

Ag Link

May—June 2009

A newsletter of:

UW
Extension



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 7 — Marathon County June Dairy Breakfast

8:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. To be held at Swiderski Equipment, 3301 County Road WW, Wausau WI 54401. Directions: Exit 197 off Hwy 51, north of Wausau to Hwy WW, then west 1/2 mile. Activities include kiddie tractor pedal pull, face painting, education tent, cheese tasting, petting zoo, photos with machinery. The breakfast cost \$7 for adults, ages 6-12: \$4 and 5 and under are FREE.

June 12—June Dairy Breakfast, Spencer

The is the 25th annual Dairy Breakfast for the Spencer community. The address is: Spencer Village Park, 105 Park Street, Spencer, WI 54479. Next to Spencer Village Hall; at the intersection of Hwy 13 and 98, go one block west (left), cross the railroad tracks and immediately turn left (south) onto Park Street. The Village Park shelter for the breakfast is in between the Spencer Village Hall and the Land O'Lakes cheese plant. Cost for adults is \$5.50, children are \$2 and preschool is free. Live music throughout the morning. Menu: pancakes, sausage, cheese, applesauce, ice cream, milk, coffee. Sponsored by the Spencer Chamber of Commerce

June 20 — June Dairy Brunch & Open Farm

8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. To be held at 4514 County Line Road, Rudolph, WI 54475. Directions: 1.5 miles west of State Hwy 34, halfway between Wisconsin Rapids and State Hwy 10. On the Wood and Portage county line. Activities include: Door Prizes - Education Tent - Hay Rides - Small Animals - Quilt Display - Dairy Coloring Contest - Little Farmer Dressup - Dairy Jeopardy on Stage! - Pedal Tractor Pull - Free Ice cream Sundaes and Root Beer Floats - Academie DeLa Danse Studio Gals - Reading First - NRCS - Ice Age Trail

June 26 — Berry & Dairy Breakfast, Wisconsin Rapids

6:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. To be held at the Lincoln High School.

****June Dairy Breakfasts are a Wisconsin Tradition.**

Check with your local community for June Dairy month activities. You can also visit the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board website at www.wisdairy.com to see the calendar of events.

July 1 — Summer Field Day, Marshfield Ag Research Station

The Marshfield Agricultural Research Station will host a Summer Field Day at the "south farm", on East 29th Street, Marshfield. The program runs from 10:15 am to 2:30 pm and includes: Joe Lauer, UW Corn Specialist; Shaun Conley, UW Soybean and Small Grain Specialist; Dan Undersander, UW Forage Specialist; Dick Wolkowski, UW Soils Specialist; Carrie Laboski, UW Soil Fertility Specialist; and Wayne Coblenz, USDA Agronomist. For more details, call the Marshfield Ag Research Station at 715-387-2523.

Farm City Dinner Recap

The 77th Annual Farm City Dinner was held in March to bring together 250 people of rural and urban communities, recognizing each other's value and a realization of how much each has to offer. The Farm Progress Days Scholarship was awarded to Katie Wirkus, Athens. Wirkus is a student at the University of Wisconsin – River Falls.

A special program recognized the 2009 Marathon County Century Farms award. The award recognizes families that have 100 years of continuous farm ownership. Named to that distinction were Norman and Sharon Beran, Athens; Gene, Joyce and Scott Christian, Merrill, and Tim Duvall, Colby.



Norman and Sharon Beran, Athens

Frank B. Beran and wife Anna bought the farm near Athens in July of 1908 after coming to America from Czechoslovakia. They later sold their farm to Frank J. Beran, in 1929. Frank died in 1948 and his oldest son, Frank L, took over. Frank and Caroline's second son Norman married Sharon Schreiner in 1977 purchased the farm in 1997. Currently Norman and Sharon have 500 acres of land and rent 67.

Gene, Joyce and Scott Christian, Merrill

Emil Christian purchased the farm by Merrill consisting of 73 acres, from his brother William Jr. in 1909. In 1974 Gene and his wife Joyce purchased the farm on a land contract. The herd consists of 50 cows. In 2004 Gene sold the personal property to his son Scott. He formed a partnership with Joyce and is now Christian Farms, LLP. At the present time they are milking cows and raising all the bull calves for steers.



Tim Duvall, Colby

Frederick and Augusta Witte settled the land near Colby in 1878. Six of the nine children settled on farms within two miles of each other. William Witte purchased the farm and passed it onto his brother Otto, and wife Minnie Witte in 1946. Their daughter Madeline married Melvin Duvall and purchased the farm in 1963. When Melvin died, his son Allen bought the farm in 1976. Their son Tim purchased the front 40 acres in 1991. Tim raises steers and has a few horses.

In addition to the Century Farm awards, the coveted Outstanding Young Farmer award was announced. To be eligible for the Outstanding Young Farmer award, applicants must be 37 years-old or younger and receive at least two-thirds of their income from farming. Each applicant is evaluated on the progress of their agricultural career, implemented soil and water conservation practices, and involvement in community activities. This year had five highly qualified applicants, Peter Arnold, Edgar; Dan Cihlar, Mosinee; Bruce and Jolene Gumz, Dorchester; Tyler and Renee Liedberg, Colby; Anthony Totzke, Edgar.

This year's recipient was Peter Arnold, Edgar. Arnold along with wife Suzanne farms 257 acres and 150 cows. The cows and livestock graze about seven months out of the year. The farm has been open for Pasture Walks and is always open to help others start a grazing practice. He is continually looking at the efficiency of the operation to make the best improvements that would benefit the business in the long run. Arnold is a member of the Central Wisconsin River Grazers and the local dairy discussion group. He will represent Marathon County at the State Outstanding Young Farmer Event in January 2010.



The evening concluded with the live auction with all proceeds going to fund the Ag Ambassador Intern and Ag Adventure Tent at the Wisconsin Valley Fair. A record of \$4495 was raised. Thanks to everyone who donated and purchased items. Also thanks to the major sponsors: M & I Bank, Security Health Plan of Wisconsin, Swiderski Equipment and Marathon County Agricultural Society. The dinner and program was hosted by the Partnership for Progressive Agriculture, Northcentral Technical College, University of Wisconsin Extension and Marathon County Government. Thank you to everyone who attended and the committee for coordinating a wonderful event.



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Wanted: PPA Members

Agriculture is a vital component of our economy in Marathon County. The Partnership for Progressive Agriculture (PPA) is a unique public/private collaboration.

The PPA has proactively addressed the issues facing the sector of our business community since its establishment in 2003. Two volunteer-driven subcommittees—economic development/advocacy and education/promotions—are organized to accomplish these tasks. Producers and agribusinesses of all types and sizes are welcome to join in PPA activities.

The Partnership for Progressive Agriculture committee would like to welcome its new members: Scott Mickelsen, Melissa Klein, Terri Devore, Rosemary Eckardt, Dennis & Sandi Cihlar, Leon Woller, Lisa & Bryan Kumfer, Marathon County Ag Society, Inc., Steve & Pam Zahn, Dale and Pat Heise, Todd and Christine Heise, and Marathon Feed.

Your membership supports the activities of PPA and Marathon County Agriculture. If you would like to join the PPA please fill out the form below. An individual membership is \$45 and runs from January 1 to December 31. Make checks payable to: Marathon County—PPA.

Return completed form and payment to: Marathon County Finance Department, 500 Forest Street, Wausau, WI 54403

Individual Membership Registration Form

Name: _____

Company: _____

Mailing Address: _____

Email Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Occupation: _____

Please check all that apply:

- I am interested in becoming a member of the PPA. Enclosed is my \$45 membership dues.
- I am interested in becoming a committee member:
- PPA Board (elected position)
 - Education/Promotions Committee
 - Economic Development/Advocacy Committee
- I am a student and would like to become a member. Enclosed is my \$5 membership dues.

The MILC Program

The continuation of the MILC program under the new farm bill provided dairy producers, who have signed MILC contracts, benefits in the amount of \$1.51352 per hundred weight of milk sold in February 2009. Forty-five percent of the difference between the Boston Class I price and the targeted level accounted for \$1.33 of the February MILC rate. The balance of the MILC rate (\$1.51352) came from the feed cost adjustment. The FSA already knows that the MILC rate for milk sold in March will be greater than the February MILC rate. However, they do not yet know how much the feed cost adjustment will affect the final March MILC rate. If have not yet enrolled to receive MILC payments and are interested, call the Marathon County FSA office at 848-2330.

Spanish-Speaking Employees

Sara Sulko and is the Bilingual Health and Safety Coordinator with the North Central WI Workforce Development Board. She works closely with AHORA, a group of social service organization focused on the needs of the Hispanic community. She works area farms that have Spanish-speaking employees to give them training on safety around the farm. This is a great way to bridge the language barrier you may have with your employees. Sara is well versed in the Spanish language. Sara is willing to meet and work with you and your employees. If interested, please contact Sara at 715-442-4715 or ssulko@ncwwdb.org.

Farm Progress Days Show Continues Legacy

The Marathon County Farm Progress Days Scholarship Fund was established to promote continuing educational opportunities in the field of agriculture and to provide educational opportunities to Marathon County residents. Scholarships are available to qualified persons who are enrolled in a degreed program, short course, or continuing education program within the University of Wisconsin, or Wisconsin Technical College System for selected fields of agricultural study. In 1996, Marathon County hosted Wisconsin Farm Progress Days. The three-day event was one of the most successful farm shows of it's kind, and a real tribute to the local volunteerism and community support that made it possible. This event generated net earnings, which made it possible for show organizers to fund several community projects and initiatives — including the Farm Progress Days Scholarship Fund managed by the Community Foundation of Northcentral Wisconsin.

It is no surprise during these economic times that the student need for scholarship assistance was at an all-time high. Yet, due to market conditions the funds available were very limited. Desperate times called for a new approach, so with the support of scholarship committee members; Sandi Cihlar, Sue Nelson, Gary Belanger, Scott Borchart, and Mike Wildeck, and the generosity of Custom Meats, Marathon and Country Fresh Meats, Weston four processed halves of pork offered for auction at the March 6 Farm/City Dinner. As a result, it was possible to present two \$500 scholarships in 2009, one to Katie Wirkus and the other to Candis O'Brien.

Katie Wirkus is the daughter of Allen and Barb Wirkus from Athens. A 2005 graduate of Edgar High School, Katie is pursuing a degree in Agricultural Education and Mathematics at UW-River Falls. She hopes to obtain an agricultural education teaching position after graduation at an area school.

Candis O'Brien, a 2006 graduate of DC Everest, is the daughter of Timothy and Theresa O'Brien. Candis is currently pursuing a Dairy Science degree, with a horticulture minor at UW-River Falls. Her goal is to become a 4-H agent to inspire children to become involved in agriculture and the community.

Since it was established, \$10,500 has been awarded thus far from the Marathon County Farm Progress Days Scholarship Fund. Previous recipients include: 2008: Melissa Ploeckelman and Travis DeWolfe; 2007: Ryan Eckert and Joseph Ploeckelman; 2006: Adam Mielke and Otto Kraus; 2005: Michael Mueller and Connie Walters; 2004: Jeremy Luckey and Crystal Seefeldt; 2003: Craig Gumz; 2002: Andrea Behnke and Josef Harris; 2001: Michelle King and Rebecca Krueger; 2000: Amanda Landwehr and Sarah Nikolai; 1999: Kristina Friedli and Melissa Utecht

If you would like to learn more about this program please contact Sue Nelson at the Community Foundation of North Central Wisconsin. She can be reached at 845-9555.

NTC Ag Students Travel to Pennsylvania



Six agriculture students traveled to Hershey, Pennsylvania for the National Post-Secondary Agriculture Students National Conference after qualifying at the state contest. Jamie Cihlar, Marathon; Megan Groshek, Stevens Point; and Angie Schmeiser, Dorchester competed in the Livestock Specialist contest and placed third as a team. Cihlar brought home top honors individually. Schmeiser participated in impromptu speaking and placed first. Members in these two events advanced to the national competition.

Shannon McLaughlin, Wausau; Dan Enge, Stevens Point; and Jordan Mueller, Loyal competed in the Dairy Specialist contest placing eighth. Enge placed fourteenth individually. Cihlar placed second in the prepared speaking contest

with McLaughlin placing third. The chapter was honored with the chapter spirit award, which is the only award given at the state contest.

At nationals, the Livestock specialist team placed fourth with Cihlar placing ninth, Groshek fourteenth and Schmeiser placing fifteenth individually. Schmeiser also competed in the impromptu speaking contest and placed sixth. The chapter was recognized during the conference for being a new chapter.

Students were able to see agriculture in Pennsylvania through industry tours. "My favorite part of the conference was touring the dairy farm with robotic milkers," said Shannon McLaughlin, Wausau. "It was great to see this unique and innovative operation."

Dairyland State Academy Seeks Farm Opportunity



The Dairyland State Academy Farm Search Committee is accepting applications from farmers who are interested in selling their farm to the Dairyland State Academy.

In March, Marathon County Government gave their approval for Dairyland State Academy for the purchase of a farm learning lab.

"This action has created a real opportunity for high school agriculture programs, Dairy Science students at Northcentral Technical College and the farming community to be involved in helping preserve the legacy of the dairy industry," said Dale Heise, Board President of Dairyland State Academy.

The farm search committee has established minimum criteria for the learning laboratory. Successful farm applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Located approximately 15 miles of the Northcentral Technical College Wausau campus
- 80 acres minimum
- Buildings to support and house approximately 50 milking cows
- The DSA reserves the right to select the property that best fits the needs as determined by the DSA Board.

Applications must be received by June 15, 2009 for full consideration. All applications will be held in confidence and will not be shared with the public. Applications are available by contacting Tim Buttke, Treasurer, Dairyland State Academy, at 715.847.4262 or by email at tim.buttke@micorp.com

Direct & Counter-cyclical Payment

The 2009 Direct & Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) program sign up is slowing down. The FSA has been processing applicants, by appointment, since January. They believe they have enrolled 80 percent of the Marathon County farms that have sufficient bases for enrollment. The 2009 DCP signup was originally scheduled to end on June 1, 2009 but has now been extended to August 14, 2009. Due to changes in eligibility requirements and documents, farmers have been coming into the FSA office to complete the paper work. Enrollment by mail just would not work well for 2009.