In order to assist farmers and stimulate attendance, the Clark County Land Conservation Department will provide scholarships that will cover the cost of the training sessions. The **scholarships are valued at \$130 per participant**, meaning each attendee will be eligible to receive \$130 regardless if they are from the same farm. Please contact us soon if you would like to receive a scholarship, as we are limited to the **first thirty farmers**. Clark County Land Conservation Department: 715-743-5102.

Lastly, the Land Conservation Department is busy planning their Nutrient Management On-the-Road

Shows, where we **bring the class to the farm** instead of the farm to the class. If you have neighbors who would like to learn about fertilizer recommendations and manure application, ask them to participate in this unique training opportunity. A total of six farmers, not exceeding ten farmers are needed in order to have us take the show on-the-road to that particular location. There is **no cost** for this training. Please contact us soon if you would host a training session at your farm. Participation is **limited to four farms**. Clark County Land Conservation Department: 715-743-5102.



CLARK COUNTY
 517 Court Street, Room 104
 Neillsville WI 54456
 Phone: 715-743-5121
 Fax: 715-743-5129

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IT'S GARDEN CLEANING TIME
 by Christine Engelbrecht, Iowa State University

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We're well into fall now. The vegetables have been harvested, the flowers have come and gone, and there's nothing left to do in the garden, right? Wrong! A little bit of late-season cleanup now can head off many plant disease problems for next year.

Many of the fungi and bacteria that cause spots, blights, and rots of our plants survive over the winter in the dead leaves, stems, and other plant parts that are left behind in the garden. When warmer temperatures return next spring, those pathogens will come out of dormancy, ready to attack next year's tender plants. Why let the pathogens have that head start?

Even though the weather is colder now and it's not as fun to be

outdoors, we should spend a few minutes raking up and disposing of any infected plant debris that's left over in the garden. Perennials like peonies can be pruned back to get rid of leaves full of fungus. Good sanitation is essential for a healthy garden. It's tempting to wait and clean up the garden in spring, but most dead leaves become brittle and crumbly over the winter, making removal very difficult in the spring.

How can you dispose of the infected debris? Composting is a good option, assuming you have a "real" compost pile that actually heats up to at least 140°F, which will kill most pathogens. Most home compost piles do not reach this

temperature, but most municipal composting facilities do. Another option is burning, where legal.

Another way to prevent plant diseases next year is to take good notes now of where in the garden each type of plant grew this year. Next year, you can rotate where each kind of plant is placed in the garden, further reducing the changes that your new plants will run into this year's overwintered pathogens. A rotation cycle of several years is best to minimize disease, but even a two or three year rotation will help.

Take a few minutes this fall to clean up the garden and take good notes to help ensure that next year's plants are as healthy as possible.