

# Ties to the Land Newsletter

October – December 2010



**Racine/Kenosha/Milwaukee  
FSA Office**  
1012 Vine St.  
Union Grove, WI 53182  
262-878-3353

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## CONSERVATION PLANNING

Now that the snow has started to fly it is time to be planning for next year. Do you have any fields that you think might need conservation practices such as waterways or buffers or maybe just needs some tile repairs? Please contact the office now so we can begin the planning process before it is too late to get a project in before spring planting.

The Continuous Conservation Reserve Program is a private lands environmental improvement program that allows participants the opportunity to enroll acreages in conservation practices that will reduce soil erosion, improve water and soil quality and provide wildlife habitat and food sources.

Continuous CRP program participation is voluntary. Eligible landowners enter into contracts that range from 10 to 15 years in length. In return, the landowners will receive annual rental and maintenance payments, incentive payments for certain activities, and cost share for establishment.

For more information on Continuous CRP enrollments or local Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) availability, please contact Jeanette at the FSA office.

## FIRST LENDER OF OPPORTUNITY

Are you considering a career in production agriculture? Are you considering expanding your existing operation or looking at options to diversify your farm income? FSA provides lending opportunities for farmers to enter production agriculture, to finance specialized operations, and to maintain a farming operation following economic and weather related disasters. FSA has a unique blend of programs offering a variety of financing options, attractive interest rates, and a consultative lending relationship. Our loan officers provide fresh perspectives, alternatives, and creative ways of growing your business. We can coordinate resources and tailor a financial solution that works for unique lending situations. FSA specializes in:

- Loans for beginning farmers, disaster recovery, operational financing, and farm ownership
- Farm planning and counseling
- Supervised credit and assistance throughout the life of your loan
- Sustained financial planning services
- Guaranteed loan products
- Lending for niche markets and alternative crops

Call 262-878-3353 today to set up an appointment with our loan staff.

## CCC-927 OR CCC-928 MUST BE SENT TO IRS

Producers who participated in 2009, 2010, or 2011 programs subject to adjusted gross income limitations (AGI) must certify compliance with AGI rules. The AGI verification process for 2009-2011 payment eligibility requires all program participants to provide written consent to IRS for the disclosure of certain information to FSA.

On October 6, 2010, a letter was mailed to producers who have not submitted either a CCC-927 "Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information-Individual Form" or a CCC-928: "Consent to Disclosure of Tax Information-Legal Entity" as applicable for 2009 and/or 2010

Individuals and legal entities, including members of legal entities, that certified to average AGI compliance for 2009 and/or 2010 payment eligibility must submit a completed CCC-927 or CCC-928 to IRS regardless of whether they received program benefits directly or as a member of a joint operation or entity. These forms must be submitted to IRS in order to avoid a demand for refund of program payments and benefits received.

This requirement is also in affect for 2011. Forms are available to meet this program requirement for this program year. Producers may check both 2010 and 2011 as they file new forms or as they return forms for the reconciliation process.

## 2011 DCP SIGNUP

Enrollment for the 2011 Direct and Counter-cyclical Program (DCP) has begun and will continue through June 1, 2011. Producers should visit our office to complete their 2011 DCP contract or they can make use of the eDCP automated website to sign up, if they have access. Our office began making advance direct payments as early as December 1, 2010. These payments are issued based on the month designated by the producer and after the contract has been approved with all required signatures and forms filed.

## The ACRE Option

The Average Crop Revenue Election Program (ACRE) provides a safety net based on state revenue losses and acts in place of the price-based safety net of counter-cyclical payments under DCP. A farm's payment is based on a revenue guarantee calculated using a 5-year average state yield and the most recent 2-year national price for each eligible commodity.

An ACRE payment is issued when both the state and the farm have triggered a revenue loss. In exchange for participating in ACRE, a farm's direct payment is reduced by 20 percent, and marketing assistance loan rates are reduced by 30 percent.

The decision to enroll in the ACRE Program is irrevocable. The owner of the farm and all producers on the farm must agree to enroll in ACRE. Once approved, the farm shall be enrolled in ACRE through the 2012 crop year. Annually, ACRE participants must also

initiate an annual contract. The deadline to sign this contract is June 1, 2011.

### **INSURANCE COVERAGE NEEDED FOR DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS**

FSA has a number of disaster assistance programs which include:

- Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP)
- Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP)
- Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP)
- Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments (SURE) Program
- Tree Assistance Program (TAP)

To be eligible for these programs, producers must purchase at least Catastrophic Risk Protection or CAT coverage for all insurable crops, as well as coverage for non-insurable crops to be eligible for SURE, TAP, and ELAP.

Farm-Raised Fish means all fish being produced for sale by an eligible producer. In the case of honey, the term "farm" means all bees and beehives in all counties that are intended to be harvested for a honey crop by the eligible producer.

Producers who meet the definition of Socially Disadvantaged, Limited Resource Producer, or Beginning Farmer or Rancher, do not have to meet this risk management purchase requirement.

#### **Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs**

The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) provides assistance to eligible livestock owners and contract growers for eligible livestock deaths as a result of an eligible weather event such as floods, blizzards, and extreme heat or cold. To be eligible for LIP, a notice of loss must be filed no later than 30 days after the loss of livestock from an eligible weather event.

The Livestock Feed Program (LFP) provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that suffered grazing losses from a qualifying drought. This program becomes available after it is determined the

County has a qualifying drought based on the U.S. Drought Monitor severity rating. An application must be filed no later than 30 days after the end of the year of the grazing loss.

The Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP) provides assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honey bees, and farm-raised fish that have losses because of disease, adverse weather, or other conditions determined by the Secretary of Agriculture. Producers that suffer an eligible loss must file a notice of loss within 30 days after the loss.

Producers should be aware there are no late filed provisions for any of the Livestock Disaster Assistance Programs. If you have any questions regarding these programs, please feel free to contact Angie at the FSA Office.

<b>Farm Operating-Direct</b>	2.0%
<b>Farm Ownership-Direct</b>	4.125%
<b>Farm Own-Direct, Joint Financing</b>	5.00%
<b>Farm Own-Downpymt</b>	1.50%
<b>Conservation Loan</b>	4.125
<b>Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL)- 7 yrs</b>	2.00%
<b>FSFL- 10 years</b>	2.750%
<b>FSFL-12 years</b>	3.00%
<b>9 month Commodity Loans</b>	1.250%

#### **UNAUTHORIZED DISPOSITION OF LOANED GRAIN**

If loan grain has been disposed of through feeding, selling or any other form of disposal without prior written authorization from the county office staff, it is considered unauthorized disposition. The financial penalties for unauthorized dispositions are severe and a producers name will be placed on a loan violation list for a two-year period. **Always call before you haul any grain under loan!**



## SAVE ENERGY- INCREASE YOUR PROFITS

Let Focus on Energy, Wisconsin's statewide program for energy efficiency and renewable energy, show you how their free services and cash incentives can help you:

- Save money and reduce operating costs
- Implement energy-efficiency and renewable energy projects
- Increase productivity and profits

Focus on Energy is your source for objective, third-party information and advice about practical ways to save. Their expertise extends to a variety of agricultural enterprises including:

- Dairy and livestock farms
- Commercial agribusiness
- Grain facilities
- Greenhouses
- Irrigation systems

## HOW FOCUS ON ENERGY CAN HELP

They offer free support and services to help you identify and install cost-effective, energy-efficient and renewable energy upgrades. Their services include:

- Expert assistance and energy assessments to identify energy-saving opportunities
- Technical expertise to help you select and implement cost-effective projects and practices
- Financial incentives to help cover the costs of energy-saving equipment upgrades
- Assistance with new construction design
- A variety of information, education, and training opportunities

## NO-COST ENERGY ASSESSMENTS

One of the best ways to identify energy-saving opportunities is to schedule a free, comprehensive energy assessment. An experienced Energy Advisor will talk to you about your farm or agribusiness' operation, examine its systems and equipment, and evaluate energy

savings and find the best ways to trim costs. Following the assessment, you'll receive a report of the findings, including a list of recommendations and a summary of the Focus financial incentives available to you.

## FINANCIAL INCENTIVES

Focus on Energy offers financial incentives for standard and custom efficiency projects as well as for renewable energy systems.

**Standard Efficiency Incentives** These are one-for-one equipment upgrades that are easily obtained by completing and submitting an incentive application form. Some of the standard incentive measures include: lighting, HVAC, scroll compressors, heat recovery tanks, milk pre-coolers, and greenhouse glazing.

**Custom** Do you have a project that doesn't qualify for the standard incentives? Contact Focus on Energy today to find out if you're eligible for a custom incentive. Custom incentives are for more complex energy saving projects and are based on the estimated energy savings. To qualify for custom incentives your project(s) must meet specific requirements, you must work with a Focus Energy Advisor, and you must have a signed grant agreement prior to starting your project.

**Renewable Energy Technologies** Incentives are available for solar electric, solar hot-water, wind electric, biomass, and biogas systems. They recommend that you conduct a site assessment and implement energy efficiency upgrades prior to installing a renewable technology. Those who invest in efficiency projects first may qualify for enhanced incentives. For more information about incentives and corresponding applications, call (800)762-7077 or visit [focusonenergy.com/financialincentives](http://focusonenergy.com/financialincentives).

## START SAVING TODAY

Find out why energy efficiency and renewable energy may be a smart investment for your farm or agribusiness. To learn more, contact Focus on Energy today at (800) 762-7077 or visit [focusonenergy.com/agribusiness](http://focusonenergy.com/agribusiness).

Reprinted Focus on Energy Fact Sheet © 2010 Wisconsin Focus on Energy BP-1149-0610

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**Upland Wildlife Habitat: Creating, maintaining or  
improving food and cover for upland wildlife.**

Planting trees, shrubs, warm season grasses and other vegetation that provide food and cover will attract wildlife to an area. The perennial ground cover reduces soil erosion, filters runoff and increases infiltration. Carefully planned wildlife habitat can add value and beauty to a farm.

## Planning

- Consider the type of wildlife you want to attract and choose cover and habitat for those species. NRCS field staff and DNR wildlife specialists can help you plan the habitat.
- Consider whether habitat on your land can complement other types of habitat in your area.
- Are there any threatened or endangered species you could help protect?
- Is a particular piece of land better suited to upland habitat than cropland?
- Include bird houses and feeding stations in the habitat.
- Exclude livestock from the area.
- What was your land before it was farmed? If it was grassland or prairie, consider planting it back to prairie.

## Maintenance

- Use weed management to maintain desirable plant species.
- Prescribed burning may be necessary to regenerate growth and control undesirable species.
- Replant vegetation if the habitat is damaged by disease or poor weather.



After 40.5 years of federal service Jerry Hebard retired at the end of December, 2010. Since 1982 he has served as District Conservationist in the Kenosha and Racine and now also the Milwaukee area.

His federal service began in the United States Air Force in February, 1967 as a Missile Crew Chief until February, 1971. After returning to college, he graduated 1974 with a Soil Science and Resource Management major to begin his career with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). He had the opportunity to work in Marathon, Dane, and Rusk counties before settling into serving the producers in the southeast area.

He and his wife Virginia plan to stay in the Kenosha area after retirement to continue to work on his “honey do” list.

Jerry will miss the field work of applying conservation on the land and the wonderful producers, but will not miss the amount of paper work that went with the job!



**Racine County Land Conservation**  
**14200 Washington Ave.**  
**Sturtevant, WI 53177**  
**262-886-8479**

<http://www.racineco.com/landconv/>

Staff Contributions by:  
Chad Sampson, Jon Grove, & Krystal Freimark



**The deadline for placing orders  
for the 2011 Racine County  
Tree & Shrub Sale is ...**

**FEBRUARY 25, 2011**

In October, order forms were sent out in the fall issue of the Ties to the Land newsletter and to all 2010 customers. If you did not receive a form and you would like one 1) contact the Land Conservation Department and we will mail / fax / email you a copy or 2) download the order form (pdf) from the Land Conservation website. See heading above for contact and website information.

Several new species have been added to this year's sale including: Ninebark, Red Osier Dogwood, Serviceberry, and American Plum. Besides evergreens, shrubs, and hardwoods the sale also includes several different sizes of prairie and wildflower seed. Fertilizer and water gel packets have also been included in the sale for your convenience.

All items should arrive at the Racine County Fairgrounds in Union Grove by mid-April.

Two tree planters are available for rental, starting at \$30 per planter. Contact us today to reserve one.



**INVEST IN AGRICULTURE: ESTABLISH AN  
AGRICULTURAL ENTERPRISE AREA (AEA)**  
Contact the Land Conservation Office if you are  
interested in participating.

### **Agricultural Enterprise Areas**

An "Agricultural Enterprise Area" (AEA) is a contiguous land area, devoted primarily to agricultural use, which the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) designates through administrative rule in response to a local petition. Under state law, DATCP has the authority through administrative rule to designate up to 1,000,000 acres as AEAs. AEAs should be filed jointly by at least 5 eligible farmers and must be at least 1,000 acres in size. There are currently 12 AEAs located within the State. Farmers within designated AEAs will be eligible to enter into *voluntary* farmland preservation agreements to collect the farmland preservation tax credits. DATCP is now accepting petitions requesting designation of AEA; petitions must be submitted by **February 18, 2011**.

See <http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/workinglands/aea.jsp>  
for submittal forms and specific details.

### **Farmland Preservation Agreements**

Eligible farmers located in a designated AEA may enter into voluntary farmland preservation agreements with the state in order to claim the farmland preservation tax credits. By entering into this agreement, a farmer agrees to keep the land in an agricultural use for the period of time specified in the agreement; must be for at least 15 years. Any farmer covered by an agreement who wishes to be released from the terms of the agreement must pay a conversion fee.

See <http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/workinglands/fpa.jsp>  
for submittal forms and specific details.

### **Tax credit amounts are:**

- \$5.00 for farmers with a farmland preservation agreement signed after July 1, 2009 and located in an agricultural enterprise area
- \$7.50 for farmers in an area zoned for farmland preservation
- \$10.00 for farmers in an area zoned and certified for farmland preservation and in an agricultural enterprise area, with a farmland preservation agreement signed after July 1, 2009

**Kenosha County**  
PO Box 550  
Bristol, WI 53104  
262-857-1945

**Racine County**  
14200 Washington Avenue  
Sturtevant, WI 53177  
262-886-8460

Article Submitted by: Rose Skora  
rose.skora@ces.uwex.edu

## Upcoming Events

**Annie's Project:** Annie's Project, which focuses on farm women, will be offered this winter with a focus on financial information.

This program will provide information on topics such as:

- Financial planning
- Estate Planning
- Taxes
- Basic Record Keeping

The program will be held on three Fridays this winter. The dates are February 11, 18 and March 4th, from 9:00 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. The classes will meet at the Walworth County Extension Office in the Walworth County Courthouse, 100 Walworth St., Elkhorn, Wisconsin. Please contact Rose Skora for more information or to request a brochure.

*Annie's Project* is partially funded by the North Center Region Risk Management Education Center, the UW Center for Dairy Profitability, UW Agricultural Innovation Center and UW Cooperative Extension and the USDA Farm Service Agency.



**Farmers' Markets Workshop:** If you are a farmer selling at local farmers' markets or are a market manager interested in helping your vendors and farmers' market to be successful, the **Farmers' Market Workshop** scheduled for Saturday, February 5 is just for you.

The **Farmers' Market Workshop** will provide farmers' market vendors and managers with a variety of information related to safety and risk on the farm and at the farmers market. The day will begin with a discussion entitled "Are You Legal" presented by Phil Harris, UW Extension Farm Law Specialist. John Schuske with UW Extension will follow with "Responding to Emergencies on the Farm."

After a lunch sourced with local ingredients, there will be 2 breakout sessions to choose from. "Preventing Foodborne Outbreaks Using Good Agricultural Practices" is designed for vegetable and fruit producers and will be presented by John Schuske. Meat producers will have the opportunity to attend "Overview of the Meat Industry: Impacts of Food Safety on Direct Marketers" by Jeff Sindelar, UW Extension's Meat Specialist.

The event will take place at the Oconomowoc Lake Club in Oconomowoc, Wisconsin. Registration starts at 8:30 a.m., and the program will run from 9am until 3pm. Cost is \$25/person or \$40 for two people from the same farm or market. There will be a late fee for individuals registering after January 31<sup>st</sup>.

**2011 Tractor Safety:** Racine, Kenosha and Walworth Counties will be collaborating to provide tractor safety education for youth ages 12-16. The course will be a total of 24 hours in length. This course is required by Wisconsin for any youth between the ages of 12 and 16 that will be driving farm machinery on public roads.

The tractor safety course will be held at Burlington High School. Classes will be held Monday through Friday, June 20th – June 24th from 8am – Noon. Testing will be held on Monday June 27th from 8am to Noon. Youth are required to attend all sessions.

This course includes hands-on driving exercises, various hands-on safety demonstrations including first aid, fire safety and pesticide safety. Students will also be required to do homework assignments including reading and writing assignment, photo assignments and more. The course will cost \$50.

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For more information on any of these programs, contact Rose Skora at the phone/email listed above.



**DIRECTORY OF AGENCIES**

**Kenosha/Milwaukee/Racine Farm Service Agency (FSA)**

1012 Vine Street, Union Grove, WI 53182 1330  
Phone: 262-878-3353, Ext 2 Fax: 262-878-3283

**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)**

1012 Vine Street, Union Grove, WI 53182 1330  
Phone: 262-878-1243, Ext 3 Fax: 262-878-3283

**Racine County Land Conservation Division**

14200 Washington Avenue, Sturtevant, WI 53177  
Phone: 262-886-8479, Fax: 262-886-8488

**Kenosha County Land & Water Conservation**

19600 75<sup>th</sup> St, PO Box 520, Bristol, WI 53104  
Phone: 262-857-1895, Fax: 262-857-6508

**Kenosha County UW-Extension**

19600 75<sup>th</sup> St, PO Box 550, Bristol, WI 53104  
Phone: 262-857-1945, Fax: 262-857-1998

**Racine County UW-Extension**

14200 Washington Avenue, Sturtevant, WI 53177  
Phone: 262-886-8460, Fax: 262-886-8489



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To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 1400 Independence Ave. SW, Washington, D.C. 20250-9410 or call (202) 720-5964 (voice and TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

**Ties to the Land Newsletter**

**Change Service Requested**

**Farm Service Agency  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Racine County Land Conservation  
Kenosha County Land and Water Conservation  
UW-Cooperative Extension**

**Your Resource Partners:**

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US Department of Agriculture  
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