

# Columbia County Ag Reporter

July/August 2019



**Extension**

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON  
COLUMBIA COUNTY

## WHAT'S INSIDE...

*Agricultural newsletter for Columbia  
County landowners and residents*

### This issue's highlighted articles:

- ◆ Calendar of Events (pg. 2)
- ◆ Tar Spot (pg. 4-6)
- ◆ Public Field Days (pg. 8-9)
- ◆ Prevented Plant Acres & Cover Crops (pg. 13-14)

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## Ag Reporter Calendar of Events

### July

- 4 Independence Day, County offices closed
- 11 Field Scout Clinic with Bryan Jensen - Corn and Soybean Insects, at Ben Grove Farm, 2441 Bristol Rd, Columbus, 9-11am
- 11-14 Lodi Ag Fair
- 23-25 Farm Technology Days, Jefferson
- 23-28 Columbia County Fair

### August

- 1-11 WI State Fair
- 21 Field Scout Clinic, with Damon Smith, Corn & Soybean Diseases - Arlington ARS, 9-11am
- 28 Agronomy Field Day - Arlington ARS

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

## Columbia County Corn Growers Presents:

### 2019 Summer Grain Crop Scouting Clinics

Watch for details in future Friday Ag Reporter Snapshots. We are working on the details of dates and locations for these events for 2019. They will usually be held on a Wednesday or Thursday mornings from 9-11 am. Our general topics and time frames are listed below. As soon as we can identify availability from UW-Madison Extension specialists and locations we will share that info.

July 11, 9-11 am	Ben Grove Farm	Insect Id and Control – Bryan Jensen
Aug 21, 9-11am	Arlington ARS	Corn and Soybean Diseases – Damon Smith
Late August/early September		Scott Holland Impact Plots

# Lodi Agricultural FAIR

## Schedule of Events

Thursday, July 11th:	6:30-7pm Market Lamb Weigh-In 7pm Beef & Swine Market Weigh-In
Friday, July 12th:	8am Mandatory (Beef, Dairy, Sheep, Swine, Poultry, Rabbits) Exhibitor's Meeting 10am Swine Show 3pm Beef Show 4:40pm Pork Chop Dinner
Saturday, July 13th:	8am Sheep Show 8am Dairy Show 9am Poultry Show 2pm Exhibitor Meat Animal Auction
Sunday, July 14th:	10am Master Showman Competition



## Schedule of Events

Sunday, July 21st:	8am Horse Pleasure Show/Trail Class
Monday, July 22nd:	6pm Open Dog Show - Ag Building
Tuesday, July 23rd:	6-8pm Junior Swine entry & Weigh-In
Wed., July 24th:	noon-7pm Animal Entry 5pm Swine Judging—Swine barn
Thur., July 25th:	9am Beef Judging—Ag Building 4pm Sheep Judging/Sheep Lead Class
Friday, July 26th:	8:30am Dairy Judging—Ag Building 9am Poultry Judging—Ag Building 10am Meat Goat Judging
Saturday, July 27th:	11am-12:30pm Buyers Buffet 1pm Sale of Champions—Ag Building 4pm Steak Fry @ Farm Bureau Eat Stand
Sunday, July 28th:	10am Showman of Showmen—Ag Building 12pm Parade of Champions & Merit Awards

# "Tar Spot on My Mind"

By Damon Smith, UW Madison Extension Plant Pathologist

Tar spot seems to be on everyone's mind now that corn planting is nearing the finish line. The challenging spring and wet weather has folks now focused on the various disease issues that might be in front of us if we stay in this cool and rainy pattern in Wisconsin. I addressed this concern in an article earlier this season, and tar spot is certainly a disease that could be significant if the weather stays wet and cool.

As many are aware, we have worked with a group of plant pathologists in the Midwest during the winter of 2019 to develop a tar spot prediction tool. The model that runs the tool is based on data from the Arlington Agricultural Research Station located in Arlington, WI and data from a single location in Michigan. Data from several fungicide trials were used to generate probability-based prediction models for tar spot epidemics. The framework of the models follows that of our previous models for soybean, which run the Sporecaster application. However, the weather information and predictor variables have been changed based on our work in corn in 2018.

While the preliminary smartphone application, called Tarspotter, has been programmed it needs to be validated in replicated studies and in observational studies to determine the accuracy. Thus, Tarspotter is not publicly available and is being tested by extension and industry colleagues during the 2019 season. With that said, I will provide an outlook based on the calculated risk and my interpretation of the risk for Wisconsin during the season.

## What is the Present Risk For Tar Spot Development?

Figure 1 shows the calculated risk from Tarspotter for June 19, 2019, for various locations in Wisconsin. Figure 2 provides a zoomed view for southern and south-central Wisconsin. As you can see, the present risk is very high for tar spot development in all locations examined.

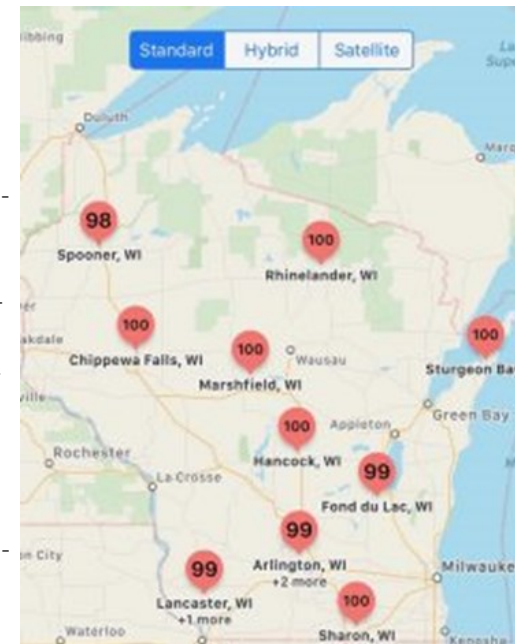


Figure 1. Tarspotter risk predictions for the state of Wisconsin on June 19, 2019.

This is due to the fact that the weather has been extremely cool and wet for the past 30 days across the entire state. Tar spot is favored by persistent temperatures between 60 and 70 F and high relative humidity averaging above 75% for a 30-day period. We have been right in the zone for conducive conditions for this disease.

### Should I Spray Fungicide Now on My Corn in Wisconsin?

The short answer is NO! While the weather has been conducive for tar spot, corn is still very young. We would not recommend spraying corn for any foliar disease any earlier than V6. In fact, I would urge folks to hold off as long as they can toward VT



Figure 2. Tarspotter risk predictions for southern Wisconsin on June 19, 2019.

to make a fungicide application. Some things to consider in this decision to spray fungicide for tar spot at V6 would be the field history. Has tar spot ever been found in a field? If not, then there is presumed to be no local inoculum available for infection, even if conditions are conducive (remember that the disease triangle is important). In fields with no history of tar spot, scout regularly and monitor the risk maps and what we are recommending based on our observations. You might be able to hold off longer on that fungicide application and get it on at VT where a return on your fungicide investment is more likely. If you have had a history of tar spot and you know that you have a hybrid that is more susceptible and there is a large amount of infested residue, then you should monitor this situation closely. Remember that the first 4 or 5 leaves on a corn plant don't contribute to yield. In

fact the corn plant will soon get rid of those leaves, as the adult leaves emerge and the stalk elongates. Thus protecting leaves prior to V6 or V8 really doesn't make a lot of economic sense (let alone biological sense for the Midwest). If you have had a history of the disease, conditions remain conducive, and the crop is V6-V8 or later, a fungicide application might make sense. Weigh the economics of this application and shop around. There are many products that have demonstrated decent efficacy toward tar spot. You can find our 2018 fungicide test summaries by [CLICKING HERE](#) and scrolling down to pages 2-7.

### The Summary

While weather has been conducive for tar spot over the last month, do a little homework and evaluate the likelihood that tar spot might develop early in your

field. Remember, if you have no history of the disease, then the likelihood of local inoculum being present is low. Saving the fungicide application for later in the season might be a better option. If you have a history and you know you have a susceptible hybrid coupled with a no-till situation, then the risk is higher and you need to evaluate the economics of doing an application of fungicide as early as V6. Remember, if you do a V6-V8 application of fungicide, conditions could stay conducive later in the season for tar spot. Those early applications will "burn out" but the time the tasseling period rolls around. So if you do put a fungicide spray on at V6, you might have to come back at VT with another application to protect plants during the reproductive phase, should we stay in favorable conditions for tar spot. Keep an eye on the weather and keep scouting!

## 2019 Farm Tech Days - July 23-25, 2019

**Walter Grain Farms** – Jefferson County, Johnson Creek,  
\$8 per person at the gate  
\$5 admission on Wednesday after 3 pm



### Theme Days

**Tuesday, July 23 AG CAREER DAY - 9am - 4pm**

Tuesday is all about CELEBRATING WORK! On Tuesday, the 2019 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days will host the first-ever Ag Career Day. 1,000 youth from all over the state will participate in a Career Scavenger Hunt to learn about the diverse careers the agriculture industry has to offer. This event is sponsored by Pioneer Seed and the Career Scavenger Hunt is sponsored by Alfex Livestock Intelligence.

**Wednesday, July 24 THANK A FARMER DAY - 9am - 7pm**

On Wednesday, we will celebrate the work of the farmer by emphasizing the Culver's "Thank a Farmer" Booth. Attendees will have the chance to write thank you cards to local farmers and show their appreciation for the work farmers do for us each and every day. Also, on Wednesday, we will celebrate local agriculture royalty with a Royalty Hour from 2:00 pm to 3:00 pm. Come and enjoy snacks and share stories with our local agriculture royalty.

**Thursday, July 25 MASCOT DAY - 9am - 4pm**

On Thursday we will have a fun-filled day by sponsoring a mascot day. Come out and celebrate local businesses in Jefferson County by snapping a photo with local mascots and see a surprise from some celebrity mascots.

For a schedule of events please visit : <http://www.wifarmtechnologydays.com/>



***Dairy Situation and Outlook, June 18, 2019***  
***By Bob Cropp, Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin-Madison***

The good news is milk prices continue to improve. The Class III price which was as low as \$13.89 in February will improve about \$2.40 in June to around \$16.30. The Class IV price which was as low as \$15.48 in January will improve about \$1.30 to around \$16.80 in June. Much lower milk production is the driver for improved milk prices. For the U.S. compared to a year earlier, April's milk production was up just 0.3% with May down 0.4%. Cow numbers in May were 9.333 million head, down 89,000 since January or 0.9% lower than a year ago. The continued exiting of dairy producers and the slaughter of cows running 5.0% higher than a year ago is reducing the size of the dairy herd. Milk per cow was also well below trend being up just 0.6%. Of the 24 reporting states 14 had fewer cows and 11 had lower total milk production.

Milk prices should improve further as we progress through the rest of the year. USDA now forecasts milk production for the year to be just 0.3% higher than 2018, the result of cow numbers averaging 0.7% lower and milk per cow 1.0% higher. It looks like feed prices will be higher. Alfalfa hay prices will be higher. Current hay stocks are tight and there are reports of significant winter kill in some areas along with a challenge of harvesting quality first cutting due to wet weather. Delayed corn planting and unplanted acres means higher corn prices. Tighter feed supplies, lower quality forages along with higher feed prices will likely continue to reduce cow numbers and dampen milk per cow this fall and winter.

Butter and cheese sales are expected to continue to show modest growth. While exports will be lower exports will still support to milk prices. It doesn't look like the trade dispute with China will end soon. In May U.S. increased tariffs on China's goods and China in turn increased tariffs levied on U.S. dairy products. But, in May U.S. eliminated tariffs on steel and aluminum from Mexico and Mexico in turn eliminated its tariffs on U.S. cheese. This could be positive for cheese exports later this year and going into 2020.

As of now we could see the Class III price in the low \$17's by August and in the mid to high \$17's by fourth quarter. Some are predicting Class III even in the \$18's. Class IV could be in the low \$17's by July and in the mid \$17's fourth quarter. If this holds true, Class III would average about \$16.30 for the year compared to \$14.61 in 2018 and the Class IV price would average about \$17.00 compared to \$15.09 in 2018.



## **UW Madison Public Field Days**

MADISON — Each year, UW–Madison's Agricultural Research Stations host more than a dozen public field days throughout the growing season to share research updates and educational information with agricultural professionals, home gardeners and other interested citizens. Below is a list of some of this season's field days. Events are free unless noted otherwise.

For more information about a particular event, please contact the host station. Station contact information can be found at <http://ars.wisc.edu/>. Stations will make a reasonable effort to provide accommodations for participants with disabilities when notified in advance. To request a disability accommodation, please contact [ars\\_accommodation@cals.wisc.edu](mailto:ars_accommodation@cals.wisc.edu) or call (608) 846-3750 ext. 3 at least 10 days in advance of the event. Efforts will be made to meet same-day requests to the extent possible.

### **Potato Research Field Day – Hancock**

July 18, 2019, 8:45 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.  
Hancock Agricultural Research Station, N3909 County Road V, Hancock, WI

This field day features updates of interest to the state's potato industry on variety trials; disease, insect and weed management field experiments; and crop storage research.

### **Wisconsin Turfgrass Association Summer Field Day – Verona**

July 23, 2019, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.  
O.J. Noer Turfgrass Research and Education Facility, 2502 Highway M, Verona, WI

This field day, organized by the Wis-

consin Turfgrass Association and the station, features morning sessions on general turfgrass management and lawn care. After a lunch break, the focus shifts to golf turf management. Registration costs \$45. More info: <https://wisconsinturfgrassassociation.org/wisconsin-turfgrass-summer-field-day/>.

### **Horticulture Open House – Verona**

August 17, 2019, 9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.  
West Madison Agricultural Research Station, 8502 Mineral Point Rd, Verona, WI

At this family-friendly field day, visitors are welcome to tour the station's extensive flowerbeds, where more than 300 cultivars of annual and perennial flowers will be on display. Visitors can

also explore the vineyard and vegetable garden, and there will be various fresh-picked vegetables to sample. UW–Madison and UW–Extension experts will be on hand to answer questions.

### **UW Organic Vegetable Variety Research Showcase – Verona**

August 22, 2019, 2:00 pm – 5:00 p.m. West Madison Agricultural Research Station, 8502 Mineral Point Rd, Verona, WI

At this field day, scientists will share the results of vegetable variety trials for organic systems, including tomatoes, potatoes, carrots, sweet corn, beets, peppers, squash and melons. Attendees will be able to tour the station's 10+ acres of certified organic land and participate in a vegetable flavor evaluation.

### **UW Agronomy and Soils Field Day – Arlington**

August 28, 2019, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Arlington Agricultural Research Station, N695 Hopkins Road, Arlington, WI

The morning portion of this field day will feature field plot tours and UW research updates on soil fertility and management; pest management; and grain production systems. The afternoon will focus on industrial hemp, including a tour of the UW industrial hemp research plots, where researcher will share field observations and showcase organic

weed management, conventional fertility and variety trial studies focused on fiber and grain production. An update on cannabidiol (CBD) research will also be provided. Lunch will be available for \$5. Please RSVP at <https://go.wisc.edu/n4yrl5>.

### **UW Organic Agriculture Research Field Day – Arlington**

August 29, 2019, 10:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Arlington Agricultural Research Station, N695 Hopkins Road, Arlington, WI

This field day will highlight organic research conducted at UW–Madison, including optimizing equipment and production practices for organic no-till production; interseeding cover crops into corn, soybeans and cereal grains; the impact of organic management on soil microbial communities; and weed management for organic hemp production for grain. A free lunch will be provided. Registration is requested by Aug. 26. RSVP to [emsilva@wisc.edu](mailto:emsilva@wisc.edu). More info: <https://ograin.cals.wisc.edu/events>.



**Extension**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## **Dairy Margin Coverage Program**

The 2018 Farm Bill authorized the new Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program, which is a voluntary risk management program for dairy producers. DMC replaces the Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy).

DMC continues to offer protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer.



### **Program at a Glance**

The program provides:

- catastrophic coverage, at no cost to the producer, other than an annual \$100 administrative fee that is waived in some cases; and
- various levels of buy-up coverage.



### **Benefits**

DMC helps producers manage the ups and downs. So far, DMC payments have been triggered in January, February, March and April 2019.

FSA and the University of Wisconsin partnered on the development of a [DMC decision support tool](#) that helps producers determine the level of coverage under a variety of conditions that will provide them with the strongest financial safety net. It allows farmers to simplify their coverage level selection by combining operation data and other key variables to calculate coverage needs based on price projections. [Visit the tool.](#)



## Who Is Eligible?

To be eligible for DMC, a dairy operation must:

- Produce and commercially market milk from cows located in the United States; and

Provide proof of milk production at the time of registration.

Dairy operations may consist of one or more dairy producers who are in the business of commercially producing and marketing milk as a single unit.

Dairy producers who are members of the dairy operation must share in the risk of producing milk and make contributions to the dairy operation that are at least commensurate with their share of the proceeds of the operation.

Dairy operations must be in compliance with highly erodible land and wetland conservation provisions. For more information, visit [fsa.usda.gov/compliance](http://fsa.usda.gov/compliance). Adjusted gross income provisions do not apply to DMC.



## How It Works

To participate in DMC, dairy producers:

- select a coverage level ranging from \$4.00 to \$9.50 per cwt, in \$0.50 increments
- select a coverage percentage of the dairy operation's production history ranging from 5 percent to 95 percent, in 5 percent increments.

Producers have the choice to lock in coverage levels until 2023 and receive a 25 percent discount on their DMC premiums.

Dairy operations who paid MPP-Dairy premiums during any calendar year from 2014 through 2017 may eligible to receive a repayment for part of the premiums paid into the program. Through September 20, 2019, an operation either can elect to receive 50 percent of the repayment amount as a cash refund or take 75 percent of the amount as a credit that can be used toward premiums for DMC.



## How to Apply

FSA will open signup for DMC on June 17, providing coverage retroactive to January 1, 2019, with applicable payments following soon after enrollment. FSA will make more information available as signup nears.



## More Information

The 2018 Farm Bill enabled dairy producers who had covered under MPP-Dairy, the predecessor of DMC, to be eligible for reimbursements. An operation either can receive 50 percent of the reimbursement amount as a cash refund or take 75 percent of the amount as a credit toward premiums for DMC. Producers must make repayment elections by September 20, 2019.

[Read more information.](#)

### Dairy Margin Coverage – a new risk management option.

Watch Dr. Mark Stephenson as he describes what the Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) decision tool is and how it works and functions:

[https://dairymarkets.org/DMC/DMC\\_Video.mp4](https://dairymarkets.org/DMC/DMC_Video.mp4) .

This DMC decision tool can be used to help you look at and think about what your opportunities are.

Contact George Koepp at the Columbia County UW-Madison Extension Office for help or assistance with the DMC decision tool and to discuss your individual options. For most dairy farms it makes sense to sign up for the five year program and receive a 25% discount on premiums. For most farms it makes sense to sign up at the \$9.50 level for the first 5 million pounds of production and at the \$5.00 level for any production over 5 million pounds. Again, call George at 608-742-9682 for help.

You must be signed up by September 20, but do not delay, the sooner you sign up the sooner you can begin to receive payments for January thru May of 2019.

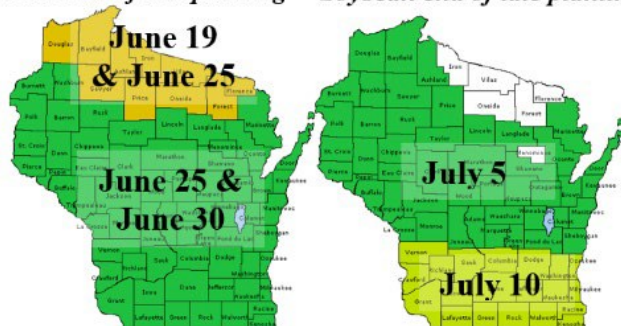


# Can I Use Corn or Soybeans as a Cover Crop on Prevented Plant Acres?

Paul D. Mitchell, Agricultural and Applied Economics,  
UW-Madison  
Office: (608) 265-6514, Email: [pdmitchell@wisc.edu](mailto:pdmitchell@wisc.edu) Web:  
<http://www.aae.wisc.edu/mitchell/extension.htm>

As many Wisconsin farmers are taking prevented plant payments for their insured corn or soybeans acres, they are asking what they can use for cover crops on these acres. Traditional cover crop seed is hard to find this year with all the prevented plant acres in the region and farmers already have corn and/or soybean seed. Thus the question: *Can I use corn or soybeans as a cover crop on prevented plant acres?* The short answer is yes, but only if planted sufficiently late and if the cover crop is never harvested for grain or seed. Note that after September 1, a cover crop can be grazed, baled for hay or baled for straw/stover for bedding, or harvested for silage, haylage or baleage, including a corn or soybean corn crop. This bulletin provides guidance to farmers, examining at three options. For agronomic information on corn and soybeans as cover crops, see <https://coolbean.info/2019/06/13/soybean-corn-considered-cover-crop-options-wi/>.

## Corn end of late planting Soybean end of late planting



First, if a farmer takes the full prevented plant indemnity, planting the same crop as a cover crop before the end of the late planting period is not allowed. Instead, the farmer should report it as late planted with a reduced guarantee. For all but northern Wisconsin, June 25 is the end of the late planting period for corn grain, June 30 for corn silage. For soybeans, the late planting period ends on July 5 for the northern two-thirds of Wisconsin and on July 10 for the southern third. Therefore, after taking a full prevented plant indemnity, planting corn or soybeans as a cover crop before these dates is not allowed. These maps show the dates for the end of the late planting periods for each Wisconsin county. If a farmer wants to plant a cover crop during this period, something other than corn and soybeans should be planted.

Second, if the goal is to harvest forage from prevented plant acres, then farmers should take the partial prevented plant payment (35% of the full payment) and acknowledge forage as the alternative crop. However, on June 20, the RMA announced new rules pertaining to forage production on prevented plant acres that offer better forage production options. Previously, farmers had to wait until after November 1 and could only

graze the cover crop or bale it as hay for feed or as straw/stover for bedding. *Now, for 2019 only, they only have to wait until after September 1 and can also chop the cover crop for silage, haylage or baleage. These dates and practices are less risky for forage production in Wisconsin and some farmers may want to take advantage of this new option.* Note that farmers can still take the partial prevented plant payment (35% of the full payment) and acknowledge forage as the alternative crop and not worry about the September 1 date. If farmers have questions, they should consult with local agronomic experts for recommended crops for forage production as an alternative crop. Potentially, a full season corn hybrid (105-110 days) planted in early July may be a viable option for corn silage production, but it will not be insurable.

Third, the RMA does not have an official list of approved cover crops. RMA states that "For crop insurance purposes, a cover crop is a crop generally recognized by agricultural experts as agronomically sound for the area for erosion control or other purposes related to conservation or soil improvement." (<https://www.rma.usda.gov/en/Fact-Sheets/National-Fact-Sheets/Cover-Crops-and-Crop-Insurance>). Thus a local agronomic expert, such as a University of Wisconsin Extension county crops agent, could provide a letter to a farmer and crop insurance agent that corn or soybeans was an acceptable cover crop in their county. Alternatively, a University of Wisconsin Extension state agronomic specialist could provide publically available written guidance on how to use corn or soy-

beans as a cover crop on prevented plant acres in Wisconsin including recommended agronomic practices. If farmers use corn or soybeans as a cover crop, they should carefully document the destruction of the corn or soybean cover crop (e.g., with dated photographs), that it was not harvested for grain or seed, and if they grazed it, chopped it for silage, or baled it for hay, straw/stover, or baleage, that they did not do so until after September 1, and that was it clearly for bedding or silage. Potentially, this documentation could include a written statement from an Extension county crops agent or other third party expert witness documenting and certifying these activities and their dates.

Finally, many farmers have been wondering about the impact of prevented plant acres on USDA support payments. The market facilitation program (MFP) has been announced for 2019, with Secretary Perdue making an official press release on June 10: <https://www.usda.gov/media/press-releases/2019/06/10/secretary-perdue-statement-disaster-and-trade-related-assistance>. At this time, it seems that MFP payments will not be made for prevented plant acres (see item 4), but these interpretations can evolve, as MFP is authorized by executive order, not an existing law. Prevented plant payments do not affect Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) payments. Lastly, how the USDA Farm Service Agency will count prevented plant acres as acres planted for determining base acres is officially unclear and has to be clarified by Congress.

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

### **Farmland Preservation Self-Certification Post Card:**

FPP participants will be required to maintain their eligibility as follows:

- Annually submit a FPP Self Certification Postcard (July 15th)
- Annually submit a 590 NMP Checklist Form ARM-LWR-480)
- Receive an onsite NR 151 compliance status review once every 4 years (Year determined by LWCD)

The self-certification postcards have been mailed to all Farmland Preservation participants the first week of June. A return date of July 15, 2019, is required.

Participants will have the option to complete the postcard through an online log-in process (under [www.co.columbia.wi.us/columbiacounty/](http://www.co.columbia.wi.us/columbiacounty/)), or return the postcard to the Columbia County Land and Water Conservation Department. All postcards must be postmarked before July 15, 2019, or they will be charged a \$10.00 late fee.

FPP Participants who do Not maintain their eligibility by submitting the annual self-certification postcard, annually providing a 590 Nutrient Management Checklist and maintaining NR 151 Compliance can have their Certificate of Compliance ID # voided with the Department of Revenue, thus removing their ability to claim the Farmland preservation Tax Credit for the applicable tax season. NR 151 conservation compliance reviews will begin for a fourth of the FPP participants in 2019. For questions, please contact the LWCD office at 608-742-9670.

### **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 2019/2020. This is a very important process that will help guide our Land and Water Conservation programming for the next 10 years and beyond. 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 2019/2020. →

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.

### **Farmland Preservation Program Required Farm Inspections:**

The Columbia County Land and Water Conservation Department will be conducting the required farm inspections throughout 2019 for ¼ of the certified program participants. It is important that you understand the questions asked thru the self-certification process. If you unsure of your status, or what a question means, please contact the LWCD and we will help you thru it. As part of our inspection process, we will use a combination of in office technology and onsite evaluations to monitor your status. If we find a compliance issue, our first step will be to work with you to bring it into compliance, but it could jeopardize your participation. This link is a quick reference to the range of evaluation components we will be looking at:

<http://runoffinfo.uwex.edu/pdf/WisRunoffRules.pdf>

### **2020 Nutrient Management Farmer Education Cost-Share Assistance Available:**

The Columbia County Land and Water Conservation Department in cooperation with UW-Extension Columbia County have cost-share funds available for our Nutrient Management Training Program participants. These grant funds will allow us to provide class participants a stipend of up to \$1,100 per landowner for taking the class and completing a certified 590 NMP. Final details will be worked out in the coming months, but this grant will allow us to offset soil testing costs and plan development for landowners. We pursued this funding opportunity to increase incentives options available to landowners. Often times direct cost share opportunities are used, but those funds are currently somewhat limited based on our current budget, so this will be another opportunity for us to encourage more landowners to go through the process and learn the benefits of using a NMP. If you are interested in participating in our 2020 classes, please contact UW-Extension at 608-742-9680 or LWCD 608-742-9670 to discuss the program and get signed up.





*Lexie Meyer, Acting County Executive Director, USDA - Farm Service Agency, 2912 Red Fox Run, Portage, WI 53901  
608.742.5361 Ext. 7350*

## United States Department of Agriculture

### Nominations Open for the 2019 County Committee Elections

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency (FSA) encourages all farmers, ranchers, and FSA program participants to take part in the Columbia County Committee election nomination process.

FSA's county committees are a critical component of the day-to-day operations of FSA and allow grassroots input and local administration of federal farm programs. Committees are comprised of locally elected agricultural producers responsible for the fair and equitable administration of FSA farm programs in their counties. Committee members are accountable to the Secretary of Agriculture. If elected, members become part of a local decision making and farm program delivery process.

A county committee is composed of three to 11 elected members from local administrative areas (LAA). Each member serves a three-year term. One-third of the seats on these committees are open for election each year. For 2019, an election will be held in LAA 1, which includes the townships of Arlington, Caledonia, Dekorra, Lewiston, Lodi, Newport, and West Point.

County committees may have an appointed advisor to further represent the local interests of underserved farmers and ranchers. Underserved producers are beginning, women and other minority farmers and ranchers and landowners and/or operators who have limited resources.

All nomination forms for the 2019 election must be postmarked or received in the local USDA service center by Aug. 1, 2019. For more information on FSA county committee elections and appointments, refer to the FSA fact sheet: Eligibility to Vote and Hold Office as a COC Member available online at: [fsa.usda.gov/](https://fsa.usda.gov/)

### USDA Reopens Continuous CRP Signup

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will accept applications beginning June 3, 2019, for certain practices under the continuous Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) signup and will offer extensions for expiring CRP contracts. The 2018 Farm Bill reauthorized CRP, one of the country's largest conservation programs.

FSA stopped accepting applications last fall for the continuous CRP signup when 2014 Farm Bill authority expired. Since passage of the 2018 Farm Bill last December, Fordyce said FSA has carefully analyzed the language and determined that a limited signup prioritizing water-quality practices furthers conservation goals and makes sense for producers as FSA works to fully implement the program.

### Continuous CRP Signup

**SIGN UP NOW**

This year's signup will include such practices as grassed waterways, filter strips, riparian buffers, wetland restoration and others. View a full list of practices approved for this program.

Continuous signup enrollment contracts are 10 to 15 years in duration. Soil rental rates will be set at 90 percent of the existing rates. Incentive payments will not be offered for these contracts.

### Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program Signup

FSA will also reopen signup for existing Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) agreements. Fact sheets on current CREP agreements are available on this webpage.

### Other CRP Signup Options

FSA will open a CRP general signup in December 2019 and a CRP Grasslands signup later.

### CRP Contract Extensions

A one-year extension will be offered to existing CRP participants who have expiring CRP contracts of 14 years or less. Producers eligible for an extension will receive a letter describing their options.

Alternatively, producers with expiring contracts may have the option to enroll in the Transition Incentives Program, which provides two additional annual rental payments on the condition the land is sold or rented to a beginning farmer or rancher or a member of a socially disadvantaged group.

### More Information

Producers interested in applying for continuous CRP practices, including those under existing CREP agreements, or who need an extension, should contact their USDA service center beginning June 3. To locate your local FSA office, visit [www.farmers.gov](https://www.farmers.gov). More information on CRP can be found at [www.fsa.usda.gov/crp](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/crp).

### New Dairy Margin Coverage Signup Begins June 17

Signup begins June 17 for the new Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC) program, the cornerstone program of the dairy safety net that helps dairy producers manage the volatility of milk and feed prices, operated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Farm Service Agency (FSA). The 2018 Farm Bill allowed USDA to construct the new DMC, which replaces the Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy). This new program offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed cost (the margin) falls below a certain dollar

amount selected by the producer. The program provides coverage retroactive to January 1, 2019, with applicable payments following soon after enrollment. At the time of signup, dairy producers can choose between the \$4.00 to \$9.50 coverage levels. Learn more about coverage levels and premiums.

The Farm Bill also allows producers who participated in MPP-Dairy from 2014-2017 to receive a repayment or credit for part of the premiums paid into the program. FSA has been providing premium reimbursements to producers since last month and those that elect the 75 percent credit option will now have that credit applied toward 2019 DMC premiums.

The Department has built in a 50 percent blend of premium and supreme alfalfa hay prices with the alfalfa hay price used under the prior dairy program to provide a total feed cost that more closely aligns with hay rations used by many producers. At a milk margin minus feed cost of \$9.50 or less, payments are possible. With the 50 percent hay blend, FSA's revised April 2019 income over feed cost margin is \$8.82 per hundredweight (cwt). The revised margins for January, February and March are, respectively, \$7.71, \$7.91 and \$8.66 – triggering DMC payments for each month.

DMC payments will be reduced by 6.2 percent in 2019 because of a sequester order required by Congress and issued in accordance with the Balanced Budget and Emergency Deficit Control Act of 1985. DMC offers catastrophic coverage at no cost to the producer, other than an annual \$100 administrative fee. Producers can opt for greater coverage levels for a premium in addition to the administrative fee. Operations owned by limited resource, beginning, socially disadvantaged or veteran farmers and ranchers may be eligible for a waiver on administrative fees. Producers have the choice to lock in coverage levels until 2023 and receive a 25-percent discount on their DMC premiums.

To assist producers in making coverage elections, USDA partnered with the University of Wisconsin to develop a DMC decision support tool, which can be used to evaluate various scenarios using different coverage levels through DMC. All dairy operations in the United States are eligible for the DMC program. An operation can be run either by a single producer or multiple producers who commercially produce and market cows' milk.

Eligible dairy operations must have a production history determined by FSA. For most operations, production history is based on the highest milk production in 2011, 2012 and 2013. Newer dairy operations have other options for determining production history. Producers may contact their local FSA office to get their verified production history. Dairy producers also are reminded that 2018 Farm Bill provisions allow for dairy operation to participate in both FSA's DMC program and the Risk Management Agency's Livestock Gross Margin (LGM-Dairy) program. There are also no restrictions from participating in DMC in conjunction with any other RMA insurance products. For more information, contact your local USDA service center.

## WI NRCS WETLAND EASEMENTS WORKING FOR YOU Over 25 Years of Wetland Restoration Success

In 1992, Wisconsin became one of the first states to implement a new wetland restoration and protection program through the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), known as the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP). Over a few years, the program gained momentum, and is still going strong under a new title, the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program–Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE). This program, along with another easement program, the Emergency Watershed Protection Program–Floodplain Easements (EWPP-FPE), are providing wetlands working for you. Wisconsin NRCS has partnered with private landowners across the state to restore and/or protect over 68,000 acres of wetlands and related habitats that deliver an array of ecosystem services for generations to enjoy.

**USDA-NRCS Easement Programs** - Congress first authorized the Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) in the 1990 Farm Bill and Wisconsin adopted the program as one of nine pilot states in 1992. WRP was reauthorized in the next three Farm Bills with little change until the 2014 Farm Bill, which reorganized the program under the Agricultural Conservation Easement Program–Wetland Reserve Easements (ACEP-WRE). The two programs, WRP (retired) and ACEP-WRE (current), function identically as voluntary, incentive-based federal programs that offer private landowners the opportunity to protect, restore, and enhance wetlands on their property. A sister program, the Emergency Watershed Protection Program–Floodplain Easements (EWPP-FPE) specifically benefits lands prone to damage or flooding due to a natural disaster or dam breach. Since its inception in 1992, NRCS Wisconsin has protected, restored, or enhanced over 63,000 acres of land through WRP and WRE, and over 5,500 acres through EWPP-FPE.

These three federal easement programs incentivize farmers to retire marginal or frequently flooded lands from agriculture by establishing conservation easements on their property. The technical and financial assistance provided by NRCS is intended to engage landowners, especially in the agricultural community, in environmental conservation, while also allowing them to diversify their economic portfolio.

**Wisconsin's Wetlands** - Wetlands are among the most productive ecosystems in the world, comparable to rain forests and coral reefs. Over the past 25 years, NRCS staff, through WRP, ACEP-WRE, and EWPP-FPE have worked with over 900 private landowners on 695 projects across Wisconsin to help maintain, restore, enhance,

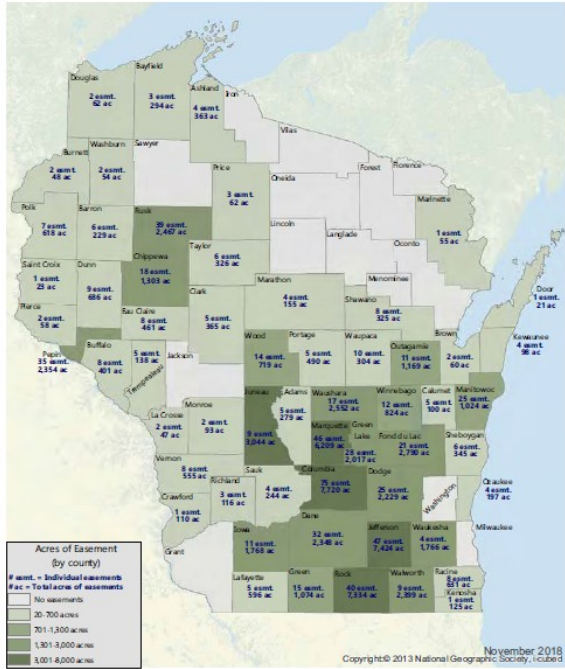
and protect 68,000 acres of these unique communities. The goal of NRCS ACEP-WRE is to improve wetland functions and values, and to optimize wildlife habitat by providing financial and technical assistance to private landowners interested in conservation. This voluntary approach over the last 25 years has brought wetlands and the habitats they support to the forefront of conservation efforts in Wisconsin.

**NRCS WETLAND EASEMENTS**

Despite this growing interest in wetland conservation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) National Wetlands Inventory finds that between 2004 and 2009 there was an average annual loss of 13,800 acres of wetland. Historically, Wisconsin alone had over 10 million acres of wetlands, of which approximately 5 million remain. Many of those remaining wetlands have been altered, which reduces their quality and function.

**Partnerships** - The agency's primary partners are Wisconsin's private landowners. NRCS also partners with other Wisconsin wildlife and conservation organizations to protect, enhance, and restore wetlands across the state. Effective working relationships with Pheasants Forever, Ducks Unlimited, Wisconsin Wetlands Association, Wisconsin Waterfowl Association, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, the Oneida Nation, and others, are vital to the NRCS's success. These partners provide funding to our easement programs, valuable expertise, and critical support.

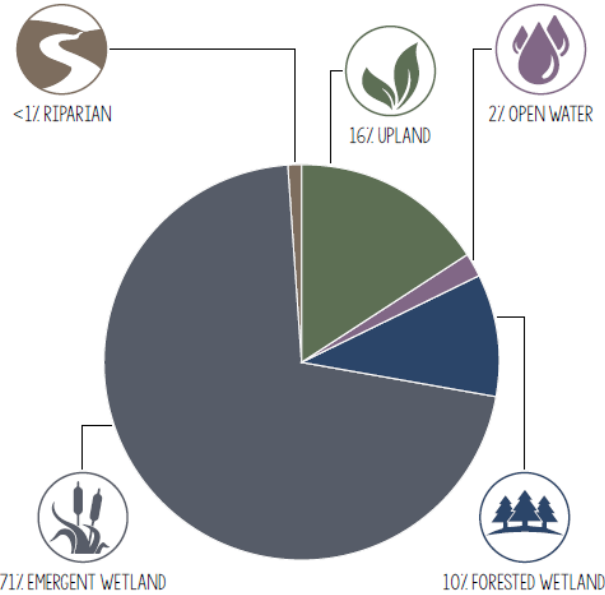
**NRCS Easements are a Triple Win for Wisconsin** - Restoration programs such as WRP, ACEP-WRE, and EWPP-FPE provide a financial solution to Wisconsin landowners who are struggling with frequently flooded, marginal croplands. These programs also reduce costly payouts from the federal crop insurance program, which benefits Wisconsin taxpayers.<sup>17</sup> The habitat and ecosystem services provided by these restored wetlands deliver benefits to countless species. Overall, NRCS easements are a win-win-win for Wisconsin's landowners, taxpayers, and



wildlife. Thank you to all participating landowners and partners for over 25 years of successful private lands conservation on wetlands.

**Wisconsin Habitat Restoration** - NRCS conservation easements encompass a variety of habitat types. The majority of easement acres are emergent wetland, characterized by herbaceous (non-woody) water-loving plants and hydric soils. Wetland habitats are often associated with uplands, which act as a buffer to protect the lower-lying wetland and offers drier soils for different plant and animal species. Some easements contain forested wetland habitat, which is dominated by trees and shrubs. A small percentage of easement acreage is open water, which provides good habitat for waterfowl. A very small (<1%) portion of easement acres are riparian, or are adjacent to rivers and streams. This chart displays both existing and restorable habitat types that are protected under either WRP, ACEP-WRE, or EWPP-FPE programs.

**How to Apply** - Landowners may apply for ACEP-WRE by contacting their local NRCS Service Center assigned to the county in which the land is located. To learn more, please visit [www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov).



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**United States Department of Agriculture**





## Responding to *STRESS*

Feeling stressed? You're not alone. A recent Gallup poll found that 55 percent of Americans said they had experienced stress during a lot of the day. The farming community is not immune to stress; ongoing economic conditions in agriculture are taking a toll on farm families and their rural communities according to Trisha Wagner, Farm

Management Program Outreach Director, UW-Madison-Extension.

"Understanding stress and how chronic stress impacts all aspects of life and then learning how to manage stress are essential for one's health and our rural communities," said Wagner.

Extension resources, available online at : <https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/farmstress/>, help farmers, families, businesses and communities remain resilient by learning how to manage stress by recognizing and working to positively address, not avoid, the causes of stress. Resources include planning tools to make sound decisions and create a road-map for the future.

Contact our office for more help and information. Dealing with stress requires help. Let us help you connect with local resources.

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