

# Columbia County Ag Reporter



September/October 2017

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Agricultural newsletter for Columbia County landowners and residents

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## Ag Reporter Calendar of Events

September	4	Labor Day (office closed)
	8-10	WI Sheep & Wool Festival, Jefferson County Fairgrounds
	16	WI Hickory Outdoor Educational Workshop, Columbus
	17-23	National Farm Safety Week
	22-24	World Beef Expo—WI State Fairgrounds, Milwaukee
October	2	Fall Conservation Tour, Portage 1pm
	3-7	World Dairy Expo, Alliant Energy Center

The Columbia County **Ag Calendar and Deadlines'** webpage is located at <http://columbia.uwex.edu/ag-calendar-and-deadlines/>.

## WI Corn Growers Yield Contest



Changes are being made to this contest for 2017 and will be shared as soon as they are available. Contact George Koepp at [george.koepp@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:george.koepp@ces.uwex.edu) for more info.

## Harvest Time Safety!

As we move to the middle of September, we start to see an increase in farm activities again. We see more farm trucks, tractors, wagons and machinery on the road and in the fields. Harvesting corn silage, corn grain, and soybeans also means an increase in manure spreading, winter wheat and cover crop planting, and movement of large equipment on the roads. Along with these activities should come some natural thoughts of safety both in the field and on the road.

Number one, be responsible for your own wellbeing. Eat well, rest well, drink plenty of water, and get out of the cab to walk around your equipment to inspect it for safety issues.

Number two, be responsible for the safety of others. Watch out for the other guy, especially while on the road. Make sure all lights are functioning. Working, hazard, and flashing lights must be operational so others see you. Make sure co-workers and employees get plenty of rest, water, and nutrition so they are alert and attentive while on the job!

Please be safe and have a great harvest season!

George

## WI Soybean Yield Contest

Entries are due by December 15, 2017

New Changes Made to Wisconsin Soybean Yield Contest

Wisconsin Ag Connection - 08/11/2017



The Wisconsin Soybean Marketing Board has announced details of its eighth annual Soybean Yield Contest. The program aims to encourage the development of new and innovative management practices and to show the importance of using sound cultural practices in Wisconsin soybean production.

University of Wisconsin-Extension Soybean Specialist Dr. Shawn Conley says the deadline for growers to complete their entry forms has been changed this year. For the first time, the due date has been extended to December 15 or two weeks post field harvest, whichever comes first. The entry fee has also been reduced to \$25 per entry.

Two winners from each of the four geographical divisions in the state will receive awards. The contest's top entries in each division will earn a \$1,000 cash prize at next year's Wisconsin Corn/Soy Expo, with second-place receiving \$500. Winners will be selected for having the highest soybean yield based on bushels per acre at 13-percent moisture.

Also, the first grower in the state who achieves 100 bu/a or more in the contest will be awarded a \$2,500 check.

The competition is sponsored by the WSMB, Wisconsin Soybean Association, University of Wisconsin-Extension and UW College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

For entry information and additional details about the contest, call 608-262-7975 or visit [www.coolbean.info](http://www.coolbean.info).

Contact George Koepp for a copy of the rules or find them on the [www.coolbean.info](http://www.coolbean.info) website at [http://www.coolbean.info/soybean\\_research/soybean\\_yield\\_contest.php](http://www.coolbean.info/soybean_research/soybean_yield_contest.php)

## National Farm Safety and Health Week—Putting Farm Safety Into Practice



National Farm Safety and Health Week, September 17-23, 2017, recognizes the importance of protecting agriculture's most precious resource—its people. Putting Farm Safety Into Practice is the theme of the 74th Annual event that promotes safe and healthy practices on farms.

Farming ranks as the most dangerous industry in the U.S. with a yearly death rate of 20.4 farm work related deaths for every 100,000 workers – six times higher than the combined average for all U.S. workers, according to the National Safety Council. The most recent farm fatality count in Wisconsin, released in late 2016 by the Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene, showed 26 farmers, employees, and/or family members died in 2015 from farm work-related causes.

Nationally, the CDC's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health reports that 100 agriculture workers experience a lost-time injury each day. A telephone-based survey of nearly 4,000 farm households in the Midwest several years ago showed that an injury occurs on almost one in five Wisconsin farms each year; more than 80 percent of these require medical care.

Over the past 30 years, efforts by the agriculture industry, media, and groups like Extension, non-profits and governmental agencies have contributed to a decline in the number of fatalities; in 1987, the fatality rate was 53 per 100,000.

The University of Wisconsin Center for Agricultural Safety and Health works with local educators, farmers, health professionals, and key partners in the public and private sectors to provide education, technical consultation, and guidance to community and industry leaders who share the goal of reducing the burden of agricultural injury and disease for Wisconsin.

"We're fortunate here in Wisconsin to have many individuals involved in a variety of safety and health programs," said Cheryl Skjolaas, University of Wisconsin-Extension agricultural safety specialist at UW-Madison.

Some recent agricultural safety and health trainings have included:

- Manure gas safety, monitoring, and management

- Managing safety, health, and decision-making impacts associated with farm stress
- Caring for farm families—the health professionals’ role in farm safety and health
- Youth tractor and machinery safety certification

***“There is so much to do if we want to make future progress to make farms safer and more healthful places to work,” said John Shutske, Director of the UW Center for Agricultural Safety and Health and agricultural engineering specialist. “These efforts require all who provide services, technical information and products to farmers to work together to make a difference.”***

**Five things that can make a difference still this fall season when agricultural work is at its peak:**

1. Learn about important safety and health issues that Wisconsin farmers and farm workers face. Resources include the Wisconsin Agricultural Health and Safety website <http://fyi.uwex.edu/agsafety/> and the national “eXtension” Ag Safety and Health resource center [http://articles.extension.org/farm\\_safety\\_and\\_health](http://articles.extension.org/farm_safety_and_health)
2. Slow down and watch carefully on roadways for slow moving farm machines and implements of husbandry. If you are moving farm equipment on the roadways, make sure all lighting and marking are up to current state law requirements and are clearly visible and functional. Current requirements can be found at <http://fyi.uwex.edu/agsafety/2017/03/10/2986/>
3. Spend a few dollars to invest in the appropriate array of personal protective equipment (PPE) including safety glasses, hearing protection and gloves. The right safety gear is important to every size of farm as well as people with small parcels of land and homeowners doing routine yard work.



4. Make sure all workers are fully qualified and provided with constantly updated training and demonstration to do the job safely. Even experienced workers need adequate supervision and oversight. Since youth are at especially high risk for farm injury, know the laws and regulations for younger workers and check out these guidelines for children and teens working on farms <https://cultivatesafety.org/work/>
5. To get more involved or to organize your community to address these issues – there are several places where you might start. Check with your local Cooperative Extension office and/or visit your local clinic, hospital or other healthcare center and learn about the community outreach events that they offer.

As Shutske reminds those attending educational events, “Partnerships are key – credible agriculture experts working with local health professionals and other farmers who are leaders in the community are a powerful and much-needed combination.”

Contact: John Shutske, 608-890-2949; [john.shutske@wisc.edu](mailto:john.shutske@wisc.edu)

## **Many Details but Only Two Main Point on Heifer Raising**

There is no one way to raise a dairy replacement. Increasingly I see a wide range of methods used successfully to raise replacements. Goals should be to raise sound animals that will be useful for your herd and to do so economically. Calves can be housed in hutches, individual pen barns, or group fed. Older heifers can be fed hay and grain, TMR, or grazed. They can utilize free stalls or group pens; they can be in a barn, have an outside manger, or be in a field with a wind break. They can be limit-fed high energy diets or full-feed lower energy diets. No matter what the method, we should strive to have them clean and dry with fresh air without drafts.

## How to raise a useful animal?

To start with, there are many great possibilities for outstanding genetics available at reasonable cost. Our dairy cattle breeds are improving in genetic merit at an increasing rate. It makes no difference if you choose to raise purebreds or cross-breeds. A great place to start is to select from the highest Net Merit (NM\$) bulls that are available in whatever breed is used. You can refine the ranking by selecting for Cheese Merit or Grazing Merit, but in all instances, these index rankings place value on high production of solids from fertile and healthy animals with sound functional type. With genomics, there is much more known about young sires today so consider either proven or genomic tested bulls. Sometimes the price difference between these groups is not very great, but the highest rankings are usually in the young sires.

There is plentiful evidence that we should not cut corners on young calves. They need colostrum within minutes to very few hours after birth. The colostrum should be evaluated to be high in immunoglobulins. Many producers now are feeding 4 quarts at the initial feeding. There is new evidence to support some benefit to feed colostrum or transitional milk for several days. After that, pasteurized whole milk or high-nutrient milk replacer will supply more for good early growth



than traditional milk replacers. Early availability of calf starter and fresh water are important. Wean after two pounds of starter intake have occurred for several days and then continue with starter and transition to a high quality grower. The transition after weaning is a critical time as calves socialize and diets change. While some access to forage in young calves is fine, don't rely too much on fermented feeds or high forage TMR's on calves under 6 months of age. A good method is to feed a base line of 6-10 pounds of grain mix depending on breed, and as the heifers grow, let their additional intake to be made up of hay. After six months we can't forget the heifers, but if we have done all these things right, it will get easier to manage them. Avoid high energy, low protein diets such as high corn silage diets. Test your feeds, offer a 12-15% protein diet that will support 1.8 ADG and watch the heifers to see if they are getting heavy or are too thin.



## How to raise heifers economically?

Due to mortality of calves, low fertility in the herd, or high herd turn over, many producers have felt they could never have too many heifers. Today more and more producers admit there are more heifers than necessary out behind the barn. One of the best ways to trim cost is to stop raising excess heifers.

The same genomic test that identifies superior AI sires can be used in the herd to determine the genetic merit of your heifers. You can use the test to identify your best, or you can use it to identify the worst. If you get rid of the low end early, suddenly facilities that weren't adequate now are adequate. Heifers that are not crowded are easier to keep clean; they will be more uniform in weight with better access to the bunk. Your feed supplies will be more adequate, you will purchase less feed. There will be less labor for the care of those heifers.

Make sure your heifers are growing fast enough. On pasture or confinement systems we should be able to produce heifers that calve between a year and ten months to two years of age. A gain of 1.7 to 1.8 pounds per day for Holsteins is all that is needed to make a heifer that is big enough for this. If you have been calving at 2 years 3 months, reducing to an even two years calving age will reduce the number of big heifers that are eating a lot. You also will have only 90% of the heifers as with the slower program.

If you are limited on facilities, feed, land, or labor, perhaps you should have your heifers custom raised. This is yet another option for raising your replacements. Even then you should pay attention to how things are going. After all they are your heifers, and someday they will be your herd.

*Matt Lippert—Agriculture Agent, Wood County*

## Land & Water Conservation Department Updates & Program Information



By Kurt Calkins, Director of Columbia County Land & Water

### 2017 Fall Conservation Tour:

The Columbia County Land & Water Conservation Department will host its annual Fall Conservation Tour Monday October 2, 2017. We will depart the Columbia County Annex building around 1:00 pm and return no later than 4:30 pm. It's a great chance to see some of the diverse local conservation work that landowners work on each year in Columbia County, many utilizing the cost-share and technical assistance made available to landowners throughout the year. We usually highlight 2-4 sites during this tour, varying from barnyard sites to lake/stream projects. If you have an interest in coming along feel free to give us a call.

**Columbia County LWCD Awarded Nutrient Management Farmer Education Grant Award:**

The Columbia County LWCD is happy to announce that it has been awarded another grant from DATCP to continue our Nutrient Management Planning efforts in Columbia County. This grant is an annual grant of \$13,000. We used this grant successfully in past years to help cover some of the costs associated with the development of a 590 Nutrient Management Plan through our winter landowner developed training class. We will again be providing a stipend to offset soil testing and plan development. We hope to assist up to 20 landowners each year through this program. If you are interested in signing up for the winter class to learn how to develop a Nutrient Management Plan for your land, please feel free to contact Harold McElroy LWRM Specialist at (608) 742-9670 to discuss this program or others cost share assistance we may have. Fall is the perfect time to have soil samples taken in preparation of plan development over the winter. Harold can explain to the protocol for soil testing that is necessary to develop a 590 NMP Plan.

We will offer a 1 day refresher class for past class participants and a 3 day workshop for landowners who will be developing plans for the first time. This is a perfect opportunity for landowners and producers to develop plans that are necessary to continue or gain access to participation in the Farmland Preservation Program, and the tax credits it offers. Wisconsin's agricultural runoff management regulations require 590 NMP for all agricultural lands that receive all sources of fertilizer applications. In addition we may also have cost sharing assistance available to offset the cost of having a NMP plan developed. Classes will take place in January and February.

Please feel free to contact the Columbia County Land & Water Conservation Department if you have questions or would like to request a site visit.  
608 .742. 9670

**Cost Share & Technical Assistance Available:**

As usual the LWCD has several different sources of cost share funds to assist landowners in addressing a wide range of resource needs for help with projects on their land for 2018. We have cost-share assistance available both through DATCP and DNR to be put on the list for the upcoming 2018 fund. We have several sources of money that are specific to geographical locations in the County. Available funds can be used for both hard practices (Barnyards, Manure Storage, etc.; and soft practices (Nutrient Management Planning). Please contact the LWCD if you have questions we would be glad to meet on site and discuss a potential project.

**2017-2018 Columbia County LWCD Tree Sales Program:**

The Columbia County Tree Sales Program for 2017-2018 will begin mid-November, the order forms should be reach anyone on our mailing list by the 3rd week of November. You will be able to find the order form online, mid-November, at: <http://www.co.columbia.wi.us/columbiacounty/lwcd/TreeProgram> or you can contact our office to receive a tree order or be placed on the mailing list for the November mailing. We maintain a mailing list compiled from orders placed prior to the current year, so if you have ordered in the past few years you will remain on the list for this year and future years.

Tree pick up day is tentatively scheduled for April 19, 2018. NEW this year, we will be accepting credit cards for tree orders, through our office, and on the

Tree Pickup day, in addition to the online version. If you have question, please contact us at 608 742-9670. Thank you for your continued support!

Also, If you wish to pickup an order form, our office did move in June, 2017, and we are NOW located at 112 East Edgewater

Street, Portage, WI., on the second floor, in the new Administration Building.



**Columbia County Phase II: 2017-2020 Drinking Well Water Testing Program**

**When is the last time you had your well water tested?**

The towns in collaboration with Columbia County Land and Water Conservation and UW-Extension, are offering well users an opportunity to test their drinking water in a program that will begin Fall 2017 and finish in the Spring of 2020. The following schedule is when to expect more information for participating in this community opportunity.

**October 2017**—Town of Lodi, Town of West Point

**February 2018**—Town of Arlington, Town of Dekorra, Town of Leeds, Town of Lowville

**August 2018**—Town of Caledonia, Town of Lewiston, Town of Newport  
**Spring 2019**—Town of Fort Winnebago, Town of Marcellon, Town of Pacific, Town of Wyocena

**Fall 2019**—Town of Columbus, Town of Fountain Prairie, Town of Hampden, Town of Otsego

**Spring 2020**—Town of Courtland, Town of Springvale, Town of Randolph, Town of Scott



## Beginning Farmer Loans

FSA assists beginning farmers to finance agricultural enterprises. Under these designated farm loan programs, FSA can provide financing to eligible applicants through either direct or guaranteed loans. FSA defines a beginning farmer as a person who:

- Meets the loan eligibility requirements of the program to which they are applying
- Has operated a farm for no more than 10 years
- Will substantially participate in the operation of the farm
- Agrees to participate in a loan assessment, borrower training and financial management program sponsored by FSA
- For Farm Ownership loans, does not own a farm in excess of 30 percent of the county's average size farm

Additional program information, loan applications, and other materials are available from the Fond du Lac Farm Loan team who may be reached at 920-923-3033, ext. 2. You may also visit <https://www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/farm-loan-programs/beginning-farmers-and-ranchers-loans/index>



## Columbia County FSA is Hiring

The Columbia County Farm Service Agency (FSA) office is accepting applications for a permanent Program Technician position at the USDA Service Center in Portage, WI.

We are seeking a candidate with farm experience or knowledge to perform work in support of Wisconsin agriculture and farmers. Starting pay is \$29,356 to \$52,893 per year, depending on qualifications.

Benefits include health insurance that can be carried into retirement, 401 (k) plan, pension program, and paid holidays, vacation, and sick leave. For more information contact Susan Hunter via phone at (608) 742-5361, ext. 104 or by email at [susan.hunter@wi.usda.gov](mailto:susan.hunter@wi.usda.gov).

To apply, applicants must carefully follow all instructions in the vacancy announcement at [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) (in Search Jobs box, type WI-2017-0026).

All applications must be received/submitted in [www.usajobs.gov](http://www.usajobs.gov) by 10:59 PM (Central Time) on September 19, 2017.

## ARC and PLC Acreage Maintenance

Producers enrolled in Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) or Price Loss Coverage (PLC) must protect all cropland and noncropland acres on the farm from wind and water erosion and noxious weeds. Producers who sign ARC county or individual contracts and PLC contracts agree to effectively control noxious weeds on the farm according to sound agricultural practices. If a producer fails to take necessary actions to correct a maintenance problem on a farm that is enrolled in ARC or PLC, the County Committee may elect to terminate the contract for the program year.

### Dates to Remember

- Sept 1** Enrollment begins for 2018 Dairy Margin Protection Program
- Sept 4** Offices closed in observance of Labor Day
- Sept 19** Deadline to apply for Program Technician position at Columbia County FSA
- Sept 30** Deadline for 2017 Organic producers (livestock and crop) to request cost share on up to 75 percent (maximum of \$750 for livestock and \$750 for crops) of their certification costs
- Nov 1** Enrollment begins for 2018 Agricultural Risk Coverage/ Price Loss Coverage (ARC/PLC)
- Nov 15** Acreage reporting deadline for 2018 crops including fall-seeded crops, perennial forage, pasture, and forage crops.
- Dec 15** Deadline for 2018 Dairy Margin Protection Program signup and pay \$100 fee.

**Ongoing-** Farm Storage Facility Loans; this program provides extremely low interest financing to build or upgrade on-farm storage or to purchase storage and handling equipment; see the article below for more information

**Ongoing-** Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP); CREP offers producers substantial payments to remove environmentally sensitive acreage from production and convert the acreage to filter strips, waterways or wetland restorations

**Appointments Required** – Please call the Columbia County FSA office at 608-742-5361, ext. 2 to make an appointment before you stop in the office to enroll or inquire about any program or service. Thanks in advance for making your appointment!

## Organic Certification Cost Share Program

The Farm Service Agency (FSA) Organic Certification Cost Share Program (OCCSP) provides cost share assistance to producers and handlers of agricultural products who are obtaining or renewing their certification under the National Organic Program (NOP). Certified operations may receive up to 75 percent of their certification costs paid from Oct. 1, 2016, through Sept. 30, 2017, not to exceed \$750 per certification scope.

Eligible costs include application fees, inspection costs, fees related to equivalency agreement/arrangement requirements, travel/per diem for inspectors, user fees, sales assessments and postage.

Ineligible costs include equipment, materials, supplies, transitional certifica-

tion fees, late fees and inspections necessary to address NOP regulatory violations.

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection (DATCP) currently runs a similar program and will continue to do so. Producers can apply for reimbursement at either FSA or DATCP, but not both.

The FSA OCCSP application form is available at [USDA's eForms site](http://www.usda.gov/eForms), by selecting "Browse forms" and entering "OCCSP" in the "title or keywords" field on the search page.

To learn more about organic certification cost share, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/organic](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/organic) or contact a local FSA office by visiting <http://offices.usda.gov>. Producers in Columbia County can call 608-742-5361, ext. 2 for more details.



## Be Palmer Amaranth Aware

Palmer amaranth is a fast-growing, problematic broadleaf weed native to the Southwest. Recently, this weed has been spread to other parts of the nation. It is a highly competitive weed that has developed resistance to many herbicides, making it difficult to control. It is a very prolific seed producer, producing up to 250,000 seeds from one plant.

As you spend time in your fields this summer, be on the lookout for Palmer amaranth. If you suspect Palmer amaranth is on your property, contact your local county extension agent or crop consultant for recommendations for control. You can take steps to help prevent further infestation by not entering affected areas, and always cleaning vehicles, equipment and clothing that have come in contact with the weed.

Those planting grasses and flower mixes for conservation plantings should only use local reputable sources. Obtaining a seed laboratory report before purchasing a seed mix is recommended. Reject any seed lots which have "pigweed" or "amaranth" as a weed component unless the pigweed seed has been genetically tested to not be Palmer amaranth.

Visit [https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2017/palmer\\_amaranth\\_nrcs\\_national\\_factsheet.pdf](https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2017/palmer_amaranth_nrcs_national_factsheet.pdf) to learn more about Palmer amaranth and how to identify it.

## Start Planning: Youth Loans Available

As the youth across the state are finishing up their year-long 4-H and FFA projects, the Farm Service Agency (FSA) wants to take the opportunity to remind everyone that loans are available to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien

- Be 10 to 20 years of age
- Comply with FSA's general eligibility requirements
- Be unable to get a loan from other sources
- Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, and provide adequate supervision.

Stop by the FSA county office for help preparing and processing the application forms. To find your local office visit <http://offices.usda.gov>. In Columbia County call 920-923-3033, ext.2 and ask for a farm loan team official.

# LOANS

## USDA Offers New Loans for Portable Farm Storage and Handling Equipment

Portable Equipment Can Help Producers, including Small-Scale and Local Farmers, Get Products to Market Quickly.

USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) will provide a new financing option to help farmers purchase portable storage and handling equipment. The loans are designed to help producers, including new, small and mid-sized producers, grow their businesses and markets.

The program also offers a new "microloan" option, which allows applicants seeking less than \$50,000 to qualify for a reduced down payment of five percent. There is no requirement to provide three years of production history. Farms and ranches of all sizes are eligible. The microloan option is expected

# Agronomy/Soils Field Day

to be of particular benefit to smaller farms and ranches, and specialty crop producers who may not have access to commercial storage or on-farm storage after harvest. These producers can invest in equipment like conveyers, scales or refrigeration units and trucks that can store commodities before delivering them to markets. Producers do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply.

Earlier this year, FSA significantly expanded the list of commodities eligible for a Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL). Eligible commodities now include aquaculture, floriculture, fruits (including nuts) and vegetables, corn, grain sorghum, rice, oilseeds, oats, wheat, triticale, spelt, buckwheat, lentils, chickpeas, dry peas, sugar, peanuts, barley, rye, hay, honey, hops, maple sap, unprocessed meat and poultry, eggs, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt and renewable biomass. FSFL microloans can also be used to finance wash and pack equipment used post-harvest, before a commodity is placed in cold storage.

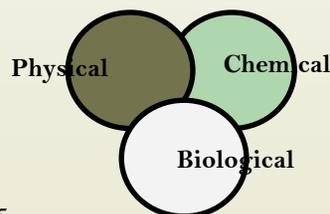
To learn more about Farm Storage Facility Loans, visit [www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport) or contact a local FSA county office. To find your local FSA

## Agronomy/Soils Field Day

**Do cover crops improve soil health? “Sure” What is their value?** “That is hard to quantify”, by *Matt Ruark (UW Soil Science)* One of the key benefits producers are seeking from cover crops is an improvement in soil health. While the consensus of what soil health is, or entails, is still evolving. Most people agree that “Soil Health” is characterized by the interaction of physical, chemical and biological soil properties. One of the important aspects of soil health, is an increase in soil organic matter (SOM) and soil microbial activity. There are some key biological indicators in the soil health arena that may be valuable indicators. These include: potentially mineralizable nitrogen (PMN), potentially mineralizable carbon (PMC), and active carbon (measured as permanganate oxidizable carbon, POXC).

continuous corn, corn-soybean, and corn-soybean-wheat), little difference is detected in PMN, PMC, and POXC. It is the phase-shifts in production (e.g., from annual to perennial systems) that cause increases in these soil components. This suggests management practices that include manure applications, reduction in tillage, and more plant roots will lead to soil improvements. Cover crops may be the only option to alter soil organic matter on annual production systems.

### Soil Health Interactions



Within annual cropping systems (e.g., 15

## How many corn hybrids should I grow on my farm? Minimizing risk & maximizing options. *By Joe Lauer (UW Agronomy)*

The answer to this question is.....one (it just has to be the right one). Since we don't know which “one” is the best, we spread risk and grow more than one. Genetic improvement of corn is continuous—new hybrids are released every year; while agronomic



improvement is more episodic—measured and finite. Transgenic traits have increased resilience in corn systems via pest control, herbicide resistance and drought stress. Newer hybrids are more tolerant to abiotic stresses such as lower temperature allowing earlier planting dates, crowding allowing higher plant densities, and low N allowing increased N use efficiency and uptake throughout the growing season. The mechanisms responsible for enhanced stress tolerance are unknown but appear to be associated with greater canopy photosynthesis and kernel set. Physiological changes have occurred simultaneously and include increased duration of the effective growing season allowing the corn crop more time to accumulate photosynthates and biomass through increased leaf angle and LAI, leaf longevity (“stay-green”), delayed leaf senescence, shorter ASI, reduced tassel weight and branch number, and increased biomass accumulation during the grain filling period. Agronomic improvement has occurred via earlier planting dates, higher plant densities, use of N fertilizer, crop rotation, better weed and pest control and adoption of no-or reduced-tillage. Many of these genetic and agronomic factors are not additive, but they often interact synergistically over time.

- Use multi-year multi-location data to select hybrids
- WI Farmers average five hybrids per farm
- Lose 1.9 bushels per acre per day for shorter day hybrids
- Diversify the genetics to diversify your risk
- FYI
  - 37% of N is taken up by the corn plant after pollination
  - We want to see corn dented by Labor Day



# Wisconsin Hickory Association Outdoor Educational Workshop

Saturday, September 16, 2017

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

W11272 Cty. Rd. D Columbus, WI 53925

(Don & Marilyn Niedermair Residence)

- Walking tour of large hickory stand (rides also available)
- Discuss types of hickory, growth, disease, history.....
- Nut cracking workshop
- Learn about WHA and their Feasibility Study of hickory as a WI industry
- View hickory products and businesses
- Taste hickory food samples; nuts, cheese, syrup, coffee, meat



Pre-Registration Appreciated  
Call Don & Marilyn 920-887-3818

Or online at

[www.wihickory.org](http://www.wihickory.org)

Cost

\$7.00 WHA Member

\$15.00 Non-Member

The Workshop is for anyone interested in hickory; whether it would be growing hickory trees, utilizing the nuts, creating a hickory-based business or hobby or just out of curiosity. Participants can enjoy – “A Hickory Tour” walking a stand of hickory trees discussing types, health/disease, growing conditions, nut production and history of hickory in Native American culture; Nut cracking tools and techniques; and the "Business" of hickory in Wisconsin. Then enjoy samples of a variety of hickory-based foods.



Portage Service Center  
2912 Red Fox Run  
Portage, WI 53901  
(608) 742-5361, ext.3

## Signup by October 20, 2017 for Several Special Initiatives Focusing on Conservation Efforts

Special sign-up opportunities are also now open for On-Farm Energy, Organic, Specialty Crops and Seasonal High Tunnel conservation practices, as well as a number of landscape based initiatives. All offer technical and financial assistance through EQIP.

**On-Farm Energy:** NRCS and producers develop Agricultural Energy Management Plans (AgEMP) or farm energy audits that assess energy consumption on an operation. Audit data is used to develop energy conservation recommendations.

**Organic:** NRCS helps certified organic growers and producers, working to achieve organic certification, install conservation practices to address resource concerns on organic operations.

**Specialty Crops:** NRCS offers a fund pool for fruit crop producers; in Wisconsin, this is applicable to cranberry and orchard growers. The practices offered are the same as the general local work group sign-up but give these niche farmers an opportunity to apply for EQIP without competing with mainstream crop producers.

**Seasonal High Tunnel (Hoop House):** NRCS helps producers plan and implement high tunnels - steel-framed, polyethylene-covered structures that extend growing seasons in an environmentally safe manner. High tunnel benefits include better plant and soil quality, fewer nutrients and pesticides in the environment, and better air quality due to fewer vehicles being needed to transport crops. Supporting conservation practices such as grassed waterways, and diversions are available to address resource concerns on operations with Seasonal High Tunnel structures.

**Honey Bee:** The upper Midwest is the resting ground for over 65 percent of commercially managed honey bees in the country. The NRCS is helping farmers and landowners implement conservation practices that will provide safe and diverse food sources for honey bees. Pasture management, wildlife habitat, and appropriate cover crops are used as tools to improve the health of our honey bees, which support more than \$15 billion worth of agricultural production.

**Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative:** Through this Initiative, NRCS and its partners will help producers in selected watersheds in the Mississippi River Basin voluntarily implement conservation practices that avoid, control, and trap nutrient runoff; improve wildlife habitat; and maintain agricultural productivity. Designated subwatersheds within the Kickapoo River and Rush River basins are eligible.

**Great Lakes Restoration Initiative:** Through GLRI, NRCS offers financial assistance to agricultural producers for implementing practices that improve water quality in selected watersheds. Eligible watersheds in Wisconsin include the Door-Kewaunee Rivers, Lower Fox River, Manitowoc-Sheboygan, and the Milwaukee River.

**Regional Conservation Partnership Program:** The Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) promotes coordination between NRCS and its partners to deliver conservation assistance to producers and landowners. NRCS provides assistance to producers through partnership agreements and through program contracts or easement agreements. Current active projects for water quality improvement are located within the Oconomowoc River watershed, the Baraboo River watershed, the Milwaukee River watershed, Yahara River watershed, and portions of the Pecatonica River watershed in Lafayette County. Projects to improve fish and wildlife habitat include monarch habitat statewide, stream and riparian habitat in the Driftless Area, as well as a project to improve young forest habitat for Golden-winged warblers in 20 northern Wisconsin counties.

Landowners interested in applying for EQIP funding should contact their local NRCS office at the USDA Service Center in their county. For more information, visit [www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov](http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov).



United States Department of Agriculture

Helping People Help the Land

## DIRECTORY

### UW-Extension Columbia County Agriculture Staff

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[george.koepf@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:george.koepf@ces.uwex.edu)

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**Office: (608) 742-9680; Fax: (608) 742-9862; <http://columbia.uwex.edu/agriculture/>**

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