

Columbia County Ag Reporter

November/December 2020



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)
- ◆ Private Pesticide Applicator Testing (pg. 4-5)
- ◆ Columbia Cty. 2021 Nutrient Management Planning (pg. 7)
- ◆ Dairy Situation & Outlook (pg. 8)
- ◆ Columbia Cty. Land & Water Updates (pgs. 12-13)
- ◆ NRCS News (pgs. 14-16)
- ◆ USDA News (pgs. 17-18)

General Information:

Ag Reporter Calendar.....	2
WI Pest Management Mtgs.....	3
Private Pesticide Applicator Testing.....	4-5
Extension Programming Notice...	5
Fall Soil Sampling.....	6
Nutrient Management Planning.....	7
ARC & PLC for 2021.....	7
Dairy Situation Outlook.....	8
Dairy Margin Too, CC Corn Growers, Coffee Chats.....	9
WI Corn Yield Contest.....	10
Lake WI Farmer Led Watershed.....	11
Wheat-Increased Mgmt. Intensity & Profitability.....	13
Extension Office Hours.....	19

Land & Water Conservation:

Land & Water Conservation Updates.....	12-13
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NRCS:

EQIP Signup.....	14-15
USDA Secure New Online Options.....	16

USDA:

Dairy Margin Prog. Enrollment...	17
2019 Crop Year ARC & PLC Payments.....	18

Directory.....

Web Site: <https://columbia.extension.wisc.edu/>



Ag Reporter Calendar of Events



November

- 3 Election Day, be sure to Vote!
- 10 Pest Management Update, 9:00 – 11:00 am
- 11 Veteran's Day—Thank a Veteran!
- 11 Pest Management Update, 11:00 am—1:00 pm
- 12 Pest Management Update, 1:00 – 3:00 pm
- 26 Thanksgiving—Columbia County Extension Office Closed
- 27 Columbia County Extension Office Closed

December

- 8 CC Corn Growers, 8:00 – 9:00 am, Agency Reports
- 9 CC Corn Growers, 8:00 – 9:00 am, 2021 Grain Marketing
- 10 CC Corn Growers, 8:00 – 9:00 am, Lime & Variable Rate Fertilizing Considerations
- 11 Dairy Margin Coverage Sign-up due
- 17 PAT Self Study Test Session, HHS 2 & 3, 1:00 – 3:30 PM
- 24 Christmas Eve, Columbia County Offices Closed
- 25 Christmas Day, Columbia County Offices Closed
- 31 New Years Eve, Columbia County Offices Closed

January

- 1 New Year's Day, Columbia County Offices Closed
- 11-14 WI Agribusiness Classic, Virtual meetings
- 14 PAT Training and Testing, HHS 2 & 3, 9:00 am – 3:30 pm
- 20 PAT Self Study Test Session, HHS 2 & 3, 1:00 – 3:30 pm
- 25 Nutrient Mgt Review, 113-114 Admin Bldg, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
- 27 Nutrient Mgt Review, 113-114 Admin Bldg, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm
- 28 Nutrient Mgt Review, 113-114 Admin Bldg, 9:00 am to 3:00 pm

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



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
COLUMBIA COUNTY

2020 WI Pest Management Update Virtual Meetings

The schedule for the **Wisconsin Pest Management Update meeting series** is listed below. The format will be different this year because of COVID-19. Presentations will include pest management information for Wisconsin field and forage crops.

FREE EVENT! 2 CEU Credits in pest management have been approved for each session!

Speakers will include Mark Renz, Nick Arneson, and Rodrigo Werle, Weed Scientists, Damon Smith, Plant Pathologist, and Bryan Jensen, Entomologist.

The virtual meetings will be offered multiple times during the week of November 9, 2020 and will run for 2 hours (please choose the option that best fits your schedule).

Schedule:

Tuesday, November 10, 9:00-11:00 AM

Moderator: Jerry Clark, Chippewa County Agriculture Educator

Wednesday, November 11, 11:00 AM-1:00 PM

Moderator: George Koepp, Columbia County Agriculture Educator

Thursday, November 12, 1:00-3:00 PM

Moderator: Josh Kamps, Lafayette County Agriculture Educator

Registration link: <https://go.wisc.edu/78t2bd>

Private Pesticide Applicator Testing

The 2021 Pesticide Applicator Training will look a little different in 2021 due to the Corona Virus Pandemic. Farmers will have a couple of new opportunities to get certified. We are recommending that farmers either choose the online training program that will be outlined below or follow the regular self-study option that has been in use for many years. Both of these still require that the farmer come to a physical location to take the two-hour exam in person. Limited in-person training opportunities will be offered to those without internet service or computer skills.

All testing is still required to be in-person.

An online private applicator course will be available for private applicators who elect to participate. These are going to be offered the first two weeks of December, January, February, March, April and May. Each session will allow the participant to access the course for 14 days to complete the training. The training will take up to 4 hours and once the person starts, they will have to finish it, just like coming to a live training in the county. Training will include two 15-minute breaks.

Some points to keep in mind:

- Farmer/Participant still must purchase the PAT manual (\$30.00).
- To take the online training, participants will have to register at the PAT Store - [https://patstore.wisc.edu/secure/browse_cat.asp?category_id=30]. It will cost \$10/participant.
- Participants will have 14 days to access the course. From the 1st to the 14th of the month they select. They can access it any time they want in that period.
- They must complete the training from beginning to end. Leaving during the training (excluding 2 x 15 min breaks) will be incomplete. Be sure to block four (4) hours to take the training.
- There are code words in the training that they will have to enter at the end of the training to assure they were attending.
- There are two 15 minute breaks.
- At completion of training they will be given a receipt. **They must show this to the person giving the test in order to take the test as "attended a training" (50% passing grade). Otherwise the test will be scored as "Self Study" (70% passing grade).**



Private Pesticide Applicator Testing (con't)

Testing sites will be in Portage this year in the Administration Building or the Health and Human Services Building. Participation will be limited to 18 individuals on each date. PAT will not be held at other locations in 2021.

Currently we are scheduling four Test Only Dates for producers who are doing the Self-Study or the On-Line Training and Testing option. These will be held in the HHS Building on Mullet Street in Meeting Rooms 2 & 3. The Tests will begin at 1:00 PM. Participants have two hours to complete the Test. Call the Columbia County Extension Office to sign up for one of these dates. We will be only able to accommodate 18 participants per date due to Covid-19 Restrictions. Call Sarah Millard at 608-742-9688 to reserve your seat for the date you wish to take the test. Testing Dates will be:

Thursday, December 17
Wednesday, January 20
Wednesday, February 17
Wednesday, March 17

The traditional all-day training and testing will be offered on two dates in rooms 2 & 3 of the HHS building. These classes will begin at 9:00 am. These sessions will have an extra \$10 fee to have a box lunch catered in. Testing will take place after lunch. Again, there will be limited seating due to Covid-19 Restrictions. Call Sarah Millard at 608-742-9688 to reserve your seat for the Training and Testing dates:

Thursday, January 14
Tuesday, February 16

The Columbia County Extension Office is open from 8:00 am to 4:30 PM daily for your convenience to stop in and purchase your PAT Manual (\$30.00); check or cash only.



UW-Madison, Division of Extension is committed to keeping people safe during the coronavirus pandemic. We are receiving guidance from UW-Madison about the 15th of each month to determine what types of programming we may perform during the following month. Currently, we are restricted to only hold meetings of 10 or less people per room and must secure permission from our Area Extension Directors in order to hold these events. Special safety plans must be in place for meetings to take place. Watch for more up to the minute changes in the Friday "Ag Reporter Snapshot" electronic newsletter.

Fall Soil Sampling

Since the weather is cooperating with harvest season this year, at least so far, plan to get as much soil sampling done this fall as you can. Fall soil sampling helps you get a jump on spring nutrient planning and planting. Liming if needed in the fall and winter gives you an edge, rather than waiting to get on fields after spring thaws and mud.

An acre of soil to a 6-inch depth weighs about 1,000 tons, yet less than 1 ounce of soil is used for each test in the laboratory. Therefore, it is very important that the soil sample be representative of the entire field.

Goals for your soil sampling should include:

1. Obtain samples that accurately represent the field from which they were taken
2. Estimate the amount of nutrients that should be applied to provide the greatest economic return to the grower
3. Estimate the variation that exists within the field and how the nutrients are distributed spatially
4. Monitor the changes in nutrient status of the field over time

For more details and understanding, access publication A2100 "Sampling soils for testing" at :

<https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0145/8808/4272/files/A2100.pdf>





Columbia County 2021 Nutrient Management Planning

Sam Peterson is the new “Harold” in the Columbia County Land and Water Conservation. Sam has been tasked with working with farmers to keep their Nutrient Management Plans up to date so that they continue to be eligible for the Farmland Preservation Tax Credits. Harold retired from Land and Water Conservation early this summer. We wish him well.

Sam has been busy contacting farmers about funds available to assist them with the costs associated with Nutrient Management Planning. He will also be contacting some of you about becoming trained to write your own farm Nutrient Management Plan, rather than hiring it done. You also can get paid to come to class.

Review/Update Sessions are planned for January 25, 27, 28 from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm in rooms 113-114 of the Columbia County Administration Building. Contact the Columbia County Extension Office or Land and Water Conservation Office to register for one of the day sessions.

Farmers interested in receiving initial Nutrient Management Plan Training should mark their calendars for February 4, 11, 18 from 9:00 am to 3:00 PM. We will offer three days of training to help them learn the SnapPlus Nutrient Management Program and assist them with developing their initial farm plan.

Please remember to make sure that all the soil samples for your fields are up to date (within the last four years). If you need to take new soil samples, getting that done this fall would be the best. Nutrient management planning starts with good, current soil sample results.



ARC and PLC for 2021

Signup begins for this program on October 13 and runs until March of 2021. Be patient, wait to sign up, let prices settle a bit and plan to sign up sometime in January or February. UW-Extension will share decision making tools as we get closer to the new year.



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Dairy Situation and Outlook

Bob Cropp, Professor Emeritus
University of Wisconsin - Madison Division of Extension

Somewhat surprising we will see considerable strength in October milk prices. Class III was \$24.54 back in July but had fallen to \$16.43 by September. It looks like Class III for October will increase to about \$21.40 reaching or surpassing the previous record for the month of October set in 2014 at \$21.35.

Factors contributing to higher cheese prices include cheese production, retail sales, government purchases and exports. The latest dairy product production report was for August showing American cheese production 1.3% lower than a year ago with total cheese production 2.1% lower. As consumers continue to eat more meals at home retail cheese sales have been relatively strong. The government is purchasing cheese under the third round of the Farm to Families Food Box program which ends on October 31st. With cheese prices above world prices it was surprising that August cheese exports were 17% higher than a year ago. Dry whey exports were 54% high than a year ago with almost all the increase contributed to China as they attempt to build back their swine herd.

Butter prices have been rather weak all year. A year ago at this time butter was over \$2 per pound. Butter has been below \$2 per pound all year being as low as \$1.15 in April and only as high as \$1.90 in June.

Class III dairy futures remain strong for the remainder of the year with November at \$21.44 and December at \$19.38. The level of milk production, domestic sales and exports are crucial. But so important will be how soon the COVID-19 virus slows down. Until it does restaurants will not be fully open, schools and colleges will be virtual learning rather than in person instruction. Major sports will not have audiences in the stands and major events and conferences will not be held or if they are, they may be virtual. The COVID-19 virus is hurting not only the U.S. economy but the world economy which impacts domestic sales and exports.

Milk production continues to run at a relatively high level putting downward pressure on milk prices. USDA's report on September milk production showed milk production 2.3% higher than a year ago, the result of 0.4% more cows and 2.0% increase in milk production per cow. At this level of milk production, it will take good domestic sales and exports to provide good milk prices.

As of now it seems reasonable to assume 2021 milk prices could be less volatile. Class III could be in the \$16's first half of the year, reach the \$17's in the second half and averaging in the high \$16's or low \$17's for the year. If the COVID-19 is under control, there could be a good rally in milk prices for the second half of the year. But, this far from certain. Dairy farmers should seriously consider signing up for the Dairy Margin Coverage program for 2021.

Dairy Margin Coverage Decision Tool

Signup for the 2021 Dairy Margin Coverage Program runs from October 12 – December 11. Start looking at the new website to begin making your selection for 2021. There is a 16 minute YouTube video demonstrating the new DMC tool. You can also contact George to discuss your selection options. Follow this link to the Dairy Margin Coverage Decision Tool,

<https://dairymarkets.org/DMC/>

Columbia County Corn Growers

The Columbia County Corn Growers are planning virtual meetings in December to replace our usual meeting at Club 60. This year the gathering will be held virtually on December 8, 9, and 10 from 8:00 am to 9:00 am. We are also making an in-person location available to those who do not have good internet or computer skills to participate by gathering in Rooms 113 & 114 in the Administration Building in Portage. Wearing a face mask and following social distancing will be required for the in-person setting. We strongly encourage you to join us virtually. So, put those dates and times on your calendar. More information and details on the topics for each day will be coming soon.

Coffee Chats!

UW-Madison Extension hosts "Coffee Chats" a Heart of the Farm program for Women in Agriculture.

University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension's Heart of the Farm-Women in Agriculture program is bringing back its online 'Coffee Chats' series starting Monday November 9th, 2020 at 10:00 a.m. and will continue the 2nd Monday of each month through March 2021 from 10:00-11:00 a.m. The Heart of the Farm-Women in Agriculture Coffee Chat series is an Extension program that addresses the needs of farm women by providing education on farm business topics, connecting them with agricultural resources and creating support networks. Sessions will be facilitated by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension and anyone with a web connection can register or you can call by phone. This series is partially funded by a grant from CHS Community Giving.

Jerry Apps, author and rural historian, will kickoff the series on Monday, November 9th, 2020 by giving a brief history of Wisconsin Women in Agriculture.

Register online at: <https://uwmadison.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJItceirrzkvEtfMSLLlJrhhsJFMymAHHUA4>

WI Corn Growers Association Corn Yield Contest

The Wisconsin Corn Growers Association (WCGA) Corn Yield Contest is organized to encourage the development of new and innovative management practices that highlight the importance of using sound cultural practices in Wisconsin corn production systems.

Contest contact: Nicole Wagner, Executive Director

Contact information: 262-372-3289 or nicole@wicorn.org

CONTEST DESCRIPTION

Any corn production system can be entered in the contest. WCGA is not responsible for incorrect or missing entries. All rules set forth here-in apply to all entries. Three winners will be selected from each of four geographical divisions in the state. Divisions are based on active county corn grower organizations. Active county organizations include those that have met at least twice during the calendar year.

CONTEST ENTRANT QUALIFICATIONS

There is no cost to enter, but the entrant must be a Wisconsin Corn Grower Association member in good standing. Only one entry per membership, but there could be more than one entry per farm if additional memberships are purchased.

CONTEST FIELD AND ENTRY QUALIFICATIONS

Contest field must be in the state of Wisconsin. Contest entry must be at least 10 continuous acres of one variety. Contestant may select the best 1.25 acres in a corn field larger than 10 acres and enter that variety. In the interest of Best Management Practices, grass waterways may be a part of the contest plot area. The length of any rows planted in a grass waterway will be included in the harvested row length if corn rows are planted in the waterway. If corn rows are not planted in the waterway, the length of each row will not include areas in the waterway. The land entered in the Contest must be owned or leased by the entrant and located in Wisconsin. The variety entered must be currently commercially available.

ENTRY FEE AND DEADLINE

Entries must be postmarked, emailed or faxed by **December 18, 2020** to be eligible for this contest. No late entries will be accepted. There is no entry fee for this contest. Completed forms may be emailed to nicole@wicorn.org, faxed to 262-372-3289 or mailed to Wisconsin Corn Growers Association, N77W24707 Century Court, Lisbon, WI 53089.

Follow this link for entry rules, forms, and details:

<https://wicorn.org/growers/corn-yield-contest/>

Lake Wisconsin Farmer Led Watershed Council

Columbia County Ag Extension and Columbia County Land and Water Conservation are working with a group of farmers to organize a Lake Wisconsin Farmer Watershed Council. The group has applied for a \$20,000 grant from WDATCP to assist them in getting organized, holding field days to showcase different cover crop seeding plots, a field day to demonstrate low disturbance liquid dairy manure injection, and promoting the planting of cover crops after soybean and corn silage harvest.

Their goals are to reduce water runoff and soil erosion to improve the water quality of Lake Wisconsin and maintain groundwater quality in this area. This is an obvious goal of all farmers and property owners within the Columbia County Lake Wisconsin watershed. Farmers are being invited to participate in this farmer led watershed area from portions of the townships of West Point, Lodi, Arlington, Dekorra, Caledonia, along with parts of Sauk County townships, Merrimac, Sumpter, and Prairie du Sac. (See map of the area) Farmers are in charge of this effort and events, while Extension and Land and Water Conservation provide support, encouragement, and technical advice in their efforts.

If you would like to become a part of this forward thinking group, contact one of the farmers on the Board of Directors, Joe Benish, Craig Carncross, Pat Lochner, Tyler Miller, Ron Schoepp, Noah Pfeil, or Time Enge. You may also contact Todd Rietmann in the Land and Water Conservation office, or George Koepp at the Extension Office. See the map to determine if any of your farmland is in the boundaries of this important watershed.



COLUMBIA
COUNTY

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

Land & Water Conservation Department Updates

Land & Water Conservation Department Updates/ Program Information

Tree Sales Program 2020-2021 Reserve ASAP

Just a reminder we will be soon be processing orders for the 2020-2021 year. All order forms will be mailed out by mid-November, and if you are on our mailing list you will receive yours in the mail. 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 or you may use your credit card submitting your order in person or over the phone. To reserve the trees you want, order sooner than later. Tree pick-up day is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, April 22, 2021. You can also find us on facebook. Thanks for your continued support in this program. If you have questions, please contact us at 608 742-9670.

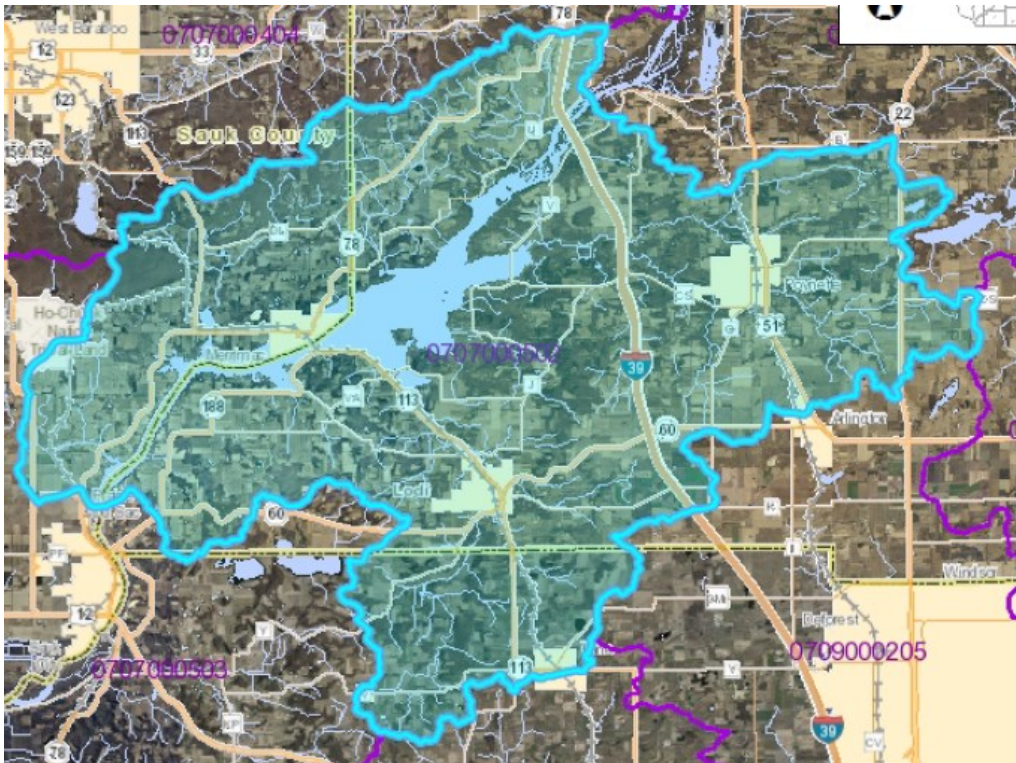
After the mailing goes out, you can also find the order form online at: <http://www.co.columbia.wi.us/columbiacounty/lwcd/TreeProgram>.

2021 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. This is a great low-cost option to learn to develop your own 590 Nutrient Management Plan. 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 the classes, please contact UW-Extension at 608-742-9680 or LWCD 608-742-9670 to discuss the program and get signed up. Past Participants are reminded that they need to participate in updating the class to keep self-written plan certification current. The review class should be done a minimum of every 4th year.

Reminder For 2020 Farmland Preservation Tax Credits To Be Claimed

When you file your 2020 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



Land & Water Conservation Department Updates

description on your previous Certificate of Compliance. That would require you to obtain a new certificate, 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 valid. 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.

Poster/Speaking Contests 2021

The Youth Speaking & Poster Contests are tentatively scheduled for January 18, 2020 and January 25, 2020. The poster theme this year is “Healthy Forests – Healthy Communities”. Speeches can be on any conservation-related subject. This year will be the first time we will do virtual contests/judging. These contests are open to any students in the Columbia County area. There are 3 age divisions for the *Speaking Contest*, starting at 5th grade, through 12th; but for the *Poster Contest* there are 5 age groups from K to 12 grades! We are hoping for more interest, so if anyone is interested in entering this contest, please contact our office for forms, deadlines and more information on them, even if your class is not offering participation.

Wheat – Increased Management Intensity and Profitability

UW-Madison Extension

“Wheat Grain and Straw Yield, Grain Quality, and Disease Benefits Associated with Increased Management Intensity”

A FEW KERNELS:

- Integrating applications of growth regulators, micronutrients, fungicides, and increased seeding rate, and higher N rates led to increased wheat grain yield, grain test weight, and straw yield across winter wheat varieties in Wisconsin.
- One or two fungicide applications successfully reduced the incidence and severity of Fusarium head blight (FHB) and DON levels in grain. Two fungicide applications were required to successfully reduce the incidence and severity of stripe rust during the years of this study.
- While the intensified management practices require additional expenditures, the yield benefits make them profitable. Compared to the current management level, the mid-level management technique resulted in an additional \$124 per acre, and the high-level management plan resulted in an additional \$98 per acre.

For the entire article and details follow this link: https://coolbean.info/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2020/10/2020_Wheat_IML_FinalReview.pdf If you do not have internet access, contact George—(608) 742-9682—for a printed copy of this document from UW-Madison Extension.

**NRCS Announces EQIP Signup for 2021 Funding
Apply by November 20, 2020**

Providing Conservation Practices to Protect Natural Resources

Farmers and forest landowners will want to plan ahead and sign up early for USDA conservation funding. Angela Biggs, [USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) (NRCS) State Conservationist in Wisconsin, announced farmers and forest landowners interested in the [Environmental Quality Incentives Program \(EQIP\)](#) need to apply by November 20, 2020, for funding in 2021. Applications are being taken at all [USDA Service Centers](#) in Wisconsin.

EQIP is the primary program available to farmers and landowners for farm and woodland conservation work, offering payments for over 120 basic conservation practices. Last year, Wisconsin received over \$33 million in funds for EQIP practices.

“The new Farm Bill allows NRCS to support conservation that ensures cost-effective financial assistance for improved soil health, water and air quality and other natural resources benefits,” said Biggs. “By getting EQIP applications in early, NRCS staff will have time to assist in planning conservation practice needs.”

All eligible applications received by November 20, 2020, will be evaluated, prioritized and ranked for funding in 2021. Farmers may contact their local USDA Service Center to get started on producer eligibility and planning. Biggs reminds farmers who are interested in practices that may require permits, such as manure storage or streambank restoration, to begin planning and seeking permits as soon as possible. Applicants with shovel-ready projects (designs completed and permit applications submitted) will receive a higher ranking.



Sign up for several special initiatives focusing on conservation efforts.

Special sign-up opportunities are also now open for Farmstead, Local Work Group, On-Farm Energy, Organic, Seasonal High Tunnel, Honey Bee, Soil Health and Source Water Protection, as well as several landscape-based initiatives. Special initiatives are also available for Beginning Farmer, Socially Disadvantaged and other historically underserved customers at increased payment rates. All offer technical and financial assistance through EQIP.

Farmstead: NRCS helps livestock producers improve nutrient handling and clean water separation by implementing practices supporting manure storage, feedlot and barnyard runoff and clean water diversion. This special opportunity also provides technical and financial assistance for roofs and covers placed over, for example, open cattle lots.

Local Work Group: Wisconsin has 18 Local Work Groups (LWG). Each LWG has a fund pool for cropland, forest and wildlife, and pasture. LWGs collect local stakeholder input and use the feedback to focus on their own local resource concern priorities for each fund pool, making each LWG fund pool unique and locally relevant.

**Conservation
Stewardship Program**
Natural Resources Conservation Service



On-Farm Energy: NRCS and producers develop Agricultural Energy Management Plans (AgEMP) or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an operation. Audit data is used to plan, develop and implement energy conservation recommendations.

Organic: NRCS helps certified organic growers and producers, working to achieve organic certification, install conservation practices to address resource concerns on organic operations.

High Tunnel System (Hoop House): NRCS helps producers plan and implement high tunnels – steel-framed, polyethylene-covered structures that extend growing seasons in an environmentally safe manner. High tunnel benefits include better plant and soil quality, fewer nutrients and pesticides in the environment and better air quality due to fewer vehicles being needed to transport crops. Supporting conservation practices, such as grassed waterways and diversions, are available to address resource concerns on operations with Seasonal High Tunnel structures.

Honey Bee: The upper Midwest is the resting ground for over 65 percent of commercially managed honey bees in the country. The NRCS is helping farmers and landowners implement conservation practices that will provide safe and diverse food sources for honey bees. Pasture management, wildlife habitat and appropriate cover crops are used as tools to improve the health of our honey bees, which support more than \$15 billion worth of agricultural production.

Soil Health: Soil is a living and life-giving natural resource. By farming using soil health principles and systems that include no-till, cover cropping and diverse rotations, more and more farmers are increasing their soil's organic matter and improving microbial activity.

Great Lakes Restoration Initiative: Through the [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative](#) (GLRI), NRCS offers financial assistance to agricultural producers for implementing practices that improve water quality in selected watersheds. Newly eligible watersheds for 2021 include the Pensaukee River, Oconto River and Peshtigo River. These watersheds are in addition to the existing Door-Kewaunee Rivers, Lower Fox River, Manitowoc-Sheboygan, Milwaukee River, Upper Fox River, Wolf River and Lake Winnebago watersheds.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program: The [Regional Conservation Partnership Program](#) (RCPP) promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements. Current active projects for water quality improvement are located within the Oconomowoc River watershed, the Baraboo River watershed and portions of the Pecatonica River watershed in Lafayette County. RCPP funding is also available in the Driftless Area to improve fish and wildlife habitat, stream and riparian habitat.

Landowners interested in applying for EQIP funding should contact their local NRCS office at the [USDA Service Center](#) for their county. For more information, visit www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov.

USDA Offers Secure New Options for Signing and Sharing Documents Online

Farmers and ranchers working with USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) or Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) can now sign and share documents online in just a few clicks. By using Box or OneSpan, producers can digitally complete business transactions without leaving their homes or agricultural operations. Both services are free, secure, and available for multiple FSA and NRCS programs.

"Box and OneSpan support social distancing measures while providing efficient, user-friendly options for our customers to conduct business with us without needing to interrupt the productivity of their workday," said Angela Biggs, NRCS State Conservationist, "Given the critical goods and services our farmers and ranchers provide, any time saved or opportunity to streamline is a big win."

About Box and OneSpan

Box is a secure, cloud-based site where FSA or NRCS documents can be managed and shared. Producers who choose to use Box can create a username and password to access their secure Box account, where documents can be downloaded, printed, manually signed, scanned, uploaded, and shared digitally with Service Center staff. This service is available to any FSA or NRCS customer with access to a mobile device or computer with printer connectivity.



OneSpan is a secure eSignature solution for FSA and NRCS customers. Like Box, no software downloads or eAuthentication is required for OneSpan. Instead, producers interested in eSignature through OneSpan can confirm their identity through two-factor authentication using a verification code sent to their mobile device or a personalized question and answer. Once identity is confirmed, documents can be reviewed and e-signed through OneSpan via the producer's personal email address. Signed documents immediately become available to the appropriate Service Center staff.

Box and OneSpan are both optional services for customers interested in improved efficiency in signing and sharing documents with USDA, and they do not replace existing systems using eAuthentication for digital signature. Instead, these tools provide additional digital options for producers to use when conducting business with FSA or NRCS.

Steps to Get Started

USDA Service Center staff are available to help producers get started with Box and

OneSpan through a few simple steps. Please visit farmers.gov/service-locator to find your local office and let Service Center staff know you're interested in signing and sharing documents through these new features. In most cases, one quick phone call will be all that is needed to initiate the process.

More Information

Visit farmers.gov/mydocs to learn more about Box and OneSpan, steps for getting started, and additional resources for conducting business with USDA online.

To learn more about program flexibilities and Service Center status during the coronavirus pandemic, visit farmers.gov/coronavirus.

Helping People Help the Land

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Conservation
Stewardship Program

Natural Resources Conservation Service



Conservation
Stewardship Program

Natural Resources Conservation Service



1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, DC 20250

Contact:
FPAC.BC.Press@usda.gov

Dairy Margin Coverage Program Enrollment for 2021 Opens Oct. 13 *Enhancements to Online Dairy Decision Tool Now Available*

CHIPPEWA FALLS, WISCONSIN, Oct. 8, 2020 – The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) will begin accepting applications for the [Dairy Margin Coverage](#) (DMC) program on Tuesday, October 13, 2020 for 2021 enrollment.

“This year has been a market roller coaster for the dairy industry, and the Dairy Margin Coverage program is a valuable tool dairy producers can use to manage risk,” said Bill Northey, USDA’s Under Secretary for Farm Production and Conservation, during a roundtable at a dairy in Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin. “We were excited to roll out this new and improved program through the 2018 Farm Bill, and if you haven’t enrolled in previous years, we highly encourage you to check it out.”

Signup runs through Dec. 11, 2020. DMC is a voluntary risk management program that offers 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. DMC payments triggered for seven months in 2019 and three months so far in 2020. More than 23,000 operations enrolled in DMC in 2019, and more than 13,000 in 2020.

Updated Dairy Decision Tool

To determine the appropriate level of coverage for a specific dairy operation, producers can utilize the recently updated online dairy decision tool. The [decision tool](#) is designed to assist producers with calculating total premium costs and administrative fees associated with participation in DMC. An [informational video](#) is available, too.

Improvements to the decision tool, made in cooperation with representatives from the University of Minnesota and University of Wisconsin, include historical analysis that illustrates what DMC indemnity payments might have been had the program been available over the previous two decades. The analysis indicates that over the course of time, DMC payments made to producers exceed premiums paid. These decision tool enhancements provide a more comprehensive decision support experience for producers considering DMC.

Additional Support for Dairy Producers

In addition to DMC, USDA offers a variety of programs that have helped dairy producers, including insurance, disaster assistance, and conservation programs. Most recently, the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 1 provided \$1.75 billion in direct relief to dairy producers who faced price declines and additional marketing costs due to COVID-19 in early 2020. Now, signup is underway for the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2, which provides another round of assistance for dairy producers and many other eligible producers.

More Information

For more information, visit [farmers.gov DMC webpage](https://farmers.gov/dmc), or contact your local USDA Service Center. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

All USDA Service Centers are open for business, including some that are open to visitors to conduct business in person by appointment only. All Service Center visitors wishing to conduct business with the FSA, Natural Resources Conservation Service, or any other Service Center agency should call ahead and schedule an appointment. Service Centers that are open for appointments will pre-screen visitors based on health concerns or recent travel, and visitors must adhere to social distancing guidelines. Visitors are required to wear a face covering during their appointment. Field work will continue with appropriate social distancing. Our program delivery staff will be in the office, and they will be working with our producers in office, by phone, and using online tools. More information can be found at farmers.gov/coronavirus.

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer and lender.

2019 Crop Year ARC and PLC Payments

FSA began processing payments last week for 2019 ARC-County (ARC-CO) and PLC on covered commodities that met payment triggers on farms enrolled for the 2019 crop year. In addition to the \$5 billion now in process, FSA anticipates it will issue additional payments by the end of November for 2019 commodities covered under ARC-Individual (ARC-IC) and additional commodities that trigger PLC and ARC-CO payments for which rates have not yet been published.

Producers who had 2019 covered commodities enrolled in ARC-CO can visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#) for payment rates applicable to their county and each covered commodity. For farms and covered commodities enrolled in 2019 PLC, the following crops met payment triggers: barley, canola, chickpeas (small and large), corn, dry peas, grain sorghum, lentils, peanuts, seed cotton and wheat.

Oats and soybeans did not meet 2019 PLC payment triggers.

2019 PLC payment rates for the following covered commodities have not been determined: cramble, flaxseed, long and medium grain rice, mustard seed, rapeseed, safflower, sesame seed, sunflower seed and temperate Japonica rice. Payment rates for these commodities will be announced at a later date.

Web-Based Decision Tools

In partnership with USDA, the University of Illinois and Texas A&M University offer web-based decision tools to assist producers in making informed, educated decisions using crop data specific to their respective farming operations. Tools include:

- [Gardner-farmdoc Payment Calculator](#), the University of Illinois tool that offers farmers the ability to run payment estimate modeling for their farms and counties for ARC-County and PLC.
- [ARC and PLC Decision Tool](#), the Texas A&M tool allows producers to analyze payment yield updates and expected payments for 2021. Producers who have used the tool in the past should see their username and much of their farm data already available in the system.

More Information

For more information on ARC and PLC, including two online decision tools that assist producers in making enrollment and election decisions specific to their operations, visit the [ARC and PLC webpage](#).

For additional questions and assistance, contact your local USDA service center. To locate your local FSA office, visit farmers.gov/service-center-locator.

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Columbia County Extension
Office Hours - 8:00 am to 4:30 pm

Sarah Millard, Administrative Assistant, is in the office Monday through Friday from 8:00 am to 1:00 pm, her normal working hours. Guidance from UW-Madison is allowing Extension Educators to slowly return to the office on a limited basis. We must continue social distancing, wear facemasks when meeting the public and may not have more than two Educators in the office at a time. Columbia County Extension Educators are taking turns coming to the office to keep the office open until 4:30 pm to serve our county residents. At other times we continue to work remotely using appropriate technology.

George is able to make farm visits again. He needs to complete a programming request form and obtain permission from the Area Extension Director. This takes a couple of days to complete so please understand and be patient. We are doing our best to keep our clients, the public, and our Educators safe from Covid 19. It will take awhile to get back to normal, or to whatever the new normal might be.

Columbia County Extension is still only a phone call or email away. That has not changed. We are still able to provide up to date, University research based answers and advice in a timely manner.

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If you have a change of email, address or would like to be removed, please call the Columbia County Extension office at (608) 742-9680 or email your request to: sarah.millard@wisc.edu

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