

# Ag Link

July -- August 2009

A newsletter of:

UW  
**Extension**



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**July 9 — Parlor Tour Set For Western Marathon County** (see article) 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. Anyone interested in touring three moderately priced milking parlors is invited to attend this free tour.

**July 25 — Marathon County Holstein Twilight Meeting** 11 a.m. To be held at Norway Pete Farm, 1751 Cherry Drive, Eland, WI

**July 30 — Pasture Walk: Tony Schultz & Kat Becker Farm, 7002 Rangeline Road. Athens WI**  
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Tony and Kat operate a Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm where they grow all of their own vegetables, herbs, and fruit, make maple syrup, and graze beef and chicken using their own labor.

**August 4-9 — Wisconsin Valley Fair**  
Wausau's Marathon Park is the site of the annual Wisconsin Valley Fair, one of the oldest and largest agricultural fairs in Wisconsin. In addition to the food and carnival rides, the fair includes live entertainment, animal shows and judging.

**August 4-9 — Ag Adventure Tent** (see article) This year's Ag Adventure tent is open on August 4, from 12 pm to 8 pm, August 5-8 from 10 am to 8 pm, and August 9 from 10 am to 6 pm.

**August 4 — Pasture Walk: Aaron Yoder Farm, W354 26th Road, Spencer**  
1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. We will check the pastures of this organic dairy farm looking at the diversity of plant species and seeing the differences that irrigation is making. Aaron has practiced Management Intensive Rotational Grazing for quite a few years.

**August 6 — Pasture Walk: Bryan & Michelle Hilts Farm, 3443 Evergreen Road, Marathon WI**  
6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Bryan and Michelle developed a managed grazing plan for their farm along with restoring a wetland area. They have about 30 beef cow/calf pairs and managed their farm's woodlands using the help of a DNR Forester.

**August 13 — Pasture Walk: Peter and Suzie Arnold farm, 4612 County Road E, Edgar WI**  
10:00 a.m. to Noon. Geoff Brink of the USDA Dairy Forage Research Center will discuss the research and findings at the Arnold farm. They have a new freestall for winter and calf housing and have been interseeding Meadow Fescue and clovers into their pasture.

## Report 2009 Crop Acreage to FSA by July 15



The Marathon County Farm Service Agency (FSA) reminds producers to report crop acreage by July 15, 2009.

Acreage reports are required to participate in the Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP), Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE), Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP), and to receive loan deficiency payments (LDPs) or Marketing Assistance Loans. Acreage reporting may also be useful to track cropping history for future FSA program enrollment.

Pasture and grazed acreage must be reported for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE), the Livestock Forage Program (LFP), and acreage covered by a Non-insured Assistance Program (NAP) grazing policy.

After the July 15<sup>th</sup> reporting deadline, producers will be charged a minimum late-filing fee of \$46 per farm. Acreage reports may be revised at any time without a late-filing charge as long as the crop may be verified in the field. For an appointment and/or more information call the Marathon County Farm Service Agency at 715-848-2330.

## Pasture Walks

**Thursday July 30<sup>th</sup> - 6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.**

**Tony Schultz and Kat Becker farm,** Stoney Acres Farm is a third generation family Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm located just outside Athens, WI. They grow all of their own vegetables, herbs, and fruit, make maple syrup, and graze beef and chicken. Their farm products are available through our CSA, at the Wausau farmers' market, through direct delivery and, on the farm. They are certified organic and raise 172 fruits and vegetables for their CSA.

They use managed grazing to raise beef, where they pasture-finish steers and have a cow/calf operation on 85 acres of pasture. They also pasture-raise poultry.

**Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup> — 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.**

**Aaron Yoder Farm,** The Yoders are looking at putting in an irrigation system this summer. They are deciding between either a K-line system or possibly a "traveling gun" system for use on part of their acres. We will check the pastures of this organic dairy farm looking at the diversity of plant species and seeing the differences that irrigation is making. Aaron has practiced Management Intensive Rotational Grazing for quite a few years. He has incorporated annuals into his rotation, including grazing corn this year. Over the years he has had numerous innovative ideas to keep his pastures and cattle producing at optimum levels.

**Thursday August 6<sup>th</sup> - 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.**

**Bryan and Michelle Hilts farm,** Bryan and Michelle developed a managed grazing plan for their farm in the spring of 2004, they fenced 46 acres to start with and built a wetland restoration project as well. In 2008, they fenced 29 more acres of pasture, and restored an additional wetland area. They currently run approximately 30 beef cow/calf pairs. They get by with very few winter facilities and instead choose to strategically place bales in their fields for winter feeding. They are experimenting with pastured poultry and also participate in the Conservation Security Program. In addition to the pasture land, they actively managed their farm's woodlands using the help of a DNR Forester which we will see.

**Thursday, August 13<sup>th</sup> — 10:00 a.m. to Noon**

**Peter and Suzie Arnold farm.** The Arnolds are part of a research project conducted by the USDA Dairy Forage Research Center. Geoff will be there to discuss the research and findings at the Arnold farm and his findings statewide.

The Arnolds' also have a new freestall for winter and calf housing. They have kept costs low by only including housing under the new roof. All feeding is still done outside along with a bedded pack outdoors to accommodate dry cows and heifers. They also built a new calf building in the fall of 2008 to accommodate a large spring calf crop.

They have also started to changeover their pasture species by interseeding Meadow Fescue and clovers. Peter has been pleased with the interseeding results. Don't miss this one!. Don't miss this one!



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## ACRE Program Enrollment Open

Diana Pernsteiner, County Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency for Marathon County announced that producers can elect and enroll in the Average Crop Revenue Election (ACRE) program for 2009 until August 14, 2009. ACRE is a provision of the 2008 Farm Bill.

The Average Crop Revenue Election program is an alternative to our traditional signup. This new option presents an opportunity for producers to review both ACRE and Direct Counter Cyclical programs and to decide which one will work best for their operation." Producers have until Aug. 14, 2009, to make their decision for the 2009 crop. USDA will not accept any late-filed applications. Producers who elect the ACRE program for a farm agree to:

- forgo counter-cyclical payments; but will receive ACRE payments
- accept a 20-percent reduction of the direct payments; and accept a 30-percent reduction in loan rates for all commodities placed under loan. Commodities eligible for ACRE payments are wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, long grain rice, medium and short grain rice, peanuts, soybeans, sunflower seed, canola, flaxseed, safflower, mustard seed, rapeseed, sesame seed, crambe, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas and large chickpeas.

The ACRE program was created in the 2008 Farm Bill to give producers an option in lieu of traditional counter-cyclical payments. Producers may elect and enroll in ACRE for the 2009 crop year even if they have already accepted advance direct payments under the Direct and Counter-cyclical Program.

Producers must first elect to convert a particular farm to ACRE. This action is irrevocable through crop year 2012. The next step is to enroll the farm in a contract to participate in ACRE. The enrollment must subsequently be completed each year just as farms are enrolled in DCP each year.

For more information about the ACRE program please visit the Marathon County Farm Service Agency (FSA) office or visit <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>.

## Bergan is named as 2009 Ag Ambassador Intern

Jessica Bergan is the new Ag Ambassador Intern for the Partnership for Progressive Agriculture and Northcentral Technical College. Her first day was June 1, the week of the annual June

Dairy Breakfast. As the Ag Ambassador, Bergan will be responsible for making presentations to a wide variety of groups throughout Marathon County. In addition she will also oversee the ever-popular Ag Adventure Tent at the Wisconsin Valley Fair August 4-9. Bergan is from Peterson, MN and is currently attending UW-River Falls, where she is a junior and is majoring in Agricultural Education. She is looking forward to her responsibilities as a Resident Assistant this fall as well as being involved with the UWRF Rodeo Team; the professional agricultural sorority, Sigma Alpha; the Agricultural Communicators of Tomorrow; Alpha Tau Alpha and the Ag. Ed. Society. Please contact Melissa Klein, Agriculture Coordinator, if you would like to schedule Jessica to speak.

## June Dairy Breakfast A Success

With over 1200 people served, the June Dairy Breakfast was a success. Guest appearances from WI Valley Fairest of the Fairs, Katie Wirkus, Woody the Woodchuck, Louie the Lightening Bug, and Culvers Scoopie made the day even more fun and exciting for all. A well-deserved thank you is in place for all of the volunteers who did a wonderful job helping set-up and take-down. Without the volunteers or sponsors, this event would not have been possible. This year's sponsors were: Ballweg Toyota of Wausau, Brickner Auto Group, Culver's, Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board, Marathon Feed Inc., Meyer Manufacturing Corp., Customer One Coop., Wisconsin Rapids Grain LLC, United FCS, Roger Kreager Insurance, Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle Inc., FABCO, Rib Mountain Travel Center, Cover-All of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Public Service, Eckardt Corp., Marathon County Holstein Breeders, Marathon County DHIA, Equity Livestock, Larsen Coop., Mullins Cheese Inc., Bletsoe Cheese Inc., and Marathon Cheese Corp.

## Ag Adventure Tent to be featured at the Wisconsin Valley Fair



Northcentral Technical College and the Partnership for Progressive Agriculture will be hosting the Ag Adventure Tent at the Wisconsin Valley Fair. The tent will be open on Tuesday, August 4<sup>th</sup> from 12 pm to 8 pm; August 5<sup>th</sup> through the 8<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 8 pm; and on August 9<sup>th</sup> from 10 am to 6 pm. You are invited to join in the tent's free activities with the Wisconsin Valley Fair's general admission. Ice cream making, a petting zoo, and fun ag. trivia games are just some of the activities that you can enjoy when attending. We are also having the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Celebrity Butter Carving Contest on Friday and Saturday. This year's tent is sponsored by Abby Bank, Crossroads County Market, Van Der Geest Dairy, and the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board. If you are interested in volunteering or serving on the planning committee please contact Jessica Bergan at (715) 803-1638 or Melissa Klein at (715) 803-1671.



## Parlor Tour Set for Western Marathon County

On July 9, there will be a parlor tour set for anyone interested in attending.

The tentative itinerary includes visiting Carl Oberholtzer's farm from 10:30-11:30 a.m. Carl and his family have been milking their 130 head of dairy cattle through their retrofitted double 8 herringbone parlor since December of 2007. They added a lean-to on the tiestall barn and purchased used milking equipment to keep the cost of their milking facility low relative to a new facility. They are currently grazing their herd of dairy cattle. The Oberholtzer's address is: H4178 Maple Rd, Colby, WI.

11:30-12:30 is time for lunch on your own.

The tour will then proceed to Dave and Becky Ruesch's farm from 12:30-1:30. Dave and his father Rod farm together and are milking 95 cows through a very nice double 6 parallel parlor that is expandable to a double 9. They have 41 tiestalls left in the barn and have 51 cows in freestalls. The holding area is ramped up in the existing tiestall barn and the parlor was constructed on the end of the barn. The Ruesch's address is: 5338 Pickard Ave, Abbotsford, WI.

From 2:00-3:00, Jim and Tammy Schreiner will be showing off their farm. They are currently milking 65 cows in a 1½ year old Westfalia Swing 8 milking parlor. The parlor, holding area, new milkhouse, and additional tiestalls were added onto the barn. Most of the construction was done on their own. They also began rotational grazing in 2007. The Schriener's address is: 2052 Frahm Rd, Athens, WI.

For any other information, Call Sam Zimmermann, UW Extension at (715) 261-1250 or Contact your local Extension Agent.

This tour is hosted by Clark, Taylor, Marathon and Lincoln County UW Extension offices and Central WI River Grazier Network.

## WI Farm Technology Show July 21-23 In Dodge County

Bus Transportation Available July 22 From Cedar Creek Mall, Rothschild



Wisconsin Farm Technology Days is just days away. Hosted by Dodge County at the Crave Brothers Farm near Waterloo, the show offers something for everyone. "All of the educational events at this show center around the theme -- Food-Fuel-Future," according to Dave Frohling, Watertown, Executive Committee chair for the 2009 Wisconsin Farm Technology Days.

Frohling says the Craves have many innovative ideas on the farm including a cheese plant to process the milk from their 1200 cows, two anaerobic digesters to create electricity, heat, and a material that is used as the base of a potting soil mix from the manure on the farm. The farm also includes many new buildings including a "state of the art shop", office, feed storage, and livestock housing. Visitors will have an opportunity to tour the farm while at the show. "We'll have more trams at this show than ever before so we can get as many people through the farm as possible," Frohling says. "We expect to be able to take 2500 people a day through the tours."

Frohling says, "This is a wonderful opportunity for people to see so many things in one place." There are numerous hands-on youth activities; the Family Living tent features a variety of entertainment and education. A crafts tent will feature unique, hand-made items. The University of Wisconsin's Farm Progress pavilion will feature a wide variety of educational topics including digesters, composting, cheese making, and animal identification. More than 1000 commercial exhibitors will also demonstrate or talk about the latest products and service offerings.

The show is presented in partnership with the Wisconsin Farm Technology Days, Inc., UW-Extension, and teaming with the host county. Countless volunteers have been working for the last three years with the Executive Committee from Dodge County on plans for the 2009 show. Learn more about all the activities planned on the show's website at <http://www.dodgefarmtech.com>.



The host site is about a 3-hour drive from Marathon County, so you might be interested in riding down via a luxury coach bus. The Marathon County Executive Committee for the 2011 Farm Technology Days has made arrangements to depart Cedar Creek Mall, Rothschild at 7 am and return at 8 pm. Contact Marathon County UW-Extension at 715-261-1239 to reserve a spot for only \$20 (includes a \$5 admission ticket). For more information on planning, or volunteer opportunities for the 2011 show, visit <http://marathon.uwex.edu>.

## Farmers Health Cooperative of Wisconsin (FHCW) Grows

FHCW continues to grow stronger with approximately 2,600 members to date. Now is the perfect time to check out the only farmer-owned, not-for-profit insurance option that provides high-quality health insurance coverage specifically designed to meet the needs of farmers. With two years of single-digit premium increases, a comprehensive provider network and a new dental offering, it's time for more people to find out what FHCW offers. Help spread the word by referring others to FHCW. They may contact us by calling 1-800-539-9370