

Address Service Requested

# Ag Link

January—February, 2009

A newsletter of:



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### January 8 — Sheep Management WisLine Program

The first of a 3-part series, 7:30 p.m. Participants must pre-register with Marathon County UWEX by calling 261-1230.

### January 8 — Wisconsin Agronomy Update Meeting

The UW Department of Agronomy will offer Crop Production and Management Meeting at Wausau's Midway Motor Lodge, 12 pm, January 8. Cost is \$28. A \$5.00 "walk-in" fee will be charged to those who have not pre-registered. Call 261-1230 to register.

### January 9 — Gaining the Competitive Edge: A Dairy Seminar Series - Antigo

10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Knights of Columbus Hall, 535 Center Street, Antigo, WI. The cost is \$25.00/person. Call Langlade County UWEX to registration.

### January 13 — Marathon County Holstein Breeders

The annual meeting will be at the Rib River Ballroom in Marathon, at noon. Elections will be held.

### January 15 — Gaining the Competitive Edge: A Dairy Seminar Series - Stratford

The seminar run from 10:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Country Aire Banquet Hall, Stratford. The cost is \$25.00/person. Call 261-1230 for registration.

### January 29-30 — Corn/Soy Expo

Kalahari Conference Center in Wisconsin Dells

### January 30 - February 1 — Garden Visions

Location: Plaza Hotel & Suites in Wausau, WI

Visit [www.gardenvisions.org](http://www.gardenvisions.org) for more information.

### January 30 -- Deadline to sign up for conservation practice cost-share programs

Contact Any Neigum at Natural Resource Conservation Service (848-2330) for more information.

### February 5 — 2009 Sheep Management WisLine

The second of a 3-part series, 7:30 p.m. Participants must pre-register by calling 261-1230.

### February 18 — Farm Transfer Basics - Abbotsford

There's no need for ag producers to know all the details about transferring farm ownership, but without a plan you could get "a really expensive education." Contact 715-261-1230 for a registration brochure.

### February 19-21 — Wisconsin Grazing Conference

Location: Holiday Inn Hotel & Convention Center, Stevens Point. For more information call Heather Flashinski 715-289-4896.

### February 24 — Private Pesticide Applicator Training - Stratford

This training is recommended for ALL pesticide applicators or handlers, and is required for the purchase and handling of restricted use pesticides. Private applicators can take the day-time group class or self study option. For more information call Marathon County UW-Extension at 261-1231.

### March 5 — 2009 Sheep Management WisLine Program

The third of a 3-part series, 7:30 p.m. Participants must pre-register with Marathon County UWEX by calling 261-1230.

### March 6 -- Farm/City Dinner at Stoney Creek Conference Center, Rothschild

Contact Melissa Klein, at 803-1671 for information.



## PPA Has New Home

It is with great excitement that we share with you that the Partnership for Progressive Agriculture (PPA) has found a new home with Northcentral Technical College (NTC). This new collaboration is being supported by NTC, Marathon County Government, and UW-Extension Marathon County.

Past accomplishments of this group have been the Dairyland State Academy initiative, Grow Wisconsin grant, Economic Development seminars, June Dairy Breakfast, Farm/City Dinner, and Ag Adventure Tent. This new collaborative effort will offer more opportunities for agriculture producers in addition to past activities. Seminars and workshops will be held in marketing, animal husbandry, employee management, farm transition, and more. The Farm City Dinner, Ag Adventure Tent, and June Dairy Breakfast will still be the main events of the PPA.

We are looking for people to serve on committees, to serve as volunteers for programs and helping develop seminars. The committees of PPA are: PPA Board (elected position), Education/Promotions Sub-Committee, and Economic Development/Advocacy.

To become a member, serve on a committee and make your commitment to the future of agriculture please contact Melissa Klein, Agriculture Coordinator at 715-803-1671 or by e-mail at [klein@ntc.edu](mailto:klein@ntc.edu). There is a \$45.00 membership fee that helps support agriculture programs and gets you in to workshops and seminars at a discounted rate.

We want to thank all those who have helped PPA be successful in the past and welcome those as well as new volunteers to step forward as we chart our new course.

## Tractor Safety Courses

Northcentral Technical College will be offering Tractor Safety Courses at the Antigo, Medford and Wausau NTC campuses.

Who should attend:

- Youth ages 14 - 15 who need the federal certificate of training for employment on farms.
- Youth ages 12 - 16 who will be operating tractors or self-propelled farm machinery on public roads.
- Participants in the training must be able to sit securely in the operator's seat of a late model, 40 - 60 horsepower, utility-type tractor; fully depress the clutch; and reach all of the controls. The tractors used for the driving test will have seat belts, which must be properly fastened for safe operation.
- Participants should have the strength to shift, steer, and hook up equipment to the tractor.
- Participants will be asked to complete a driving course. They should be able to control the tractor and an attached two - wheel trailer while looking to see if there is traffic around them.
- Students must be able to attend 24 hours of instructor training. No make up work will be accepted.
- Students must be accompanied by a parent or guardian for the first class.

Requests for reasonable accommodations or limitations should be made

Course Information:

February 14, 23,28

March 7, 14, 21

Driving Test April 4

Time: 9 am to 1:30 pm (includes half hour lunch)

Cost: \$129 (includes book, materials, exam fees)



For more information contact Cathy Newby at 888.NTC.7144 ext. 1861. To register call 888.NTC.7144 ext. 5861 or register online at [ntc.edu/wls/register](http://ntc.edu/wls/register).



AG FINANCING MADE EASY

Specializing In:

- Revolving Lines of Credit
- Commercial and Mortgage Loans
- Full Line of Related Services

715/842-4631 • 800-324-5751  
611 S 32nd Ave • Wausau, WI 54401



Chad Glaze  
Outside Sales Pro



9719 Cty Road F  
Merrill, WI 54452  
[chad@vinevest.com](mailto:chad@vinevest.com)  
715.536.3287 Office  
715.340.6162 Cell

"Specializing in crop insurance"

FOR OVER 85 YEARS.....  
BUYING AND SELLING QUALITY DAIRY CATTLE  
COMPLETE HERDS, SPRINGING & OPEN HEIFERS

Lee Van Der Geest & Jason Mell



Wausau 715-675-6043

## Outstanding Young Farmer Applications Due January 14

Who will be the next Marathon County Outstanding Young Farmer? The Partnership for Progressive Agriculture and Marathon County UW Extension are accepting applications for the 2009 Outstanding Young Farmer awards. The Marathon County Agricultural Society provides financial support for this awards program, recognizing the achievements of producers who are 37 years-old or younger and dedicated to their farm business and community.

Applicants must receive at least two-thirds of their income from farming but can be the farm owner, operator or manager involved in a farm business. Any farming enterprise is eligible. Individuals are evaluated on progress in their ag career, soil and water conservation practices and community activities. Eligible farmers can be owners, partial owners, or employees. The top Outstanding Young Farmer or Farm Couple in this competition will be invited to participate in the statewide competition the following January (2009), and receive up to \$500 in financial support as the Marathon County delegate(s).

Applications are due by January 14 and recipients will be recognized at Annual Farm City Dinner on March 6, 2009. For more information or an application form, visit [marathon.uwex.edu](http://marathon.uwex.edu) or call Melissa Klein (803-1671) or Mike Wildeck (261-1239).

## Marathon County Century Farms to be Recognized

Anniversaries are times for celebration. Is your farm celebrating 100 years of continuous family ownership? Any family in Marathon County whose farm is celebrating 100 years of continuous family ownership is encouraged to apply for a Century Farm Award. The award is sponsored by the Marathon County Agricultural Society in cooperation with the Partnership for Progressive Agriculture and Marathon County UW-Extension.

Recipients of the Century Farm award and their farm businesses are recognized for this outstanding accomplishment, at the annual Farm City Dinner on March 6, 2009. Proof of continuous family ownership, such as a copy of an abstract of title, is required. For more details and an application, contact Melissa Klein (803-1671) or Mike Wildeck (261-1239), or visit [marathon.uwex.edu](http://marathon.uwex.edu). Applications must be received no later than January 14, 2009.

## Farm/City Dinner

Save the date: March 6<sup>th</sup>, 2009 for the 77<sup>th</sup> Annual Farm/City Dinner at the Stoney Creek Inn, Rothschild. Reception begins at 6:30 pm with dinner and program at 7:30 pm. The dinner features locally grown food. We will recognize the Farm Progress Days Scholarship Winners, Marathon County Outstanding Young Farmer and Century Farms. In addition there will be a live auction with all proceeds funding the Ag Ambassador Intern and the Ag Adventure Tent at the Wisconsin Valley Fair. This event is put on by the Partnership for Progressive Agriculture Committee with Northcentral Technical College, UW-Extension and Marathon County. We are still looking for donations for the auction and sponsors for the event. If you would like to donate, sponsor, or purchase tickets please contact Melissa Klein, Agriculture Coordinator at 803.1671.

## EQUIP Funding Available

The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) is accepting applications for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP). The EQIP program assists landowners in applying conservation practices to their land. The signup is open from December 1, 2008 to January 30, 2009. Call 848-2330 ext 3 for more information.

## Direct & Counter-cyclical Payment Program

Yes, there **will be** a Direct & Counter-cyclical Payment (DCP) program for 2009. The beginning of the signup is **yet to be announced**. We do know that the regular signup will end on June 1, 2009. Any DCP contracts enrolled after June 1<sup>st</sup> will be accessed a \$100 late fee per contract and the final deadline to enroll is September 30, 2009. Because of changes in eligibility requirements and documents, expect that the 2009 signup will require a trip to the Farm Service Agency office.

The payment schedule for DCP under the new farm bill will be the same as the for the last farm bill. Producers may select to take an advanced direct payment that will be 22% of the full amount. The direct payments will be less next year because the formula will use 83.3% of the base rather 85% paid under the prior farm bill. Producers may also select to receive a 40% advance counter-cyclical payment. This advanced payment will be made 6 months after the beginning of the marketing year which follows the crop year. The system for making all of our payments has been centralized. This means that direct deposit payment statements and checks will not be printed in our office. Payments are handled through the FSA Kansas City Finance Office. The delay will be longer if you are not paid by direct deposit.

## Seehafer Acres, Inc. to Host Farm Technology Days, July 12-14, 2011



At a media conference held November 11th, Keith Langenhahn, Farm Technology Days (FTD) Executive Committee Chairman introduced Ken and Karen Seehafer of Seehafer Acres, Inc., as the host farm of the 2011 event. Seehafer Acres, owned and operated by Ken & Karen Seehafer since 1972, is located north of Marshfield on Hwy. 97, in the Township of McMillan, County of Marathon.

The 3rd generation family farm was originally purchased by Ken's grandfather in 1930 consisting of 80 acres. Seehafer Acres is a picture perfect modern dairy facility managed by a husband and wife team showcasing cow comfort, herd management and conservation practices. Managing 700 acres of forage, corn and soybeans; Seehafer's utilize conservation practices through minimum tillage, strip cropping, terracing and waterways.

Seehafer's are excited to showcase their facility and honored to represent Marathon County at the July 12-14, 2011 event. Wisconsin Farm Technology Days is one of the largest outdoor agricultural shows in the country. The annual three-day event showcases the latest improvements in production agriculture, including practical applications of recent research and technologies.

Some of the committees that plan and conduct the show have already begun to form. If you are interested in volunteering in some capacity please check the Marathon County UW-Extension web page at <http://marathon.uwex.edu> for a full description, or call the office at 261-1230 to have information sent to you.

## Milk Program?

The new farm bill continued the MILC program. This program for dairy producers is intended to pay when the "basic formula" milk price (based on the Boston Class I price) falls below a targeted level. Under the new farm bill, feed costs will enter into the formula. When national average feed costs go up, the target level for the milk will also go up. Washington D.C. will process the payment formula every month and determine whether a MILC rate will be paid. Farm Service Agency computers will then calculate the payment on each individual's milk production. The beginning of the MILC signup is **yet to be announced**.

## Private Pesticide Applicator Training

Two group training sessions will be available to agricultural producers in Marathon County who use pesticides on property owned or rented them. The sessions are set for February 14 in Stratford and March 17 in Wausau.

Although it's recommended for all pesticide applicators to take this training, producers must be certified to legally purchase, and handle "restricted use" pesticides. Certification is attained through the group class or by self-study (and then passing the exam). Minimum passing scores for certification are: Group Session - 50%, and Self-study - 70%.

UW-Extension agricultural agents provide the training and the WI Dept. of Agriculture issues the certification which is valid for five years. So if you were last certified in 2003, your certification expires in 2008. Greenhouse and nursery operators are considered private applicators and can take the group training, but take a different exam.

Fees are \$38 per person for the Group Class training (includes lunch) and \$30 per person for Self Study. Both options include the training manual. For registration information please contact the Marathon County UW-Extension at 715-261-1231, or go to web site at <http://marathon.uwex.edu>.



## Referendum for Pork Checkoff

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) announced that it will conduct a Request for Referendum among eligible pork producers to determine if they want a referendum on the Pork Checkoff Program. Participation is voluntary, and only individuals who desire a referendum on the Pork Checkoff Program should participate.

The USDA will conduct a referendum only if at least 15 percent of the total number of eligible pork producers requests a referendum. (Eligible pork producers will need to provide purchase receipts or sales receipts to verify pork production activity). Producers need to have been active between Jan. 1, 2007, and Dec. 31, 2007, and at least 18 years of age. The Request for Referendum will be held **Dec. 8, 2008 through Jan. 2, 2009**.

For voting forms and more information you may call the Marathon County Farm Service Agency at 715-848-2330.

## Increase winter milk production with the effects of Long Day Lighting



With big swings in energy costs and weakening milk prices, now may be the time to consider more energy efficient lights. Not only will they make your barn brighter, they have proven to make bigger milk checks when coupled with the effects of long day lighting. Dairy cows in northern regions like Wisconsin, give more milk if they get extra lighting during the winter months, when days are short. According to Scott Sanford, an outreach specialist in Biological Systems Engineering at University of Wisconsin-Madison, the increase in production is, on average, 4 pounds a day for each cow.

Farmers who are considering leaving the lights on should provide lighting so cows get about 15 to 20 foot-candles of light for 16 to 18 hours each day. Sanford said cows getting extra light during the winter eat, on average, 4 percent more.

In a tie stall barn, you can use one continuous row of single bulb T-8 fluorescent lamps or two bulb T-8 fluorescent lamps every 8 feet in water resistant fixtures on the ceiling over the cows' heads. In a freestall barn, Pulse Start metal halide or high pressure sodium lamps are recommended but one should consult a lighting contractor about proper placement.

"It is very important to turn the lights on and off at the same time each day," Sanford said. "It's best to use an automatic timer." Sanford also reminds that "It is a biological function and you will not be able to shortcut anything, it's pretty much all or nothing."

According to Sam Zimmermann, Extension's Northern WI Dairy Educator, the payback can be less than 1 year on some dairies and may be worth checking out on your farm. The beauty of long day lighting is that once it is installed, it becomes no additional work to manage, just a little more feed and more milk into the bulk tank. But, the cows need to have 6-8 hours of continuous darkness for the effects of long day lighting to be seen. This can be a challenge with those that are milking 3x and may require some creativity. Cows also need their dry period to have a rest from long day lighting to take advantage of the effects in their next lactation.

Sanford recommends using high efficiency lamps and said that "Focus on Energy" has grants that could help farmers pay for them. Information is available at 1-800-762-7077 or go to <http://www.focusonenergy.com>. For more information on long day lighting, contact Sam Zimmermann at UWEX at (715) 261-1250. There is also good background information on long day lighting and decision making tools available on the web at [http://www.uwex.edu/energy/dairy\\_LD.html](http://www.uwex.edu/energy/dairy_LD.html).