

NEWS RELEASE

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COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EXTENSION**

November 22, 2005

Agriculture Conference Can Help You Connect with Your Customers

Are you a farmer or landowner looking to make more money? Do you think you have an idea that people will buy? The Midwest Value Added Agriculture Conference can help you explore new market opportunities and learn from farmers, business people and experts involved in value-added farm enterprises.

In its eighth year, the conference is themed "Connecting You with Your Customers." It will be held Friday and Saturday, Jan. 27 and 28, 2006, at the Plaza Hotel and Suites in Eau Claire, Wisconsin.

If you are interested in increasing or diversifying the profit from your farm or small acreage, you will benefit from attending this conference. It is an opportunity to learn and talk to those who are exploring new ways of developing and marketing their products.

At this conference, you will have opportunities to learn how to write a business plan, market as a group and choose between alternative enterprises. You will also learn about up and coming agricultural products others have created, where to get start-up funds and how to get a loan. The keynote address will be given by Harold Lloyd, president, CEO, mentor, author, business owner, student teacher and family man. He will be enlightening, challenging and definitely will give you information that will keep your customers coming back for more.

A highlight of the conference this year is delicious food produced by people just like you. Attendees will also have an opportunity to visit the Chippewa Valley Museum and the new Farm Life Exhibit. Those interested in attending the conference, having a tradeshow booth, or showcasing their product ideas should call Heather Flashinski from River Country Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D) Council at 715-834-9672. Registration costs are reduced \$15 for those who register before Jan. 1st. For more information, visit www.rivercountryrccd.org/valad.htm

Conservation Program Signup Reminder

The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service is continuing with the Manitowoc County signup for conservation programs which started on October 31, 2005 and will continue through December 23, 2005 at the USDA Service Center in Manitowoc.

Farmers can apply for cost-sharing for several types of conservation practices through the **Environmental Quality Incentives Program**, called EQIP. For most practices, farmers will receive 50 percent of the costs, with a few high priority practices at 70-75 percent cost-sharing. Some of the practices eligible for cost-sharing during this signup are: Well Decommissioning, Cover Crops, Grassed Waterways, Prescribed Grazing, Nutrient Management, Feed Management, and Pest Management.

"The purpose of this program is to help active farmers with conservation on working farmland," said Matt Rataczak, District Conservationist for NRCS in Manitowoc County. "A good conservation system on working farmland is the most effective thing we can do to protect our water quality and the health of our soils."

EQIP is a competitive program, with the most cost-effective and environmentally beneficial projects selected for funding. Separate statewide signups for animal waste storage, orchard crops, and cranberry marsh practices will be open November 1 through December 30, 2005.

Other NRCS programs include the following:

Wetland Reserve Program – landowners wishing to restore wetlands from land that has been drained for agriculture can apply for WRP. NRCS purchases an easement from the landowner (either permanent or 30-year easement) to restore the land to wetlands. No public access is required.

Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program – provides technical assistance and cost sharing to establish or improve wildlife habitat on any type of land. Five acres or more are usually required.

All of these programs are competitive. Generally, only the most environmentally beneficial projects are selected for funding.

For more information or to sign up for the programs listed above, contact the NRCS Office in Manitowoc at 683-5119.

Dates of Interest

Dairy producers, employees and farm consultants may be interested in the following UW-Extension sponsored educational programs.

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| December 5, 2005 | 2005 Cattle Feeder Clinic
Equity Livestock Sale Facility, Reedsville, 6:00 p.m. |
| December 6, 2005 | 2005 Fertilizer Dealer and Soil & Water Management Meetings
Millhome Supper Club, Kiel (3 miles east on Hwy. 57/32)
10:00 Soil & Water Meeting; Noon – Lunch; 1:00 Fertilizer Dealer Meeting |
| December 7, 2005 | Manitowoc-Calumet Parlor/Freestall Discussion Group
Edgewood Pub and Grill, Valders, 11:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. |
| December 20, 2005 | So You Want to Modernize Your Dairy. Now What?
North Brook Country Club, Luxemburg; 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. |
| December 21, 2005 | Low Cost Milking Parlor and Housing Conference
Michiels Inn Highway 10, Brillion; 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. |
| January 17, 2006 | Gaining the Competitive Edge Dairy Seminars
Millhome Supper Club, Kiel |

More information is available at the Manitowoc County UW-Extension Agricultural Program Coming Events link at: www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/manitowoc/ag/events.html

An EEO/Affirmative Action employer, University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements. Please make requests for reasonable accommodations to ensure equal access to educational programs as early as possible preceding the scheduled program, service or activity.

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