

# Ag Link

March—April 2009

A newsletter of:



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### March 11—15th Annual Winter Grazing Conference

The Heart of Wisconsin 15th annual Winter Grazing Conference will be held Wednesday, March 11, 9:45am-4 pm at the Stoney Creek Inn, Mosinee. This event is sponsored by the Central Wisconsin River Graziers' Network and the Portage/Wood/Waupaca Grazing Network. (see article)

### March 17 — Private Pesticide Applicator Training

You must be certified to legally purchase, transport, mix and load and apply "restricted use" pesticides. Private Pesticide Applicator Training is being offered from 9 am - 3:00 pm Marathon County UWEX—Wausau. Marathon County UWEX Agents will provide the training. WI Dept. of Ag issues the certification which is valid for five years. You can be certified by attending a formal class or by self-study (and then passing the exam). Call the UW-Extension office to schedule a self-study exam. Minimum Evaluation Scores for Certification: Class Session - 50%; Self-study - 70% For further information, contact Marathon County UWEX at 715-261-1231.

### March 17—June Dairy Breakfast Committee Meeting

Beginning at 9:30 am at NTC. Contact Melissa Klein at 715-803-1671 for more information.

### March 17-18 — PDPW Annual Business Conference

Exhibition Hall at the Alliant Energy Center, Madison. The Annual Business Conference is industry's premier educational event and PDPW's hallmark conference, featuring priceless never-before-seen producer panels and other world-renowned experts. Contact PDPW at 1-800-947-7379 for more information.

### March 24-25 — Midwest Manure Summit

Sponsored by UW-Extension, the 2009 Midwest Manure Summit is a conference for any agriculture producers or agribusiness professionals interested in manure handling and storage. Dealing with manure is a challenge for any farming operation, and it's time to start using new technologies to best utilize and dispose of this waste. Experts from across the world will be with us to address manure handling challenges and alternatives. Conference is held at Lambeau Field, Green Bay. Contact Brown County UWEX at 920-391-4612.

### March 27 & 30 — Crop Production 101:

#### Just the Basics

Clark County UW-Extension is offering this one day session at two different locations to teach you the "basics." What a farm manager needs to know to make a better informed decision for crop inputs. March 27 is at the Abbotsford City Hall and March 30 is in Medford. Everyone will have a chance to experience creating facts for their operations during this two hour workshop. Contact Clark County UWEX at 715-743-5121 for the Abbotsford site or Taylor County UWEX at 715-748-3327 for the Medford site

### March 31 - April 2 — Wisconsin Public Service Farm Show

The Wisconsin Public Service Farm Show has provided an opportunity for the agricultural community to check out the latest farming equipment, machinery, tools and services. The event will be held at the EAA Grounds in Oshkosh.

## Milk Income Loss Contract Program

Marathon County dairy producers are reminded that to participate in the Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) program authorized in the 2008 Farm Bill, new contracts must be signed, according to Diana Pernsteiner, Director of the Marathon County Farm Service Agency (FSA). The initial sign-up period for the program ended Wednesday, January 21, 2009.

"There is an extended sign-up period that we are currently conducting. Producers signing up for the MILC program now will not have the option to select any of the prior months to start their payments. This may not be a problem for producers who have not yet signed up for the MILC program because there is no MILC payment rate for the beginning of fiscal year 2009 which began in October of 2008", explained Pernsteiner.

Pernsteiner explained that there are three major differences between MILC programs of the past and this new program:

The method for determining the payment rate when the Boston Class I milk price falls below \$16.94 per hundred-weight now includes an adjustment made for high feed costs,

The payment rate itself has been increased to 45 percent, up from 34 percent.

The maximum eligible pounds for payment per dairy operation per fiscal year, has increased to 2.985 million.

Any dairy producer who commercially produces milk in the United States is eligible to participate in the program. To receive payment, they must be in conservation compliance with the wetland and highly erodible land provisions of the U.S. farm bill. Applicants are subject to the Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) limitation. If non-farm income exceeds \$500,000, the dairy operation and the dairy producer are not eligible for MILC benefits. Marathon County dairy producers should contact the FSA county office at (715) 848-2330, if they have not yet signed up.

## Use Caution In Spreading Manure



Dairy and livestock producers are urged to avoid spreading manure in coming days in those areas where forecasted rain and snowmelt are expected to increase the risk of runoff. While most farmers carefully manage manure, manure spread on fields can be carried into lakes, rivers and groundwater by rain or melting snow. Farmers can lose the manure as a valuable fertilizer. In fact, a UW research survey released in November, 2008 showed that the N, P, and K content of manure from a typical 100-cow dairy farm was worth more than \$30,000 when compared with commercial fertilizers. Manure can cause water quality problems that can include killing fish and contaminating drinking water wells.

The Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning (CPZ) Department, is a valuable source of manure management information and can help find alternatives if you are running out of storage capacity but want to avoid spreading during high risk conditions.

If manure must be applied, the following steps can reduce the risk of runoff:

- Do not spread manure on fields where their location and slope presents a high risk of manure running off. Contact the Marathon County CPZ, certified agronomist or manure hauler to help find alternatives or to identify fields with the lowest risk of runoff.
- Monitor weather forecasts and avoid spreading if rain or snowmelt conditions are predicted.
- Apply manure on fields with little or no snow cover if possible. Contact with soil reduces the risk of runoff as does incorporation into the soil if conditions allow.
- Avoid fields that are near drinking water wells or that have sinkholes or exposed bedrock to reduce the risk of groundwater contamination.

Even if these precautions are followed, runoff events may still occur in certain weather conditions. A state-approved Nutrient Management Plan can be developed for your farm to improve crop utilization of manure nutrients, and reduce adverse environmental affects. Contact your local agronomist, or to develop your own plan, contact Kirk Langfoss at Marathon County CPZ (261-6008) or Mike Wildeck at Marathon County UW-Extension (261-1239) for information about upcoming classes.



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## DSA Update

The Northcentral Technical College (NTC) District Board of Trustees reaffirmed its commitment to agriculture at their February 18 board meeting. The Board unanimously approved the pursuit of a partnership between NTC, Marathon County and Dairyland State Academy for a farm/learning lab in support of the College's two-year Associate Degree in Dairy Science. Members of the Dairyland State Academy Board of Directors were at the meeting in support of the partnership.

The Marathon County Board was to consider whether to fund the Dairyland State Academy at its February 24 meeting. That decision has been postponed as officials wait to determine whether federal economic stimulus money will be available to offset facility costs.



## PPA Welcomes New Members

The Partnership for Progressive Agriculture committee would like to welcome its first members:

- Sly Krautkramer
- Dave Krautkramer
- Keith and Paula Langenhahn
- Brenda Prieve
- Mary Kay Van Der Geest
- Jilayne Radtke
- John Schommer
- Country Fresh Meats
- Country Lane Farm
- Scott and Mia Bayer
- Matthew and Cherie Bayer
- Leonard and Agnes Bayer
- Bob Dinkel
- Tim Buttke
- Lyle Weden
- Bob and Carol Kaldunski
- Joanne Klaus
- Mike Wildeck

Your membership supports the activities of PPA and gives you a discounted rate for seminars the PPA coordinates. If you would like to join the PPA please contact Melissa Klein at 715.803.1671 for an application. An individual membership is \$45 and runs from January 1 to December 31.

## Working Lands Initiative Workshop March 12

Land use is changing in Central Wisconsin. We are witnessing the increase in new single family homes sprouting up in rural areas, to empty barns and farmhouses that dot the landscape. While this has been a subtle and slow change in this part of the state we only have to look at some of the areas in Southern and North Eastern Wisconsin to see the long term impacts of the changing landscape. On March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2009, from 9AM – 3PM, a workshop devoted to providing an overview of some of the trends in land use conversions that are taking place and exploring some of the possible tools to balancing the conservation of our working lands to those other uses with the community's desire for economic development will be held at the Northcentral Technical College Center for Health Science in Wausau. The workshop is a cooperative effort of Marathon and Lincoln Counties, the Wisconsin Institute for Public Policy, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection, UW-Extension and Northcentral Technical College with registrations being handled by the Marathon County Conservation, Planning and Zoning Office. If there are any questions about the workshop please contact the Marathon County CPZ Department at 715-261-6002.

## June Dairy Breakfast

### Host Selected



The host of this year's June Dairy Breakfast is Swiderski Equipment, Inc.—Wausau. Attendees will get to see how an agribusiness is involved in the industry. The PPA committee is in the beginning stages of planning for the event. We are looking for more volunteers to serve on the food, grounds, education/entertainment and parking committees. The Breakfast is not successful without the help of all the volunteers who help plan and help at the event. If you would like to get involved please contact Melissa Klein at 715.803.1671. Our next meeting will be March 17, 9:30 am at NTC.

## Farm Technology Days 2011 --

### Volunteer Opportunities Already Available!

Are you interested in being involved in the planning and coordination of the largest outdoor agriculture show in Wisconsin? Looking for an opportunity to network with other persons interested in agriculture?



Keith Langenhahn, Chair of the 2011 Executive Committee, says "it may seem like a long ways off, but recruiting is well underway for fourteen working committees. There is an Executive Committee member working closely with each of these committees. Committees include;

- **Admissions Committee** — Provide assistance for show attendees with positioning of information booths and tents, set up admission headquarters, collect admission fees.
- **Education Committee** — Coordinates UW-Extension and partner agency theme tents and exhibits in and around tent city (i.e.; Applied Technology Center)
- **Family Living Committee** — Coordinate educational and entertaining programs – including speakers, exhibits, demonstrations and displays, host the Family Living Tent.
- **Field Demonstrations Committee** — Plan field harvest demonstrations, coordinate needs for seed and fertilizer to establish crops (for Tent City, parking, and fieldwork demonstrations), work cooperatively with host farmer, coordinate transportation for show attendees to and from demonstration area.
- **Food Committee** — Select groups to provide food and beverage at the show, select menus, operate and coordinate six food tents and the Taste of Marathon County Tent.
- **Grounds Committee** — Provide services (fencing, culverts, unloading ramps, forklifts), coordinate garbage and refuse collection, provide shavings for the grounds, provide drinking water and toilet facilities.
- **Hospitality Committee** — Distribute invitations and information to exhibitors, staff information booths, provide conveyances for handicapped accessibility at the show. Solicit cash and in-kind donations from sponsors.
- **Parking Committee** — Provide volunteer force for directing traffic flow, parking and assistance with assigning an area for handicap, VIP and media parking. Committee is responsible for transporting attendees to and from Tent City via trams if needed.
- **Publicity & Promotions Committee** — Develop and distribute promotional materials and media kits, write news releases, host media Press Day six weeks prior to the show, develop logo, develop web site.
- **Sign Committee** — Install and take down highway and tent city signs, provide storage space and maintenance of signs as needed.
- **Tent City Committee** — Assist in layout of streets, avenues, food and educational tents. Supervision of Tent City, work with exhibitors during setup and removal, work with sign committee, assist with transportation needs during the show, coordinate two-way radio system.
- **Traffic Committee** — Establish traffic pattern for incoming and outgoing visitors, provide security for the grounds, set up a command post, work cooperatively with local police, fire and EMS personnel.
- **Utilities Committee** — Work cooperatively with various utility companies (power, telephone), coordinate wiring according to Tent City layout.
- **Youth Committee** — Work with FFA and 4-H members/leaders in setting up a soil judging program, host the Youth Tent, conduct youth educational programs in the Youth Tent at the Marathon County show.

To volunteer, please contact Mike Wildeck, Marathon County UW-Extension at 261-1239. You can also find more information on the web at <http://marathon.uwex.edu>.

## 2009 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program Sign-up Deadline Approaching

County Executive Director for the Marathon County Farm Service Agency (FSA) director, Diana Pernsteiner, would like to remind producers planning to enroll a farm in the 2009 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) that sign up ends **very early this year. The deadline is June 1, 2009.**

The Farm Service Agency has already begun the 2009 sign-up. "We have a full schedule of appointments through March", said Pernsteiner. "Currently, if a producer does not have an appointment scheduled, we do not know that they have a farm with over 10 acres of bases that could be enrolled for 2009", she added. There is no late sign-up period, as in prior years, giving producers a second chance for enrolling for 2009. June 1, 2009 is the deadline to enroll a farm in the 2009 Direct & Counter-cyclical Program.

The direct payment is a guaranteed payment for past crop history, indicated by the bases and yields on the farm, while counter-cyclical payments vary depending on market prices, and are earned only when the effective price for a commodity is below its target price. ACRE is a new program coming out of the new Farm Bill. Unfortunately, ACRE is not ready to offer producers at this time so we are moving forward with the 2009 DCP sign-up.

## 15<sup>th</sup> Annual Winter Grazing Conference

The Heart of Wisconsin 15th annual Winter Grazing Conference will be held Wednesday, March 11, 9:45am-4 pm at the Stoney Creek Inn, Mosinee. This event is sponsored by the Central Wisconsin River Graziers' Network and the Portage/Wood/Waupaca Grazing Network.

Morning and afternoon Breakout sessions include:

- Progressive Investment Strategies for Parlors presented by Sam Zimmermann and Alex Crockford
- Taking Stock of your Pastures presented by Jim Gerrish
- Getting Started Successfully in Managed Grazing Today presented by Teal Fyksen and Adam Abel
- Building a Sustainable Farm Arrangement presented by Tom Cadwallader
- Getting the Most out of your Pastures—Part 1 presented by Jim Gerrish
- Getting the Most out of your Pastures—Part 2 presented by Jim Gerrish

A bonus session from 6-8 pm will be held discussing Producing Pasture Finished Beef presented by Jim Gerrish. The session will talk about making a profit with this operation and what really matters in grazing management. Information on Wisconsin Grass-Fed Beef Cooperatives will also be available.

Pre-registration is highly recommended. Cost of the conference is \$10 per person in advance and includes lunch, handouts and speaker costs. Walk-in registration is \$15 per person. Please contact Paul Daigle at 715-261-6006 for more information.



Producers who would like to apply for the 2009 DCP or need additional information, should contact the Marathon County