

Columbia County Ag Reporter



January/February 2019

WHAT'S INSIDE...

Agricultural newsletter for Columbia County landowners and residents

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- ♦ Dairy Farm Stress (pg. 6)
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- ♦ Emergency Assistance (pg. 15)



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Ag Reporter Calendar of Events

January

15-17	WI Ag Classic – Alliant Center Madison
22	Pesticide Applicators Training – Otsego Town Hall
23	Nutrient Management Update Class – CC Admin Bldg
30	Nutrient Management Update Class – CC Admin Bldg
31- Feb 1	Corn/Soy/Pork Conference – Kalahari, WI Dells
31-Feb 2	Grassworks Conference – Chula Vista, WI Dells

February

4	Dairy Marketing Meeting – CC Admin Bldg
11	Winter Grazing Program – CC HHS Bldg
13	Nutrient Management Planning New Class #1 – CC Admin Bldg
16	WI Hops Conference – Hillsboro, WI
18-20	MFA, WCO, PNAAW Conference – Chula Vista, WI Dells
27	Pesticide Applicators Training – CC Admin Bldg
28	Nutrient Management Planning New Class #2 – CC Admin Bldg

March

6	Nutrient Management Planning New Class #3 – CC Admin Bldg
13-14	Professional Dairy Producers of WI Annual Mtg – Alliant Center, MSN
15	WI Produce Grower Training – CC HHS Bldg

The Columbia County **Ag Calendar and Deadlines** webpage is located at <http://columbia.uwex.edu/ag-calendar-and-deadlines/>.

Columbia County Master Gardener Association Scholarship

This Scholarship is for high school seniors or others planning to attend a two or four year post-secondary institution on a full-time basis or current college students attending full time. Recipient will be a student majoring in horticulture, plant sciences, forestry, landscape architecture and design, or a closely related field. Scholarship amount is \$500. Recipient must be a resident of Columbia County or a graduate or soon-to-be graduate of a Columbia County high school. Application deadline is March 15, 2019.

For application and rules visit:

<https://columbia.uwex.edu/master-gardener/high-school-scholarship/>



Ten Things to Consider for Succession Planning

By Joy Kirkpatrick, Farm Succession Outreach Specialist, University of WI Center for Dairy Profitability, UW-Extension

1. Organize Your Information
2. Develop and Discuss Intentions/Priorities
3. Evaluate Your Communication Skills/Patterns
4. Analyze the Farm Business Financials
5. Estimate Family Living Needs
6. Develop a Management Transition Plan
7. Create a Timeline
8. Develop and Discuss Estate Plans
9. Consider What is Fair v. Equal for Inheritance
10. Evaluate Long Term Care Needs and Options

Moving Into 2019

As we move into 2019 and you have some time to plan your planting season, use this time to develop some useful crop budgets. Use the worksheet below or contact George for a set of free excel Crop Budget Analyzer worksheets for Corn, Soybeans, Wheat, Direct Seeded Alfalfa, and Established Alfalfa. You enter your own costs or use some example costs to learn what it will cost you to produce these crops in 2019.

Crop Budget Worksheet

1. Seed Cost per acre	\$ _____
2. Tillage cost per acre	\$ _____
3. Planting Cost per acre	\$ _____
4. Fertilizer Cost per acre	\$ _____
5. Herbicide Cost per acre	\$ _____
6. Insecticide Cost per acre	\$ _____
7. Fungicide Cost per acre	\$ _____
8. Harvest Cost per acre	\$ _____
9. Land Cost per acre	\$ _____
10. Trucking Grain per acre	\$ _____
11. Drying Cost per acre	\$ _____
Total cost per acre	\$ _____
Your farm expected:	
Yield per acre Bushels	_____
Selling price per bushel	\$ _____
Gross Return per acre	\$ _____
Gross Return – Total cost /acre = Net Profit per acre \$ _____	

Dairy Revenue Protection Program Informational Meetings offered by UW-Extension

University of Wisconsin-Extension will offer a number of meetings across the state for farmers interested in learning about the new Dairy Revenue Protection program, a new federal insurance tool, with a quarterly payout to dairy farms when milk revenue falls below their insured revenue level. Mark Stephenson Director of the UW-Center for Dairy Profitability will provide a comprehensive overview of the Dairy Revenue Protection program and updates to the FSA Dairy Margin Protection Program (MPP), as another tool for dairy farmers when milk prices are low. Important changes to the MPP have been introduced in the Farm Bill that may make this program worth a second look.

The discussion will cover the following specific information for dairy farmers considering the program:

- * New Dairy Revenue Protection (RP) program structure and function
- * Overview of Dairy programs RP, MPP and Livestock Gross Margins
- * FSA implementation
- * Expected returns
- * Decision making tool & calculations

There is no fee to attend the meetings. Registration is recommended for meeting materials. The following UW-Extension meetings on the Dairy Revenue Protection program are available by date and location. For registration, more information and questions, contact the UW-Extension office by meeting location. Thank you to the Wisconsin Farm Bureau and other partnering organizations for their sponsorship of meeting refreshments, where applicable.

Dates and locations of meetings in our area are:

Jan. 16, 2019, 10 a.m. - Spring Green Fire Department, 327 South Winsted Street, Spring Green, WI. Contact: Alana Voss, Sauk County UW-Extension, (608) 355-3250

Feb. 4, 2019 1 p.m. - Columbia County Administration Building, 112 E Edgewater St., Portage, WI Contact: George Koepp, Columbia County UW-Extension, (608) 742-9680

Feb. 12, 2019, 1 p.m. - Dodge County, Lowell Community Memorial VFW, 280 South Street, Lowell, WI. Contact: Amanda Young, Dodge County UW-Extension, (920) 386-3790

March 5, 2019, 10 a.m. - Green Lake County UW-Extension, 571 County Road A, Green Lake, WI Contact: Ben Jenkins, Green Lake County UW-Extension, (920) 294-4032

Dairy Farm Stress Webinar Series: Recognizing and Managing Stress



Many dairy farmers have experienced the up's and down's of milk prices over the years. Most have known the joys and profits, sorrows and losses over time. The low points that we have experienced sometimes drag out too long and are often beyond a producer's control. Not only low milk prices can be a factor, but others such as weather, disaster, death, divorce, and debt can wreak havoc on a producer's financial situation and their mental health.

In the Four-State Dairy Nutrition & Management Conference **Dairy Farm Stress Webinar Series part 1 Recognizing and Managing Stress in Dairy Farmers**, UW-Extension Biological Systems Engineering Extension Specialist **John Shutske** and Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Dairy Specialist **Larry Tranel** discuss why dairy farm stress is difficult and what stress is.

For a collection of recent farm stress resources, please visit **Agriculture Safety & Health Information Clearinghouse**.

Another option is to contact George at the Columbia County UW-Extension office (608-742-9682) for some help and guidance. George can assist you with some of your questions and help you find the resources you may need to cope with these stressful times and farming situations. You don't have to go it alone! Farmers ask for help from Crop Consultants, Nutritionists, Accountants, Mechanics, and others all the time. It is a sign of strength, not weakness to ask for help with stress!

Finally, if you see something, say something. You may know that your neighbor or family member is having some serious financial or health issues. If they won't ask for help themselves, consider asking for them. Contacting clergy, Health and Human Services, UW-Extension, or the DATCP Wisconsin Farm Center would be great places to start.

Nutrient Management Plan Classes

Mark your
calendar!

We are again offering help to update your **2019 Nutrient Management Plans** in cooperation with our partners NRCS, WDATCP and the Columbia County Land and Water Conservation Department. For those who have already been trained and have completed their own plans in the past, you may sign up for one of two update sessions. **January 23 or 30** from 9:00 am to 3:30 pm. We even provide lunch and a \$50 stipend for attending the class and completing your 2019 plan. We will be meeting in the Columbia County Administration Building, meeting rooms 113 & 114.

For those farmers that want to begin writing their own plans, we are holding a three session course beginning in February. Attend all three sessions, **February 13, 28, and March 6** at the Columbia County Administration Building, meeting rooms 113 & 114, 9:00 am to 3:30 pm each day. At the end of these three days, you should walk away with a completed Nutrient Management Plan for 2019. Again, we are providing lunch each day, offering stipends to attend the class and complete a plan, as well as money for soil testing from a DATCP grant.

For more details and to **sign up for classes** contact Jennifer Evans in the UW-Extension office, 608-742-9682 or jennifer.evans@ces.uwex.edu. There are registration deadlines for each class, so please contact Jennifer at your earliest convenience to reserve your place in the classes.

2019 PESTICIDE APPLICATOR TRAINING (PAT)

Has it been five years already? Stop in to our office to purchase your manual and schedule the training session that works best for your schedule. If you are unable to attend one of these sessions you still have the option of studying the materials on your own and then schedule a time to take the exam on your own. The Self-study exam requires that you score 70% or higher. When you participate in the training sessions you need to score 50% or higher on the exam.

2019 Training Sessions 9:00 am to 3:30 pm:

January 22	Otsego Town Hall
February 27	Administration Building, Portage



To register, stop in the Extension Office or contact Jennifer Evans at 608-742-9687, jennifer.evans@ces.uwex.edu

BQA Certification Workshops Update

Some large packers and processors have announced that effective January 1, 2019, they will only purchase from farms that are BQA or FARM Certified. Most dairy farms are FARM certified through their milk processor. Ask your dairy plant representative for help to get a copy of your completed FARM evaluation, or a letter from them indicating your farm's completion of FARM 3.0 or beyond.

The January 1, 2019 BQA Requirement impacts those selling finished cattle that are predominantly beef breeds and will be in effect for all markets and all private treaty transactions. Farmers need to work with their marketing partners, or buyers if selling direct, to ensure correct documentation of BQA or FARM certification.

At this time, it is believed that beginning in January 2020, additional processors will begin to require BQA or FARM Certification from their suppliers.

Beef producers created the voluntary Beef Quality Assurance Program in 1987 to assist each other in raising, feeding and harvesting high quality beef. By participating in BQA and adopting BQA production practices, you are helping to answer the call from the packers' consumers, for safe beef raised in a humane manner.

(continued.....)

Obtain free, online BQA certification at BQA.org, <http://www.bqa.org>. Here you will create an account (based upon your email address) and select the course that best fits your particular operation. Each interactive course takes about 2 hours to complete, and requires an 80% score to pass the final test. You will receive your BQA certification via email, which you will provide at the point of sale.

UW-Extension is hosting in-person BQA certification trainings throughout the state. Visit the [WI Beef Information Center online calendar](#) for enrollment information of upcoming trainings.



Date	Location	Hosted by
Jan. 10, 2019 5:30 pm registration 6:00 pm start	Merrill High School (Large Group Inst.) Rm 1201 N. Sales St., Merrill, WI Enter through door 11	UWEX Lincoln County 608.539.1078 RSVP by Jan. 4th
Jan. 14, 2019 8:30 am registration 9:00 am start	Calumet County Courthouse— Room 025 206 Court Street, Chilton, WI	UWEX Calumet County 920.849.1450 ext. 3 RSVP by Jan. 9th
Jan. 19, 2019 9:30 am registration 10:00 am start	Outagamie County UW Extension Rm ABC 3365 W. Brewster St., Appleton, WI	UWEX Outagamie County 920.832.4763
Jan. 30, 2019 Noon—lunch 1:00 pm start	Buzz'z Bar 7 Grill 152 S. Eau Claire St., Mondovi, WI	Alliance Bank of Mondovi 715.926.4234 Ask for Patty

Winter Grazing Program

Attention all Grazers. UW-Extension and our Grazing Partners are planning a Winter Grazing Program to be held on Monday, February 11, 2019 at the Columbia County Health and Human Services Building in Rooms 2 & 3. This is located at 111 East Mullet Street in Portage, which is across the canal from the Columbia County Administration Building. The program will run from 9:00 am to 3:15 PM. Registration for the day is \$20.00 per person and includes lunch.

Topics to be covered include:

- * Economics of Grazing
- * Seeding and Stocking Rates
- * Grazing Cover Crops
- * Enhanced Pasture Renovation
- * Grazing Nutrition
- * DNR Grazing Program and Opportunities
 - * DNR & Farmer Grazing Panel
- * Land and Water & Farmer Grazing Panel
 - * Meet the UW CIAS Grazing Specialist
- * Wrap up, Evaluation, and Summer Pasture Walk Host Sign-up

We also plan to have a table in the hallway for participants to meet one on one with a Grazing planner to get answers to any grazing questions they might have throughout the day.

Watch for more details and information in the Ag Reporter Snapshot, our Friday afternoon electronic newsletter or call the Columbia County UW-Extension office for more program details after January 10.

Contact Jennifer Evans at 608-742-9687 or Jennifer.evans@ces.uwex.edu to register by February 4th.



GLYPHOSATE RESISTANCE CONFIRMED IN COMMON RAGWEED FROM COLUMBIA COUNTY, WISCONSIN

Common ragweed (*Ambrosia artemisiifolia*) is a widely distributed weed species in Wisconsin. In a survey of 64 soybean fields located in 10 counties from southwest to east-central Wisconsin, we found that common ragweed was among the most abundant broadleaf weed species, present in 53% of all fields (Fickett et al. 2013). Globally, occurrence of herbicide resistance in common ragweed currently totals 37 unique cases of resistance to one or more herbicide sites of action (Heap 2018) including acetolactate synthase (ALS) inhibitor resistance in Wisconsin (Butts et al. 2015).

Among these 37 unique cases for common ragweed, resistance to glyphosate (Group 9 EPSP synthase inhibitors) or ALS inhibitors (Group 2) have been the most common (Heap 2018). However, the most recent reports have been cases of multiple resistance to glyphosate, ALS inhibitors, and protoporphyrinogen oxidase (PPO) inhibitors (Group 14). In 2010, multiple resistance to glyphosate and the ALS-inhibitor cloransulam was confirmed in a population found

in a Minnesota soybean production system. In 2016, multiple resistance to cloransulam and the PPO-inhibitor fomesafen was confirmed in a population from Michigan. More concerning is three-way resistance (glyphosate, ALS- and PPO-inhibitors) which has been found in populations from a number of eastern states.

To our knowledge, the sole instance of confirmed herbicide resistance in Wisconsin common ragweed is a population from Brown County resistant to cloransulam (Butts et al. 2015). However, a common ragweed population located in Columbia County was reported in 2017 that was suspected of being resistant to glyphosate. Field histories suggested that this population had survived repeated exposure to glyphosate over several years in a long-term corn-soybean rotation.

We conducted research during 2018 to confirm and quantify suspected glyphosate resistance in this common ragweed population and also determine if the population showed multiple resistance to

the ALS-inhibitor cloransulam and PPO-inhibitor fomesafen. Seeds were collected in September 2017 from suspected glyphosate-resistant (R) and -sensitive (S) plants. We conducted dose-response experiments under greenhouse conditions on the UW-Madison campus following standard methods for herbicide resistance testing. Glyphosate Resistance Confirmed.

The results of our experiments confirmed glyphosate resistance in the common ragweed population from Columbia County (Figures 1 and 2). The population showed a 4-fold level of glyphosate resistance based on the glyphosate rate that reduced shoot biomass 50% compared to non-treated plants, and over 20-fold level of resistance based on the rate

that reduced shoot biomass 90%. Even at the 10X rate of glyphosate, many of the resistance plants survived although growth was severely reduced. In contrast, there was no evidence of multiple resistance to the ALS-inhibitor cloransulam or the PPO-inhibitor fomesafen (data not shown).

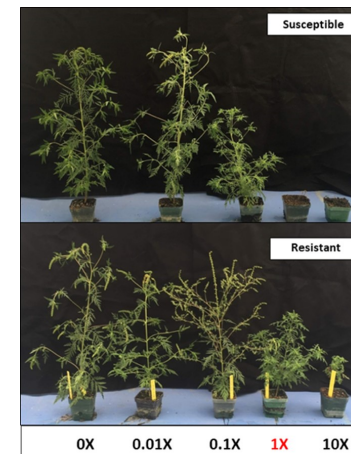


Figure 1. Columbia County common ragweed plants 4 weeks after treatment with glyphosate at rates up to 10 times (10X) the labeled rate (0.77 lb ae/acre). The label rate is indicated by 1X. Non-treated plants are indicated by 0X. All treatments included 8.5 lb AMS/100 gal.

Dairy Situation and Outlook, December 19, 2018

**By Bob Cropp, Professor Emeritus
University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension**

Milk prices were a record high in 2014 with Class III averaging \$22.34 and Class IV averaging \$22.09. For the past four years milk prices have averaged well below this record. This year, despite a lower growth in milk production, up just 0.7% in October and 0.6% in November, the Class III price has fallen each month since the peak of \$16.09 in September. Over the past four years Class IV will average about \$14.25. This decline in milk prices towards the end of the year was not expected. Strong holiday sales of butter and cheese

normally push prices higher. Sales this year appear to be up but only modestly. Fluid (beverage) milk sales continued to decline being 2.2% lower January through October of this year. December CME butter and cheese prices will average lower than November. Butter currently at \$2.18 per pound could average about \$0.04 lower. Barrel cheese currently at \$1.3150 per pound and 40 pound blocks currently at \$1.41 per pound.

U.S. dairy exports which have been running above year ago levels all year were virtually flat in October, undermined by a continued loss of sales to China since implementation of retaliatory tariffs. According to the U.S. Dairy Export Council combined shipments of milk powder, whey, lactose, cheese and butterfat to China were down 47% in October from a year ago. Exports elsewhere were up 14% with large gains to Southeast Asia and Mexico.

Milk prices for 2019 hinge heavily upon the level of milk production and dairy exports. Forecasted milk production, domestic sales and dairy exports point to improved milk prices in 2019, but how much improvement? The current slowdown in milk production is encouraging. Milk cows have been declining since June with November numbers down 38,000 head from last year. Cow numbers are likely to continue to decline into 2019. The increase in milk per cow has slowed to 1.0%.

USDA's December forecast has milk production for 2019 increasing 1.3% from 20,000 fewer milk cows producing 1.5% more milk per cow. This level of increased milk production normally would be positive for milk prices, but milk production could even turn out lower. Milk cow numbers could fall by more than this. A wet spring and fall reduced silage/forage quality particularly in the Northeast and Midwest which could reduce the increase in milk per cow. It looks like growth in the economy may slow some in 2019, but still be conducive to increased butter and cheese sales. Dairy exports are a major factor that will determine how much milk prices will improve. An anticipated slower growth in world milk production is positive for exports. Unless the trade dispute with China and Mexico ends dairy exports will likely fall below 2018 and dampen the improvement in milk prices.



Agronomy Update Meetings

The Department of Agronomy and UW-Extension will offer Crop Production and Management Meetings at eight locations during 2019. Joe Lauer and Shawn Conley will present the latest information on hybrid/variety performance, an analysis and discussion of last year's growing season, and updated recommendations for field crop production. Certified Crop Advisor CEU credits have been requested (3.0 CEU hours-Crop Management). The registration fee includes a meal and information materials. A \$45.00 registration fee (which includes the meal) will be charged for the meeting. A "walk-in" fee will be charged to those who have not preregistered. Extra information packets are available for \$21.00 each. Make your reservations with the host agent one week prior to the scheduled meeting date.

Below is a list of meeting sites in our area, dates and times:

Janesville - Monday, Jan. 7 at 12:00

Holiday Inn Express - 3100 Wellington Dr.

Nick Baker

Rock Co. Extension Office

51 S. Main St.

Janesville, WI 53545-3978

(608) 757-5696 nick.baker@ces.uwex.edu

Madison - Tuesday, Jan. 8 at 7:30 am

Comfort Inn, 5025 County Hwy. V, De Forest, WI

Heidi Johnson

Dane Co. Extension Office

5201 Fen Oak Drive, Rm. 138

Madison, WI 53718 <http://fyi.uwex.edu/danecountyag>

(608) 224-3716 Heidi.johnson@ces.uwex.edu

Fond du Lac - Tuesday, Jan. 8 at 12:00

UW Fond du Lac, Rm. 114 University Center

Tina Kohlman

Fond du Lac Co. Extension Office

400 University Drive

Fond du Lac, WI 54935-2998

(920) 929-3171 tina.kohlman@ces.uwex.edu

**Emergency Assistance Program grant applications
now available for damages sustained from August 27, 2018
to September 1, 2018**

Residents in Columbia County, Dodge County, Jefferson County, Ozaukee County, Sauk County and Washington County whose homes were damaged by the August 27, 2018 to September 1, 2018 destructive storms and flooding may now apply for recovery funds through the Southern Housing Region Emergency Assistance Program.

Columbia County was recently awarded approximately \$800,000 in Community Development Block Grant-Emergency Assistance Program funding to provide aid to low-to-moderate-income households affected by the flooding.

Funds are granted to applicants and do not need to be paid back. Applicants may only receive Emergency Assistance Program funding once, however, and they will not qualify for the program again if their homes are damaged by future flooding.

Funds may be used to reimburse eligible applicants for work already completed and funds are available for those who have work that needs to be done. Applicants' homes will be visited to see that repairs have been made or that there is still flood-related damage in need of repair.

For applications and more information about the program, please contact Sue Koehn at 800-552-6330 or skoehn@msa-ps.com. Applications are available on the Columbia County website.

***Land & Water Conservation Department
Updates & Program Information***

By Kurt Calkins, Director of Columbia County Land & Water Conservation

**Tree Sales Program 2018-
2019-Reserve ASAP!**

Just a reminder we are processing orders for the 2018-2019 year. If you submit your order to our office (or postmarked) by January 31, 2018, you will also have your name entered into a drawing where we will pick one name for a free bundle of trees to be picked up on Tree Day. All order forms were mailed out in November, if you are on our mailing list you should have received yours already. You can also find the order form online at: <http://www.co.columbia.wi.us/columbiacounty/lwcd/TreeProgram>. If you are NOT on the annual mailing list, feel free to contact us to be added. There is also an online purchasing option through paypal with the above link. To reserve the trees you want, order sooner than later. Tree pick-up day is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, April 25, 2019. Thanks for your continued support in this program. If you have questions, please contact us at 608 742-9670.

Reminder For 2018 Farmland Preservation

Tax Credits To Be Claimed:

When you file your 2018 Farmland Preservation Tax Credit, remember you only need your unique Certificate number when filing your taxes. If you received this number last year on your Certificate of Compliance, it would still be applicable to your land, unless you have removed or added any land which would change the description on your previous Certificate of Compliance. That would require you to obtain a new certificate, obtainable with a new certificate fee of \$25.00. If you continue to meet eligibility requirements including meeting all applicable conservation standards each year and submitting your postcard due to our office every July 15th, that certificate number will still be able. The date on the bottom of the certificates refers to the date your certification started, you do **NOT** need a new Certificate of Compliance each year. If you have any questions, please contact our office.



Chance To Participate in Citizen Advisory Committee (LWRM Plan Revision):

Columbia County LWCD will be going through a State required update to our DATCP approved Land and Water Resource Management Plan in 2019. This is a very important process that will help guide our Land and Water Conservation programming for the next 10 years and more. We will need to populate a citizen advisory committee to help us through the process. If you are interested in serving on the Citizen Advisory Committee, or have questions about the role, please contact Kurt Calkins to discuss this. Commitment will include a number of evening meetings in 2019.

The plan provides long & short term guidance of departmental programming and areas of emphasis. The plan also provides eligibility for the County to gain access to financial resources from state and federal sources. The two prong approach is a valuable opportunity for citizens to have direct impact in local decision making and priority setting regarding a wide range of natural resource management priorities, including the regulatory management of animal waste and general agricultural nonpoint source pollution abatement.



United States Department of Agriculture
Farm Service Agency

Important Dates to Remember

December 24, 2018: USDA Service Centers Closed

December 25, 2018: USDA Service Centers Closed

January 1, 2019: New County Committee members' terms begin

January 1, 2019: USDA Service Centers Closed

January 2, 2019: Acreage reporting deadline for 2018 honey

January 15, 2019: Final date to sign up for MFP

Columbia County Farm Service Agency Announces County Committee Election Results

Columbia County U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) announced that County Committee elections are over and the ballots have been counted.



David Hughes of Cambria was elected to represent local administrative area (LAA) #3

and James Van Erem of Cambria will serve as the first alternate.

County Committee members are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA. They help deliver programs at the county level and work to serve the needs of local producers. All recently elected County Committee members take office in January 2019, and will be joining the existing committee. Every FSA office is required to have a County Committee, and they are made up of local farmers who are elected by local farmers.

Nearly 7,800 FSA County Committee members serve FSA offices nationwide. Each committee has three to 11 elected members who serve three-year terms of office. One-third of County Committee

seats are up for election each year. County Committee members impact the administration of FSA within a community by applying their knowledge and judgment to help FSA make important decisions on its commodity support programs, conservation programs, indemnity and disaster programs, emergency programs and eligibility.

County Committee members impact producers through their decision making and help shape the culture of a local FSA office. They also ensure the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties and are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. Members conduct hearings and reviews as requested by the State Committee, ensure socially disadvantaged (SDA) farmers and ranchers are fairly represented, make recommendations to the State Committee on existing programs, monitor changes in farm programs, and inform farmers of the purpose and provisions of FSA programs. They also assist with outreach and inform underserved producers such as beginning farmers and ranchers about FSA opportunities.

For more information, visit the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/elections or contact the Columbia County FSA office at 608-742-5361 x2.

USDA Commodity Loans Available to Columbia County Producers

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Columbia County Farm Service Agency reminds producers that Marketing Assistance Loans (MALs) and Loan Deficiency Payments (LDPs) are available to help producers through periods of low market prices. The 2014 Farm Bill authorized MALs and LDPs for the 2014 to 2018 crop years.

MALs provide interim financing and allow producers to delay the sale of the commodity at harvest-time lows and wait until more favorable market conditions emerge. A producer who is eligible to obtain a loan, but agrees to forgo the loan, may obtain an LDP if such a payment is available.



MALs and LDPs provide financing and marketing assistance for wheat, feed grains, soybeans and other oilseeds, pulse crops, rice, peanuts, cotton, wool and honey.

The Columbia County FSA office is now accepting requests for 2018 MALs and LDPs for all eligible commodities after harvest.

Before MAL repayments and LDP disbursements can be made, producers must meet the requirements of actively engaged in farming, cash-rent tenant and member contribution.

In order to meet eligibility requirements, producers must retain beneficial interest in the commodity, meaning they have control of the commodity or a title to the commodity, until the MAL is repaid or the Commodity Credit Corporation takes title to the commodity.

The 2014 Farm Bill also establishes payment limitations per individual or entity not to exceed \$125,000 annually on certain commodities for the following program benefits: Agriculture Risk Coverage and Price Loss Coverage payments, Marketing Loan Gains and LDPs. These payment limitations do not apply to MAL disbursements.



Producers or legal entities whose total applicable three-year average adjusted gross income exceeds \$900,000 are not eligible for Marketing Loan Gains and LDPs, but are eligible for MALs repaid at principal plus interest.

For more information, please visit your local FSA office or www.fsa.usda.gov. To find your local USDA service center, visit www.farmers.gov.

USDA Offers Loans for Portable Farm Storage and Handling Equipment

Portable Equipment Can Help Producers, including Small-Scale and Local Farmers, Get Products to Market Quickly

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide a financing option to help farmers purchase portable storage and handling equipment. The loans, which now include a smaller microloan op-

tion with lower down payments, are designed to help producers, including new, small and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets.

The program also offers a “microloan” option, which allows applicants seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of five percent. There is no requirement to provide three years of production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible. The microloan option is expected to be of particular benefit to smaller farms and ranches, and specialty crop producers who may not have access to commercial storage or on-farm storage after harvest. These producers can invest in equipment like conveyers, scales or refrigeration units and trucks that can store commodities before delivering them to markets. Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply.

FSA significantly expanded the list of commodities eligible for Farm Storage Facility Loan. Eligible commodities now include aquaculture; floriculture; fruits (including



nuts) and vegetables; corn, grain sorghum, rice, oilseeds, oats, wheat, triticale, spelt, buckwheat, lentils, chickpeas, dry peas sugar, peanuts, barley, rye, hay, honey, hops, maple sap, unprocessed meat and poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt and renewable biomass. FSFL microloans can also be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a commodity is placed in cold storage.

To learn more about Farm Storage Facility Loans, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport or contact a local FSA county office.

To find your local FSA county office, visit <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Are you Currently Enrolled or Do You Plan to Enroll in a Federal Program?

Maintain your Eligibility by Following Conservation Compliance Guidelines

All U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) program participants are required to have a conservation system in place on all highly erodible land (HEL). Farmers with HEL determined soils must apply tillage, crop residue and rotation requirements as specified in their conservation plan. Additionally, it is important that you contact the USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) now, before modifying, tiling, draining, dredging, filling or leveling any wetland or drainage ditches.

Breaking out additional land, changing crops or changing or removing existing conservation practices may result in compliance issues. Additionally, producers need to be aware of potential compliance concerns when renting new cropland or purchasing new land.

Your local USDA Service Center can help to make sure you have a self-certified, up-to-date, AD-1026, Highly Erodible Land Conservation and Wetland Conservation Certification form, on file. Find out more by reading AD-1026: What You Need to Know located at www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/wi/newsroom/factsheets. Landowners and operators are required to complete the AD-1026 to determine whether a referral to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is necessary for a HEL or wetland determination.

Now is the time to contact your local USDA Service Center before you start planning your spring activities in detail. Updating your AD-1026 enables USDA to complete HEL and wetland determinations now. Producers should notify their local Service Center prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects to ensure compli-

ance. If you intend to clear any trees to create new cropland, these areas will need to be reviewed to ensure any work will not jeopardize your eligibility for benefits. Failure to have an evaluation of the land prior to these activities may result in ineligibility for USDA federal payments, including crop insurance premium support.

For more information on HEL and wetland conservation provisions, read Conservation Compliance, What You Need to Know, or contact your local USDA Service Center at <http://offices.usda.gov>.

Helping People Help the Land

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