

Agricultural Newsletter

UW-Madison College of Ag & Life Science
University of Wisconsin-Extension



Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers to Begin

*Ag Research Station, Spooner – 14 Sessions, November-March
Thursdays, 11:00-1:15*

The Wisconsin School for Beginning Farmers course will be offered locally this fall and winter at the Spooner Ag Research Station. The course comes through the University of Wisconsin Farm and Industry Short Course. Delivery will be done through interactive video and audio. Most of the subject materials apply to both grass-based and conventional farming and cover dairy, beef, sheep and goats. An important aspect of the course is business planning. If desired, students will be able to develop their own business plans by the end of the course. Since the course began in 1995, about 400 students have enrolled and a third went on to start their own farms.

There are 14 required regular class sessions and some opportunities for software training, tours or attendance at GrassWorks, depending on location. The course is divided into three terms. Classes run from 11:00 AM to 1:30 PM on Thursdays except for one class on the Tuesday before Thanksgiving. Students who miss a class may catch it later online. The class dates are Nov. 11, 18, 23, Dec 2, 9, 16, Jan 20, 27, Feb 3, 10, 17, 24, Mar 3, 10.

Subjects this year are not yet set, but could include starting a livestock business whether confinement or grazing, grazing system layout, stray voltage, goal-setting, feeding on pasture, production and marketing of pasture-based beef, goat and sheep dairying, information on beginner loans, enterprise budgets, farm-driven marketing, business plan writing, successful models for business startups, bio-fuels and farm energy, organic farming, low-cost parlors, out-wintering and environmental stewardship. A brochure for the course will be available shortly. Also watch for news releases in the papers.

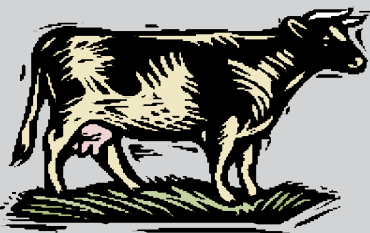
The cost of the entire course has not yet been determined, but has been about \$240 or \$15 for individual sessions in previous years in the Spooner area. Sponsorships are encouraged. You can also enroll for individual classes or terms, or take the course for university credit at a higher cost. Additional afternoon sessions covering related topics of interest may be added by local UW-Extension. You will have to bring your own lunch.

To register or obtain further information, contact Otto Wiegand at UWEX Spooner at 715-635-3506, Dick Cates at 608-265-6437, or Jennifer Taylor at 608-265-7914. The course is a collaborative effort between the UW-Center for Integrated Agricultural Studies, UW Cooperative Extension, CALS, DATCP, the Technical Colleges and GrassWorks.

October-November-December
2010
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*produced by
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and
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Heart of The Farm Conference to be in Siren

*Jenny Vanderlin
UW-Madison*

Mark your calendars! A Heart of the Farm-Women in Agriculture Conference will be held at The Lodge at Crooked Lake in Siren on Wednesday, February 2nd, 2011. It will focus on risk management issues of concern to farm women.

The Heart of the Farm Conference Series is a UW-Extension program committed to addressing the needs of farm women by providing education on farm business topics, connecting them with agricultural resources and creating support networks. Since 2002 there have been a total of 30 Heart of the Farm one-day conferences held across the state. As a result of these programs, participants have improved their record keeping skills, made changes to insurance coverage, implemented production changes, made decision on retirement needs and plans and more!

Heart of the Farm – Women in Agriculture is sponsored by UW-Extension Northern District Counties, UW Center for Dairy Profitability and UW-Extension’s Farm and Risk Management Team. It is partially funded by a USDA Risk Management Agency grant.

If you would like to be part of the planning committee for the conference, please contact either Otto Wiegand or Kevin Schoessow, 800-528-1914 or 715-635-3506. For more information, contact Jenny at jmvander@wisc.edu, 608-263-7795. Watch for details in the December newsletter and in the newspapers in January.

Distance Education Technologies

*Otto Wiegand
Area Agricultural Agent
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties*

*Greg Johll
Information Technology
UW-Extension - Madison*

Many of you have attended Extension or other meetings presented through a type of distance education. Distance education technologies are used more and more to deliver programs or courses. These technologies help to eliminate cost of travel for presenters and participants, may be able to be set up close to your home, allow for much larger audiences, and are, in some cases, almost like having the speaker in the room. We will attempt to explain what you are getting when offered certain types of technologies. Not all conference centers have the latest capabilities, but they are becoming more common.

Teleconferencing, which is actually audioconferencing, is the most common and uses a standard or polycom phone. Teleconferencing can also be done over the internet allowing computer to computer or computer to phone connections. Skype is a commonly used Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) service. Most new computers have built in speakers and microphones for audionconferencing, but some older ones may not. WisLine is a statewide UW-Extension teleconferencing system frequently used.

Webconferencing, such as Webinars or Webcasts, are a combination of presentation through a web browser

(internet) and a teleconference. They are commonly used with PowerPoint slide presentations. Some of these services will also include a streamed video of a presenter. Depending on the service used, there are various levels of interaction (questions from audience, real-time polling) that may also take place through the web browser. DimDim and GoToMeeting are examples that include one-way video and sharing of some documentation.

Videoconferencing allows two-way interactive live video and audio simultaneously between two or more sites. It can allow face-to-face interaction worldwide. It employs compressed signals and uses either Integrated Services Digital Network (ISDN) phone lines or the internet. Compressed video can allow for transmission of text, computer graphics, DVDs and videos. WisLine Video is commonly used by UW-Extension.



Hunting Leases Becoming More Popular

*Kevin Schoessow
Area Agricultural Development Agent
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties*

Hunting leases are becoming more common as farmers and rural property owners look at ways to help defray the costs associated with recreational land property taxes. The value of these hunting leases can vary greatly depending on the property, size of the parcel, evidence of huntable species, length of lease, and local markets. Deer hunting leases are the most common, although some parties maybe interested in leasing a property for other species.

In a recent email survey, I asked my colleagues what are the going rates for hunting leases. As with all leases, the price was depended on what was outlined in the lease and the perceived value of the property being leased. Here are some of the responses:

A hunting group paid something like \$1000 two years ago for hunting

rights on a 40 acre parcel near Mason. From what I understand they didn't see any more deer there than they did on Nat'l Forest land, so last year they were back on public land. Rates can be as high as \$40+ per acre down here...Bob (Pepin Co.). . I know of a paper company that leases out hunting rights in their forest property for \$300/deer season / 40 acres. A group of guys that I'm a part of lease two 180 acre farms in Waupaca county for \$600 per farm and use it for bow, gun and turkey hunting. The farms are 2/3 cropland, 1/3 woodland. This price is very low for Waupaca county . I am aware of leases that get 5 to 6 times that amount. Tell the farmer to get a trail camera and place it near a bait pile. The price he will get for the lease will be dependent upon the photos he can produce.

If you are interested in setting up a hunting lease for your property an internet search on "*examples of hunting leases*" will result in several state university extension publications on the topic. UW-Extension's publication *Fee Hunting in WI*; G3489, is another good reference, although it is not posted on line.

UW-Extension Has New Website

While most farmers do not consider the internet as a primary source of getting their information more and more are. In order to help farmers and agribusiness navigate the mind numbing amount of agriculture information available on the internet, UW-Extension has upgraded our main website to accommodate the way people interact with and receive information from the internet. Our new web address is www.uwex.edu/ces/ag/.

The website includes a variety of general topics and access to timely information through links such as News, Farming in Difficult Times, Wisconsin Agriculture: Economic Impact, and lists of Conferences and Activities. In addition UWEX has information on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and iTunesU. The YouTube site is of particular interest because of the video footage. There are also links to other subject matter website such as the UW Dairy Team website, which has a very active on-line posting of the latest topics of interest on its blog site. Subjects covered in the blog include: Animal Health/Biosecurity, Dairy Herd Management, Farm Management/Ag Law, Feeding/Nutrition, Milk Quality, Milking Management, and Reproduction/Genetics.

Similar links to soybeans and small grains, corn agronomy, soils and nutrient management, crop integrated pest management (IPM), milk quality, livestock, farm and risk management and bioenergy can be found. In addition, there are links to other UW resources such as the Center for Dairy Profitability to commodity groups, state organizations, and numerous state and federal agencies.

Moldy Hay and Mycotoxins

Otto Wiegand

Adapted from Dan Undersander, UW-Extension Agronomist, and Co-Authors

Penn State Field Crop News, Vol. 9, No. 17

Haymaking conditions this summer were poor in many areas. Much hay has been rained on or left lying in the field for prolonged time periods due to cool and humid conditions, which reduced drying rates. The long drying periods with high humidity allowed field growth of mold on the hay.

Poor drying weather has also meant that some hay was put up wetter than usual and mold growth occurred in storage. With wet weather and high humidity, normal drying in storage may not occur and hay can retain elevated levels of moisture, allowing mold growth. Mold will grow on hay without preservative at moisture levels above 14-15%. The mold growth produces heat and can result in large losses of dry matter and nutrients. In some cases, heating can be great enough to cause spontaneous combustion and hay fires. Drying of stored hay is enhanced by ventilation, creation of air spaces between bales, allowing ample head space above a stack of bales in a barn for moisture to evaporate, avoidance of other wet products in the same area, reduced size of stacks, alternated direction of stacking and not placing tarp directly over a stack in the field because it traps moisture.

Molds commonly found in hay include *Alternaria*, *Aspergillus*, *Cladosporium*, *Fusarium*, *Mucor*, *Penicillium* and *Rhizopus*. These molds can produce spores that cause respiratory problems, especially in horses or other animals fed in poorly ventilated areas and, under some conditions, will produce mycotoxins. There is much confusion about mycotoxins in forages because several mycotoxins may be present, diagnostic methods are not consistent, and treatment and control recommendations lack needed research. While most molds do not produce mycotoxins, the presence of mold could indicate mycotoxin presence and animals being fed moldy hay should be watched carefully for mycotoxin symptoms.

Mycotoxins have several effects on animals: 1. intake reduction or feed refusal; 2. reduced nutrient absorption and impaired metabolism, including altered rumen fermentation, diarrhea, intestinal irritation, reduced production, lower fertility, lethargy and increased disease activity; 3. alterations in the endocrine and exocrine systems; 4. suppression of the immune system, predisposing livestock to disease, increased milk somatic cell count and possible lack of response to medications and failure of vaccine programs; and 5. cellular death causing organ damage.

Mycotoxins may cause acute health or production problems which are most common in horses and other non-ruminants. In cattle, mycotoxins more likely will contribute to chronic problems including a higher incidence of disease, poor reproductive performance or lower milk production. Ruminants are somewhat protected from acute toxicity because the rumen destroys a large portion of most mycotoxins. However, rumen degradation of mycotoxins may hide symptoms.

The mycotoxins of greatest concern are those produced by *Aspergillus* (aflatoxin, gliotoxin, fumitremorgens, fumigaclavines), *Fusarium* (deoxynivalenol, zearalenone, T-2 toxin) and *Penicillium* (PR toxin, mycophenolic acid, roquefortine C, patulin), but other mycotoxins can be present. There are about 400 different known mycotoxins.

Increased attention to field and storage management may help reduce the incidence and concentration of mycotoxins in forage. Heavily contaminated forage may need to be discarded. Lightly contaminated feed can be diluted and used for animals under less stress. Dry cows and transition cows should receive clean feed because they are exposed to or are soon to be exposed to greater stress.

A therapy that has been effective is the use of mycotoxin adsorbents that bind with mycotoxins in the feed and reduce their absorption by the animal. This effectively reduces, but does not eliminate, mycotoxin exposure to the animal. In cattle, a robust rumen fermentation can help maximize mycotoxin detoxification. Therefore, the use of sufficient effective fiber, buffers and microbial products to stimulate rumen function can be helpful. Because many nutrients interact with mycotoxins to modify their toxicity, optimal levels of nutrients can be helpful to reduce mycotoxin effects. In particular, antioxidants (selenium, vitamin E, synthetic antioxidants, etc.) can help protect the animal against increased oxidative stress caused by mycotoxin exposure.

If you have mold in hay, watch for the symptoms mentioned above. If hay is dusty (from mold spores) take care in feeding to sensitive animals and those in poor ventilation. If mycotoxin symptoms are observed, check with a nutritionist to make sure the ration is properly balanced and with a veterinarian to eliminate other disease/health problems. Quick-test kits (ELISA kits) are available. You can find a listing to determine the presence of a limited number of mycotoxins at www.ces.ncsu.edu/gaston/Agriculture/mycotoxins/mycotest.html. A word of caution - they can give false positives. Some forage testing laboratories will provide other mycotoxin tests. Often, the best strategy is to remove a suspected mycotoxin-contaminated feedstuff from the diet and see if symptoms disappear. If mycotoxins are present, the feedstuff can often be fed at a diluted rate or with approved feed additives.

In summary, most molds are harmless and do not produce known mycotoxins. Many of the commonly diagnosed mycotoxins are produced in the field prior to harvest. Vomitoxins (DON, deoxynivalenol) are somewhat toxic, but their presence often serves as a marker for other more toxic mycotoxins. Positive ELISA tests should be retested by the laboratory using other means since current ELISA tests can give false positives. If a mycotoxin problem is suspected, a comprehensive review of herd nutrition and health is essential – e.g. herd problems blamed on mycotoxins may be other disorders or nutritional issues. Diagnosing a mycotoxin problem is difficult and often involves the elimination of other possible factors. Certain feed additives have proved to be helpful in treatment. The physical dust problem associated with moldy forage can be reduced by ensiling, mixing with a high-moisture feed or wetting the hay, but these will not reduce mycotoxins if present.

Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium

*Adapted from Claire Mikolayunas
UW-Madison Animal Sciences
Small Ruminant Extension Specialist*

The 16th annual Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium returns to Wisconsin and will be held November 11-13, 2010 at the Ramada Inn and Convention Center in Eau Claire. This event will include practical information for producers and sheep milk processors and tours of an operating dairy sheep farm and farmstead cheesemakers.

The featured international speaker is Ivan Larcher, a former instructor at the Centre Fromager in Carmejeane, France. Mr. Larcher has provided technical advice to cheesemakers in North America, Israel, Slovenia, Croatia, Spain, Morocco, Algiers and the United Kingdom.

Additional speakers include Dr. Robin Rastani of Milk Specialties Global Research, who will speak

about selecting lamb milk replacer and lamb rearing. Dr. Pamela Ruegg of UW-Madison will address mastitis in dairy sheep. Dr. Bob Wendorff, professor emeritus of Food Science at UW-Madison and Bob Wills of Cedar Grove Cheese, will speak on the art and science of making sheep milk cheese. Dan Scruton from the Vermont Agency of Agriculture will address antibiotic testing in sheep milk. Mateo Kehler, an artisan cheesemaker and affineur from the Cellars at Jasper Hill, Vermont, will address cheese aging techniques. In addition, current dairy sheep producers will discuss beginning sheep dairying, lamb rearing techniques, and farm management decision-making. Milk recording, genetic improvement, and sire referencing programs will also be discussed.

Saturday farm tours will include a visit to the Spooner Agricultural Research Station, the only dairy sheep research facility in North America. In addition, the tour will visit Shepherd's Ridge Farm, a farmstead sheep dairy operation in St. Croix Falls, managed by Jeff and Vicky Simpkins.

Note on Liming: Graymont lime, sourced from Duluth-Superior, is an 80-89 grade that is finer than the 60-69 grade that is the base of the recommendation on your University of Wisconsin soil test. You will have to adjust the amount you apply downward. Regulating your soil's pH with a lime material is one of the highest impact and lowest cost practices that you can do to manage your hay and crop land.

The symposium is sponsored by the Dairy Sheep Association of North America, with support by UW-Madison, the Spooner Agricultural Research Station, and the Dairy Business Innovation Center. Major financial support is provided by the Babcock Institute of International Dairy Research and Development at UW-Madison and industry sponsors.

A complete symposium brochure, sponsor information, and on-line registration can be found at <http://www.dsana.org>, through the UW-CALS Conference Services, or by contacting Claire Mikolayunas at mikolayunas@wisc.edu, 608-890-3802.

Increasing Corn Production Costs Cut Into Profits

Kevin Schoessow

Adapted from Joe Lauer, UW-Extension Corn Agronomist

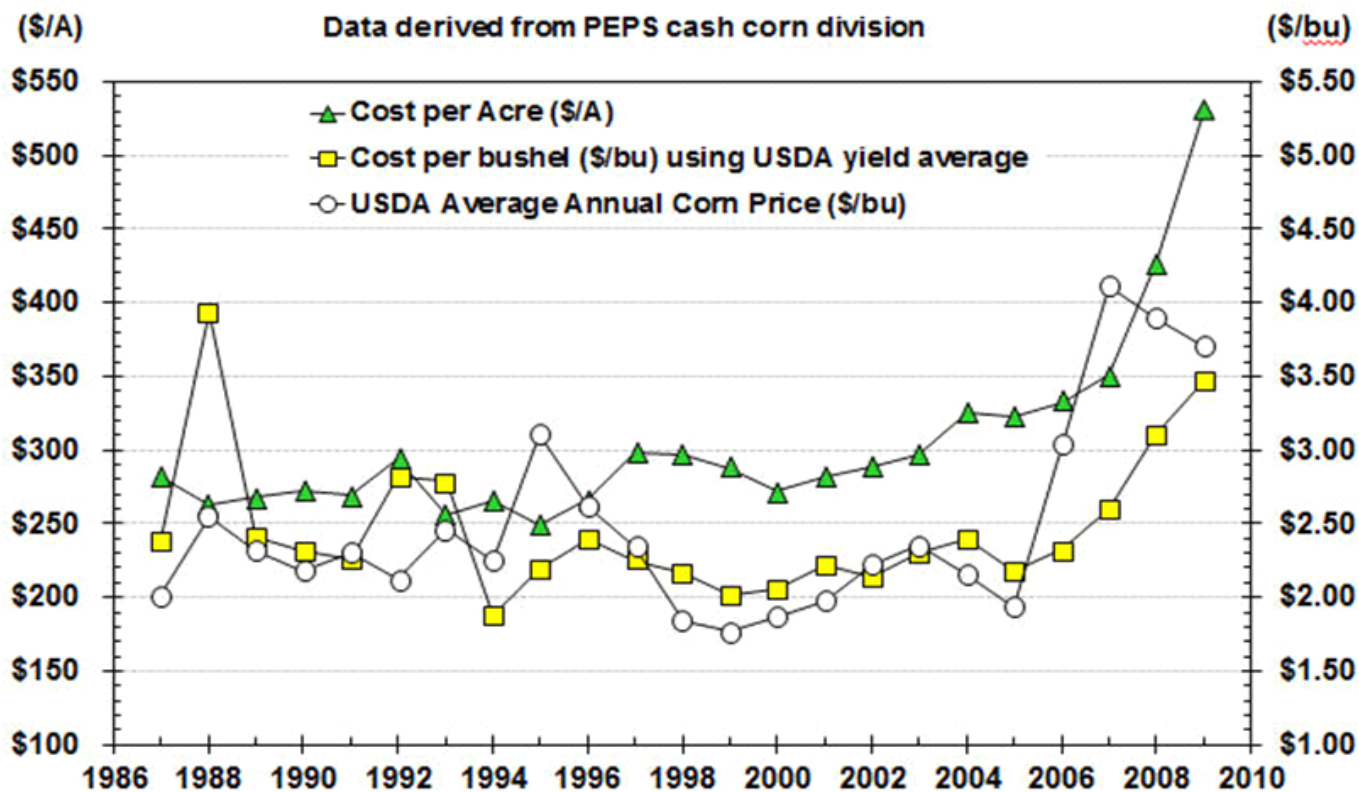
As harvest draws near, corn growers are encouraged by record projected yields and the strong corn prices available right now. But a strong corn price does not guarantee profitability unless production costs are kept under control. Even though prices are strong, grower profitability for 2010 is likely going to be similar to previous years because of increasing production costs and a strong basis.

Based on data collected from the Wisconsin PEPS program (Profits through Efficient Production Systems), the cost of producing corn in recent years has been steadily increasing. For more information on the PEPS program, see the website at <http://corn.agronomy.wisc.edu/PEPS>. Data from 1986 through 2003 show corn production costs in most years was between \$ 2.00-\$2.40 per bushel and \$250-\$300 per acre. Since 2003, these costs have steadily increased with 2009 at \$3.47 per bushel and \$531 per acre. Keep in mind these PEPS results reflect the efforts and costs of some of the best farmers growing corn on the best land available using their best management practices and may not reflect real world cost. However, they do validate production costs trends faced by all corn producers.

With the exception of chemical costs, nearly all production cost categories (seed, fertilizer, harvesting, equipment and land) have increased since 2003. The most dramatic increases have been in seed and fertilizer. Both were similar in 2003 (approximately \$40-\$42) with seed costs doubling and fertilizer tripling by 2009. Harvest costs include grain drying which varies by year and is usually expensive in cool years like 2009.

Although the PEPS program does not capture all of the production costs associated with raising corn, it does give some feel for the kind of production costs we are dealing with.

Average production costs for corn grown in Wisconsin. The cost per bushel is calculated using the PEPS cost per acre and dividing by the USDA average grain yield for Wisconsin. The USDA average annual corn price is included for comparison.



This Quarter's Events

Contacts: UW-Extension Ag Agents Otto Wiegand or Kevin Schoessow, Spooner Station, 715-635-3506, Jane Anklam Douglas Co, 715-395-1363, or Jason Fischbach, Ashland & Bayfield Counties, 715-682-8393 for more information, brochures or how to register.

Late Fall 2010 – EQIP Cost-Share Signup – watch for announcements in your local papers or contact your NRCS office

Sept 28-Oct 2, Tues-Sat – World Dairy Expo – Madison

Oct. 6, Weds, Noon – Buy Locally Grown Food Day, Superior Downtown Farmers Market – demo on how to use, store and preserve local foods, discussion on impacts and value of locally-grown foods in NW Wis, contact Jane Anklam, 715-395-1363

Oct 15-16, Fri-Sat – Focus on Goats Conference, UW-Platteville – contact Jeanne Meier, Dairy Business Innovation Center, 608-219-4081, or jeannemariemeier@gmail.com

Oct. 16, Sat, 10 AM-Noon, Chetek – Organic Dairy Pasture Walk - Cheyenne & Katy Christianson, 1732 9th Ave. Chetek – organic producer, rotationally grazes 70 Holsteins on 260 acres, grazing for 16 years, plants annuals for early or late season grazing such as purple turnips, oats, Japanese millet, triticale and winter rye, no grain has been fed for 10 years, went 5 years without a veterinarian on the farm, co-hosting with River Country RC&D. From Barron on Hwy 8, take Cty O south 4 miles, turn right or west on 9th Avenue

Oct. 23, Sat – FAMACHA Training for Sheep and Goat Producers, UW-River Falls – discusses a scoring system to help identify anemic animals with a common type of internal parasite. Contact Claire Mikolayunas, 608-890-3802 or mikolayunas@wisc.edu

Oct-April, May-Sept – Lake Superior Farm Beginnings Course, Ashland Research Station – 39 hours in 9 winter class sessions on evenings or Sat, then 10 on-farm workshops in summer, \$1,000, some scholarships available, limited to 20 persons, registration by Oct. 1, contact Cree Bradley 218-834-0846 or UW-Extension Agents Jason Fischbach or Jane Anklam

Nov 11-13, Thurs-Sat – Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium, Eau Claire – contact Claire Mikolayunas, 608-890-3802 or mikolayunas@wisc.edu

Nov–Mar – Beginning Farmer Course, Spooner Ag Research Station - 14 sessions, 2-3 hours per session, \$240 for full course or \$15 per session, now in its 4th consecutive year in this region, contact Otto Wiegand, 715-635-3506 (See article)

Feb. 2, Weds - Heart of The Farm Conference, Siren – for farm women, to be held at The Lodge (See article)

Mar 4, Fri, 8:30-3:30 – Animal Husbandry Conference, Neillsville – conference dedicated to anticipated future requirements for animal welfare certification, speakers and perspectives from Ohio, Canada, Europe, and representatives from cattle, hog and poultry industries, also cattle handling demos – bus transport may be arranged if needed, watch for more information in Dec. newsletter and press releases

Mar 12, Sat, 8:30-3:30 – NW Graziers Annual Conference, Spooner – watch for more information in Dec. newsletter and press releases

UPCOMING FARM SERVICE AGENCY DEADLINES

September 30, 2010 – Deadline to submit 2008 Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payment (SURE) applications; Deadline to purchase crop insurance coverage for 2011 forage and fall-seeded small grains

October, 2010: Signup begins for 2011 Direct and Counter-Cyclical Program (DCP) program

Continuous -Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) continuous sign-up; Farm Storage Facility Loans; Milk Income Loss Contract (MILC) payment start - monthly change option

Contact your local FSA county office for more information on any FSA programs or deadlines or visit the website at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov>



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Kevin Schoessow
UWEX Area Agricultural Agent