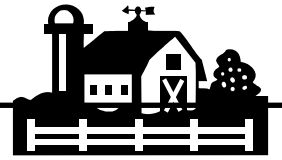


Your Partners in Farm Business



December, 2008

**Farm Service Agency
(262) 723-3216
Tom Oasen
County Executive Director**

USDA to Conduct Request for Referendum on Pork Check-off Program

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announced that it will conduct a Request for Referendum Dec. 8, 2008, through Jan. 2, 2009, among eligible producers and importers of hogs, pigs, pork, and pork products to determine if they want a referendum on the Pork Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Order, commonly known as the Pork Check-off Program. Participation is voluntary, and only individuals who desire a referendum on the Pork Check-off Program should participate.

USDA will only conduct a referendum on the order if at least 15 percent of the total number of eligible pork producers and importers request a referendum. The total number of producers and importers eligible to participate in the Request for Referendum is approximately 69,446; therefore, at least 10,417 eligible producers and importers must request a referendum. If necessary, the referendum will be conducted within one year after the results of the Request for Referendum are announced. If results of the Request for Referendum indicate that a referendum is not supported, a referendum would not be conducted.

The Request for Referendum will be held Dec. 8, 2008 through Jan. 2, 2009. Producers and importers who were engaged in pork production or in the importation of hogs, pigs, pork, or pork products between Jan. 1, 2007, and Dec. 31, 2007, and were at least 18 years of age on or before Dec. 31, 2007, are eligible to participate.

For producers, the Request for Referendum will be conducted at the USDA County Farm Service Agency (FSA) offices where their administrative farm records are maintained. For producers not participating in FSA programs, the opportunity to participate will be provided at the County FSA office where the person owns or rents land. Eligible producers may obtain form LS-54-1: Pork Promotion, Research, and Consumer Information Request for Referendum from those offices either in person, by mail or by facsimile. Forms may also be obtained at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/LSMarketingPrograms>. In order to vote, Form LS-54-1 and supporting documentation, where applicable, such as a sales receipt, veterinary bill, feed bill, copies of grower contracts, cancelled check or proof of payment must be returned in person, by mail, or by facsimile to the appropriate county FSA office by the close of business Jan. 2, 2009. Form LS-54-1 and supporting documentation returned by mail must be postmarked no later than midnight on Jan. 2, 2009, and received by Jan. 9, 2009. Importers may obtain Form LS-54-1 through the Marketing Programs Branch, Livestock and Seed Program, AMS, USDA or via the Internet at: <http://www.ams.usda.gov/LSMarketingPrograms>. Form LS-54-1 and accompanying documentation, such as Customs Form 7501, can be returned in person, by mail or by facsimile. Forms returned by mail must be postmarked no later than midnight on Jan. 2, 2009, and received by Jan. 9, 2009.

It is recommended that the form and support-

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ing documentation be mailed via an express service.

COUNTY COMMITTEE ELECTION RESULTS

The ballots were counted for the FSA Committee election in Local Administrative Area 2 (Bloomfield, Geneva, Linn, Lyons and Walworth Townships) on December 8th. Bill Leedle was elected as the FSA Committee Member, Kevin Slack was elected as the 1st Alternate, and Fred Lininger was elected as the 2nd Alternate. Thank you to all candidates and the rest of the FSA Committee looks forward to working with you in 2009.

CONTINUOUS CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM

Environmentally desirable land devoted to certain conservation practices may be enrolled in CRP at any time under continuous sign up provisions. Offers are automatically accepted provided the land and producer meet certain eligibility requirements.

To be eligible, cropland must have been planted or considered planted to an agricultural commodity 4 of the 6 crop years between 1996 and 2001, and is physically and legally capable of being planted to an agricultural commodity. Also, certain marginal pastureland is eligible for enrollment as a riparian buffer.

Eligible conservation practices for the CRP continuous sign up include: riparian buffers; wildlife habitat buffers; wetland buffers; filter strips; wetland restoration; grass waterways; shelterbelts; living snow fences; contour grass strips; and shallow water areas for wildlife.

For additional information or to set up an appointment to determine if your land is eligible or not, contact the FSA county office.

LDPs AND 9-MONTH LOAN DEADLINES

With market prices being higher than county loan rates on most crops, we want to remind you that a marketing assistance loan may be a good alternative for short-term financing.

A marketing assistance loan on commodity crops provides short-term operating funds at a comparably low interest rate.

Repayment is usually made at the loan rate plus interest. However, if daily prices drop below the loan rate for the commodity crop any time throughout the 9-month loan period, repayment may be

This Month's Agricultural Events

December 25 & 26 - Office closed for Christmas holidays

January 1 - Office closed for New Year

January 19 - Office closed for Martin Luther King Day.

made at the lower posted county price without interest, which is considered a market gain.

The deadline to apply for 9-month loans and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDP) for unshorn pelts, wool, and mohair produced in crop year 2008 is January 31, 2009. The deadline to put 2008 crop wheat, small grains, many minor oilseeds, and honey under a 9-month loan or to apply for a LDP is March 31, 2009. The last day to request a 9-month loan or LDP on 2008 corn or soybean crops is June 1, 2009.

All producers are eligible to apply for a loan for stored crops or to request a LDP as long as all eligibility requirements are met.

REPORT BANK ACCOUNT CHANGES

All Farm Service Agency payments are electronically transferred into your bank account. In order to receive timely payments, you need to notify your administrative FSA office if you close your account or if another financial institution purchases your bank. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to your account and routing number.

Also, be aware that actual deposits of FSA payments could take from 2-3 days to be deposited into your bank account, although it shows up in Financial Inquiries as being posted. This delay is due to the processing time required by our processing center in Kansas City, Missouri.

FOREIGN LANDOWNER NOTIFICATION

The Agricultural Foreign Investment Disclosure Act (AFIDA) requires all foreign owners of U.S. agricultural land to report their holdings to the Secretary of Agriculture. FSA administers this program for the USDA. Foreign persons who have purchased or sold agricultural land in the United States are required to report the transaction to FSA within 90 days of the closing. Failure to submit an FSA-129 Internal Review Checklist for AFIDA form could result in civil penalties up to 25 percent of the fair market value of the property. County government offices, realtors, attorneys, and others involved in real estate transactions are reminded to notify foreign investors of this reporting requirement. It is the foreign person's responsibility to report the land transaction.

SNOWMOBILES ON CRP ACREAGE

It is up to the local FSA county committee to determine whether or not snowmobile trails are allowed to cross acreage enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program. If this affects any of your CRP acreage, contact your local FSA office to request this particular use prior to allowing a trail on your CRP land.

REPORT DAMAGE

Please notify FSA of any structural damage to your facilities resulting from snow loads. Reporting damage aids county offices in completing damage assessment reports that help to secure low-interest emergency loan funds.

SIGNATURE AUTHORITY

County offices are required to verify that signature authority is on file in the county office before accepting a signature on any program or related documents on behalf of another. Producers can present evidence of signature authority such as corporate charter, bylaws, court orders of appointment, operating agreement, trust agreement, last will and testament, or articles of partnership. The FSA-211 Power-of-Attorney form can also be completed to grant signature authority to another individual or entity.

Spouses may sign documents on behalf of each other for FSA and CCC programs in which either has an interest, unless written notification denying a spouse this authority has been provided to the county office. Spouses may not sign FSA-211 on behalf of the other. Spouses may also not sign on behalf of the other as an authorized signatory for partnerships, joint ventures, corporations, or other similar entities.

Please contact your local county office for more information on the specific signature authority documentation your entity must provide.

NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION SERVICE (262) 723-3216 (Ext. 3) Greg Igl

EQIP SIGNUP FOR 2009 ENDS ON JANUARY 30, 2009

Environmental Quality Incentives Program

The Walworth County Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is taking applications for the EQIP program through January 30, 2009. EQIP offers financial assistance to help off-set the costs of eligible conservation practices. Payment rates have been established for each conservation practice being offered so that a producer will know up-front what the payment will be. There are over 60 eligible practices being offered locally during this signup.

There are a number of new technology conservation practices being offered including precision agriculture practice for applying crop nutrients using variable rate technology. Incentive payments are also being offered on numerous practices to encourage farmers to adopt land management practices such as nutrient management (up to \$15,000 per contract), integrated pest management or prescribed grazing practices. Other commonly used EQIP conservation options include: grassed waterways, grade stabilization structures, brush management, forestry management practices and well abandonment.

Prior to applying for manure storage, farmers should develop a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) for their operations to aid in the major decisions that come along with building a manure storage system. Applicants for manure storage that have completed a CNMP receive additional points when applications are ranked. The backlog of applications for manure storage was significantly reduced in last year's EQIP signup, creating opportunities for new applicants. A number of steps must be completed in advance for an application to be eligible.

Eligible practices that address a resource concern will be ranked based on a Ranking tool that was developed for southeastern Wisconsin and is posted on the NRCS web site. Applications will be selected for plan development and contracting in ranked order according to the score as available funds allow.

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Applicants must demonstrate control of the land being offered for EQIP throughout the life of the proposed practices being offered. To be eligible for financial assistance the producer must not have started the practice prior to having an EQIP contract approved by NRCS. Interested agricultural producers can call 262-723-3216 extension 3 for an appointment at the USDA Service Center in Elkhorn. For more information, you may also visit our website at: www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov.

NEW NRCS STAFF AT THE ELKHORN SERVICE CENTER

Within the last four months two new employees have begun work for the Natural Resources Conservation Service in Elkhorn.

Kelly McCredie, Soil Conservation Technician will be assisting producers and landowners with the design and application of various erosion control and other conservation practices. She will also be using her technical expertise to assist producers through the Union Grove and Waukesha county NRCS offices.

Kelly is originally from Oshkosh, Wisconsin. In 2006 she graduated from the Natural Resources Program at Fox Valley Technical College. She worked for the Waushara and Calumet County Land and Water Conservation Departments prior to assuming her new duties here in August.

Nathan Fikkert, Soil Conservationist will be assisting farmers with all aspects of conservation planning. He comes to us with field experience to help farmers solve their natural resource challenges and maintain and improve their economic viability.

Nathan is from Green Bay and he has a degree in Integrated Resource Management and Soil Science from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point. He began his career working as a Soil Scientist for four years in Pine Dale, Wyoming working on the Sublette County Soil Survey. In 2007 he began his work as a Soil Conservationist in Coalville, Utah prior to recently assuming his new duties right here in Elkhorn.

Welcome to both Kelly and Nathan!!

LAND CONSERVATION

(262) 741-7912

Lou Olson

THE SUGAR-HONEY CREEKS WATERSHED IS SUN-SETTING. WHAT NOW?

You've signed a watershed contract, installed the practice, and maintained it for the 10 years specified. Now you can sit back and enjoy cleaner water. That's the end of it, right?



Well, not quite. Proper maintenance for conservation practices is still essential to keeping non-point source pollution out of our waters. For example, maintaining healthy sod in a waterway is just as important now as when the contract was in place. The goal is the same.

Care should be taken when tilling along waterways and diversions. It is important to maintain their original shape, gradient and width. A waterway or diversion that has been compromised will not work as efficiently and may eventually fail. Inspect waterways regularly, especially following heavy rains and remove sediment deposits to maintain capacity. When applying herbicides, avoid areas where forbs have been established.



Terrace systems should also be inspected at least once per year. Common terrace problems to look for include reduced ridge height, decreased channel capacity, sediment bars and ponding of water in the channel. Remove high areas to restore channel grade. Any sediment removed can be used to build up low spots on the terrace ridge or in the field.

There are some basic maintenance actions you can take to ensure proper functioning of different kinds of practices. Scraping the lots, cleaning filter box screens, mowing, and removing grass from filter strips are simple ways to ensure proper functioning.

The entire barnyard should be inspected on a regular basis. Plugged screens, broken troughs and downspouts, and other problems can be easily repaired before

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they become major problems. It's also a good idea to keep gutters clean, especially before that first spring downpour occurs. Walls in the barnyard should be inspected for cracks or other problems. Fencing above the walls should be checked so that animals can't cause damage to the wall.

Filter strips should be mowed or grazed periodically. Mowed grass should be removed and spread away from the filter to prevent nutrient overloading. Don't allow over-grazing or mow too close. And don't use waterways as machinery lots. Gravel spreaders should be raked as necessary to maintain even water flow, and concrete pads need to be scraped of any sediment buildup.

Barnyard systems are designed to handle manure and runoff. They are not for storage. Clean the lot as stipulated in the Operation and Maintenance Agreement, or more often. Take full advantage of the nutrient value in manure and spread according to your animal waste plan. A clean lot will keep your herd healthier and more productive.

A small amount of time spent maintaining practices can prevent major, costly problems. Rebuilding structures is a big waste of time and money. On the other hand, a barnyard system or other practice that is operating properly will help make your life easier by improving efficiency.



UW-EXTENSION (262) 741-4951 Peg Reedy

Wisconsin Soybean Conference
December 16; 9-3; Evergreen Golf Club, Elkhorn

Wisconsin Crop Management Conference (formerly Wisconsin Fertilizer, Aglime, and Pest Management Conference)
January 13-15; Alliant Energy Center, Madison.

Wisconsin Corn/Soy EXPO
January 29-30
Kalihari Resort, Wisconsin Dells

Pesticide Applicator Training
Elkhorn: January 28, 2009; 9-3
Bristol: January 21, 2009; 9-3
Janesville: February 3, 4; 9-3; Craig Center

IMPORTANT NEWSLETTER UPDATE

Budget concerns may force the Walworth County agencies that create this newsletter for county owners and producers to discontinue mailings. We plan to still make the newsletter available either online at <http://walworth.uwex.edu> under agriculture, in hard copy at either the Extension or FSA offices, or electronically if you supply us with an email. You may send an email to peg.reedy@ces.uwex.edu or call 262-741-4961 to receive an electronic copy via email. With the discontinuation of the Cowscope newsletter for dairy producers which was distributed out of Jefferson County, we will make an effort to print some of the dairy related articles that were a feature of Cowscope in this newsletter

CROP DECISIONS 2009

Crop Decisions 2009, a web-based series of crop management programs began in late November and continues through March 4. These presentations deal with crop management issues including economical fertilizer rates and application strategies, corn hybrid selection, weed and insect management, efficacy of corn foliar fungicides, harvesting and storing quality silage, and the future of cellulosic ethanol in Wisconsin. The complete series schedule and descriptions of topics and speakers is available at the Extension website (<http://walworth.uwex.edu>) or at the Extension or FSA office.

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The next program is "Selecting Economical Nitrogen Rates and Other Management Considerations for 2009" on December 19 at 1:00 p.m. in Room 201 of the Walworth County Government Building in Elkhorn.

ANNIES PROJECT

UW-Extension in Racine, Kenosha and Walworth Counties invites farm women to attend *Annie's Project*, a risk management education program, scheduled to meet a total six times during the months of January, February and March at the Gateway Technical College, Burlington Center. *Annie's Project* brings risk management tools and education to farm women so they can be better farm managers, whether that is in a partnership or on their own. The program also provides networking opportunities to discuss similar issues with other farming women.

This *Annie's Project* series will cover accounting and tax issues for the farm, financial evaluation and decision-making, market research, promoting small businesses, grain marketing and employment issues. The original *Annie's Project* was designed so farm women met with instructors several times over a six week period. This series has been modified so that farm women can choose to attend all six sessions or attend only the workshops in which they are most interested. All workshops will be held from 9:00 a.m. - noon. The schedule follows:

- Friday, January 9, 2009, - Farm Accounting Principles, Farm Tax Deductions and Farm Financial Recordkeeping.
- Saturday, January 31, - Evaluating the Financial Stability of Your Business.
- Saturday, February 7, 2009, - How to Do Market Research.
- Friday, February 20, 2009, - Promoting Your Small Business.
- Friday, March 20, 2009, - Grain Marking Basics.
- Friday, March 27, 2009, - Human Resources 101

The program cost \$50 per person for all six sessions or \$10 for each individual workshop. Registration deadlines are one week prior to each class.

For more information or to receive a brochure and registration form, contact the Walworth County UW-Extension Office at 262-741-4951 or Peg Reedy at peg.reedy@ces.uwex.edu or Rose Skora rose.skora@ces.uwex.edu

VARIETY TEST RESULTS AVAILABLE

Variety test results are now available for corn, soybeans, wheat, and small grains and cereals. They are available online at:

Corn: <http://corn.agronomy.wisc.edu/>

Soybeans: <http://soybean.uwex.edu/>

Winter Wheat: <http://soybean.uwex.edu/>

Small Grains and Forages: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/forage/>

GYPSY MOTH PROGRAM FOR WALWORTH COUNTY

The gypsy moth is an invasive pest that has been spreading westward since its introduction in 1869. Gypsy moth caterpillars feed on many species of trees and shrubs, especially oaks, and can cause defoliation when feeding in large numbers. For trees stressed by other factors, including drought, this can lead to mortality. The Wisconsin DNR Gypsy Moth Suppression Program is a voluntary partnership that involves the state, counties, municipalities, and landowners in a state-organized aerial insecticide treatment to suppress damaging gypsy moth populations in eligible and participating counties, including Walworth County, which is in the gypsy moth quarantined area of Eastern Wisconsin. Insecticides used in the spray program are either Foray, a formulation of BT or Gypcheck a viral insecticide specific to gypsy moth caterpillars and they are applied aerially. Trapping data collected by the WI-DATCP indicates that gypsy moth numbers are increasing in Wisconsin and several areas in Walworth County have reported damaging populations. The local coordinator for the suppression program is Christine Regester, horticulture educator for the UW-Extension office. She may be reached at 262-741-4958.

HANDLING AND PROCESSING VENISON

As a deer hunter, you are probably aware of chronic wasting disease, or CWD, first found in Wisconsin white-tailed deer in 2002. Recently another concern has risen; the possibility of bullet fragments contaminating venison and posing a health threat to humans. Deer may also suffer from other diseases as well.

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CWD

According to the World Health Organization, there is no evidence that chronic wasting disease passes to humans. However, many people still prefer to take extra precautions to remove prions from venison. These are the abnormal proteins associated with CWD.

LEAD IN VENISON

Lead is known to damage the brain and central nervous system, especially in young children and pregnant women. It does not always cause outward signs of illness. The risk depends on the amount and frequency of venison consumption. Although no one has linked human health effects to lead in venison, the amount found in some samples suggests that lead poisoning could occur in people who regularly eat venison shot with lead ammunition. Some of the fragments in venison samples have been found far from the wound channel and were too small to see during processing.

To help you remove both prions and lead fragments from venison, we offer these common sense guidelines for field-dressing deer, and cutting and processing venison.

GENERAL PRECAUTIONS

- Do not eat the eyes, brain, spinal cord, spleen, tonsils or lymph nodes of any deer.
- **Do not eat any part of a deer that appears sick.**
- If your deer is sampled for CWD testing, wait for the test results before eating the meat.

FIELD DRESSING

- Wear rubber or latex gloves.
- Minimize contact with the brain, spinal cord, spleen and lymph nodes (lumps of tissue next to organs or in fat and membranes) as you work.
- Do not use household knives or utensils.
- Remove all internal organs.

CUTTING AND PROCESSING

- Wear rubber or latex gloves.
- If processing deer from the CWD management zone, keep meat and trimmings from each deer separate.
- Minimize handling brain or spinal tissues. If removing antlers, use a saw designated for that purpose only, and dispose of the blade.
- Do not cut through the spinal column except to remove the head. Use a knife designated only for this purpose.

- Bone out the meat from the deer and remove all fat and connective tissue (the web-like membranes attached to the meat). This will also remove lymph nodes.

IF YOU USE LEAD AMMUNITION:

- When you select venison for grinding, do not use meat with excessive shot damage.
- Process small batches so you can frequently check the grinder and remove lead fragments.
- Trim a generous distance away from the bullet wound channel, beyond what has been common practice.
- Discard any meat that is bruised, discolored or contains hair, dirt, bone fragments or grass.

CLEANING UP

- Dispose of hide, brain and spinal cord, eyes, spleen, tonsils, bones, and head in a landfill or by other means available in your area.
- Thoroughly clean and sanitize equipment and work areas with bleach water after processing.
- Clean knives and equipment of residue and disinfect by soaking them for an hour in a 50/50 solution of household chlorine bleach and water.
- Wipe down counters with a 50/50 solution of household chlorine bleach and water, and let them air-dry.

For more information about lead in venison:

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

<http://www.datcp.state.wi.us>

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources

<http://dnr.wi.gov/org/land/wildlife/lead.htm>

Wisconsin Department of Health Services

<http://dhs.wisconsin.gov/lead/WIInfo.htm>

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Farm Service Agency
Walworth County FSA Office
USDA Service Center
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Elkhorn, WI 53121

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