

MSC
A27p

December 24, 2003

Surveillance, intervention should lessen impact of mad cow disease

The combination of the U.S. surveillance and intervention measures should limit the potential impact of mad cow disease here, compared to that in the United Kingdom in the 1990s.

The University of Minnesota's Center for Animal Health and Food Safety lists these "quick facts" about Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), widely referred to as mad cow disease:

--The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has made a preliminary diagnosis of BSE in a four-year-old Holstein cow in Washington State (additional information is at <http://www.usda.gov/>).

--This is the first positive case of BSE in the United States and the second in a North American born animal--check the Canadian Food Inspection Agency Web site at <http://www.inspection.gc.ca/english/anima/heasan/disemala/bseesb/bseesbindexe.shtml> for more information.

--BSE is not Foot and Mouth Disease (FME), a virus, contagious, or spread by animal-to-animal contact.

--The U.S. has been actively working to detect and prevent BSE, starting with an import ban on animals in 1989, active surveillance for BSE in 1990, focus on downer animals as a high-risk population in 1993 and the ruminant feed ban in 1997.

--Research confirms that the agent accumulates in neural tissue and has not been found in muscle tissue.

--The USDA has released a BSE response plan, available at <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/bse/bsesum.pdf>.

For more information, contact the Center for Animal Health and Food Safety at (612) 625-8709 or <http://www.cahfs.umn.edu>.

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Web, V2, V4, V7, D1

bse12243

Source: U of M Center for Animal Health & Food Safety (612) 625-8709, www.cahfs.umn.edu.
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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December 19, 2003

Dairy Days scheduled at eight Minnesota locations in January

Forage quality, reproductive management and cow culling will be topics at University of Minnesota Dairy Days at eight locations in January.

The events are designed for producers and others interested in dairying. The program will be similar at each site, with registration opening at 9:30 a.m. The program will begin at 10 a.m. with a University of Minnesota research update.

Speakers are University of Minnesota dairy and agronomy specialists, and educators from the U of M Extension Service. In addition, Gary Neubauer of Pfizer Animal Health will speak on reproductive management.

Local coordinators for the meetings are regional educators with the U of M Extension Service. Dates, locations and coordinator contacts are as follows:

- Jan. 6, Slayton, The Royal Loon, Chuck Schwartau, (651) 385-3100;
- Jan. 7, Winsted, Blue Note, Jim Salfer (320) 255-6169;
- Jan. 8, Goodhue, Lions Community Center, Chuck Schwartau, (651) 385-3100;
- Jan. 9, Lewiston, Community Center, Chuck Schwartau, (651) 385-3100;
- Jan. 13, McIntosh, Community Center, Gene Krause, (218) 634-1511;
- Jan. 14, Perham, VFW, Jim Salfer (320) 255-6169;
- Jan. 15, Melrose, American Legion, Jim Salfer (320) 255-6169;
- Jan. 16, Little Falls, Government Center, Jim Salfer (320) 255-6169.

Full registration is \$25 per person, with a discounted fee of \$15 for each additional person from the same farm. Pre-registration is encouraged since space is limited at some locations. You may register at the door, but for meal planning purposes please call the local contact at least a day ahead of the event.

You can find a copy of the program and a registration form at <http://www.ansci.umn.edu/dairy>.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, V5MN, D1

rae12173

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December 19, 2003

Teens who are monitored by parents less apt to use alcohol or drugs

Decisions, decisions. If you have a teenager, you may not be impressed with some of the decisions she's making, including who she's choosing for friends.

Friends provide care, respect and trust during the teenage years, says Jodi Dworkin, family social scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Teens choose their friends because of similar interests or to make themselves more popular, Dworkin says.

"Your child's friends are going through the same kinds of things as your teen," Dworkin says. "They understand each other so they can talk about their problems and figure out ways to solve them together."

Teens make decisions based on two important questions, Dworkin says: What do my friends think? Will it be fun?

You may be worried that your teen's friends are a bad influence. But teens don't drink or use drugs only because their friends do, Dworkin says. Abusing alcohol or drugs is a sign of a problem more serious than peer pressure.

But there are ways parents can help prevent their teen from drinking and using drugs. Research has found that when parents monitor their teen's behaviors, the teen is less likely to participate in problem behaviors, and more likely to choose friends who participate in behaviors that parents approve of.

Dworkin has written these tips for talking to your teen in a series of articles titled "Teen Talk: A survival guide for parents of teenagers." You can find the Teen Talk articles at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/family> on the Internet.

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Web, V4, V5, F1

dworkin11243

Source: Jodi Dworkin (612) 624-3732, jdworkin@che.umn.edu
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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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NEWS & INFORMATION

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

December 19, 2003

Extension is offering beef cattle reproductive management home study course

Beef cattle reproductive management for both large and small producers is the subject of a home study course offered by the University of Minnesota Extension Service this winter. The course is entitled "Reproductive Management," and includes six lessons covering the basics of reproduction for beef cattle producers. This is the second year that this management course is offered to beef cattle producers.

The course is designed to provide producers with the information necessary to make decisions to improve profitability. Lesson topics include health management for reproduction, nutrition effects on reproduction, Expected Progeny Differences (EPDs) and genetics for improved reproduction, heifer development, synchronization and raising versus buying replacements. An added bonus will be an appendix with advanced reproductive technology information.

The course provides an educational opportunity for those who find it difficult to attend meetings due to work schedules, family commitments or geographic location. This is the fifth Beef Home Study Course offered by the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Registrations received by the Jan. 15 deadline will guarantee course enrollment. Class lessons will be mailed to participants every 6-10 days beginning in February from the Pipestone County Extension Office.

The course registration fee is \$40, and covers the six lessons, a three-ring binder, supporting reference materials and postage costs. Materials from the first four course offerings (Breeding Herd Nutrition, Health Management, Pasture Management and Preparing for Value Based Marketing) are also available. Additional information and registration forms are available from the Pipestone County Extension Office, 119 2nd Ave. SW, Suite # 2, Pipestone, MN, phone (800) 967-2705 or (507) 825-6715. Or, registration forms can be found at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/pipestone> under the "Programs," then "Home Study Course" headings.

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Web, B1, V2, V4, V5

berg12163

Source: Philip Berg (507) 825-6715

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December 16, 2003

Conservation tillage translates to higher farm profits

The 2003 growing season illustrates the many advantages of conservation tillage, says George Rehm, soil scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Conservation tillage leaves crop residues on the soil moisture, thus conserving soil moisture. "The positive effects of moisture conservation were very evident this year," Rehm says. "Ridge-till farmers reported an advantage of four to 10 bushels per acre, compared to soybeans grown without conservation tillage. The extra bushels are attributed to more stored soil moisture in the ridge-till systems."

The additional soil moisture in conservation tillage systems can be attributed to more surface residue and less water loss, compared to conventional tillage operations. "There are good estimates that say each secondary tillage operation results in a loss of about one-fourth inch of usable moisture," Rehm says.

Farmers who use conservation tillage also recognize that they save soil and reduce the amount of fuel needed for crop production, Rehm says. "Usually, inputs can be reduced without reducing yields. And reduced inputs translate into lower production costs and good potential for higher farm profits," he says.

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Web, V2, V4, C4, F4

rehm12103

Source: George Rehm (612) 625-6210, rehmx001@umn.edu
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December 12, 2003

Drainage management conference at Crookston, Willmar in January

The University of Minnesota Extension Service and state agency partners are sponsoring a two-day Minnesota Drainage Management Conference at both Crookston and Willmar in January 2004.

The conference was developed by a multi-agency planning team to provide education on administrative, legal, engineering and environmental aspects of drainage system management, says Gary Sands, Extension engineer. It's intended for drainage system managers, county administrators, local watershed and conservation planners and their staffs, and private engineers and consultants.

The Crookston conference is Jan. 8-9 on the University of Minnesota campus, and the Willmar session is Jan 22-23 at the Willmar Holiday Inn. A brochure and other information can be found at the conference website: <http://wrc.coafes.umn.edu/MDM>. On-line registration is encouraged and is available for the Crookston site at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/forms/prod/draincrook>, and for Willmar at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/forms/prod/drainwill> Or, call (800) 876-8636 to register for either session. Cost for the full two-day conference is \$75; one-day registration is \$45.

Mark Holsten, DNR deputy commissioner, will discuss Minnesota's drainage law and the needs and issues of the 21st century. Other topics include case studies of drainage systems in transition, making the most of a viewer's report, downstream drainage/flooding problems, advanced legal procedures, wetland regulations, and integrating wetland restoration with drainage.

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Web, V2MN, V4, V5, C4

sands12093

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December 12, 2003

Improve your backyard composting with a new CD-ROM

Whether you're thinking of trying composting for the first time or an experienced composter, a new "Backyard Composting" CD-ROM can help.

"The CD-ROM is a comprehensive guide with photographs, movies and animated diagrams," says Tom Halbach, water quality and waste management specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Two levels of text meet the needs of homeowners, as well as Master Gardeners, students, teachers and anyone who loves to compost.

"It illustrates how to get usable products such as mulch, soil amendments and potting soil from your yard and food waste," Halbach says. The CD covers all major topics—from the history of composting to tips on producing better compost in less time.

"It's never too early or late in the year to compost," Halbach says. "You can compost anytime." The CD-ROM sells for \$19.95 plus sales and handling. Go to

<http://www.compost.umn.edu> for more information, including an order form. Halbach may be reached at (612) 625-3135, or halba001@umn.edu.

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Web, V2, V4, V5, G1

halbach11203

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December 12, 2003

Zone tillage will be highlighted at Feb. 4 conference

How do zone tillage systems work? You can get some answers at the Midwest Ridge and Strip Till Conference Feb. 4, 2004, when farmers and researchers will share their research and evaluation results.

It's scheduled for the Arrowwood Conference Center in Spirit Lake, Iowa, from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. "If you arrive early you can participate in an informal roundtable and learn from others," says George Rehm, soils specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Zone tillage has been a hot topic in the northern and western Corn Belt for the past year or so, Rehm says. In addition to zone tillage, concurrent sessions will be held on fertilization, weed management and new developments in equipment.

If you'd like to come the night before, call (800) 727-4561 for reservations. A special room rate applies if you make your reservations before Jan. 4.

"Conservation-minded farmers should mark Feb. 4 on the calendar," Rehm says. For more information, contact him at (612) 625-6210, or rehmx001@umn.edu.

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Web, V2, V4, C4, F4

rehm12093

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NEWS & INFORMATION

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

December 5, 2003

Check the 'winners and losers' from U of M soybean variety trials

You can find results of 2003 Minnesota soybean variety trials posted on a University of Minnesota web site at <http://www.soybeans.umn.edu>. Check with an office of the University's Extension Service if you don't have Internet access.

"Variety trial results are a valuable decision-making tool when you're choosing varieties," says Extension agronomist Seth Naeve. "Choosing a variety is one of the most important decisions soybean producers make," Naeve says.

The variety trials are listed for the northern, central and southern Minnesota zones. Results include performance and characteristics of soybean nematode infested and non-infested sites.

You'll also find trial results on public and special use varieties, very early maturing varieties, and both Roundup Ready and conventional varieties. And, look for the "winners and losers," which represents lists of varieties that Naeve recommends (or doesn't recommend) based on yield and seed quality.

"University trials are the only source for independent, reliable variety evaluations," Naeve says.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, F4

naeve12045

Source: Seth Naeve (612) 625-4298, naeve002@umn.edu
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MSC
A27p

December 5, 2003

Master Marketers say the program made over \$10,000 for them

Surveys of past Minnesota Master Marketer Program participants have shown over \$10,000 impact per year on the bottom line, says Bob Craven, economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Now in its sixth year, this six-day educational program for grain producers and ag professionals is designed to develop and improve the marketing skills needed to succeed in today's markets. The 2004 Master Marketer Program, developed by the University of Minnesota's Center for Farm Financial Management, will be held at the Shoreland Country Club in St. Peter, Minn., Jan. 14-15, Jan. 28-29 and Feb. 11-12.

Topics covered in the workshop include basic and advanced marketing strategies using futures and options, fundamental and technical price analysis, the role of crop insurance in marketing, climate trends and impacts, key elements of a solid marketing plan, and marketing clubs. Edward Usset, U of M grain marketing specialist, will lead the workshop.

Speakers include Bob Wisner of Iowa State University, one of the premier grain analysts in the country; Alan Brugler of Omaha, a veteran technical analyst and DTN market commentator; and Elwynn Taylor of Iowa State University, a top-notch ag meteorologist. The registration fee for the six-day session is \$350 per person, and includes lunches and workshop materials. Spouses can attend for an additional \$200. For a brochure or to register, contact the Center for Farm Financial Management at (800) 234-1111 or (612) 625-1964. An on-line brochure is available at www.cffm.umn.edu/pubs/MNMasterMarketer2004.pdf

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, A2

craven12023

Source: Robert Craven (612) 625-7014, usset001@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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November 25, 2003

New Extension publication gives machinery cost estimates for 2004

You can find estimates of farm machinery operation costs for late 2003 and 2004 in a new publication from the University of Minnesota Extension Service. There are both time-related and use-related cost figures for over 150 machines—from chisel plows to hooded sprayers and sugar beet wagons.

“Machinery costs are substantial and controlling them is important,” says Bill Lazarus, economist with the University of Minnesota and a co-author of the publication with Roger Selley, University of Nebraska. “Custom charges are often based on these costs. No one should do custom work unless the charge will cover operating costs and use-related depreciation plus as return for one’s risk and time,” Lazarus and Seeley say in the publication.

You incur user-related costs only when a machine is used. They include fuel, lubrication, use-related repairs and labor. Time-related costs, also often referred to as overhead costs, accrue to the owner whether or not a machine is used. Overhead includes the time-related economic costs of interest, insurance, personal property taxes and housing.

You can find the publication at www.apec.umn.edu/faculty/wlazarus/machinery.html.

Check with an Extension office in Minnesota if you don’t have Internet access.

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Web, V2, V4, V5, A2

lazarus11193

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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

November 26, 2003

U of M Extension has new fact sheets on farm transfer, estate planning

Newly updated fact sheets on transferring the farm and estate planning are now available from the University of Minnesota Extension Service. They were written by Extension educators Robert Anderson and Gary Hachfeld, and professor emeritus Erlin Weness.

“Preparing to Transfer the Farm Business” is the first of 10 fact sheets in the farm transfer series. Other topics include farming together as a transfer strategy, using partnerships or corporations, transferring livestock and machinery, whether to sell real estate, gifting farm assets, tax considerations, treatment of heirs, financial help for beginning farmers and written transfer plans.

Topics for the 10-part estate planning series include estate planning principles, establishing a will, distribution of estate assets, gifting assets, trusts, income tax issues, life insurance in estate planning, disposing of personal and household items, and steps in estate settlement.

All 20 fact sheets are available from the Nicollet County Extension Web site at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/nicollet>. For more information, contact an Extension office in your area or Hachfeld at (507) 934-0360 or hachf002@umn.edu

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Web, V2, V4, V5, A2

hach11243

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November 21, 2003

It's time to stand up to bullies

We may think of the school bully as an unavoidable, innocent part of growing up. And too often, bullying happens around adults who don't do anything about it.

But bullying is serious. It's been linked directly to violence, crime and death, says Jodi Dworkin, family social scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Bullying now affects one out of three children in grades six to ten. Researchers say there are three forms of bullying: physical, verbal and psychological. Psychological bullying involves spreading rumors, manipulating social relationships and engaging in social exclusion, extortion or intimidation. Verbal and psychological bullying are just as hurtful to youth as physical bullying.

Several organizations are emphasizing "anti-bullying" educational and advocacy programs, Dworkin says. One of the latest to emerge is "Fight Crime: Invest in Kids," an organization of over 2,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, prosecutors and crime survivors dedicated to preventing crime and violence.

The organization recently released a report called "Bullying Prevention Is Crime Prevention," and you can find the details at <http://www.fightcrime.org> on the Internet. The report shows:

--For children in sixth through tenth grade, nearly one in six —3.2 million—are victims of bullying each year. An additional 3.7 million bully other children.

--Kids who are bullied are five times more likely to be depressed than other kids, and also far more likely to be suicidal.

--Bullies are much more likely than other kids to carry a weapon to school.

--A study in Norway found that four of every ten boys who bullied others as kids had three or more convictions by the time they turned 24.

You can also find several references to bullying at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/family>, and then click on "Preventing Violence in our Schools." One of the references is a Penn State publication titled "Bullying: What Parents Can Do About It."

The Penn State publication says bullying can be prevented if students, parents, teachers and school administrators are proactive. Strategies to prevent or stop bullying include: raising awareness about bullying, improving student-to-student relations, getting involved to stop intimidation, developing clear rules against bullying behavior, and supporting and protecting victims of bullying.

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Web, V4, V5, F1

dworkin11123

Source: Jodi Dworkin (612) 624-3732, jdworkin@che.umn.eduEditor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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November 21, 2003

Crop share rent agreements require attention to details

Crop share rent arrangements takes some extra bookkeeping and attention to details—for both landlords and tenants. The landlord needs to get even more involved in details of the farming operation than with flexible rents, says Gary Hachfeld, regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The landlord pays some of the operating costs based on the percentage split of the crop share arrangement. In addition, the landlord receives a percentage of the government payments, again based on the percentage split. Hachfeld says a fair crop share arrangement is one in which the landlord and tenant share the produced crop in the same percentage as they contribute production inputs (such as land, machinery, seed and fertilizer).

You can find a chart that Hachfeld has prepared listing the most typical crop share rental arrangements for South Central Minnesota. It's in the recent "Land Rental Survey" publication, available at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/nicollet>, the Nicollet County Extension site.

The chart shows the portion of crop received by landlord and tenant (either 1/3-2/3, 40-60, or 50-50, and the portion of operating costs paid by each. Normally, the tenant hauls the landlord share once with the area(field to building site or field to town), each party provides their own storage and the tenant provides all labor to grow the crop.

"A crop share rental agreement should be put into writing, signed by both landlord and tenant, and notarized," Hachfeld says. For more information, contact your local Extension office or Hachfeld at (507) 934-0360, e-mail hachf002@umn.edu.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, V5, A2

hach11153

Source: Gary Hachfeld (507) 934-0360, hachf002@umn.eduEditor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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November 21, 2003

Both landlord, tenant must be comfortable with flexible cash rents

Landlords must become more active in the farm operation with flexible cash rental agreements, opposed to straight cash rent. And that means both the operator-tenant and landlord feel comfortable with the flexible cash rent agreement.

In addition, landlords must consider whether they want the additional risk that goes with flexible cash rent agreements, says Gary Hachfeld, regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

A flexible cash lease has all the provisions of a standard cash rental agreement, with one additional component: the rent paid is adjusted upward or downward based on crop prices, crop yields or some combination of both. If the crop prices and yields are greater than expected, rent increases. But if prices and yields are less than expected, rent decreases.

This lease allows both the landlord and operator to share in production and price benefits, as well as production and price risk. Hachfeld has developed a number of different sample calculations to help you make a decision on flexible cash rents. You can find them in an article he's written in the recent "Land Rental Survey" publication, available from the Nicollet County Extension site at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/nicollet>.

The landlord and operator should establish both a top and bottom rent price when using flexible cash rental arrangements, Hachfeld says. An operator should be entitled to all income above a certain point. Likewise, the landlord should not absorb all of the risk in a bad year. Hachfeld says one approach might be to set a \$15-\$25 limit, both up and down, from the base rent agreed on. For more information, contact your local Extension office or Hachfeld at (507) 934-0360, e-mail hachf002@umn.edu.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, V5, A2

hach11143

Source: Gary Hachfeld (507) 934-0360, hachf002@umn.edu

Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

Misc
4/1/03

November 14, 2003

No need to adjust nitrogen rates for wheat varieties

You don't need to adjust fertilizer nitrogen rates for different varieties of hard red spring wheat, according to new University of Minnesota research.

The issue arises since Minnesota wheat growers are interested in nitrogen fertilizer efficiency for both environmental and economical reasons. And this interest in improving the efficiency of fertilizer nitrogen raised questions about matching nitrogen rates to specific varieties, says George Rehm, soil scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"This was a logical question since the protein percentage in grain varies in modern varieties," Rehm says. Since nitrogen is a major component of protein, logic might say that some wheat varieties require more nitrogen for optimum yields than others.

To find some answers, field research supported by the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers was conducted with the cooperation of six wheat growers in 2002 and 2003. In these field trials, five rates of nitrogen were applied to three modern varieties (Knudson, Alsen and Oxen) and one traditional choice (P2375).

Wheat yields in 2003 were excellent, Rehm says. At three of four sites, optimum yield was in the range of 100 bu. per acre. The optimum rate of fertilizer nitrogen was about 120 lb. per acre when wheat followed crops other than sugarbeets and soybeans. The optimum rate decreased to about 100 lb. per acre when wheat followed a soybean crop.

The study also illustrated the value of nitrogen in the tops of sugarbeets, Rehm says. At this site, the wheat yield was 100 bu. per acre; but use of fertilizer nitrogen did not increase yield.

"At all test sites, the optimum rate of fertilizer nitrogen was the same for all varieties. Therefore, there appears to be no need to adjust recommended rates of fertilizer N for variety," Rehm says.

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Web, V2, F4, X7

rehm10303

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Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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MSC
Adip

November 14, 2003

Talk with teenagers about school shootings

Although we can all recall news reports of school shootings, murders in schools are lower than in previous years.

"It's more likely that your child will get killed by lightning than murdered at school," says Jodi Dworkin, family social scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. However, it's important to talk to teens about school violence and listen to their thoughts and concerns.

Dworkin has written these tips for talking to your teen in an article that's part of "Teen Talk: A survival guide for parents of teenagers."

- It's okay to express fear at what has been happening and compassion for the students and families who have survived these horrors.
- Explain the distinction between being different from other students and having severe problems that lead to extreme violence.
- Express to your teen how important it is to let you or another adult know if they hear another child threatening violence towards himself or others.
- Talk about what it might feel like to be an outcast at school, and find out if your teen is having trouble fitting in.
- Teens are aware of social issues, so talk with them about bigger issues like gun control and what they can do to help keep their school safe.
- Talk with your kids about solving problems constructively; help them to find appropriate solutions to problems without using violence.

More details on what we know about the teens who are committing these crimes, how schools can help keep kids safe and warning signs in teens are available at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/family>.

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Web, V4, V5, F1

dworkin11103

Source: Jodi Dworkin (612) 624-3732, jdworkin@che.umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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November 11, 2003

Tax law changes have 'enormous' effect on farmers

Farmers and their tax preparers will want to check a new publication from the University of Minnesota Extension Service. It's titled "Ag Tax Update: Changes in Tax Law, Guidelines, Procedures and Strategies," and was written by Extension educators Gary Hachfeld and Robert Anderson.

"There have been several tax law changes in the past year, and they have an enormous effect on farmers," Hachfeld and Anderson wrote.

The 11-page publication has major sections on taxation of government program payments, cost-sharing payments for capital expenditures and changes in depreciation. You'll also find details on self-employment tax changes, deferred contract sales and alternative minimum tax issues, income averaging, capital gains tax changes, and disaster payments and crop insurance indemnity payments.

In addition, there's information on sale of livestock due to weather, wind easements, federal individual tax rates, marriage penalty relief and federal child tax credit. You'll also find Minnesota individual tax rates, corporate rates for 2003, dividend tax procedures and farm family tax and retirement provisions.

Withdrawals from retirement plans for first time home purchases are now allowed—the money must be used to purchase a first house for you or a relative. There's no 10 percent penalty assessed against funds withdrawn for this purpose.

The "Ag Tax Update" is available from the Nicollet County Extension site at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/nicollet>. Check with your local Extension office if you have questions or don't have Internet access.

For more information, contact your local Extension office or Hachfeld at (507) 934-0360, e-mail hachf002@umn.edu.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, V5, A2

hach11073

Source: Gary Hachfeld (507) 934-0360, hachf002@umn.eduEditor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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Extension

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NEWS & INFORMATION

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

November 11, 2003

Follow simple hand washing tips to prevent foodborne illness

Compare your home to a small restaurant for a moment--would you want to get written up in the newspaper if your guests became ill from eating Thanksgiving dinner ?

Several outbreaks of foodborne illness have been reported around the country lately, says Carolyn Thomas, food safety specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. In Pennsylvania, 130 people became ill after eating food that had been prepared by a worker who had failed to wash his/her hands before handling food.

A New England newspaper editorial suggested that all food handlers should know the answers to simple food preparation questions such as, "Before serving food how long should an employee spend in hand washing? How hot should the water be? How cold should the refrigerator be to store perishable foods safely? At what temperatures do microorganisms that cause foodborne illnesses grow best?" (Just so you know, hand washing should be done with soap for at least 20 seconds in 100-degree water. Keep the refrigerator at or below 41 degrees F. Bacteria grow best between 70 and 125 degrees F.)

"These are all in the federal and Minnesota codes for food workers," Thomas says. "Fail them and your customers—or Thanksgiving guests--could have an unpleasant or even dangerous dining experience."

Hand washing is the single most effective method to prevent foodborne illness, during the holidays and at all times of the year. Bacteria and viruses that can make us ill are in the air, on doorknobs, broom handles and telephones. Every time we cough or sneeze, we may expel microorganisms that could make someone ill. Catch it in your hand? Use the bathroom and not

wash well afterwards? Run your hand through your hair? Scratch your elbow? Do these while preparing a lovely Thanksgiving dinner for your family and friends and you've just invited them to a potentially unpleasant meal.

"Many times we feel ill after we overeat. Sometimes it's truly due to overeating, but other times it may be due to poor food preparation habits," Thomas says. Other rules to remember this Thanksgiving:

--Keep hot food hot and cold food cold for serving.

--Minimize the time bowls sit on the table or in the kitchen after everyone has eaten. Get the warm leftovers into shallow storage containers and into the refrigerator. Divide large quantities into several containers so the temperature in each will decrease quickly.

--Try not to overload the refrigerator with so much food that cooling time is slowed. Allow plenty of air circulation during cooling, then cover the foods.

The Minnesota code for cooling potentially hazardous foods specifies that the temperature of the food must drop from 140 degrees F to 70 degrees F within two hours. That will likely happen while you are enjoying the meal. When you get up to clear the table, use the code guidelines of dropping the temperature from 70 degrees F to 41 degrees F within four more hours.

What are potentially hazardous foods? Cooked meat, poultry, eggs, milk dishes (including custard and pumpkin pie) and starches such as rice, potatoes, noodles, gravy, squash, stuffing/dressing and sauces. "Even gelatin-based products can provide a fine place for disease-causing organisms to grow," Thomas says.

Enjoy your holiday meals with family and friends—pretend you're running a restaurant and keep your name out of the newspaper!

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Web, V4, V5, V7, F7

thomas11103

Source: Carolyn P. Thomas (612) 624-4793, cthomas@umn.edu

Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

November 5, 2003

Congresswoman McCollum to keynote River Summit Nov. 13

Minnesota Congresswoman Betty McCollum will give the keynote address at the third annual River Summit Thursday, Nov. 13, 2003. It runs from 8:45 a.m. until 1 p.m. at the Science Museum of Minnesota.

Emcee for the River Summit is KARE-11 TV personality Belinda Jensen. Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Commissioner Sheryl Corrigan is also on the program.

Over 200 volunteer stream monitors, natural resource professionals, and policy-makers from around the Twin Cities metropolitan region will attend, learn about the health of metro area streams and celebrate the region's rivers. If you're interested in attending, call Mary Gullickson at (612) 625-6781 for details.

Participants will also attend one of several breakout sessions, where they will have an opportunity to learn in more detail about rivers in specific watersheds. Each breakout session will report back to the entire group in the final session.

The River Summit is sponsored annually by the Volunteer Stream Monitoring Partnership (VSMP), a program of the University of Minnesota's Water Resources Center. VSMP supports and coordinates volunteer stream monitoring throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Nearly 2,000 volunteers participate in VSMP's network of stream monitors.

The University of Minnesota Extension Service Water Quality Program is part of the Water Resources Center. Check <http://www.extension.umn.edu/water> for more information on water quality programs.

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Web, V7, C4, T2

liukk11045

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NEWS & INFORMATION

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

November 4, 2003

Farmers and landlords: check the new Extension Service land rent survey

Small to modest cash rent increases are projected for next year in a new land rent survey by the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The survey of farmers and landlords in 27 southern Minnesota counties projects increases of 0.49 percent to 2.41 percent per acre for 2004.

The survey had close to 3,700 responses representing 522,000 acres of land, according to Gary Hachfeld, regional educator with Extension. Data is listed for each township and includes the number of parcels, tillable acres from responses to the survey, the actual average 2003 rent, estimated 2004 rent and the estimated 2004 rental range. The report is available from the Nicollet County Extension site at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/county/nicollet>. Check with your local Extension office if you have questions or don't have Internet access.

The report indicates trends in rental rates, Hachfeld says. "But the data is not meant to establish, determine, set or fix rental rates," he says.

"Actual cash rental rates should be based on projected returns from crop production, typical cash rent rates in the area and other factors," Hachfeld says. Items such as use of buildings, upgraded drainage systems and rent to family members can influence rental rates.

Farm rental rates are more accurate if they're individualized, rather than generalized, Hachfeld says in the survey report. Try to use all available data, such as Crop Equivalency Rating (CER) values, historical production, drainage, and soil fertility and production economics. In addition, if there are fewer than three to five parcels of land reported per township, "be a bit cautious about the land rental rate number."

Sample results from four of the counties are as follows. All figures represent tillable acres:

--Nicollet, 124 responses representing 21,312 acres. Actual 2003 rent was \$111.63 and the estimated 2004 average was \$112.85, a 1.09 percent increase.

--Wabasha, 162 responses representing 15,973 acres. Actual 2003 rent was \$87.24 and the estimated 2004 average was \$88.32, a 1.23 percent increase.

--Faribault, 467 responses representing 66,418 acres. Actual rent was \$111.82 and the estimated 2004 average was \$112.56, a 0.66 percent increase.

--Rock, 178 responses representing 26, 202 acres. Actual rent was \$107.14 and the estimated 2004 average was \$108.90, a 1.64 percent increase.

The report also has a cash rent worksheet and a detailed list of factors to consider when calculating rates.

For more information, contact your local Extension office or Hachfeld at (507) 934-0360, e-mail hachf002@umn.edu.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, A2

hach11033

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November 4, 2003

Parents of teenagers: Get your 'Survival Guide'

"A Survival Guide for Parents of Teenagers" will give you ideas galore about how to talk with your teenagers.

Although you may not think so, your child probably cares a great deal about what you think. "You play an important role in shaping your teenager's behavior," says Jodi Dworkin, family social scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

For example, teens who say their parents warned them about drug use and set clear rules are less likely to use drugs. Parents' and teenagers' morals, future aspirations and self-control are typically quite similar, Dworkin says. Talking encourages family togetherness and increases the likelihood teens will share parents' values.

There's apt to be some conflict, but "your goal as a parent should be to solve conflict in a positive way," says Dworkin, the author of five fact sheets that comprise the "Survival Guide for Parents of Teenagers." You can find them on the Internet at

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/familydevelopment/DE7938.html>.

They're also available in sets of 25 from the Extension Distribution Center. Call (612) 624-4900 or (800) 876-8636 for ordering information. Ask for item 07938.

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Web, V4, F1

dworkin10243

Source: Jodi Dworkin (612) 624-3732, jdworkin@che.umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

October 31, 2003

Water bottles need to be washed before reusing them

Once they're opened, water bottles become contaminated very quickly. Commercial water bottles are made with plastic designed for one-time use. They're made for recycling, not reuse.

The water bottles sold in sporting good stores are made from a more durable plastic. They're a better alternative and are designed to be used over and over. The opening of the bottle is wider, making it easier to clean.

If you insist on reusing a "one-time" water bottle, it needs a good daily washing, says Suzanne Driessen, regional food science educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. If you refill a commercial water bottle, or any container for that matter, wash it every day to prevent bacteria from contaminating this healthy beverage.

Wash the bottle with hot, soapy water and rinse well. Use a bottlebrush to clean in and around the neck of the bottle. Scrub the lids with a brush. Allow the water bottle and cap to air dry completely between uses.

Because of the narrow neck of most commercial water bottles, sanitizing your water bottle in the dishwasher isn't the best option because water can't get up into the bottle for a thorough cleaning.

Most people use their hands to open the caps of the water bottle. Another basic but important part of keeping your water bottle germ free is washing your hands well after using the

bathroom!. Water bottles can be safely reused if you wash your hands and the bottle well and often.

An article in the August 2003 issue of "Environmental Nutrition," <http://www.environmentalnutrition.com>, should convince you of the importance of washing water bottles. Researchers at the University of Calgary collected 75 water bottles from elementary students. Coliform bacteria, typically from fecal material—were found in nine percent of bottles tested. Unclean hands were used to open the cap of the water bottle.

Various hetrotrophic bacteria, which are often present in the mouth, were found in 13 percent of the samples. Salvia and food particles can get into the water bottle and if left sitting at room temperature for several hours, bacteria can grow to harmful levels.

For more food safety information for both consumers and food service personnel, go to <http://www.extension.umn.edu/foodsafety>.

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Web, V4, V5, F7

drisen10293

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Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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October 31, 2003

You don't need to match nitrogen rates to wheat varieties

New research results say there's no reason to tailor nitrogen rates for wheat to new, improved varieties. George Rehm, soil scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, says trials at four locations in northwestern Minnesota were conducted with this reasoning in mind:

Some new varieties have higher protein content than others. Since nitrogen is a key component of protein, it's reasonable to think that differences in grain protein could translate to differences in nitrogen uptake. And, differences in uptake of nitrogen could mean that specific rates of fertilizer nitrogen should be matched to individual varieties.

However, yield information from the study provides good evidence that the same rate of nitrogen should be recommended for all varieties of hard red spring, wheat, including the new improved varieties. The four varieties used were P2375, representing an old variety; and Alsen, Knudson and Oxen representing newer, improved varieties. Varieties for the study were suggested by several wheat growers.

"The results also illustrate the importance of nitrogen to economic wheat production," Rehm says. At the University's Northwest Research and Outreach Center at Crookston, the optimum rate of 120 pounds of nitrogen per acre nearly doubled yields of all varieties when compared to the control. And at wheat producer sites near Fisher and Fosston, Minn., the optimum fertilizer rates produced yield increases of 30 and 25 bushels per acre, respectively.

Rehm says with wheat at \$3.50 a bushel and nitrogen at 20 cents per pound, the return on investment was \$67.50 per acre and \$101 per acre at the Fisher and Fosston sites.

The Minnesota Wheat Growers Association provided financial support for the research. More detailed information is available in the Oct. 27, 2003 issue of Minnesota Crop News at <http://www.plpa.agri.umn.edu/extension/news%20releases/03MNCN32.htm>.

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Web, V2, F4, X7

rehm10283

Source: George Rehm (612) 625-6210
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Should women be more concerned than men? Before menopause, women normally have higher HDL cholesterol levels than men. It is believed that high HDL cholesterol is protective against heart disease and that pre-menopausal women are somewhat "immune" to the disease. After menopause, most women normally have a decrease in HDL cholesterol and an increase in LDL cholesterol. These changes in LDL and HDL cholesterol are linked to heart disease and higher triglyceride levels. High triglycerides, whether in women or men, could indicate abnormalities or could simply reflect changes in blood lipoproteins and cholesterol that we all experience with age. If a person has high triglycerides and a low HDL level, he or she likely needs further examination by a physician.

What should I do? First, before having blood drawn for a triglyceride check, it is absolutely essential that you fast several hours (preferably overnight). Fasting is not necessary to measure cholesterol, but it is for triglyceride. Second, have the test repeated. Triglyceride levels can vary so you'll want to be sure your measurement is accurate. Third, tell your physician to also measure LDL and HDL cholesterol. A triglyceride measurement by itself is useless unless accompanied by a complete lipoprotein cholesterol determination.

Only after learning your levels of these fats can you make an informed health decision. The treatment for high triglycerides is similar to the treatment for high cholesterol: quit smoking, control blood pressure, lose weight, and exercise regularly. Since studies over the years have shown that high carbohydrate diets tend to raise triglyceride levels, the health care provider may also give specific dietary advice. Remember--both triglycerides and cholesterol increase as we age; so the decisions about whether and how to treat high levels must be made on an individual basis.

More information is available in an article by Extension food scientist Craig Hassel in the September 2003, issue of "Nutrinet" at <http://fscn.che.umn.edu/nutrinet/>.

(Marilyn Adams Maiser is a regional health and nutrition educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service).

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Web, V4, V5, H2

adams09153

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October 28, 2003

High triglyceride levels usually point to other abnormalities

Confused about blood triglyceride levels? Here's review of what they are and how they relate to heart disease.

What are triglycerides? Triglycerides are fat! Lard, shortening, and cooking oils are all examples of pure triglycerides. They can be of plant or animal origin. When we eat these products, the triglycerides end up in our blood. Even when we don't eat them, triglycerides are present in our blood. Our bodies make them from excess carbohydrate in our diet.

Are triglycerides and cholesterol related? Triglycerides and cholesterol are different types of fats, yet they are often mentioned in the same breath. They are always found together in the bloodstream. Chances are if you have high triglycerides, you probably have high cholesterol, although there are exceptions. They also coexist in animal fat. So when we eat meat, dairy, eggs and other animal products we consume both cholesterol and triglycerides together. Cholesterol doesn't exist in plants and so it's not present in fats and oils derived from plants

What are normal levels of triglycerides? Triglyceride levels in the blood vary a great deal, but the "normal" range is at or below 150 mg/dL. From 150 to 199 mg/dl is called "borderline-high." A triglyceride level of 200-499 mg/dl is considered "high," and over 500 mg/dl is labeled "very high." Keep in mind; these are only guidelines to help physicians. The ranges were developed based on the entire population and may not apply to individuals. A person can make an informed decision about his or her blood triglyceride level with the help of a physician or other qualified health professional.

Are high triglycerides dangerous? High triglycerides in the blood often indicate an abnormality of some sort; rarely do high triglycerides occur independent of other abnormalities. Most often high triglycerides are associated with an increase in LDL cholesterol (the "bad" one) and a decrease in HDL cholesterol (the "good" one). In older women, the relationship between high triglycerides, low HDL cholesterol and heart disease is quite strong. In fact, it is so strong that a high triglyceride level in post-menopausal women is now considered by many as an *independent risk factor* for heart disease. Men, younger women and children could view their blood triglyceride level as a "marker" of their blood cholesterol status.

October 28, 2003

'Teen Link' gives you fast access to issues facing teens

Teens, their parents, teachers and anyone interested in teen development can find hundreds of good references at "Teen Link," <http://www.teenlink.umn.edu>

The Teen Link database has references to other web sites and abstracts of books and journal articles, says Jodi Dworkin, family social scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. It covers both practical issues and academic topics. You can use it to learn more about an issue, to answer questions, for guidance in negotiating issues or to help guide program development.

The Teen Link site is organized into topics, including parenting, school, family, friends, sex, risk-taking, eating disorders and alcohol. There are also sections on African American, Somali and Southeast Asian families.

"All topics are being constantly updated to represent the best of what's out there," Dworkin says.

Teen Link is a joint venture of the University of Illinois Extension Service and the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

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Web, V4, V5, F1

dworkin10273

Source: Jodi Dworkin (612) 624-3732, jdworkin@che.umn.edu

Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

October 24, 2003

Safe meat handling program for hunters is just in time for deer season

Deer hunters should be "safety-conscious but not alarmed" about chronic wasting disease (CWD). And a satellite broadcast that will give all the details of safe meat handling for hunters is scheduled Monday, Nov. 3, 7-9 p.m.

The "It's No Game" program will originate from the South Central Technical College in North Mankato and will be broadcast at some 20 locations in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Topics include field dressing for safety, transporting and processing of the large game animal, CWD in deer and elk, anthrax in bear and Lyme disease. Viewers will also learn about safe food handling of the game meat, then cooking and preserving it for later use by making jerky, canning and freezing.

Presenters will include experts from the University of Minnesota Extension Service, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Minnesota Department of Health, Department of Natural Resources and the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association. Speakers include Heidi Kasselborg, epidemiologist from the MDA and Suzanne Driessen and Roselyn Biermaier from the Extension Service, who will cover safe food handling and preserving. Meat processors will perform the field dressing.

The field dressing and processing demonstration will be narrated by Mark Wm. Johnson, executive director of the Minnesota Deer Hunters Association. Participants from satellite viewing sites will be able to ask questions via fax. Call your Extension office or (507) 537-6702 to find the downlink site nearest you and to get registration materials. The cost is \$10 per person or \$25 for an immediate family of three or more. To register, visit www.extension.umn.edu/foodsafety, or call (507) 537-6702

Advance registrations and checks should be sent to Connie Schwartau, 607 West Main St.,
Marshall, Minn., 56258. Her e-mail address is schwa047@umn.edu. Register by Oct. 30 to be included
in

-more-

a drawing for prizes the night of the program. Walk-ins are welcome, but will not be included in the
drawing.

Broadcast Locations:

Albert Lea
Riverland Community College Lecture Hall

Alexandria
Douglas County Extension Office
720 Fillmore
Suite B090

Andover
Anoka County Extension Office
550 Bunker Lake Blvd NW

Blue Earth
Faribault County Extension Meeting Room
Courthouse Annex

Dodge Center
Ag Center Meeting Room
42 E. Main Street

Elk River
Sherburne County Government Center
Commissioners Room
13880 Highway 10

Faribault
Rice County Government Service Building
320 NW 3rd

Hallock
Kittson County Courthouse
410 5th Street South

Hutchinson
McLeod County Extension Office
840 Century Ave

Little Falls
Morrison County Government Center
Meeting Room 1
213 First Ave SE

Madison
Prairie 5 Conference Room
422 5th Ave

Maplewood
Ramsey County Historical Barn
2020 White Bear Avenue

Marshall
Lyon County Courthouse
607 West Main St
Room 4, 3rd Floor

Moorhead
Clay County Family Service Center
715 11th St North

Two Harbors
Lake County Law Enforcement Center
Courthouse

Willmar
Health and Human Services Building
2200 23rd St NE
Room 1070

Winona
Winona County Extension Office
202 West 3rd St

Wisconsin Locations:

Eau Claire County Extension Office

227 1st St. W

Altoona

Contact: Dianne Weber (715) 839-4712, dianne.weber@ces.uwex.edu

Lac Courte Oreilles Ojibwa Community College

13466 W. Treponia Rd.

Hayward

Contact: Monica White (715) 634-4790 ext. 126, mwhite@LCO-college.edu

Chippewa County Extension

711 North Bridge St.

Chippewa Falls, Wisconsin

Contact: Mary Geissler (715) 726-7950, mary.geissler@ces.uwex.edu

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, V5MN, H8

thomas10213

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October 17, 2003

Don't overpay taxes on government farm payments

If you're a farmer enrolled in government farm programs, it's a good idea to get to know your accountant very well.

Taxation procedures for government programs are complex and some of the tax laws have changed, says Gary Hachfeld, regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. In some cases, farmers run the risk of over-reporting income, resulting in an increase in the amount of tax they owe.

It can be especially tricky if producers with crops under CCC loan change between the loan or income method for tax purposes. Reporting the gain is calculated differently for each method, Hachfeld says.

You need good records—especially when using the “CCC loan as income method for tax reporting.” When doing so, Hachfeld says there's a high probability of reporting too much income for tax purposes.

A newly revised publication has the details to help farmers, accountants and tax preparers get to the bottom line. It's titled “Taxation of Market Gain and LDP Income, Direct and Counter-Cyclical Payment Income.” You can find it on the Nicollet County Extension Web site at www.extension.umn.edu/county/nicollet.

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Web, V2, V4, A2

hahf10153

Source: Gary Hachfeld (507) 931-6800 or (800) 347-5044, hachf002@umn.edu
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October 14, 2003

Learning the grain marketing game

“It’s the best and most practical marketing plan that I’ve seen presented to farmers.”

That’s how Jim Palmer, executive director of the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council, describes a grain marketing workshop series called “Winning the Game.” The University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Center for Farm financial Management (CFFM) have presented the workshops around the state the past three years.

“It’s documented that two-thirds of all the grain produced in the U.S. is sold in the bottom one-third of the market,” says regional Extension educator Gary Hachfeld. “Furthermore, farmers tell us they attend a number of marketing workshops with speakers who discuss all aspects of marketing. This range of concepts confuses farmers and the result is no change in marketing behavior.”

Hachfeld says the workshops feature one or two marketing concepts the first year and add a new concept the second year. This avoids overwhelming farmers with information.

Palmer says the workshops give grain producers a way to develop and implement a marketing plan to get an overall higher return on their grain.

Grant County farmer Ron Giese has participated in two workshop series and says “they are very informative—I learned a lot.”

The workshops emphasize seasonal price patterns and using Federal Crop Insurance protection to sell a crop before harvest without worrying about weather wiping out the crop. “We had been selling 30-40 percent of our crop in July and August before harvest, and we’ve increased this to 75-80 percent,” Giese says.

Another participant says, “finally I have found a marketing plan that is simple to use and understand.”

Bill Phillips (The Phillips Agency) is a program sponsor. “Normally, when you do something for your customers, you seldom hear from them,” he says. “Last year, 65 people attended our “Winning the Game” session and I heard from 55 of them about how valuable this program was to their farming operation.”

Based on program impact evaluations, 87 percent of workshop participants purchased crop insurance revenue protection. “This is crucial to making the pre-harvest plan work,” Hachfeld says.

A total of 78 percent of program participants develop and implement a pre-harvest plan. As a result, Hachfeld says, the net financial impact of the program this past year was over \$2.6 million, or \$4,278 per farmer participant.

For more information, contact Hachfeld at (507) 934-0360, e-mail hachf002@umn.edu. Or, check with the CFFM at (800) 234-1111, Web site <http://www.cffm.umn.edu>.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, A2

hach10143

Source: Gary Hachfeld (507) 934-0360, hachf002@umn.edu
Writer: Joseph Kurtz
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October 10, 2003

The plan is to make 4-H clubs even better

Clubs have been the foundation of Minnesota 4-H for 100 years. "Clubs are noted for developing leaders and citizens who contribute to their communities," says Dale Blyth, director of the Center for 4-H Youth Development, University of Minnesota Extension Service

"Clubs are such a good idea that we are working on new ways to make them more accessible for youth from ages five through 18," Blyth says. Youth development educators have been studying lifestyles of youth and families to develop new club models as well as new activities, projects and funding partners.

4-H educators have also been working to incorporate the cultures of new immigrant populations into the club concept. New cultures bring strengths to club programs in both urban and rural areas, Blyth says.

What do 4-H clubs actually do for kids? A random sample survey of 4-H members in 2000 found that youth in clubs reported a greater sense of belonging, quality relationships with adults, contributing back to communities and active parent involvement. 4-H club members were also more likely to volunteer in their communities and be involved in sports and fine arts.

The same survey found youth involved in 4-H were less likely to have spent six hours or more per week watching television or playing video/computer games. They were also less likely to have stolen something, damaged property, smoked cigarettes, consumed alcohol or ridden a car where the driver was drinking. You can see results of the 4-H impact study at

<http://www.fourh.umn.edu/evaluation>.

Of the 168,000 Minnesota youth who participated in Extension's Youth Development Program in 2002, about 16 percent or 26,500 were in clubs. The most popular projects are indoor and flower gardening, arts and crafts, photography, foods and nutrition, large animals, wood and metal shop, and clothing and textiles.

"4-H clubs have a wonderful history in both rural and urban Minnesota and we are working to make them even better in the next 100 years," Blyth says.

For more information on 4-H clubs, see <http://www.mn4h.org>.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, Y1

anrpt.4hclbs

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October 3, 2003

Minnesotans receive 13 sustainable agriculture grants

Thirteen competitive grants have been awarded to agriculture producers, researchers, and educators in Minnesota in 2003 by the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR-SARE) program.

The 13 NCR-SARE grants in Minnesota totaled over half a million dollars--\$556,141, says Bill Wilcke, engineer with the University of Minnesota Extension Service and NCR-SARE regional coordinator. NCR-SARE awards grants in four program categories: producer, research and education, graduate student, and professional development.

Minnesota claimed four research and education grants, three of which went to researchers or educators at the University of Minnesota, St. Paul: Paul Peterson for his 36-month research project, "Enhancing Pasture Productivity by Improving Winter Survival of Perennial Ryegrass," Helene Murray for her 36-month project, "Experiential Learning Opportunities for Graduate and Undergraduate Students," and Francisco Diez-Gonzalez for his 24-month project, "Microbial Safety of Organic Fruits and Vegetables." Meg Moynihan of the Minnesota Department of Agriculture received a grant for her 24-month project, "*Livestock Your Way* Series Publications: Producer Guides to Goal Setting and Management Options for Dairy and Poultry Enterprises in the Upper Midwest."

Two U of M-St. Paul graduate students were awarded NCR-SARE grants to further their projects: Marjorie Ross for "Comparing Vesicular-Arbuscular Mycorrhizal Colonization Versus

Organic Strawberry Production Systems,” and Ebener Ballinger for “Systems Evaluation of the Components of Reduced Input Dairy Farms.”

Six Minnesota ag producers received funding from the producer grant program. Winona LaDuke, Ponsford, won a grant for “Restoration of Traditional Anishinaabeg Agricultural Practices, Utilizing the Three Sisters Gardening Method.” Tim Gieseke of Buffalo got funding for his project, “Using a Vertical Shoot Position Trellis and Micro-Nutrients to Reduce Labor and Increase Fruit Set.” In St. Paul, Sally Auger’s “Dream of Wild Health, a Project of Peta Wakan Tipi,” received a NCR-SARE grant.

Patricia Altrichter, Randall, won a grant for “Developing a Saskatoon Berry Market in the Upper Midwest.” Brian Fredericksen of Watertown received funding for “Adding Value to Honey Products Through the Use of Melissopalynology.” And, David Sjostrom of Pelican Rapids was awarded a grant for his project, “Yield and Feeding Value of Annual Crops Planted for Emergency Forage in Minnesota.”

The professional development program awards funding to projects that “educate educators.” In Minnesota, NCR-SARE chose one 24-month project, “Smarter Farmers, Smarter Lenders: Educating Toward a Sustainable Community.” The project coordinator is Caroline van Schaik of the Land Stewardship Project.

The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education program is USDA-funded, and promotes environmentally, economically, and socially sustainable agricultural research and education projects.

#

Web, V2MN, V4MN, P1

wilcke10023

Source: Bill Wilcke (612) 625-8205, wilck001@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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September 30, 2003

For hogs, low test weight doesn't reduce feeding value of corn

With lower test weight corn expected this fall, do we need to worry that its feeding value for hogs will be reduced? Apparently not, according to research at several universities.

Corn that's low in test weight appears to have the same feeding value for hogs as normal test weight corn, says Lee Johnston, animal scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. At the University's West Central Research and Outreach Center at Morris, Johnston compared "normal" test weight corn of 57 pounds per bushel to lower test weights ranging from 47.5 to 49.5 pounds per bushel.

"There was no statistically significant difference in daily gain, feed intake or feed efficiency between normal and low test weight corn," Johnston says. Pigs started the trial averaging 77 pounds and ended at 229 pounds.

Researchers at Michigan State University evaluated corn with test weights ranging from 42 to 59 pounds per bushel. Pigs started the four-week trial weighing 29 pounds, and corn test weight had no effect on growth performance.

Research in South Dakota using growing-finishing pigs and in Canada using nursery pig showed similar results. In both cases, Johnston says the researchers could not demonstrate any consistently negative or positive effect of low test weight corn on pig performance.

If corn is not contaminated with mycotoxins, and other factors don't compromise corn quality, low test weight doesn't seem to hurt feed value. "Corn with test weights as low as 40 pounds per bushel apparently supports pig performance as well as test weights of 56 to 59 pounds per bushel," Johnston says.

#

Web, V2, V4, S2

johns09253

Source: Lee Johnston (320) 589-1711, johnstlj@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

September 30, 2003

'It's No Game' just in time for the deer hunting season

A satellite broadcast of "It's No Game," a safe meat handling program for hunters, will be presented Monday, Nov. 3 from 7-9 p.m.

Field dressing for safety, plus transporting and processing of the large game animal, will be demonstrated. Current issues, including chronic wasting disease (CWD) in deer and elk, will be emphasized in the field dressing presentation.

Other conditions, including anthrax in bear and Lyme disease, will also be addressed. Viewers will also learn about safe food handling of the game meat, then cooking and preserving it for later use by making jerky, canning and freezing.

Presenters will include experts from the University of Minnesota Extension Service and a number of state agencies, including the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA), Minnesota Department of Health and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR). Speakers include Heidi Kasselborg, epidemiologist from the MDA; Gary Hart from the DNR; and Suzanne Driessen and Roselyn Biermaier from the Extension Service, who will cover safe food handling and preserving. Meat processors will perform the field dressing.

The program will originate live from Mankato. Locations throughout the state are being established where the satellite broadcast will be viewed. Participants from satellite viewing sites will be able to ask questions via fax as they learn safe handling of wild game. Call your Extension office or (507) 537-6702 to find the downlink site nearest you and to get registration materials.

Participation cost is \$10 per person or \$25 for an immediate family of three or more. Advance registrations and checks should be sent to Connie Schwartau, Food Science Extension Program Coordinator, 607 West Main St., Marshall, Minn., 56258. Schwartau can also be reached by telephone at (507) 537-6702 or by e-mail at schwa047@umn.edu.

Register by Oct. 30 to be included in a drawing for prizes the night of the program. Walk-ins are welcome, but will not be included in the drawing.

Quotes below are from the 2002 program in response to the question "What was the most important information gained from this workshop?"

--"I learned just what parts of the deer not to disturb: the spine, lymph nodes, eyes and brain."

--"This course covered so many aspects that would be good for a new hunter or as a refresher course. Maybe the program should be mandatory for all hunters at least once!"

--"More diseases are a greater risk than CWD even though they receive less media attention. Some of my ways of (field) dressing need to be changed after all the years of doing it "one way.""

--"I have a much better idea of how to handle game meats more safely and how to preserve and cook venison for the best results."

#

Web, V2MN, V4MN, V5MN, H8

thomas09223

Source: Carolyn P. Thomas (612) 624-4793, cthomas@umn.edu
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September 26, 2003

Woodland Conference is Oct. 11 at St. John's Arboretum

Minnesota's annual Woodland Owners and Users Conference will be held Saturday, Oct. 11, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on the St. John's University campus, Collegeville.

More than 30 classroom and field sessions will be available to choose from. The topics include landscaping for wildlife; bird and tree identification; wildflower identification; management and regeneration of oaks; prairie, wetland and forest field tours; forest insects and diseases; and a wood-fired pottery kiln tour. Each registrant may sign up for four hour-long classes, and is invited to attend the opening session, an optional bird walk in the morning and one of five optional tours at the end of the day. Registration includes a noon lunch, and dozens of exhibitors will be available to visit with.

The conference agenda and registration form are available on the St. John's Arboretum Web site at <http://www.csbsju.edu/arboretum/landownerconference.htm>. Many sessions will fill up, so be sure to get your registration soon.

The fee for registration is \$35. The event is open to anyone who has an interest in nature, although some sessions are more practical for people who own a workable amount of acreage. Sponsors include the St. John's Arboretum, University of Minnesota Extension Service, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Forestry Association, Institute for Agricultural and Trade Policy, Community Forestry Resource Center, Laird Norton Foundation and the Minnesota Forest Resources Council.

#

Web, V2MN, V4MN, V5, F8

seabry09243

Source: Susan Seabury (218) 879-0850, ext. 108, sseabury@umn.edu

Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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September 26, 2003

U of M Extension Services teaches food safety across Minnesota

When eating-out in Minnesota, you can dine more comfortably knowing that the University of Minnesota Extension Service is working to keep your food safe.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control, foodborne microbes are estimated to cause 76 million illnesses, 325,000 hospitalizations and 5,200 deaths each year in the U.S.

Extension teaches food safety to food managers to lower the risk of foodborne illness and meet their certification requirements from the Minnesota Department of Health.

It's in the best interest of food establishments to keep their food manager's certification current, says Suzanne Driessen, regional Extension educator specializing in food safety. A Minnesota Department of Health study showed the number of critical food violations in restaurants is nearly 20 percent less where there's a certified food manager, compared to where there isn't.

The Extension Service's online "Serve It Up Safely" renewal course makes it easier for food managers to take re-certification training from their home, office or local library.

Driessen teaches the "Serve It Up Safely" in-person course and helped develop the online version. "Food managers across the state are finding the online version a convenient way to get continuing education hours so they can keep and renew their Certified Food Manager certification," Driessen says. This online course was developed by regional Extension educators and University of Minnesota food scientists to bring research-based solutions to emerging food safety issues in the food service industry.

“Food handling education for the food service industry means safer eating-out for Minnesotans,” Driessen says.

For more information about the online or in-person courses, and food safety information for consumers and food service personnel, go to <http://www.extension.umn.edu/foodsafety>.

#

Web, V2MN, V4MN, F7

driessen09263

Source: Suzanne Driessen (866) 401-1111, ext. 161 (toll-free), driessen@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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September 23, 2003

Browse the 'Yard and Garden' Web board to answer your questions

You can get your yard and gardening questions answered, and browse answers to hundreds of others on the University of Minnesota Extension Service "Ask a Master Gardener" Web board.

You'll find answers to many common questions such as Creeping Charlie control and how to nurture new trees and shrubs. "The program taps the talents of volunteer Master Gardeners from throughout the state," says Beth Jarvis, project coordinator of the Extension "Yard and Garden Line."

Over 5,200 answers have been posted by the Master Gardener volunteers, but the answers are generally read by at least 30 other readers. Questions on popular topics, such as hardy roses or using shrubs for privacy fencing are read over 100 times "So it's not only the 5,000-plus questions answered, but all the other people who found an answer to a similar question in our archives," Jarvis says.

"The Master Gardeners are very dedicated volunteers who do an exemplary job of researching questions," Jarvis says. "They are all adept Web-searchers and experienced gardeners. I moderate the list and check the answers, but they do all the work." See <http://www.extension.umn.edu/projects/yardandgarden/askmgintro.html> to check it out.

#

Web, V4, G1

jarvis6103

Source: Beth Jarvis (612) 625-5232, brjarvis@umn.edu

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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

September 23, 2003

Testing soils for 'everything' is a waste of money

We don't need to analyze the soil for "everything," George Rehm, soil scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, reminds farmers.

For Minnesota soils, an analysis for organic matter, pH, phosphorus and potassium is routine for each sample. Most soil testing laboratories have the capability of conducting an analysis for nitrate-nitrogen, sulfur, magnesium, calcium and micronutrients. But you only need an analysis for these nutrients in special situations, Rehm says.

Here are some examples:

--An analysis for copper is only important if you're growing small grains on the organic soils of northern Minnesota.

--Iron deficiency chlorosis is a serious problem with soybeans, but there's no relationship between chlorosis and soil test values for iron. So there's no purpose in analyzing soils for iron, Rehm says.

--A response to applications of manganese has never been measured in Minnesota, Rehm says. This means you don't need to test for manganese.

--Except for boron in east central Minnesota, zinc is the only micronutrient of concern. But Rehm says zinc needs to be measured only in western Minnesota soils.

--Measures of estimated nitrogen release (EMR), strong Bray or Bray-P2 phosphorus, Cation Exchange Capacity (CEC), and exchangeable cations have no value for making fertilizer recommendations in Minnesota, Rehm says. "You're just wasting money by having an analysis for these properties," Rehm says.

#

Web, V2MN, F4

rehm09173

Source: George Rehm (612) 625-6210
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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Dear Friend,

Enclosed is some material that I hope you'll find useful. If you have further questions or would like more detailed information, please contact me.



John M. Sperbeck, News Coordinator

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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

September 23, 2003

New guidebook can help you build a sustainable business

Innovative farmer know that alternative crops and value-added products give them an edge in the marketplace. And effective planning is crucial to the long-term profitability of any new venture, says Dale Nordquist, farm management economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a Business Plan for Farms and Rural Businesses is a new guidebook produced by the Minnesota Institute for Sustainable Agriculture (MISA). It was developed by College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences faculty and staff, Nordquist and other Extension farm management specialists, Minnesota farmers and community members.

The new book helps agricultural entrepreneurs transform farm-grown inspiration into profitable enterprises. This step-by-step guide helps you develop a detailed, lender-ready business plan to take advantage of new opportunities, such as organic farming, on-farm processing, direct marketing, agri-tourism, and alternative or value-added crops.

Building a Sustainable Business follows several Minnesota farmers through their planning process. Excerpts from their sample worksheets lend a real-life perspective and illustrate how they set goals, researched alternatives, determined potential markets and evaluated financing options.

The new book is available for \$14 (plus sales and handling) from MISA, 411 Borlaug Hall, 1991 Upper Buford Circle, St. Paul, MN 55108, (800) 909-6472, misamail@umn.edu. Ask about bulk discounts for orders of 10 or more books. It's also available to view on-line at www.misa.umn.edu/bizplan.html.

Workshops are also being offered this fall to train agricultural educators in using this Guide and FINPACK's Business Planning Software effectively with producers. The Center for Farm Financial Management (CFFM) at the University of Minnesota and MISA will be presenting materials to help educators use both tools to help producers develop business plans.

These workshops are being offered as part of a USDA Sustainable Agriculture and Research Education Program grant, and will be held as follows:

--Oct. 28, Southwest Research and Outreach Center (ROC), Lamberton

--Oct. 29, Southern ROC, Waseca

--Nov. 11, West Central ROC, Morris

--Nov. 12, Northwest ROC, Crookston

Contact CFFM for more information at cffm@cffm.agecon.umn.edu, (800) 234-1111, or (612) 625-1964 in the Twin Cities area. You can also contact MISA at misamail@umn.edu or (800) 909-6472.

#

Web, V2, V4, A2, P1

misa09223

Sources: MISA (800) 909-6472, misamail@umn.edu
Dale Nordquist ((612) 625-6760, dnord@umn.edu)
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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September 19, 2003

Parents of adolescents can find support at new Web site

A new Web site with practical solutions to issues facing parents of adolescents is up and running at www.shouldertoshoulderminnesota.org. It's the site for a new campaign called "Shoulder to Shoulder: Raising Teens Together."

"The purpose of Shoulder to Shoulder is to support parents of teens by providing them with real advice about how to navigate the teen years," says Rose Allen, family relations specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "We know that confident, supportive and caring parents are vitally important to raising healthy adolescents," Allen says. "This campaign will help parents gain confidence in how they can parent teens."

The campaign grew out of a series of focus groups in 2002 with Twin Cities parents of adolescents ages 12-18. The parents said there were few resources with practical solutions to the issues they were confronting their teens. The parents also said that they often felt isolated and alone, and wanted to connect with other parents to share information and find support. Research supports their concerns that while there's a strong supply of resources for parents of young children, there isn't for parents of teens.

Cooperating in the Shoulder to Shoulder campaign are public health professionals in the Twin Cities area and family relations specialists from Extension. A 16-page booklet with parenting tips may be purchased in bulk sales of either 25 or 100 copies by calling (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900. Ask for item 08008 if you'd like 25 copies, or 08007 for 100 copies.

#

Web, V4, V5, V7, V8, F1

allen09113

Source: Rose Allen (651) 704-2058, allen027@umn.edu

Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

September 19, 2003

National sustainable farm program needed, U of M economist says

Conventional farm practices and government programs have left the farm economy in a shambles and the environment in a continuing state of degradation, says Willard W. Cochrane, professor emeritus at the University of Minnesota.

Cochrane's comments are in a new book he's written, *The Curse of American Agricultural Abundance: A Sustainable Solution*.

"We need a new approach, and I'm proposing one--a national sustainable farm program," Cochrane says in his book. "The program would operate in areas where intensive cultivation practices are poisoning the land and water, as well as causing soil erosion.

"These areas would include the Corn Belt, the Central Valley of California, the Mississippi Delta and many smaller high-production irrigated areas. It would be a voluntary program, but there would be important incentives to participate, both positive and negative," Cochrane says.

He advocates "green payments" to induce participants to move toward a sustainable plan of farm operation. "On the negative side, transition payments and loan deficiency payments would be eliminated. There would be both 'pull' and 'push' incentives to participate," he says.

For the marginal areas, such as the High Plains, he advocates a different approach. "Introducing intensive agriculture into these areas was questionable at best," he says. "But now we have no need for the production and can no longer tolerate the environmental consequences of intensive agriculture in such fragile areas."

He therefore advocates a program that would return these lands to grass and grazing, and says marginal lands in the South and mid-South should be returned to timber production.

Cochrane also continues his long-standing support for small and medium-sized family farms. "Will Cochrane has some unique ideas to help keep small family farms in business," says Vern Eidman, economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service and head of the Department of Applied Economics.

Cochrane advocates several programs in research and Extension, new programs to encourage competition in agribusiness, a grain reserve, and refinancing programs to aid these farmers. His idea of replacing current farm payment programs with a new program of green payments would both encourage conservation and "keep the family farm off the endangered species list."

Cochrane remains optimistic about the future of sustainable farming in the United States. In concluding his book, he says: "Fortunately, we have the opportunity now to move to an economically and environmentally sustainable system—our production abundance provides that opportunity. If we take advantage of it, American family farmers can look to the future not with despair, but with realistic hopes of building successful farming operations for the long haul."

The book is available from the University of Nebraska Press, Lincoln, Neb., 68588-0255. See <http://www.nebraskapress.unl.edu/thepress.html> for details.

#

Web, V2, V4, A4, A2

coch09123

Source: Willard D. Cochrane (651) 439-0029
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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September 19, 2003

Extension, FDA host food safety workshops for small food processors

Thinking about producing and selling foods like jam, jelly, salad dressing, sauce, salsa, or a pickled product? If so, you need to know the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) regulations for acidified foods and how to produce a safe product.

Food manufactures, small-scale processors of specialty foods, farmers interested in value-added processing or anyone interested in starting a small-scale food manufacturing business should attend one of the five hands-on practical training workshops. They're called "Food Safety Techniques: Acidified and Low-Acid Canned Foods," and are conducted by the FDA and area Extension Services.

The workshops will cover the main processing steps, FDA regulations, critical control points and record keeping to safely manufacture specialty foods for the marketplace.

Dressings, sauces, marinades, and similar food products depend on their acidity to prevent spoilage. They may consist of naturally acid foods, such as fruit juice or tomatoes, or may be formulated by combining acid foods with other foods to achieve the desired acidity.

Foods without adequate acidity may allow the growth of microorganisms that cause foodborne illness. Therefore, the FDA requires that all acidified foods be tested to determine pH level and water activity, which is the amount of moisture available to support bacterial growth.

Amy Johnson, public affairs specialist at the FDA's Minneapolis District Office, stresses the importance of these workshops. "Our ability to partner with local Extension experts to provide low-cost and informative training to small food processors is critical to preventing future foodborne illness outbreaks," Johnson says. The workshops are funded in part by a food safety education grant from FDA's Center for Food Safety and Nutrition

"This training provides an excellent, inexpensive opportunity for small entrepreneurs to get the important food safety information needed to produce a safe product," says Joellen Feirtag, University of Minnesota Extension food technologist.

The workshops will begin in October, 2003 at the following locations:

- Minnesota: Oct. 6 in St. Paul and Oct. 8 in St. Cloud. Contact Joellen Feirtag at (612) 624-3629 or jfeirtag@umn.edu to register. A registration fee of \$35 includes course materials and two refreshment breaks.
- South Dakota: Oct. 17 at the Minnehaha Extension Office in Sioux Falls. Contact Joan Hegerfeld at (605) 688-6233 or HEGERFELD.JOAN@ces.sdstate.edu to register. A registration fee of \$30 includes course materials and two refreshment breaks.
- North Dakota: Oct. 21 in Fargo and Oct. 22 in Bismarck. Contact Julie Garden-Robinson at (701) 231-7187 or jgardenr@ndsuent.nodak.edu to register. A registration fee of \$40 includes course materials and two refreshment breaks.

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Web, V4, F6, F7

feirtag09163

Source: Joellen Feirtag (612) 624-3629, jfeirtag@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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John M. Sperbeck, News Coordinator

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September 16, 2003

Regional workshops on teaching 'Positive Parenting' set

Where can professionals who work with parents turn for help with teaching good parenting skills? To the University of Minnesota Extension Service and its award-winning curriculum, "Positive Parenting."

A team of experienced Extension family relations specialists is offering professional development workshops that prepare professionals and trained volunteers to teach Positive Parenting. The program uses proven, research-based methods to teach parenting skills. Extension family relations specialists will be teaching the sessions at five sites throughout Minnesota.

Each complete curriculum package includes a video, background materials, lesson plans and reproducible handouts. "Positive Parenting I and II" is for use with parents of children from birth up to 12 years of age. Lesson topics include physical punishment, limits, consequences, listening, anger, challenging behaviors, parenting tools, attention, respect, responsibility, monitoring and siblings.

The "Positive Parenting of Teens" curriculum is for use with parents of early adolescents, 10 to 16 years of age. Lesson topics include parenting teens today, perception, development, communication, conflict, discipline, teen decision-making and friends/peers.

Workshops will be held at the following sites:

- Oct. 28, Steele County Community Center, 1380 South Elm (Fairgrounds), Owatonna

- Nov. 5, Travelodge Hotel, Highway 59N. & I-90 (exit 43) 2015 Humiston Ave.,
Worthington
- Nov. 7, DeWitt-Seitz Building on the Lakefront, Room 319A, 394 Lake Ave. South,
Duluth
- Nov. 14, Ramsey County Extension Office, 2020 White Bear Ave., St. Paul
- Jan. 21, Anoka County Extension Office, 550 Bunker Lake Blvd. NW, Andover

Each workshop runs from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The training cost is \$65, including lunch, and pre-registration is required. Curriculum packages range in price from \$250 to \$445. For more details and registration information, including an online registration feature, visit the Positive Parenting website at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/positiveparenting> or contact Kay Syme at (612) 624-4938 or ksyme@cce.umn.edu.

Contact Kathleen A. Olson, family relations specialist, University of Minnesota at (651) 385-3100 or kaolson@umn.edu for questions on curriculum content or training.

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Web, V4MN, V5, F1

olson09153

Source: Kathleen A. Olson (651) 385-3100, kaolson@umn.edu

Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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September 12, 2003

Extension Service will host 'Cultural Perspectives on Parenting' series

The University of Minnesota Extension Service will host a two-part satellite series titled "Cultural Perspectives on Parenting" this fall. The series will be broadcast Oct. 23 and Nov. 13 from 1:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 29 sites throughout Minnesota.

Iowa State University (ISU) Extension developed the series, which will address how culture influences parenting and how family professionals can support culturally diverse families.

Culture is a combination of thoughts, feelings, attitudes, beliefs, values and behaviors that are shared by a particular group. It is far more than heritage, ISU Extension specialists say.

Culture plays a role in many things, including the way parents rear their children.

"Cultural Perspectives on Parenting" will feature prominent national researchers and practitioners who specialize in family-centered practices and parenting in diverse cultures. The series is designed for professionals who work with families, including teachers, child care providers, social workers, counselors, psychologists, ministers and faith leaders, 4-H leaders, physicians and nurses, judges and law enforcement professionals and Extension staff.

Viewers will have the opportunity to ask questions via live call-in sessions and to network with others who share similar interests or concerns about parenting.

Details, including locations of the 29 Minnesota sites, are available on the Internet at www.parenting.umn.edu. CEUs are available.

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Web, V4, V5, F1

dworkin09123

Source: Minnell Tralle 1-800-433-5236, trall001@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

September 9, 2003

Dry weather means earlier corn harvest, but higher field losses

Dry weather means that corn will be mature and dry enough to harvest earlier this year, but that may be a good news-bad news scenario.

“There will be an opportunity for more field drying, which will reduce drying costs,” says Dale Hicks, agronomist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. However, the dry weather stress has caused premature dying as the plants have shut down. “This will likely result in increased stalk lodging and ear droppage,” Hicks says.

He advises corn growers to evaluate fields for ear droppage potential and harvest those fields first that appear to have the greatest potential for yield losses.

If the weather is sunny and breezy, corn will normally dry about three-fourths of one percent to one percent per day during the early warmer part of the harvest season, from mid-through late September. By early to mid-October, dry-down rates will usually drop to one-half to three-fourths percent per day, Hicks says.

So with earlier maturity, there is more time during the early part of the harvest season when air temperatures are higher, and that means more rapid drying rates. “It may be possible to leave corn in the field to dry to levels low enough so that little to no drying will be required,” Hicks says. And with high LP gas costs and lower yields due to the dry weather, Hicks says saving drying costs will help preserve some profitability.

However, the potential for higher field losses due to stalk lodging and ear droppage is the tradeoff. The dry weather stress has caused cannibalization of plant sugars from the stalk to the grain. That leaves stalks and ear shanks that are weak and susceptible to early stalk rot. And the organisms that cause stalk rot also grow and develop more quickly at higher temperatures, which compounds the potential for early stalk rot development.

Weakened stalks and shanks could mean lodging and ear droppage, which may slow harvest and increase harvest losses. Hicks says the droppage of one "normal" sized ear per 100 feet of row in 30-inch spaced rows equals a loss of one bushel per acre.

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Web, V2, V4, F4

hicks09033

Source: Dale Hicks (612) 625-1796, hicks001@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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September 5, 2003

Danger from deadly silo gas is greater due to stress on corn

Deadly silo gas is a concern every year for corn producers who harvest their crop as silage. However, crop stresses are adding to the danger this year, according to John Shutske, farm safety and health specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Dry conditions and wind have affected corn and other forage plants in many areas this year," says Shutske. "Generally, silo gas levels are higher in plants that have been drought-stressed or otherwise damaged by wind, insects or disease. High weed content in chopped silage material also adds to the silo gas problem, since weeds are less able to convert the nitrogen they take up into protein."

"Producers frequently ask for an 'easy' answer about how they can enter a silo safely right after they've filled it," says Shutske. "There is no easy answer. The best answer is to stay out for three weeks to a month unless you have a self-contained breathing unit. Dust masks and pesticide respirators with cartridges offer zero protection against silo gas."

"If you absolutely must enter the silo, you need to do it immediately after filling. But even then, there could be significant levels of gas, so maximum ventilation is essential."

Silo gas is the common term for nitrogen dioxide. Most farmers are somewhat familiar with the gas, but don't always understand the true risks, says Shutske. Silo gas is formed as a natural by-product of silage production when chopped-up plant material ferments in a silo.

Silo gas dangers aren't limited to upright silos, says Shutske. "We typically associate silo gas with upright, concrete silos," he points out. "But silage in bag systems and bunker silos also produces silo gas. The risks with these other storage systems are lower, however, since they are more easily ventilated with ambient outside airflow. Oxygen-limited silos present different hazards, including the absence of oxygen if a person enters such a structure."

Shutske says silo gas has an acrid, bleach-like odor. It's brown to a yellow hazy color, but can be difficult to see in dim lighting. It's heavier than air, causing it to settle into low-lying areas. These may include the bottom of silo chutes, between silage bags or in low spots within a bunker silo. "Silo gas is highly toxic, even at low levels," says Shutske. "Toxic exposure can and does occur to producers, children, livestock and pets who are exposed to the gas."

A farmer or family member exposed to low levels of silo gas might only notice some mild irritation or intermittent coughing, says Shutske. With higher gas levels, people can become unconscious, and if not removed to fresh air, will die from the gas. At the lower levels of exposure, the nitrogen dioxide will oxidize in the lungs and create nitric acid. The acid is highly irritating and corrosive, says Shutske. The lungs respond by trying to dilute the acid with more water. Thus, a person can die several hours or even days after an initial exposure to silo gas, due to excess fluid build-up in the lungs.

Shutske recommends checking with your local silo salesperson or builder for the latest information on how to safely enter silos. Or, contact the International Silo Association at (920) 265-6235 for a copy of the "Silo Operator's Manual."

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Web, V2, V4, A4, E4

shutske09033

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Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

MSC
A&T/p



NEWS & INFORMATION

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

September 5, 2003

Woodland Advisor program can help you manage your forest land

If you own forest land or are thinking of buying some, Woodland Advisor programs offered through the University of Minnesota Extension Service can give you an upper hand at managing it.

"We're offering over 40 training sessions in the next five months," says Mike Demchik, an Extension agroforestry management educator. The Woodland Advisor program trains volunteer citizen leaders, who in return pass their expertise on to neighboring forest land owners. Most training sessions are open to the general public, in addition to Woodland Advisors.

Here are examples of some programs offered in the next few months:

--Oct. 11, the Woodland Owners and Users Conference will be held at St. John's University, Collegeville. Over 25 classroom and field sessions will cover a wide variety of forest-related topics.

--Several "Growing and Tending Your Forest" programs will be offered at various locations throughout the state from late October through December.

--"Financial Aspects of Woodland Management" sessions are also scheduled at several locations. For information on all dates and locations, contact Susan Seabury at (218) 879-0850, ext. 108, sseabury@umn.edu, or <http://www.cnr.umn.edu/cfc/wa/Support/wasess.htm>.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, V5, F8

demchk09033

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MSC
A27p

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

September 2, 2003

Minnesota Nutrition Conference on livestock feeding set for Sept. 16-17

If you're interested in livestock feeding, here's a reminder that the 64th annual Minnesota Nutrition Conference is scheduled Sept. 16-17, 2003. It will be held at the Holiday Inn St. Paul / East on Interstate 94. The conference features dairy, beef, swine and poultry nutrition.

It's designed for nutritionists, feed industry representatives, veterinarians, educators and producers. The conference provides an opportunity to share information about current research at universities, in industry and at government centers. Speakers are scientists from the University of Minnesota and other universities, and from industry.

Conference highlights include how diet affects the gut, glucose balance in the dairy cow and nutrition to optimize calf health and performance. Other topics: a critique of amino acid ratios for poultry and swine, cost of immune activation in poultry and use of omega-3 fatty acids in swine diets. Check the conference website at <http://www.cce.umn.edu/ag/mn-nutrition.shtml> for the latest program information.

You can register on-line by going to <http://www.cce.umn.edu/ag/registration.shtml>. The direct telephone number for the Holiday Inn-St. Paul/East is (651) 731-2220.

More information is available from Mary Kay Ferguson at (612) 625-8215 or (800) 318-8636, e-mail mferguso@cce.umn.edu.

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Web, V2, B1, D1, P3, S2

ferg09023

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NEWS & INFORMATION

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August 5, 2003

Call the new Extension AnswerLine with your household questions

Questions about how to freeze fresh corn, or how to get stains out of a new pair of slacks? Call AnswerLine, a new service of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The toll-free number is (800) 854-1678, and it's answered between 9 a.m. and noon and 1 p.m. to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. AnswerLine household experts take questions about how to safely cook, can and freeze foods; cleaning stains and mildew from homes and clothes; and on other household issues.

AnswerLine provides research-based answers through the U of M Extension Service and Iowa State University Extension. There's also support from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the state of Minnesota, county governments and grants.

In Minnesota, AnswerLine joins two other Extension information services. INFO-U offers tips about food safety and nutrition; housing and clothing; parenting and money management; and gardening, pests, wildlife and water quality. Call (800) 525-8636, or (612) 624-2200 in the Twin Cities metro area. "Many messages are also in Hmong, Somali and Spanish," says Debby Newman, INFO-U coordinator.

And for a \$5 fee, Yard and Garden staff on the University's St. Paul campus answer calls between 9 a.m. to noon, Monday through Friday. However, volunteer Master Gardeners will return calls on gardening, landscaping, plant diseases and insects free of charge. The Yard and Garden Line number is (612) 624-4771.

You can also find these services at www.extension.umn.edu.

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Web, C2, F3, F7, V4 newman08013
Source: Debby Newman (612) 624-3263, dlnewman@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

August 14, 2003

Should you store grain after harvest?

The price situation for corn and soybeans is dramatically different from the short crop scenario of last year, and many producers are asking themselves whether they should store grain.

To help answer this question, the University of Minnesota's Center for Farm Financial Management (CFFM) is offering eight workshops in September entitled, "To Store or Not to Store." The workshops will examine the current price situation and opportunities for storage, and then develop post-harvest marketing plans for corn and soybeans.

"All grain producers are welcome," says Bob Craven, economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service and director of the CFFM. The eight workshops are scheduled at the following locations in early September, 2003.

- Sept. 2, 2003 St. Cloud, Minn. 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
- Sept. 5, 2003 Worthington, Minn. 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
- Sept. 5, 2003 Blue Earth, Minn. 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
- Sept. 8, 2003 Willmar, Minn. (Women's program) 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
- Sept. 9, 2003 Rochester, Minn. 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
- Sept. 9, 2003 Centerville, Wis. 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.
- Sept. 10, 2003 Owatonna, Minn. 9:30 - 11:30 a.m.
- Sept. 10, 2003 St. Peter, Minn. 1:30 - 3:30 p.m.

“Now is the time for producers to start forming their plans for after harvest,” says Ed Usset, U of M grain marketing specialist and workshop leader. “By examining the alternatives, we can figure out which strategy makes the best sense for your farm,” he says.

Workshop participants will examine several pitfalls in post-harvest marketing--including the lack of an exit strategy and holding grain in storage too long. Usset will also discuss loan rates and LDPs, and the pros and cons of a number of specific marketing strategies.

The registration fee of \$25 includes refreshments and handout materials. For more information or to register, contact the CFFM at (800) 234-1111 or (612) 625-1964. An on-line brochure is available at www.cffm.umn.edu/pubs/postharvest2003.pdf

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Web, V2, V4, A2

craven08113

Sources: Bob Craven or Ed Usset (800) 234-1111, rcraven@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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MSC
A27p

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

August 19, 2003

Extension receives grant to pilot innovative community leadership program

The University of Minnesota Extension Service has received a Horizons project grant from the Northwest Area Foundation to help rebuild leadership systems in three small rural communities.

“Studies show that small communities, even if they are distant from large population centers, can thrive if they have a strong leadership system,” says Karl Stauber, Northwest Area Foundation president who made the grant announcement. A major focus for the foundation is small, rural communities confronting economic and population decline.

Three Minnesota communities – Bagley, Jackson and Red Lake Falls – applied and were selected to pilot the Horizons project. The Extension Service will be the lead organization for Bagley and Red Lake Falls as well as Grafton, N. D. Extension will provide a local community coach to form strong community-based planning groups, engage citizens and bring training and technical assistance to the communities. Funding is also provided to offset child care and transportation expenses. Therefore, more community people will have the opportunity to build the skills, connections and knowledge they need to reverse trends.

“I hear citizens say they’re concerned about the future of their small town, both in my hometown in northwest Minnesota, and as I travel through the state,” says Chuck Casey, dean of the Extension Service. “Over the past decade, Extension has built a Community Vitality program

area that commits staff time, taps into knowledge and develops programs that help communities.”

Dick Senese, who leads Extension’s Community Vitality program area, will oversee the grant. “Our staff people know how to engage citizens and connect them to practical information, which is at the heart of this initiative. This project is just one of numerous ways that Extension can partner to build a better future for rural Minnesota,” Senese says. “We want to work more closely with other cities and foundations to tackle Minnesota’s complex issues head-on.”

The Northwest Area Foundation has invested \$1.7 million to pilot the initiative in 15 communities. The Horizons initiative focuses on three results:

- A reduction in poverty or its negative impacts.
- An increase in the number, knowledge and skills of community members providing leadership on poverty-reduction strategies.
- Increased capacity of small communities to access and share information among themselves and with others.

The Northwest Area Foundation, headquartered in St. Paul, Minn., helps communities reduce poverty in its eight-state region: Minnesota, Iowa, North Dakota, South Dakota, Montana, Idaho, Washington and Oregon. These states were served by the Great Northern Railway, founded by James J. Hill.

In 1934, Hills’s son, Louis W. Hill, established the foundation, which has approximately \$424 million in assets.

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Web,V2,V4,V5,V6,V7,V9,A2,A4,C4,E1,E3,F3,H5,P1,T1,Z1,Z6

hoelt8123

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August 1, 2003

Choose lower-risk investments as you approach retirement

There are many ways to invest for retirement, and choosing which ones are right for you can be challenging.

But first things first: Sharon Danes, family economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, says you first need to build a solid financial foundation before you start saving and investing. Once you've established savings goals, Danes advises considering these factors when making your investment decisions:

- The amount of risk is your first guiding factor. Consider your age, health status, family responsibilities, job stability and the current state of the economy. "If worrying about an investment is going to disturb your sleep or state of mind, you're at a risk level that's beyond your tolerance," Danes says. If you have a partner, it's crucial to talk together about the risk tolerance each is willing to take. The closer you are to retirement, the less risk you should undertake.
- The rate of return on your investment is affected by several factors, including your tax bracket, whether the return is taxable, whether there are commissions for fees, and the inflation rate. If the investment has variable rates of return, review the index that determines the rate. More risky investments usually have higher return rates.
- Some of your investments should be fairly liquid (meaning they can be turned into cash quickly). Again, your family and financial circumstances largely determine your level of liquidity.

- Unlike savings, managing investments requires time and attention. Some investments require higher maintenance than others. You can hire a professional, but it's important that you also have time, knowledge and skills to manage investments effectively. You need to know enough to understand the options provided to you by the professional.
- The point when an investment company must pay the face value of your investment is its maturity level. Shop around to find the most favorable maturity level for your circumstances, since deregulation has affected many investment options. Danes says if there are specified maturity levels, there's usually a lower rate of return.
- Fluctuations in the economy or the inflation rate affect your rate of return on any investment. Investments whose value moves with price changes are most profitable during inflationary times. But when prices go down, you're better off with fixed return rates.
- The real rate of return is the profit you make after both inflation and taxes. Find out whether an investment is taxable, tax exempt or tax deferred until a later time, such as after you retire. Knowing your income bracket (or marginal tax bracket) helps you determine your real rate of return
- If a minimum deposit is required and is a stretch for you, it may be the wrong investment, Danes says. Also, ask about costs and fees, service charges, transaction fees, early withdrawal penalties, commissions and annual maintenance fees.

Danes has written an 80-page "Planning Ahead for Retirement," guide that includes everything you need to know to plan your retirement. It includes charts and tables, glossaries and resource lists. Copies of the publication are available from county offices of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. They may also be ordered with a credit card by calling toll-free (800) 876-8636, or (612) 624-4900 in the Twin Cities area. Ask for number 07775.

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Web, V2, V4, A2, F3

danes7233

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Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

July 29, 2003

Aug. 14 drainage forum will emphasize managing nitrogen losses

Managing nitrogen losses from agricultural lands and the latest research on other drainage topics will highlight the fourth annual Iowa/Minnesota Drainage Research Forum Aug. 14, 2003.

Registration begins at 9 a.m. at the Park View Inn and Suites Conference Center, West Bend, Iowa, about one hour south of Blue Earth or Fairmont, Minn.

Lowell Busman, a regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, and Gary Sands, Extension water resources engineer, will discuss approaches to managing nitrogen losses at the 10 a.m. lead-off session. U of M scientists Jeff Strock and Bill Christner will discuss the impact of agricultural drainage on stream development in an afternoon session.

About a dozen other speakers will discuss drainage studies in Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois and Ohio. The forum will conclude with a field day at the agricultural drainage wells project near Gilmore City, Iowa.

The advance registration fee of \$30 includes lunch and refreshments. Registration can be sent to Paula Beckman, 3212 NSRIC, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011. Checks should be payable to Iowa State University.

For more information, contact Lowell Busman at (507) 835-3620 or Gary Sands, (612) 625-4756.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, C4

sands07283

Sources: Lowell Busman (507) 835-3620, Gary Sands (612) 625-4756.

Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

July 25, 2003

Volunteer stream monitors can get help from a new guidebook

There are many reasons why you or groups that you work with may be intrigued with monitoring streams.

You may be interested in knowing what organisms live in a nearby stream. Or, you may be curious why fish or other aquatic organisms have died recently. Some people want to learn about the impact of storm water runoff from their neighborhood. Others are interested in helping students learn about water chemistry and analytical methods.

Some people want to know whether water in nearby streams meets standards for fishing, swimming or drinking, or whether the water quality is improving or degenerating over time.

Some help is available through a Volunteer Stream Monitoring Partnership (VSMP) in the Twin Cities metro area. It draws on the expertise of a number of agencies to help everyone from beginners to more experienced stream monitors. Cooperating agencies include the University of Minnesota Extension Service, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Metropolitan Council and county Soil and Water Conservation Districts.

The VSMP supports monitoring in the Twin Cities metro area, ensures quality data, builds a network that connects volunteers with decision makers and creates long-term commitments for stream and watershed protection.

-more-

You'll also find some good help in a new University of Minnesota publication titled "Guide to Volunteer Stream Monitoring." The guide will help volunteers explore stream monitoring and what kind of sampling activities will help them answer their priority questions. It will also assist local units of government implement monitoring to assess the trends and impacts of storm water.

The guide is available for \$10 from the University of Minnesota Water Resources Center. You can visit their website at www.vsmp.org to preview the guide. For more information, contact Mary Gullickson at (612) 625-6781, gulli021@umn.edu.

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Web, V7, T2

gullicks713

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July 18, 2003

CRP program offers some very good payments

Landowners have until Sept. 30, 2003 to enroll in the “continuous sign-up” provision of the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

And payments can very good—comparable to cash rent in many cases, says Gary Hachfeld, regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. “Annual CRP payments for Class A land come to about \$150 an acre,” Hachfeld says. “This is good financial management as well as good environmental management,” he adds.

Environmentally desirable land devoted to certain conservation practices is eligible for the CRP continuous sign-up program. Offers are automatically accepted, provided the land and producer meet eligibility requirements. Offers for continuous sign-up are not subject to competitive bidding and are approved locally, Hachfeld says. Contracts run from 10 to 15 years.

Eligible land must be either cropland, including field margins, that is planted to an agricultural commodity four of the previous six crop years from 1996 to 2002; or certain marginal pastureland enrolled in the Water Bank Program or suitable for use as a riparian buffer.

Eligible conservation practices include riparian buffers, wildlife habitat buffers, grass waterways, shelterbelts, living snow fences and contour strips. More details on eligible land, conservation practices and payments are available in a publication that Hachfeld and co-workers have written. You can find it on the Nicollet County Extension website at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/offices>. Or, contact Hachfeld at (507) 931-6800, hachf002@umn.edu.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, A2

hach7173

Source: Gary Hachfeld (507) 931-6800, hachf002@umn.edu

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July 18, 2003

Most of us aren't confident about our retirement funds

Only one of every five workers is very confident about having enough money to live comfortably in retirement, according to the 2003 Retirement Confidence Survey of the Employee Benefit Research Institute.

Although sooner is better than later when you save for retirement, it's never too late, says Sharon Danes, family economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Saving \$20 a week equals \$1,040 over a course of a year. If you save this amount for 25 years, assuming that you get a five percent annual rate of return, you could have over \$50,000.

A "Planning Ahead for Retirement" publication that Danes has written can help. Chapter three, "Developing Income Sources," can help you make decisions about the financial products within your pension plans or your individual retirement saving plans.

Chapter four is titled "Saving and Investment Options" and includes a description of eight building blocks to establishing a solid financial foundation for the future. They are:

1. Solvency, or enough income to meet current expenses. "Make sure you have a budget that keeps you solvent before considering investing," Danes says. "An investment that you can't afford won't make you solvent."

2. An emergency reserve to pay unexpected bills. Pay this emergency fund, and consider it a standard monthly payment just like any other bill. Danes says an ideal emergency fund is two or three months' worth of take-home pay.

3. Access to credit. You can develop a good credit history by paying credit card and all other bills on time and repaying any personal loans according to the contract terms. Developing a good credit history is essential for getting any additional credit you may need in the future, such as a mortgage.

4. Insurance protection. Everyone needs an insurance plan that guards against financial loss due to premature death, disability, illness, property damage and liability.

5. Home ownership. It's not for everyone, but is a good investment because it normally gains value or appreciates over time. If you don't want to buy a home, buying other property or something else that appreciates at a comparable rate of return will also work.

6. Savings and investment options. These should be determined by your financial situation, risk tolerance and stage of life. Savings earn a guaranteed rate of interest, known as a fixed-dollar feature. But the value of an investment can go up or down, and there are no guarantees that you will make any money, Danes says. Some saving options now have a variable-dollar rate of return, just as a standard investment has.

7. A regular review of your retirement plan--to see if your goals have changed and to ensure that your finances are arranged to allow you to live the latter part of your life as you wish.

8. An estate plan that leaves legal instructions of how you'd like your net worth divided. Good communication with your partner before developing a plan with an expert or estate planner is a must.

The 80-page comprehensive guide to retirement planning tells you what you need to know to plan the retirement you want. It includes charts and tables, glossaries and resource lists. Copies are available from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. They may also be ordered with a credit card by calling toll-free (800) 876-8636, or (612) 624-4900 in the Twin Cities area. Ask for number 07775.

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Web, V2, V4, A2, F3

danes07083

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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July 15, 2003

New U of M study underscores importance of cleaning grain

A new study gives extra credence to the importance of cleaning grain before you store it.

“We’ve always recommended cleaning grain before storage to help keep stored-grain insects under control, but now we have additional data to support that recommendation,” says Bill Wilcke, engineer with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

In a study conducted by the U of M Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering Department and the U of M Entomology Department, graduate students assessed the survivability of Indian meal moth larvae (the immature stage of the insect that feeds on grain kernels) on three diets: 100 percent whole corn kernels, whole kernels mixed with five to seven percent broken kernels, and 100 percent broken kernels. The study was conducted on small samples of corn kept at room temperature in an entomology laboratory.

“We know that a certain percentage of every generation of insects will die from natural causes,” Wilcke says. However, the more favorable the environment and the better the food source, the greater the percentage of insects that survive. In a test using conventional yellow dent shelled corn, 80 percent of the insects survived on the diet in which all the kernels were broken and 61 percent survived on a diet that contained seven percent broken kernels, but only about seven percent survived on a diet that contained only whole (unbroken) kernels.

These results indicate that if you clean corn to remove broken kernels before the corn is stored, it will be much less likely that stored-grain insects like Indian meal moth will become a problem in the storage bin.

In a similar test using a corn hybrid that was developed to contain higher than normal amounts of oil (high-oil corn), the pattern was similar, but insect survivability was greater at every level of kernel damage. All of the larvae survived when provided with a diet of all broken corn kernels, 81 percent survived on diet that contained 5 percent broken kernels, and 28 percent survived on a diet that contained only whole corn kernels.

These results indicate that it would be helpful to clean high-oil corn before storage to reduce problems with stored grain insects; and that insect problems might be slightly greater in stored high-oil corn than in corn with normal levels of oil.

Although these tests were conducted with just one species of insect (Indian meal moth), there is reason to believe that the results would also apply to other types of stored-grain insects. Indian meal moths are "secondary pests"--insects that feed primarily on broken grain or on molds that grow on broken grain.

Stored grain surveys indicate that the most common stored-grain insects in the upper Midwest are "secondary pests." This means that cleaning grain to remove broken kernels should make life difficult for our most common stored-grain insects.

Of course, there are other good reasons for cleaning corn besides reducing the risk of problems with stored-grain insects:

- Research has shown that mold (fungi) grows much faster on broken corn kernels than on whole kernels, so cleaning grain to remove broken kernels also reduces the chance of mold problems.

- Broken kernels plug the air spaces between whole kernels, which increases the airflow resistance of the corn. High airflow resistance means that it takes more fan power to provide the airflow needed to dry or aerate grain. Or for a given fan, higher airflow resistance means that the fan provides less airflow, which means that it takes longer to dry or to aerate the grain.
- Broken kernels tend to concentrate under the fill spout when a storage bin is filled. These concentrated areas of broken kernels, which are already more likely to support insect life and mold growth, are also difficult to dry or aerate because they have high airflow resistance and air moves around rather than through them.
- High levels of broken kernels can lead to price discounts when grain is sold. You might be able to avoid price discounts by cleaning the corn to remove some of the broken kernels.

For more information, see the Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering postharvest website, <http://www.bae.umn.edu/extens/postharvest/index.html>, or contact Bill Wilcke, wilck001@umn.edu or Colleen Cannon, cacannon@umn.edu.

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Web, V2, V4, A2, F4

wilcke7143

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July 10, 2003

At least half of us need help with retirement planning, survey shows

Many of us need with retirement planning, and a University of Minnesota Extension Service publication can be just the ticket.

Some 53 percent of U.S. households have not calculated how much money they'll need to save by the time they retire. In addition, 51 percent of current workers think that they will be eligible for full Social Security retirement benefits before they actually will be. The statistics are from the 2003 Retirement Confidence Survey of the Employee Benefit Research Institute.

Many people aren't aware of the phased increase in normal retirement age from 65 to 67 under Social Security, says Sharon Danes, family economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. A publication that Danes has written can help.

The "Planning Ahead for Retirement," publication has a chapter titled "Will you be Able to Afford the Life You Want?" It can help you estimate what post-retirement life will cost, assist with figuring out how to take inflation into account and help you calculate whether you can afford to retire early.

The 80-page comprehensive guide to retirement planning includes everything you need to know to plan the retirement you want. It includes charts and tables, glossaries and resource lists. Copies of the publication are available from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. They may also be ordered with a credit card by calling toll-free (800) 876-8636, or (612) 624-4900 in the Twin Cities area. Ask for number 07775.

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Web, V2, V4, A2, F3

danes07073

Source: Sharon Danes (612) 625-9273, sdanes@che.umn.eduEditor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

July 10, 2003

Farmers can work together to protect organic prices

By Richard A. Levins

I recently asked a dairy farmer why he had converted to organic production. He said, "Dr. Levins, I'm tired of trying to make my living on volume. I want to make it on price." What a great answer. All of us, including me, need the occasional reminder that there is more to farm economics than trying to live with low prices.

Organic farm products have always sold for relatively high prices. I suspect that many think organic products are essentially more valuable, and that alone will protect their price. Economics tells us otherwise. High prices don't always stay high, and profits don't always stay with farmers. The same market forces that have kept prices low for many conventional farm products could just as easily play havoc with organics.

The growth in demand for organic products looks very promising. A study published by USDA documented growth of at least 20 percent per year since 1990 in organic retail food sales. That growth was projected to become even stronger as a result of USDA organic standards implemented in October 2002. Furthermore, the USDA's Economic Research Service found acreage certified for organic production of corn and soybeans to have doubled between 1992 and 1997. It doubled again between 1997 and 2001.

Growing demand is always a good sign that prices will stay up. But with organics, growing demand is attracting more farmers. It's also getting the attention of some of the large food corporations. More farmers competing with each other, coupled with growing market power as buyers merge and consolidate, is the last thing you would expect to be good for farm prices.

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The farmer I talked with knew this all too well. He had just heard that dairy giant Dean Foods was buying Horizon Organic Holding Corporation. Horizon is the leading brand of certified organic milk in both the United States and the United Kingdom. The “small is beautiful” bloom is definitely off the organic rose.

Almost always there are more farmers growing a product than there are processors and retailers to buy that product. Organics are no exception. Unless a farmer is selling directly to consumers at a farmers’ market or roadside stand, he or she is facing a buyer much larger than most farms can ever be. This puts the buyers in a strong position—they can play one farmer against another in a never-ending search for lower and lower prices.

Is there anything that can be done to keep profits in the hands of farmers instead of watching helplessly as those profits are passed along to buyers? I don’t know of anything farmers acting alone can do to stop this process. Acting together, however, is a different story.

Organic Farmers Agency for Relationship Marketing, or OFARM, is a good example. Several cooperatives in the Midwest and Canada joined together so that their farmer/members could market organic grains as if they were one large seller. Through periodic conference calls, the cooperatives discuss prices being offered and make sure that the best price is received by everyone. Competition among themselves is therefore kept at a minimum in a perfectly legal way. This, in turn, helps keep profits in farmer pockets.

The OFARM newsletters (www.ofarm.org) give some examples of how higher prices have been negotiated. Is the group always so successful, or will it be in the future? I don’t have a study or crystal ball to help with these important questions. What I do have, however, is economic theory that tells me market power matters. And the best way for farmers to get that market power is by working together. This much, organic and conventional farmers have in common.

(Richard A. Levins is an agricultural economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. He can be reached at (612) 625-5238 and by e-mail at dlevins@apex.umn.edu).

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Web, A2, A4, V2, V4, D1, P1

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July 3, 2003

Expanded EQIP funds available for farmer signup until Aug. 1

Annual funding has more than tripled in Minnesota for the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) in 2003, compared to the previous Farm Bill's allocation.

Farmers across the state now have a better chance of getting into the program, says Les Everett, water quality project coordinator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "This is due to both the increased funding, and because the funds are more evenly distributed across the state," Everett says.

The time to sign up for this year's funds is very short, Everett says. Producers who are interested in receiving cost-share or incentive payments should visit their local USDA county office and apply for EQIP by the close of business Aug. 1, 2003.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program from the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). It supports agriculture production and environmental quality as compatible goals. Structural, vegetative and management conservation practices are eligible to receive funding.

Natural resource concerns related to soil erosion, water quality, air quality and wildlife concerns are priorities for EQIP. The list of supported practices is extensive, including nutrient management, managed grazing, manure storage, conservation crop rotations, conservation tillage, field borders, various stream protection practices, tree planting and many others.

Each Soil and Water Conservation District has received an allocation of EQIP funds and has developed an application scoring sheet. Information and sign-up forms are available at the local NRCS offices. EQIP information, including the local scoring sheet for each district, is available on the state NRCS web site at <http://www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/mncons.html>.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, C4

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July 1, 2003

Farmers should sign up now for EQIP program

Agricultural producers should sign up now if they're interested in the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), advises Gary Wyatt, regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Some \$14.5 million has been allocated by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for Minnesota agricultural producers to implement natural resources conservation practices through EQIP. This is a significant increase in funding and is a product of the 2002 Federal Farm Bill, Wyatt says.

Applications must be received by the close of business on Aug. 1, 2003. It is anticipated that the entire EQIP allocation will be obligated during this initial period, so sign up now if you're interested in EQIP. The Farm Bill provides an EQIP sign-up annually.

Soil and Water Conservation District's (SWCD) share of the Minnesota allocation varies from \$50,000, \$75,000 to \$100,000, depending on the county. In addition to the county SWCD funds, each NRCS area has \$1 million available for projects exceeding the local allocation.

EQIP is a voluntary conservation program from the USDA – NRCS. It supports agriculture production and environmental quality as compatible goals. Structural, vegetative and management conservation practices are eligible to receive funding. Natural resource concerns related to soil erosion, water quality, air quality and wildlife concerns are priorities for EQIP.

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In the past few years, the more popular practices in the area have been crop residue and nutrient management practices, grassed waterways and prescribed grazing systems. The list of eligible practices is extensive. The practices are installed as part of conservation plans.

Payments are made where there are positive environmental benefits from an existing condition. They are not authorized for existing, in-place practices. This year the EQIP cost share is 50 percent.

A few of the EQIP programs pay producers a per acre fee for adopting conservation practices such as nutrient management, pest management and crop rotations. Examples include:

--Conservation crop rotation, \$20 per acre up to 250 acres for one year.

--Nutrient management (without manure), \$2.25 per acre; and with manure \$4 per acre up to 250 acres for a maximum of three years.

--Pest management, \$1 per acre up to 250 acres for a maximum of three years.

There are many other USDA conservation programs that may offer more incentives than EQIP, Wyatt says. Contact your local NRCS staff for more details. Some of the state conservation incentive programs may vary by county and include clean water partnerships, watershed projects, ag waste systems and more.

Producers who are interested in receiving cost-share or incentive payments should visit their county NRCS/SWCD office. More information is available from the Minnesota NRCS website at www.mn.nrcs.usda.gov/ecs/eqip/eqip2003.htm.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, C4

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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

July 1, 2003

Plan to attend grazing workshops this summer and fall

Midsummer pasture supply slumps can often be minimized by growing warm season grasses. Warm season grasses include natives like Big Bluestem, Switchgrass and Indiangrass that start late in the spring but hit their stride in July and August.

A pasture walk in warm season grasses will be held the U of M West Central Research and Outreach Center, Morris, Friday, July 11, following the morning summer station day.

Other programs in the grazing series include the "Upper Midwest Grazing Conference," July 29-31, LaCrosse, Wis. This four-state Extension Service-sponsored event includes presentations and tours. Contact the Dubuque County, Wis. Extension office at (563) 583-6496 or tranel@iastate.edu to register. The conference website is at www.wisc.edu/cias/uppermidwest.

Four additional grazing sessions are scheduled at Morris. Topics and dates are Supplementing Diets when Grass is Short, Aug. 6; Improving Pastures for Next Year, Sept. 10; Extending the Grazing Season, Oct. 10; and Winter Pasture and Lot Management, Nov. 12.

For more information on the Morris workshops, contact Dennis Johnson at (320) 589-1711, dairydgj@mrs.umn.edu. The programs are designed for both experienced graziers and those considering implementing a grazing system. Experienced farmers who attend are excellent resources for those who are learning about grazing, Johnson says.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, D1, P1

johnsonD6303

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June 27, 2003

Foliar fertilization of corn, soybeans not recommended

Foliar application of fertilizer application has not increased corn and soybean yields in Minnesota and is not recommended, says George Rehm, soil scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The concept of foliar fertilization has been researched for several years, Rehm says. Several projects focused on this management practice during the mid-1970s. More recently, there has been an intensive evaluation of in-season application of fertilizer-N for soybean production.

Application of fluid fertilizer containing N, P₂O₅, K₂O, and S was evaluated for corn production at the Southern Research and Outreach Center at Waseca. This mixture was applied 1, 2, or 3 times from mid-August through early September. Nutrients applied with each time of application were 25.3, 12.5, 6.3, and 1.0 lb of N, P₂O₅, K₂O and S, respectively. All treatments received full N at 150 lb. /acre as 82-0-0. In addition, there was a broadcast application of 60 lb. P₂O₅ and 100 lb. K₂O per acre.

The application times were selected so that the fluid fertilizer would be applied during grain fill. The results of this study showed that foliar application of fertilizer had no positive effect on corn yield, Rehm says.

Following a report of a positive response of foliar application for a soybean crop, trials were conducted at three locations to evaluate the potential use of this management practice for

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soybean production in Minnesota. The fertilizer was applied during pod fill. There were two varieties at each location. Results were consistent with both varieties.

“The results showed that foliar fertilization is not a management practice that will increase soybean yield,” Rehm says. “Other universities throughout the Corn Belt conducted similar studies, and the results were similar. Foliar fertilization had no effect on soybean yield.”

There is a risk to foliar fertilization of soybeans, Rehm says The N could cause burning of the foliage and reduced yields.

Tables with more details and yield results are available in the June 19, 2003 issue of “Minnesota Crop News” at <http://www.plpa.agri.umn.edu/extension/news%20releases/03MNCN21.htm>.

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Web, V2, V4, F4

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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

June 27, 2003

Minnesota Nutrition Conference on livestock feeding set for Sept. 16-17

The 64th annual Minnesota Nutrition Conference is scheduled Sept. 16-17, 2003, at the Holiday Inn St. Paul / East on Interstate 94. It features dairy, beef, swine and poultry nutrition.

It's designed for nutritionists, feed industry representatives, veterinarians, educators and producers. The conference provides an opportunity to share information about current research at universities, in industry and at government centers. Speakers are scientists from the University of Minnesota and other universities, and from industry.

Conference highlights include how diet affects the gut, glucose balance in the dairy cow and nutrition to optimize calf health and performance. Other topics: a critique of amino acid ratios for poultry and swine, cost of immune activation in poultry and use of omega-3 fatty acids in swine diets. Check the conference website at <http://www.cce.umn.edu/ag/mn-nutrition.shtml> for the latest program information.

Early registration is \$175, a savings of \$30, if received by Sept. 5, 2003. Regular registration is \$205 after Sept. 5, 2003 and at the door. You can register on-line by going to <http://www.cce.umn.edu/ag/registration.shtml>. The direct telephone number for the Holiday Inn-St. Paul/East is (651) 731-2220.

More information is available from Mary Kay Ferguson at (612) 625-8215 or (800) 318-8636, e-mail <mailto:mferguso@cce.umn.edu>.

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Web, V2, B1, D1, P3, S2

ferg6193

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June 25, 2003

Get a good night's sleep – for the health of it

By Marilyn Adams Maiser, University of Minnesota Extension Service

“Early to bed, early to rise, makes you healthy, wealthy and wise.” “Get your beauty sleep.” “Be sure to get a good night's sleep before _____ (fill in the blank with, the test, the big game, your presentation, your job interview) tomorrow.” Now, if we could only follow the age-old advice we so often give our loved ones!

Sleep is not a luxury. It is a necessity for a healthy body and an alert mind. It is vital for effective functioning on the job, too. Employers and teachers and parents are all too aware of the importance of a good night's sleep. Spouses and co-workers can testify, too.

Think melatonin. It's a hormone that is influenced by darkness and is responsible for regulating sleep. We are naturally wired to feel sleepy when the sun goes down and feel energized when the sun awakens us each morning. Well, that's how humans and lots of other creatures are biologically built to respond to light and darkness. But sleep researchers say that the lifestyle we have created conflicts with our natural patterns of sleep and wakefulness.

More than 100 million people in the United States don't get a good night's sleep on a regular basis, according to a www.MayoClinic.com article, “10 Tips for Better Sleep.” Another 33 million have occasional sleepless nights.

And it's not simply a matter of feeling sluggish the next day. We are reminded daily that inadequate sleep can have disastrous results for tired drivers. The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration reports that sleepy drivers cause at least 100,000 crashes each year resulting in 40,000 injuries and 1,550 deaths.

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A recent study published in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute (June 4, 2003) found that women who worked night shifts at least three times a month for 15 years or more had a 35 percent greater risk of developing colorectal cancer. Results suggest that melatonin might play a bigger role in overall health than previously known.

Sleep helps you fight off viruses and bacteria and is essential for a healthy immune system. It refreshes you. It improves your attitude and provides the energy you need for moving, thinking and dealing with stress of all kinds.

How much is enough? "Adults need 8 full hours of sleep and teens need 9.25 hours," says John Shepard Jr., M.D., medical director of the Mayo Clinic Sleep Disorders Center in Rochester, Minn... "However, the average person only gets 7.5 hours of sleep a night."

People vary widely in the hours of sleep they routinely get. Some do fine on 5 or 6 hours a night, while others need 9 or 10 hours. The important thing is to recognize when you are not getting enough to meet your personal needs. Do you wake refreshed? Without an alarm clock? These are clues to whether or not we have had adequate sleep.

Over time, our sleep patterns change. Lifestyle, aging, stress, stimulants, depression, lack of physical activity, pain and other changes in your environment can interrupt sleep. Our evening habits (what and when we eat, drink, watch, listen to, read or think about) affect our ability to relax and get restful sleep.

Infections, heartburn, medications, and other health problems certainly interfere with sleep. While most of us have an occasional sleepless night, for some it becomes routine. When insomnia--difficulty going to sleep, staying asleep or going back to sleep when you awaken early--lasts a month, it's time to get help.

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One excellent source of ideas for improving sleep on your own is the Mayo Clinic website at www.mayoclinic.com. The site also describes diagnosis and treatments used at sleep centers for chronic sleep problems. You deserve a good rest. Happy dreams and healthy living!

(Marilyn Adams Maiser is a regional educator in health and nutrition for the University of Minnesota Extension Service).

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Web, V2, V4, V7, H2

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June 20, 2003

Reduce your risk of skin cancer--with food

By Marilyn Adams Maiser, University of Minnesota Extension Service

We all know that a healthy diet is important for healthy skin. So it should be no surprise to find a connection between food and skin cancer. That's right--how we eat can influence skin cancer development!

A high-fat diet may contribute to one's risk for skin cancer, according to research studies funded by the American Institute for Cancer Research and conducted by Dr. Homer Black, professor of dermatology at Baylor College of Medicine. Further, a diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables may provide antioxidants and other substances that can help protect against skin cancer.

Dr. Black studied 115 patients who had experienced non-melanoma skin cancers. He learned that normally, once an individual is diagnosed with a skin cancer, he or she has a 25 percent risk for developing skin cancer again within two years. "We found that reducing fat in the diet by nearly half seemed to have a strong impact on how many second cancers developed and how fast," says Dr. Black. Those patients on a low-fat diet (20 percent calories from fat) developed only one-third as many additional tumors as those on the regular diet (37 percent of calories from fat).

Researchers suspect that fat affects the immune system. Studies on mice found that high-fat diets suppressed the immune reaction to ultraviolet (UV) radiation. In addition, when tumors

from mice on the high fat diets were transplanted into mice fed low-fat diets, the low-fat group rejected the tumors faster and had slower tumor growth than the high-fat group.

Since skin cancer may take four or more decades to develop in humans, it is very difficult to study the effect of fat intake on human skin cancer. These studies show a strong possible link between dietary fat and the body's ability to fight skin cancer.

Another finding is that antioxidants occurring naturally in food give more protection against skin cancer than supplements do. These protective chemicals in foods interact in complex ways. Research shows that large doses of any one antioxidant can lead to imbalances and less immune protection. But when consumed together, as in whole foods, their action is enhanced.

Nature provides protection from cancer and other disease in the form of whole foods. The familiar advice rings true: For a healthy immune system, eat a balanced diet that includes different kinds of vegetables and fruits, and limit your fat intake.

Skin cancer facts:

- From 40 to 50 percent of Americans who live to age 65 will have skin cancer at least once.
- Nearly all skin cancers are preventable if found and treated early.
- Skin cancer is usually caused by exposure to ultra-violet sun rays.
- Those with light skin, a family history of melanoma, history of severe sunburn in childhood, much sun exposure throughout life or many moles/freckles may have a higher risk.

Warning signs can include:

- A new growth or sore that doesn't heal in two weeks.
- A smooth, shiny, pale or waxy lump.

- A firm red lump, with bleeding or crusty surface.
- A flat, red spot that is rough, dry or scaly.
- A mole that has one half shaped differently than the other half, or a growth with irregular borders, different colors, or larger than a pencil eraser.

Prevention tips:

- Avoid exposure to sun from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. when possible.
- Wear protective clothes like brimmed hats and long sleeves.
- Use sunscreen rated 30 or higher. Reapply after swimming.
- Consume a varied diet, high in fruits and vegetables and low in fat.

(Marilyn Adams Maiser is a regional health and nutrition educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service)

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Web, V2, V4, V7, H2

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June 6, 2003

(Last of three articles on reducing diabetes risk)

A daily walk helps keep diabetes away

By Marilyn Adams Maiser, University of Minnesota Extension Service

Too much sitting around increases the risk of type 2 diabetes—and of strokes, some cancers, high blood pressure and a host of other health problems.

There's a long list of benefits from getting regular exercise at least five days a week. Exercise also aids weight loss without hunger, reduces insulin resistance and improves blood lipids. For those who have type 2 diabetes, physical activity lowers blood sugar levels and can even reduce the need for medication.

Aim to exercise 30 minutes a day, five days a week. You may want to find a walking buddy and head to the park or mall or school for a good stroll. If you can't get 30 minutes all at once, the benefits are still there if you break your walk into two 15-minute or even three 10-minute sessions.

It's important to find something you enjoy so you'll stick with it. Consistency, or getting into a daily routine, is more important than the type of activity you choose.

The typical American diet of high fat and refined carbohydrates combined with an inactive lifestyle really set the stage for developing type 2 diabetes for those of us who have the wrong genes. It is so easy to eat rich foods and to spend our free time in front of the television.

We can break this trend by taking small steps to change what we eat and our activity level. Take time to plan and set goals. Find a coach to help if you need to.

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Several health maintenance organizations now have programs in place to guide you in making small, steady changes over time. Call member services at your HMO or insurance company and ask about classes or telephone coaching services for making lifestyle changes to deal with stress, weight, exercise and diet. And best wishes for a healthy change of pace!

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Web, V2, V4, V7, H2

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June 3, 2003

Beef cattle tour at Canby will be July 15

A tour of some of Minnesota's most progressive cattle feeding and cow-calf operations is set for July 15, according to Philip Berg, regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Registration and a trade show will be at Minnesota West Community and Technical College, Canby. The tour is hosted by the Midwest Cattlemen's Association and will include a variety of stops, Berg says.

The south tour will travel to Wollum Feedlots, Stienessen Farms, Pesek Farms, Del Clark Lake, Rural Water Plant and Joe Mamer's. Wollum Feedlots is a century farm, 990-head feedlot operated by the fourth generation of Wollum's. Stienessen Farms is a 500-head natural fed finishing lot owned and operated by Gary and Sue Stienessen.

Richard and Judy Pesek have a cow-calf operation and also finish their calves, along with some additional purchased calves. The tour will visit the Del Clark Lake, which is the largest man-made lake in Minnesota. There will be a stop at the Rural Water Plant, a well system and pumping operation for much of West Central Minnesota and Eastern South Dakota. Joe Mamer has a pasture trial with one section sprayed with Graze-On, next to another section with no weed control.

The north tour will feature Bryan Kallhoff, Jerome Kallhoff, Strei Feedlot, Mark Boraas, a drive along Lac Qui Parle Lake to Montevideo, and Sonstegard Cattle Co., L.L.C. Bryan Kallhoff has an irrigated intensive grazed pasture system used to pasture replacement heifers.

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Jerome Kallhoff is working with the Lac Qui Parle Soil and Water office to demonstrate the EQIP program to help bring some feeding facilities into compliance with new MPCA rules.

Strei Feedlot is a finishing facility owned and operated by Chad Strei and his family. Chad is the second generation to operate the facility. The tour will drive by the pasture system used by Mark Boraas for his 400-head Black Angus stock cow herd. Sonstegard Cattle Co. L.L.C. is a Red Angus seed stock operation owned and managed by the Gary and Elaine Sonstegard family.

Continental breakfast and registration will run from 6 a.m. to 8 a.m. with the first morning bus leaving at 6:45 a.m. Buses will leave every 20 minutes, returning for lunch and dinner. The cost for the day will be \$20 per person if pre-registered, which includes breakfast, lunch and dinner. The cost will be \$25 per person on July 15.

For further information on the tour, call Joe or Brenda Mamer at (507) 224-2165.

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Web, V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,A2MN,B1

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May 30, 2003

(Second of three articles on reducing diabetes risk)

Whole grains reduce risk of heart disease and diabetes

By Marilyn Adams Maiser, University of Minnesota Extension Service

New research shows that three servings of whole grain products instead of refined grains can improve heart health and blood sugar.

Over time, elevated blood sugar levels damage both small and large blood vessels. And people with type 2 diabetes have two to four times the risk of dying of heart attack than those who don't.

Eating a diet high in fiber, lower in saturated fat will improve blood lipids. It also helps you sustain weight loss and makes you feel full on fewer calories. Choose whole grain products such as whole wheat pasta, brown rice, barley, whole oatmeal, and whole grain cereals (in place of bread, bagels, crackers made of mainly refined white flour). Look for the word "whole" on product ingredient lists.

On average, Americans only get one serving a day of whole grain, but we should eat at least three. And a heart healthy diet would include five whole grain foods a day. Whole grain oatmeal, toast and other cereals make breakfast an easy, healthy way to start your day.

Web, V2, V4, V7, H2

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May 23, 2003

(First of three articles on reducing diabetes risk)

Healthy eating, exercise and weight loss reduce diabetes risk

By Marilyn Adams Maiser, University of Minnesota Extension Service

Diabetes rates continue to grow as a higher percentage of the U.S. population develops the disease each year.

Family history is a major risk factor. But whether or not we have a relative with diabetes, we can all lower our chances of getting type 2 diabetes. The choices we make in our daily lives either increase or decrease our risk of getting diabetes

Many researchers confirm that body weight, level of physical activity and the nature of our diets will either increase or decrease our risk. Insulin can be less effective as we gain weight, and glucose intolerance also increases over time.

By the time a person is overweight, their chance of developing diabetes doubles or triples. Obese people have 10 times the risk.

The good news is that if you're overweight and lose weight, your body is less resistant to insulin. This can mean less need for blood-sugar lowering medication.

Healthy life choices reduce your risk of diabetes. They also lower the risk of a heart attack, stroke and other health problems.

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Web, V2, V4, V7, H2

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May 20, 2003

Here are things to watch for as you monitor wheat, soybean crops

By Zachary Fore, University of Minnesota Extension Service

Once planting is completed, you can turn your attention to other issues. Each year is different, and predicting what problems are likely to occur is uncertain business. Although we don't know what challenges 2003 will bring, here are a few things to pay attention to, particularly in wheat and soybeans.

Crop Stand: Getting a good crop stand is critical for maximum yields of any crop. Many factors contribute to getting a good crop stand, including seed quality, planting rate, soil conditions, planting depth and planting method. For wheat, we are generally shooting for 1.25 million plants per acre, and for soybeans, 150,000 to 200,000 plants per acre.

After emergence do you check to see how close you came to achieving your desired stand? It is a good idea, and it doesn't have to take a lot of time. For stand counts in narrow row spacing, a hoop works very well. If you cut a 7'5" length of anhydrous tubing, garden hose or similar substance and connect the ends, you will have a hoop with an area of 1/10,000 of an acre. Toss it in the field randomly in several locations and count the plants inside the hoop. Multiply the number by 10,000 and you have an estimate of your population per acre. For example, if you count 96 wheat plants inside the hoop that calculates out to a plant population of 960,000 plants per

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acre. For wider row spacings, it is better to count a specific number of feet of row. The length of row required to obtain 1/1000 acre is 17'5" for 30" rows, 23'9" for 22" rows and 34'10" for 15" rows.

Wheat Leaf Diseases: Leaf diseases are a serious potential problem every year in wheat. However, many factors affect the degree and severity of leaf diseases. Whether or not you need to apply a fungicide is an in-season decision determined by the variety you have planted, the condition and value of the crop, previous crop, the amount of disease present at a given time and the weather. The only way to know whether you need to apply a fungicide is to scout fields and assess these factors.

Fusarium Head Blight (Scab): Scab is also a serious potential problem each year. As with leaf diseases, many factors affect the degree and severity of scab. And, as with leaf diseases, fungicide treatment for scab is an in-season decision based on numerous factors. North Dakota State University has created a web site that can help you assess the important factors to consider when determining if a fungicide application is a good economic decision for leaf diseases or scab. You can visit the site at:

<http://www.ag.ndsu.nodak.edu/cropdisease/>.

Soybeans Root Rot and Other Stand Reducing Seedling Diseases: In many areas, soybean is grown every other year in the crop rotation. Because of this short crop rotation we need to be especially aware of increasing disease problems. Some growers have reported more problems with seedling mortality. Observing plants as they

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emerge and taking stand counts will help assess whether seedling diseases are becoming an increasing problem.

Sclerotinia (White Mold): White mold is a disease that is a problem in many broadleaf crops, including soybeans. Short crop rotations can increase the potential problems with white mold. White mold spores can survive many years in the soil, so knowing how much you have is important for determining future crops to grow.

Soybean Aphid: During the last two years we have seen that soybean aphid can be a problem all the way up to the Canadian border. We don't know if aphids will be a problem in 2003 or not, but we know the potential is there and we will have to watch for them.

Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN): We know that SCN is a significant problem from central Minnesota and south. As soybean acreage increases in northern Minnesota and North Dakota, we need to watch to monitor the spread of SCN. Once it is identified, precautions can be taken to limit its spread and manage it. Look for yellow, stunted plants, particularly near field entrances. SCN typically spreads in the direction of tillage, creating an oval pattern. Plants can be dug up, washed and physically inspected for SCN.

There is little doubt that 2003 will bring many challenges and some surprises. The potential problems detailed above are just a few, specific examples of things to keep an eye out for. Most problems can be managed if we identify them soon enough.

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Web, V2MN, F4, Z1

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May 20, 2003

Farmers need to be active in 'Wall Street' government

By Richard A. Levins

In today's economy, farmers need to be involved in two governments: our regular, civic government; and a second "economic or Wall Street" government.

For generations, farmers have looked to the government to help solve their income problems. They have lobbied for commodity payments, disaster relief, and other ways of compensating for prices too low for a decent family income. More recently, the rules governing international trade have become hot topics. The dispute over importing milk protein concentrates is the latest example.

In today's economy, farm payments must compete with everything from prescription drug relief for seniors to bailouts for troubled airlines. Free trade has become second nature to both Democrats and Republicans. We keep hearing that, "We didn't win, but we put up a good fight." Meanwhile, prices for many agricultural products are in the toilet. Worse yet, there's a heavy hand on the flush lever.

That hand on the flush lever is not the "invisible hand" of free enterprise that Adam Smith said would guide our economy toward constant improvement. No, it is a "visible hand" that large corporations use to move the economy in ways that better suit their objectives. Like everyone else, they try to influence Washington. But they work just as hard to influence Wall Street: the "economic government" of the day-to-day

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business world. No matter what happens in the civil government of Washington, those who choose not to recognize the new rules of the economic government will likely get the short end of the stick.

Take the issue of mergers and acquisitions in agribusiness. Many farmers tell me that Washington allows too many of these. That may be, but even the most pro-business administration does not require them. The initiative comes from corporations working to strengthen their positions in the world's economic government.

Here's another example: A government obsessed with free-trade policies may choose to allow imports of milk protein concentrates. But the government does not require dairy processors to buy them. That is a decision made by processors seeking to improve their own bottom line. Higher profits make them even more powerful in the economic government. That stronger position in the economic government makes them stronger in the civil government, too.

It is tempting to view these developments in terms of good and bad. That works for politics, but not for economics. Here, it is better to look at what is, and then to act accordingly. This is one place that, in my view, farmers could do more. Farmers often choose not to participate effectively in the economic government. They put all their eggs in the Washington basket and hope beyond hope that hard work and good weather will bring economic salvation. This, sadly, is increasingly unlikely.

It need not be this way. Farmers, as a group, can represent themselves very well in the economic government of the United States and the world if they choose to do so. For example, a strong group representing the economic interests of all farmers could

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offset the economic power of ever-larger corporations in the food system. As a second example, that strong farmer group, once established, could work on equal terms with dairy processors to develop product sourcing policies in everyone's best interests.

So, should we give up on civil government? Absolutely not. Farmers will need fair laws that allow them to develop and use their market power. On top of that, many of our thorniest problems on the agricultural scene will not be addressed by higher prices. The environment and the small-versus-big farm debate will still be with us. Biotechnology will remain contentious. These are problems that the civil government will have to address, and farmers and their representatives in Washington should have their fair say.

But when it comes to the issue of farm prices, I think there is only one way to make lasting improvements. That is through effective participation in the "second government," that of the boardrooms and executive offices of our global economy. All farm groups, regardless of their political positions, need to act together if they are to be represented well there. There are many issues that farmers argue over, but they must not lose sight of the overriding goal they all share: farmers deserve a fair share of food system profits and fair prices for what they produce.

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Web, A2, A4, V2, V4

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May 15, 2003

'Stress test' your crop marketing plan at a U of M workshop

Drought, downpour, disease or disaster can result in a short crop year. What happens to your pre-harvest marketing plan if this occurs? Attend a workshop entitled "Stress Test Your Marketing Plan," to look at the recent history of crop problems and price reaction.

You'll then consider ways to adapt your pre-harvest marketing plan for a short crop year, says Bob Craven, farm management economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Seven workshops sponsored by the Center for Farm Financial Management at the U of M will be offered throughout Minnesota in June of 2003. They are scheduled as follows:

- June 23, St. Cloud, from 9-11 a.m.
- June 24, Crookston, 9-11 a.m., and Fergus Falls, 2-4 p.m.
- June 25, Morris, 9-11 a.m., and Lamberton, 2-4 p.m.
- June 26, St. Peter, 9-11 a.m., and Owatonna, 2-4 p.m.

"The value and importance of pre-harvest marketing is well established. But concerns about crop problems--and the fear of missing a big price rally--prevent many producers from taking action," says Ed Usset, U of M grain marketing specialist and

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workshop leader. The workshops will address the disaster issue head-on to give producers a better sense of preparedness and a game plan for action in a short crop year.

Participants will examine the recent history of short crops and look at ways to adapt a pre-harvest marketing plan. The historical analysis will pay particular attention to seasonal grain price patterns in normal years, short crop years and post-short crop years.

All grain producers are welcome. The analysis will focus on corn, but the lessons can be applied to soybeans, wheat and other crops. The registration fee of \$25 includes refreshments and handout materials. For more information or to register, contact the Center for Farm Financial Management at (800) 234-1111 or (612) 625-1964. An on-line brochure is available at www.cffm.umn.edu/pubs/stresstest2003.pdf

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, A2, F4

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May 13, 2003

U of M Carcass Merit Program helps measure performance

Would you like to know how your cattle perform in the feedlot and in the packing plant? The University of Minnesota Carcass Merit Program can provide those answers, says Deb Roeber, meat quality and safety specialist with the U of M Extension Service.

The Minnesota Carcass Merit Program helps seedstock and commercial cow-calf producers evaluate how their genetics perform in the feedlot and on the rail. And there's a payoff for producers with genetics that make lean, fast gains in the feedlot, and have a USDA Quality Grade of high Select or better with a USDA Yield Grade of two. Roeber says these producers will reap the benefits of our changing marketing system and high consumer demand for lean and tender beef.

Since its inception, nearly 2,000 steers and heifers have been enrolled in the Carcass Merit Program. This has enabled producers to obtain detailed information in three areas:

1. Feedlot performance (average daily gain, feed intake and feed efficiency).
2. Carcass merit (dressing percentage, fat depth, ribeye area, USDA Yield Grade, and USDA Quality Grade).
3. The true value of their cattle based on carcass traits.

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Plans are currently underway to set up the 2003-2004 Carcass Merit Program. In order for appropriate program details to be put into place, the interest level in Minnesota and surrounding states must be determined, Roeber says. The tentative feedyard for the Carcass Merit Program is Gilland Feedlot, Inc., Morgan, Minn.

The enrollment fee will be \$25 per head. Producers in Minnesota and surrounding states are encouraged to participate. If you or someone you know is interested in this program, access the survey on-line at www.ansci.umn.edu/beef/carcassmerit/survey.pdf. Or, contact Deb Roeber at (612) 624-2405 or droeber@umn.edu by June 30.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, B1

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Extension

S E R V I C E

NEWS & INFORMATION

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

April 30, 2003

Editors: A photo of the Nathe family on their farm is available by e-mail. To obtain a digital color photo by e-mail, send a request to bjrae@umn.edu.

Attention to detail brings low SCC, milk check bonus for Nathes

They market high-quality milk that earns a premium price, putting extra dollars in their milk check. That makes close attention to detail in their dairy operation well worth the effort, say members of the Nathe family of Stearns County.

The Nathes milk 200 cows on their 260-acre farm about a mile east of Meire Grove, with a herd average of 24,500 pounds. The operation includes John and Ginny, their son Jeron and his wife Brenda. John and Ginny's daughter Jana, a student at St. Cloud Technical College, also helps with milking. Irene Nathe, a neighbor and distant relative, is an employee who helps milk. High school students Chris Frieler and Nathan Lieser help keep stalls and barns clean.

The Nathes are among the top dairy producers in Minnesota when it comes to producing milk with a low somatic cell count (SCC), a standard measure of mastitis and milk quality. Their herd SCC for December of 2002 was 92,000 as recorded by their milk plant, the Land O' Lakes plant in Melrose. In November it was 97,000, and for the year 2002 it was 146,000.

"That puts them up there with the elite," says Jeff Reneau, dairy scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. There are about 6,500 herds in Minnesota and 3,500 on Dairy Herd Improvement Association (DHIA) testing. Of the DHIA herds, only 37 had a SCC under 100,000 for December and only 150 were under 150,000.

The Nathes earn a milk quality premium of 70-80 cents per hundredweight. This added \$3,572 to their milk check in December of 2002, and their monthly premium

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typically tops \$3,000. The low SCC also means higher milk production. "When the count is higher, cows don't milk as well," John says.

John, 62, represents the fourth generation of the family on the Nathe farm, and Jeron, 27, represents the fifth. It's a Century Farm, homesteaded by John's great grandfather in 1868. John and Ginny were married in 1969 and took over the farming operation in 1970. They are the parents of Lori, Greg, Jeron, Karl and Jana.

When John and Ginny started farming in 1970, they milked 40 cows in a tie-stall barn. They built a 100-stall freestall barn in 1994, increased the milking herd to 100 cows, and converted the tie-stall barn to a flat-barn parlor and holding area.

Jeron joined the operation full time after completing a two-year farm management program at Ridgewater College in Willmar in 1995. Brenda, who grew up on a dairy farm near Sauk Centre, and Jeron were married in 2001 and live in Meire Grove.

In 1999 the Nathes expanded to 200 cows, adding another 100-stall freestall barn. At that time they also put in a double-eight pit milking parlor with automatic take-offs.

The Nathes have worked to keep their SCC low for many years. "Typically in the tie-stall barn we were under 100,000," says John. "We lost a little bit in the flat-barn parlor. Our equipment wasn't functioning properly and we went up to 200-250,000. But we finally got it turned around."

In addition to earning bigger milk checks because of a low SCC, providing a high-quality product to consumers is important to the Nathes. And, as Ginny says, "it's more fun milking cows that are healthy."

They stress keeping the cows clean as one of the basics for achieving a low SCC. They use rubber-filled mattresses in the freestalls, and also bed the stalls with wood shavings and sunflower hulls. They clean the back half of the stalls and the alleys in the freestall barns twice a day. After cleaning they spread hydrated lime on each stall. Their goal is to keep the cows comfortable and stress-free.

Milking procedure is another key. About a year ago they made some changes in their milking routine, implementing a procedure developed and recommended by the University of Minnesota.

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“The procedure involves dipping, rubbing the teats and especially the teat ends, stripping, and dipping again,” Jeron says. “The idea is to get good stimulation and milk letdown. The teats are then dried using a cloth towel. The whole procedure is done in a timed sequence.”

They watch cows closely at milking time for signs of mastitis, such as hard or swollen udder quarters. They also keep a close eye on individual cow SCC information from DHIA. If a problem shows up, they use the on-farm California Mastitis Test (CMT) to check individual quarters. All cows with mastitis or high cell counts are cultured. If the culture shows contagious mastitis the cow is moved to the last milking group. They also give each cow a CMT when she freshens and just before she is dried off.

They have two pails of disinfectant water in the parlor during milking. One is for washing hands. The other is to disinfect any milking unit that has come off a problem or treated cow before the unit goes on another cow.

The Nathes feel keeping equipment in good order is one of the keys to controlling mastitis. Darryl Droogsma, their Land O’ Lakes milk production specialist, checks pulsators every 4-6 weeks to make sure they are opening and closing properly. Their equipment dealer, Stearns Veterinary Outlet Store of Melrose, checks their vacuum levels every two weeks and rebuilds pulsators once a year. The dealer also does other regular maintenance and addresses any equipment concerns the family has.

“We try to keep everything clean and running the way it’s supposed to run,” says Jeron. “We’ve been doing it so long it’s automatic.”

He notes that some dairies focus on cows milked per hour. “Here, we make sure everything gets done,” he says. “We don’t worry about cows per hour quite as much.”

Droogsma, the Land O’ Lakes milk production specialist, says cleanliness and attention to detail are the keys to the Nathes’ success in controlling mastitis. “They have a super-clean working environment,” he says. “That includes the cows, the parlor, everything. When you go there, it’s not messy one day and clean the next. It’s clean and dry every day.”

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The Nathes make sure everyone in their operation who milks uses the same milking procedure consistently, says Droogsma. "And they fine-tune things," he adds. "If they have a problem with a pulsator, they fix it. Some people say 'We'll get to it,' but they don't. The Nathes do preventive maintenance, rather than waiting for problems to show up."

Jim Salfer, regional educator at St. Cloud with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, says the Nathes do an excellent job with hygiene.

"Hygiene goes a long ways in controlling somatic cell count," he says. "They're so consistent in the way they do things and they're very meticulous. They do everything consistently well every single day."

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Web,V2,V4MN,A2,D1,78

nath0226

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May 1, 2003

USDA crop loan rates are changing for 2003

By Paul Carr, University of Minnesota Extension Service

The U.S. Department of Agriculture recently revised county crop loan rates for 2003, narrowing the corn rate disparity between Minnesota and Iowa border counties that occurred last year.

A year ago the USDA changed county loan rates for the 2002 crop to fit new national loan rates and to better reflect local price differences. Observers noticed large rate disparities between neighboring counties, especially those divided by a state line. The corn loan rate in Minnesota counties along the Iowa border was 6-8 cents lower than the rate in counties on the Iowa side. In addition, Minnesota counties along the Iowa border from Rock to Freeborn County were only pennies away from having the lowest corn rates in the country.

The 2003 national loan rates stay the same at \$1.98 per bushel for corn and \$5 per bushel for soybeans. However, county loan rates for corn have changed for everyone in southern Minnesota and northern Iowa. Minnesota's 2003 corn loan rates are three cents higher than a year ago. The Iowa corn loan rates have dropped one cent, except for

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Kossuth County, Iowa, where the rate has dropped two cents. As a result, the corn loan rate disparity between state border counties has been dramatically narrowed.

Soybean loan rates in Minnesota counties for 2003 will remain the same as 2002 rates, while soybean loan rates in Iowa will go up two cents per bushel.

This is the third consecutive year that corn loan rates in Minnesota counties have changed. For example, the corn loan rate in Faribault County has gone from \$1.72 to \$1.78 to \$1.81 over the three years from 2001 to 2003. Since the national corn loan rate is set to go from \$1.98 to \$1.95 starting with the 2004 crop, county loan rates for corn are likely to change again next year.

An Internet web site with the 2003 loan rates is at

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/dafp/psd/loanrate.htm>.

(Paul Carr is a regional Extension educator in farm business management at Blue Earth, Minn.)

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Web,V2,V4MN,A2MN,F4MN,22,23,24,28,32,45,50,53,70

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April 29, 2003

Conservation Reserve Program sign-up is May 5-30

The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) protects millions of acres of American topsoil from erosion and is designed to improve the nation's natural resource base.

Participants voluntarily remove environmentally sensitive land from agricultural production by entering into long-term contracts for 10 to 15 years. In exchange, participants receive annual rental payments and a payment of up to 50 percent of the cost of establishing conservation practices.

The CRP general sign-up will be from May 5 through May 30. Producers can sign up at their county USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA) office. Producers need to be aware that the 2003 CRP signup will be through the FSA office, not the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) office as in previous CRP signups, says Gary Wyatt, regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

By reducing water runoff and sedimentation, CRP also protects groundwater and helps improve the condition of lakes, rivers, ponds and streams. Acreage enrolled in the CRP is planted to resource-conserving vegetative covers, making the program a major contributor to increases in wildlife populations in many parts of the country. The 2002 Farm Bill authorized USDA to maintain CRP enrollment up to 39.2 million acres.

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Aside from the general sign-up, CRP's continuous sign-up program will be ongoing. USDA has reserved two million acres for the continuous sign-up program, which represents the most environmentally desirable and sensitive land. USDA is making a special effort to help enhance wildlife habitats and air quality by setting aside 500,000 acres for bottomland hardwood tree planting. Continuous sign-up for hardwood planting will start after the general sign-up.

Current participants with contracts expiring this fall can make new contract offers. Contracts awarded under this sign-up will become effective either at the beginning of the next fiscal year, Oct. 1, 2003, or the following year, Oct. 1, 2004, whichever the producer chooses. One other general sign-up will be offered through 2007.

The Farm Service Agency will evaluate and rank eligible CRP offers using the Environmental Benefits Index (EBI) for environmental benefits to be gained from enrolling the land in CRP. Decisions on the EBI cutoff will be made after the sign-up ends and after analyzing the EBI numbers of all the offers. Those who would have met previous sign-up EBI thresholds are not guaranteed a contract under this sign-up. For more information, visit <http://www.usda.gov> or call your local FSA office.

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Web, V2, V4, C4, P1

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April 25, 2003

Medicinal herb network could lead to high-quality, local products

Medicinal herbs, acupuncture, therapeutic massage and Chinese medicine (CM) are examples of complementary and alternative forms of medicine that consumers are increasingly drawn to. And acceptance by mainstream health care providers is growing too—especially when therapies are used to complement more traditional forms of treatment.

The CM practitioners use medicinal herbs imported from Asia, South America and Europe. But the practitioners are suspicious of dubious quality, including concerns of contamination and adulteration, says Craig Hassel, a food and nutrition scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

There may be a good option: Locally produced, high-quality medicinal herbs that meet standards of CM practitioners could help both growers and CM practitioners.

Hassel, who has a Ph.D. in nutrition, has been working with local medicinal herb growers and CM practitioners. Together, they have just published an article on using CM to understand medicinal herb quality in the journal, "Agriculture and Human Values," (19: 337-347, 2002). The project was an "unprecedented" University partnership with practitioners of Chinese medicine and local, small-scale medicinal herb growers, Hassel says.

The Medicinal Herb Network was founded in 1998 as a partnership of small-scale medicinal herb growers and CM practitioners. Its objective was to develop more

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appropriate standards of medicinal herb quality and to encourage locally grown, high quality medicinal herbs consistent with these standards. In network conversations, Hassel says local herb growers say they're ready to organically grow a variety of high quality medicinal herbs. "But the problem is they hear mixed or unclear messages from distributors regarding the desired attributes for premium products," Hassel says.

" Meanwhile, practitioners of Chinese medicine rely upon products imported from Asia, South America, and Europe, but remain suspicious of dubious quality, including concerns of contamination and adulteration. Practitioners have no way to verify authenticity or conditions under which the product was produced or processed," Hassel says. "The practitioners say that locally grown herbs produced with specific attention to generating a high quality product would provide added value to their practice."

The Medicinal Herb Network is the only network of its kind to offer a way for herbalist health-care practitioners and local farmers to interact and work together to provide locally grown medicinal herbs of high quality, Hassel says. The network is now developing a language describing medicinal herb quality based in Chinese medical theory while using descriptive sensory analysis procedures practiced within a sub-discipline of food science.

According to Hassel and co-authors of the article, "CM is one of several ancient systems of medical care based upon a different world view than the prevailing biomedical model; it employs its own language, systems of logic, and criteria for

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understanding health and diagnosing illness. Medicinal herbs play a central role in CM systems and knowledgeable practitioners have extensive clinical experience using them."

But established scientific and regulatory organizations like the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) rely upon biomedical understandings of pathology. They seldom acknowledge the definitions and criteria for medicinal herb quality found within Chinese medicine.

"This is a problem because current approaches used by the industry may only lead to more uniform products that have little to do with effectiveness from a clinical perspective," Hassel says.

The network hopes not only to make available locally grown medicinal herbs of high quality, but also to bring attention to the value of divergent perspectives in addressing difficult issues confronting health professionals.

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Web, V2, V4, H2, P1

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April 24, 2003

Phosphorus-free fertilizer becomes widely available

When the Minnesota Phosphorus Lawn Fertilizer Bill was enacted last year, there was concern whether phosphorus-free fertilizer would be readily available.

It turns out there's no problem. Although the law does not take full effect until 2004, phosphorus-free lawn fertilizer has shown up in stores throughout the Twin Cities metropolitan area. "Consumers should not have any trouble finding the product they need," says Ron Struss, educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The phosphorus-free restriction is limited to the Twin Cities metro area and Crow Wing County. Outside of these two areas, lawn fertilizer is restricted to three percent phosphate content, which is readily available. In the fertilizer industry, phosphorus content is measured as phosphate, a form of phosphorus. The phosphate content of lawn fertilizer is given by the middle number in a string of three numbers printed on the bag.

The three numbers represent percent content of plant nutrients nitrogen, phosphate and potassium, in that order. A zero middle number indicates zero percent phosphate content, or phosphorus-free.

Use of phosphorus-free lawn fertilizer is not required until 2004, but it's good news the product is widely available this year. "The purpose of the law is to protect rivers and lakes from excessive algae growth," Struss says. "Phosphorus washing off

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the landscape during rain storms turns our waters green with algae, and using phosphorus-free lawn fertilizers is one step we can take to protect water quality."

The Phosphorus Lawn Fertilizer Law restricts the use, not the sale of phosphorus lawn fertilizer. Responsibility is on the user, not the seller, to use the product correctly. It also does not ban the use of phosphorus lawn fertilizer, but restricts use to when it's needed. Two cases where higher rates of phosphorus are needed are on newly seeded lawns and on lawns where soil testing shows a phosphorus deficiency.

"However, soil testing records show that Twin Cities metro soils are high to very high in phosphorus content," Struss says. "If there's a question on a given lawn, soil testing can be done to determine if there's a need for phosphorus."

Although use of phosphorus-free lawn fertilizer is not required until 2004, there's a requirement that is in effect now--lawn fertilizer spilled or overspread on paved areas must be cleaned up immediately. "This applies to all fertilizer, whether it contains phosphorus or not," explains Struss. "The idea is to prevent the next rain from washing it into the street, down the storm drain, and out into our lakes and rivers. A broom should now be part of lawn fertilizing equipment."

Minnesota is the first and only state to enact statewide restrictions on phosphorus lawn fertilizer, More information is available from the Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance at (800) 877-6300 or <http://www.moea.state.mn.us/campaign/garden/index.html>, and the Minnesota Department of Agriculture's website at <http://www.mda.state.mn.us/appd/ace/phoslaw.htm>. The U of M Extension Service offers assistance on lawn and garden care on their Yard and Garden Line at (612) 624-4771 or <http://www.extension.umn.edu/projects/yardandgarden/>.

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Editors: a digital photo of a fertilizer bag illustrating zero phosphorus content is available from Ron Struss at (651) 215-1950 or rstruss@umn.edu.

Web, V2MN, V4MN, G1, P1, T2

struss4233

Source: Ron Struss (651) 215-1950, rstruss@umn.edu

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April 22, 2003

Sustainable agriculture program calls for grant preproposals

Members of institutions and organizations from the North Central Region are invited to apply for 2004 Research and Education Grants through the North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR-SARE) program.

NCR-SARE estimates that about \$1.5 million will be available for 10 to 15 grants by the summer of 2004. Individual grants cannot exceed \$150,000.

Grants can be one to three years in length and must address sustainable agricultural topics with in-depth research or education/demonstration projects. Successful preproposals will address the long-term enhancement of agricultural profitability, environmental quality and societal well-being.

"We are pleased that interested citizens and the federal government support the SARE program and make these funds available for research and education projects that will make agriculture more sustainable," says Bill Wilcke, regional coordinator for the NCR-SARE program. Wilcke is also an engineer with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

NCR-SARE encourages projects that include holistic approaches, interdisciplinary team involvement, agricultural producer participation, significant outreach and measurable results. Projects should pertain to issues within the North Central Region.

The call for preproposals is available at the NCR-SARE office at (402) 472-7081 or through its website at www.sare.org/ncrsare. Preproposals will be accepted in the NCR-SARE office until June 10, 2003, at 4:30 p.m. CDT. Successful preproposal authors will be invited to submit full proposals due fall 2004.

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The Research and Education Grant Program is one of four NCR-SARE grant programs. It funds collaborative teams of scientists, farmers, educators, institutions and organizations to explore sustainable agriculture through research, education or demonstration.

NCR-SARE is a competitive grants program, funded by the U. S. Department of Agriculture, that strengthens rural communities, increases farmer/rancher profitability and improves environmental quality by supporting research and education. States included in the North Central Region are North and South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, Illinois, Michigan, Indiana and Ohio.

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Web, V2, V4, P1

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NEWS & INFORMATION

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April 17, 2003

U of M offers workshops on working with Hmong, other diverse clients

Businesses and service organizations can learn to build better relationships with the Hmong population and other diverse audiences through a pair of upcoming University of Minnesota workshops. A workshop on "Customer Service for Multicultural Customers and Clients" will be April 30 and one on "Working with Hmong Families" will be May 1. Both will run from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

The workshops will be in St. Paul at the Ramsey County Extension Office, 1525 White Bear Ave. They are designed for those who work in public or private organizations that employ and serve multicultural populations. This includes administrators of organizations, intercultural educators, entrepreneurs, healthcare professionals and social service professionals.

This April 30 workshop will focus on customer service from the perspective of interacting and communicating with persons from different cultures. It will help participants learn how to avoid common mistakes when serving or employing a diverse population.

The May 1 workshop will help participants better understand Hmong family values. The workshop will generate strategies that address cultural concerns such as gender roles, generational expectations, and whom the Hmong trust as they seek information. Attitudes and conceptions Hmong parents bring to their relationship with

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school will be explored. Health care workers will gain insight into how the Hmong view physical and mental health. Special attention will be paid to Hmong elders as "the fading Hmong generation."

Presenters at both workshops will be Krystal Vujongyia and Laura Au-Yeung, regional educators with the U of M Extension Service. Cynthia Messer, U of M campus-based Extension educator and author of several customer service programs, will also be a presenter at the April 30 workshop.

To obtain a registration brochure and workshop fee information, call (612) 374-8430 or e-mail auyeu001@umn.edu. For more information on the program, call Vujongyia at (651) 704-2057 or Au-Yeung at (612) 374-8430.

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Web, V4MN, V7, A3, E1MN, F1MN, H2MN, T1MN, Y1MN

among

Source: Joyce Hoelting, (612) 625-8233

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April 15, 2003

Keep belts tight on fans in livestock buildings

Keep belts tight on exhaust fans in mechanically ventilated livestock buildings. That's especially important during the summer, says Larry Jacobson, engineer with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Jacobson says when a fan belt isn't tight enough, the fan's revolutions per minute (RPM) can decrease. "Factors such as shutters and dirt on fan blades and other fan assembly components typically reduce airflow 30-50 percent," says Jacobson. "Additional reductions of 50 percent or more occur when the fan's RPM are further reduced due to slippage of the fan's driving belt."

Jacobson says under-ventilation in a barn is a concern any time of year. However, it's a greater concern during the summer when more fans operating create a higher static pressure in the barn. This leads to further loss in the barn's ventilation capacity.

A publication entitled "Fan Performance and Efficiency for Animal Ventilation Systems" has more information on livestock building ventilation. It's on the Internet at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/livestocksystems/DI0956.html>. Printed copies are available at a nominal cost from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 and ask for item FO-00956.

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Web,V2,D1,S2,P3

jacob413

Source: Larry Jacobson, (612) 625-9733
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

April 15, 2003

A new booklet has good ideas for parents of teenagers

Your teenager is pushing the limits on staying out late, and you're less than excited about some of the friends she's hanging out with. What do you do about it?

There are no easy answers, but you'll find many good ideas in a new booklet on parenting teens from the University of Minnesota Extension Service. It's titled "The Growing Season: A Parent's Guide to Teens."

The booklet was originally a guide for The Growing Season video, says Kathleen Olson, a regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "Parents tell me they appreciate the new stand-alone version with its in-depth, compact format and real-life examples," Olson says.

The Growing Season is a good resource for parents, schools, libraries, social service agencies or anyone who wants to know what makes teens tick. It covers positive discipline, communication, dealing with conflict, friends and peers and responsible decision-making. Also covered are school, parenting styles, dating, sex and sexuality, drugs and alcohol, depression and suicide, and jobs and money.

Copies are available from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. The booklet cost is \$7 for single copies, or 10 copies for \$50. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 and ask for item 07776. Shipping and handling charges are extra.

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Web, V4, V7, F1

como443

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MSC
A27p

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

April 11, 2003

Bulls should have breeding soundness exam before breeding season

Making sure you have a capable bull this year is a key to a good calf crop from your beef cow herd next year. That means the bull should have a breeding soundness examination, says Philip Berg, regional educator at Pipestone with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

“The importance of the bull in a cow-calf operation is often underestimated,” says Berg. “The bull is responsible for half the genetic material in 20 to 50 calves. Also, the bull’s ability to locate cows in estrus and breed them is clearly vital to the success of the operation. Low-fertility bulls can increase the percentage of open cows in your herd and extend the calving period.”

Berg says a breeding soundness exam can’t guarantee the fertility of a bull, but it can identify bulls having obvious reproductive problems. The best time for the exam is 30 to 60 days before the start of breeding. This allows enough time to replace questionable bulls.

A veterinarian administers the breeding soundness exam. The procedure includes a physical examination of feet, legs, eyes, teeth, flesh cover, and scrotal size

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and shape. It also includes an internal and external examination of the reproductive tract, and semen evaluation for sperm cell motility and normality.

"Fertile bulls classified as satisfactory potential breeders based on the exam may still have low mating behavior, or libido," says Berg. "All bulls should be watched closely early in the breeding season to make sure they have adequate serving capacity."

General recommendations are to run 25 to 30 cows per mature bull and 15 to 20 cows per yearling bull. These ratios will vary depending on the pasture, the terrain and the bull's sexual aggressiveness.

Yearling bulls may need special management to improve performance and prevent weight loss, says Berg. This may mean rotating them between pastures, and giving them extra feed or a shorter breeding season.

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Web,V2,B1,X1

berg410

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MCC
A27P

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

April 11, 2003

New U of M publication cites southern Minnesota corn nitrogen research

Providing the right amount of nitrogen for corn is a key to growing the crop profitably.

Applying too much nitrogen wastes money. And the excess can end up in ground water.

The importance of finding the right nitrogen rates for corn has led University of Minnesota soil scientists to conduct hundreds of field studies on the issue since the 1960s. Among those involved in this work is Gyles Randall, soil scientist at the U of M Southern Research and Outreach Center at Waseca. Randall says the U of M regularly updates its nitrogen recommendations using the most recent corn hybrids with the greatest yield potential.

“In recent years the University’s nitrogen recommendations for corn have been questioned by the fertilizer industry and by some farmers and crop advisors,” notes Randall. “They have considered the recommendations lower than appropriate. One reason cited is that many of the field studies were done on University Experiment Station land. For this reason, we moved many N rate studies to farm fields.”

From 1989 through 2001, University recommendations for corn after soybeans were tested in 14 small-plot and 15 field-size strip experiments on farmers’ fields. Data from the field-size strip trials were collected by farmers and crop advisors.

“Yield data show that the nitrogen rate recommended by the University produced the expected results,” says Randall. “In fact, the recommended N rates were higher than was needed

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at most of the sites to reach an economic optimum. And while the procedures were different for the two types of field studies, the results were remarkably similar.”

Randall is one of the authors of a new University of Minnesota publication entitled “Validating N Rates for Corn on Farm Fields in Southern Minnesota.” The publication describes the results of 29 site-years of research on farm fields in the southern part of the state to find the best nitrogen rate for corn after soybeans.

Growing corn using best management practices (BMPs) is a key to efficient nitrogen use, notes Randall. BMPs were used at all sites for the U of M research, and are listed in the new publication.

“Validating N rates for Corn on Farm Fields in Southern Minnesota” is on the Internet at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC7936.html>. Printed copies are available at a nominal cost from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 and ask for item BU-07936.

Related U of M Extension publications available include “Best Management Practices for Nitrogen Use Statewide in Minnesota,” (item 06125); “A Soil Nitrogen Test Option for N Recommendations with Corn,” (item 06514); “Fertilizer Urea,” (item 00636); and “Fertilizing Corn in Minnesota,” (item 03790).

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Web,V2,V4MN,C4,F4,Z4,Z5,Z6

rand0409

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April 8, 2003

Lime source has no effect on alfalfa yield in U of M trial at Rochester

Agricultural lime from a local source benefited alfalfa as much as higher-priced lime from an out-of-state source in a University of Minnesota field trial at Rochester. The trial took place from 1999 to 2002 at the University Center Rochester test plot.

The trial compared dolomite agricultural lime from a quarry near Rochester with calcite Pell Lime from Fort Dodge, Iowa. All test plots also received sufficient levels of phosphorus, potassium, sulfur and boron fertilizers.

"Some crop advisers have expressed concern about magnesium in dolomite lime," says Tim Wagar, U of M Extension crops and soils educator at Rochester. "They have suggested that the magnesium is detrimental to crops and soils and should not be used. They direct farmers to use calcite lime. The calcite is marketed at a premium for its higher calcium content and because it has to be transported farther."

Wagar says the initial soil pH at the field trial site was 5.6. Alfalfa was seeded in the spring of 2000. The ag lime increased alfalfa yields by about half a ton of dry matter per acre in 2000. There was no yield difference due to the source or rate of lime.

Three cuttings were harvested in each of the next two years. The plots that were limed showed about a third of a ton increase in alfalfa yield in 2001 and about a quarter ton increase in 2002. There were no yield differences due to the rate or source of lime.

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“Although the calcium-magnesium ratio was not at the ‘ideal level’ that some crop advisors advocate, alfalfa yields were essentially the same,” says Wagar. “The trial showed that the magnesium in dolomite lime isn’t detrimental to alfalfa, and that there is no economic reason to pay a premium to import calcite lime.”

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Web,V2,D1MN,F4MN

wagar407

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April 4, 2003

U of M agronomist: plant corn two inches deep regardless of date

Plant corn two inches deep, even if you plant early. That's the recommendation of Dale Hicks, agronomist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Hicks acknowledges that the seed zone is warmer the closer the seeds are to the soil surface, because the soil warms from the top down. Thus, planting shallow when planting early might seem to promote more rapid germination and emergence.

"I recommend planting corn two inches deep regardless of planting date," Hicks says. "I think there will be fewer potential problems later with a two-inch depth. With normal weather, the soil is on a warming trend. The extra few days to emerge for corn planted two inches deep versus one and one-half inches deep is not worth the risk of poor root development that can result from shallow planting."

Another consideration is that the seedbed may settle, especially if it rains. "When this happens, the seed doesn't move much from where it was placed in the soil," says Hicks. "However, the seed ends up at a shallower depth because the surface has settled. If the surface settles enough, the crown of the plant is very close to the surface. This may result in reduced and poor secondary root development. And the secondary roots are the permanent roots of the corn plant."

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Web, V2,V4MN,F4MN

hicks403

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April 4, 2003

Planting corn early brings higher yields, greater profits

Planting corn early brings higher yields and greater profits. That's the case year after year in Minnesota, says Dale Hicks, agronomist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. And he says last year was no exception.

"Last year 22 percent of Minnesota's corn acres were planted in mid-April," says Hicks. "The seedbed was ideal and the soil temperature was above normal for mid-April. Then it turned cold and seed lay in the ground for 30 to 40 days. The end result was plants emerging unevenly and stands that were substantially lower than the desired plant populations. Also, plant spacing was not uniform. However, we ended up with a record state average corn yield in Minnesota of 156 bushels per acre."

While timely rainfall was important, Hicks believes early planting was a major reason for last year's high yields. "Early planting sets the stage for high yields and minimizes the first yield-limiting barrier," he points out. "Production costs are fixed and independent of when corn is planted, so planting date is a no-cost production practice."

Hicks acknowledges that poor stands and uneven emergence last year resulted in fields with uneven plant heights and gaps between plants. But he cites results of a study on delaying emergence of various portions of plants in a field. The study found that when 25 percent of a full stand of 30,000 plants per acre was missing, 10 percent of the potential yield was lost. When the stand was full (30,000 plants per acre) but 25 percent of the plants emerged 10 days later than the rest of the stand, yield was reduced only 6 percent. Thus, the late emerging plants contributed 4 percent to yield.

When stands are extremely non-uniform, late-emerging plants contribute more to yield, says Hicks. For example, yield is only 70 percent of potential with a 50 percent stand. If the other 50 percent emerges 10 days later, the yield loss is only 8 percent. If

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the delay in emergence for half the plants is 20 days, the yield loss is only 20 percent. Thus, the later emerging plants contribute to yield, Hicks points out.

“The yield potential of an early planted field with a poor stand is usually better than the yield potential of a later planted field with a full stand of uniformly spaced and similar height plants,” says Hicks. “While the early planted field may not look as nice in June and July, it has a better profitability potential. And that’s not considering that later planting can mean later maturity and higher drying costs in the fall.”

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Web,V2,V4MN,F4MN

hicks0402

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April 4, 2003

Organic practices result in equal net returns on corn, soybeans

Corn and soybean yields were only minimally reduced when organic production practices were utilized in a University of Minnesota research project.

The organic practices were compared with conventional production practices. After factoring in production costs, net returns between the two production strategies were equivalent, says Paul Porter, a U of M agronomist.

Over 80 percent of corn and soybeans produced in the United States is grown in the Midwest--the vast majority with conventional production practices in a corn-soybean rotation requiring annual synthetic fertilizer and pesticide application. This corn-soybean rotation is practiced on over 100 million acres.

Organic production practices, in compliance with standards defined by the United States Department of Agriculture's National Organic Program (NOP), offer an alternative production system to conventional practices. The study of the influence of rotation length on yield of corn and soybean when grown utilizing organic and conventional production practices is published in the March-April, 2003 issue of "Agronomy Journal," a publication of the American Society of Agronomy. Porter is a co-author of the article.

The study was conducted at two Minnesota locations from 1989 to 1999. Scientists evaluated a two-year corn-soybean rotation and a four-year corn-soybean-oat/alfalfa-alfalfa rotation under conventional and organic management and production strategies.

The analysis of yield data began in 1993, after the first complete cycle of the four-year rotation had occurred. From 1993 through 1999, corn yields from the conventional two-year rotation averaged 143 and 139 bushels per acre at the two locations, while

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corn grown in the organic four-year rotation averaged nine percent and seven percent less, respectively.

During the same time frame, soybeans grown in the conventional two-year rotation averaged 43.1 and 40.7 bushels per acre, while organically produced soybeans averaged 19 percent and 16 percent less, respectively.

Weed control was a major factor for the reduced yields in the organic production system, Porter says. The larger yield reduction from organically produced soybeans relative to corn was associated with increased weed pressure in the soybean crop because of its placement in the rotation sequence.

While there was a reduction in both corn and soybean yields in the four-year organic strategy compared with the two-year conventional strategy, the organic strategy had lower production costs than the conventional strategy. Consequently, net returns for the two strategies were equivalent, without taking organic price premiums into account.

“These results won’t surprise producers who are successfully using organic production systems,” Porter says. “But they will probably be met with skepticism by many in the agri-chemical business who make their livelihood from the sale of synthetic fertilizer and pesticides.”

Conventionally produced soybeans were more responsive than conventionally produced corn to the expanded rotation length, Porter says. Whereas conventionally grown soybeans in the four-year rotation yielded from three to six percent more than soybeans grown in the two-year rotation, conventionally grown corn in the four-year rotation yielded the same to four percent less than corn grown in the two-year rotation.

These results suggest conventional soybean yields would be increased when grown in a longer rotation than the commonly practiced corn-soybean rotation, Porter says.

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Web, V2, V4, F4, P1

porter353

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MCC
A235

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

April 1, 2003

Military families are a model for dealing with separation stress

Families separated by wars and other hard times have always faced stress.

“But now there’s a new stressor—one that I’ve not seen before,” says Pauline Boss, a family social science professor at the University of Minnesota. “Due to technology, family members can be on a ‘virtual’ battlefield with their loved ones,” Boss says.

Pictures reporting them missing in action, as prisoners of war or in a battle come back in “real time,” Boss says. “This is beyond the normal range of family stressors that we’ve seen previously.”

On the other hand, families may derive some comfort or sense of relief from seeing pictures of their loved ones if they’re doing okay. But the flip side, Boss says, is the added stress caused by the possibility of getting bad (as well as good) news from the media.

Another new stressor is the possibility that chemical or biological warfare may be used against family members, Boss says. Family members may come back looking healthy, as in the first Gulf War. But the ambiguity of not knowing if their health is damaged adds another layer of stress for families.

Boss has studied family loss separation resulting from wars and catastrophes. She has consulted with the military and with the families of victims from the 9-11 World Trade Center attack in New York City.

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"I am very impressed with how the military has developed support systems for the families of those who have been deployed," Boss says. "In our own communities, we can use these techniques as we communicate with our friends, neighbors and family members who are dealing with stress."

For example, Boss says the military has a "community" support system for new mothers whose husbands have been deployed. Another base has developed an "adopt a pet" program.

"Every community needs to pitch in and help families affected by the war or by other stressful events," Boss says. "It's important to offer support, yet remain non-judgmental about how people cope."

"If we offer support to a family that wishes to be left alone, that's fine. The worst thing that can happen is that they say 'no thank-you.' But if we don't offer support, it can be a major omission on our part."

Families (and every individual within families) cope in different ways. "Some wish to cope privately, by withdrawing," Boss says. "Others welcome a social support circle of friends and relatives. And there are those who become active in talking to the press and organizing events."

Although it's important to remain supportive, we as a society are very judgmental, Boss says. "We're judgmental of people if they're spiritual, or if they're not spiritual. We judge them if they participate in social gatherings, or if they're reclusive."

"People cope in different ways, depending on their values and beliefs. Many immigrant families, for example, have unique coping strategies. As a country, we gain

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richness and diversity from families," Boss says. "And in times of war, appreciating this diversity in ways of coping can bring all of us closer together."

Boss has written "Family Stress Management: A Contextual Approach," second edition 2002, Sage Publications; and "Ambiguous Loss," Harvard University Press, 1999.

She is also the author of the University of Minnesota Extension Service publication, "Losing a Way of Life? Ambiguous Loss in Farm Families." This 16-page discussion guide for farm families and those who work with them is available for purchase from county offices of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Ask for item BU-07614. It's also available for purchase by e-mail at order@extension.umn.edu, or by credit card at (612) 624-4900 or (800) 876-8636.

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Web, V2, V4, V6, V7, F1

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NEWS & INFORMATION

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

April 1, 2003

Here's some help for 'Getting Through Tough Times'

People who quickly cut living expenses after a job loss are better off long-term. But research shows that many people who suffer suddenly reduced income don't reduce family living expenses soon enough, says Sharon Danes, family economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Unfortunately, this may put them in danger of losing their home, getting evicted from their apartment or putting creditors on their trail.

Not reducing living expenses is part of a natural "denial" syndrome, Danes says. She has just revised a 17-part series of fact sheets titled "Getting Through Tough Times," which is available at <http://outreach.che.umn.edu/toughtimes.html>.

The fact sheets cover making financial decisions with less income, dealing with stress, figuring out how to do with less, and children and tough times. The University of Wisconsin and University of Illinois Extension Services developed much of the core material for "Getting Through Tough Times."

Danes recently adapted and localized the fact sheets for Minnesota residents. For example, a fact sheet on "Looking for a Job" has links to a number of Minnesota-specific agencies. The website is a partnership between the U of M College of Human Ecology and U of M Extension Service.

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Web, V2, V4, F1, F2, F3

danes3283

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March 28, 2003

Publication on tillage best management in SE Minnesota wins award

A new publication on growing row crops in southeastern Minnesota while limiting soil erosion and maintaining water quality has won a national award.

The publication is from the University of Minnesota Extension Service and is entitled "Tillage Best Management Practices for Water Quality Protection in Southeastern Minnesota." The publication received a "Certificate of Excellence" recently in the 2002 Educational Materials Awards Program of the American Society of Agronomy. Authors are Gyles Randall, Timothy Wagar, Norman Senjem, Lowell Busman and John Moncrief.

Growing row crops in southeastern Minnesota while limiting soil erosion and maintaining water quality can be challenging for producers. Steep hillsides covered with loess soils are common. Southeastern Minnesota also receives the state's highest average annual rainfall, 30-32 inches. And this rainfall often comes during intense storms. Controlling erosion and the transport of sediments to surface water is not easy. But Wagar, one of the authors and an Extension crops and soils educator at Rochester, says conservation tillage can help.

"Properly managed conservation tillage can reduce average soil erosion by up to two-thirds," says Wagar. "When combined with other practices such as grassed waterways, buffers and contour planting, it can help retard erosion even on the region's steeper, longer slopes. The conservation tillage benchmark of 30 percent surface crop residue after planting provides significant erosion control."

The 16-page, three-color publication provides information on southeastern Minnesota's water resources and soil and using conservation tillage to control erosion. The tillage section covers soil drainage, crop rotation, weed management, planting

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equipment, nutrient management, manure management and reduced-tillage risks and benefits.

The publication also has information on conservation structures, as well as tillage recommendations for various crops. Long-term research on tillage and crops in southeastern Minnesota is covered in the last section of the publication.

“Tillage Best Management Practices for Water Quality Protection in Southeastern Minnesota” is on the Internet at

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC7694.html>. Printed

copies are available at a nominal cost from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 and ask for item BU-07694.

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Web,V2MN,C4,F4MN,Z4

wagr0324

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March 28, 2003

Listen for key phrases to help identify useless crop input products

Listening carefully when you hear crop input products advertised could save you from throwing your money away. Certain key words and phrases are a giveaway, says George Rehm, soil scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Products that are claimed to 'stimulate plant growth in a special way' or 'enhance nutrient absorption' usually don't meet advertising claims," says Rehm. "The same is true for products that claim to 'balance soil life' or provide 'special energy for seedling growth.'"

Rehm says it's not always easy to sort out products that can have a positive economic impact on crops.

"Many non-conventional and non-traditional products have been evaluated by land grant universities throughout the Corn Belt," Rehm points out. "When in doubt, don't hesitate to ask if the 'new' product has been tested."

"There's no substitute for unbiased data," he adds. "If the sales people don't provide that data, the product usually has no value. If there are no data to support the sales claims, don't buy the product—save some money."

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Web,V2,A2MN,F4

rehm0328

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March 21, 2003

Prepare and use farm tractors and equipment to save costly fuel

High fuel prices are likely to boost crop production costs during the coming growing season. However, proper preparation and use of tractors and equipment can save fuel dollars. Bill Halfman, regional educator at Caledonia with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, has several suggestions for getting the most work from each gallon of fuel.

--Match the tractor to the job. Obviously, it doesn't take a 100-horsepower tractor to rake hay. However, it's not uncommon to see high-horsepower tractors doing very low-power jobs.

--Make sure air and fuel filters are changed when necessary. Partially clogged filters can starve engines of both air and fuel, making them work harder just to run. Changing oil and other maintenance also helps tractors run efficiently.

--Make sure tires are correctly inflated. Radials are typically inflated to lower pressures than bias-ply tires.

--Make sure the tractor is properly weighted. This means considering total tractor weight and weight distribution. Often a tractor is weighted for the most difficult tillage job and left that way. Most of the year the weights aren't necessary, and taking them off means the tractor will burn less fuel. Unnecessarily leaving on a lot of weight while doing light tasks is like pulling your pick-up truck around.

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--Shifting up a gear and backing off on the throttle can help save fuel while doing many tasks, as long as it doesn't cause the engine to lug down too much.

--Newer diesel engines should not be blowing a lot of black smoke while working. The black smoke is unburned fuel and indicates inefficient operation.

--Adjusting the implements you are pulling or using can also help save fuel. If tillage tools are not correctly aligned or leveled, the tractor will work harder pulling them across the field. Forage harvesters will pull easier if the knives are sharp and the shear bar is correctly adjusted. All machinery should be kept lubricated according to the owner's manual to reduce friction and costly repairs.

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Web,V2,A4,E4,F4

half0319

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March 21, 2003

Let your children know it's okay to talk about war and peace

Most children are probably confused about the issues of war and peace. But there are many websites and other good resource materials to help parents talk with their children, says Jodi Dworkin, family social scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Two websites from the U of M Extension Service have information on communicating with children about war, terrorism and related information. They are "Restoring Hope in the Wake of Terrorism,"

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/administrative/disasterresponse/terrorism.html>, and

"Ready to Respond,"

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/administrative/disasterresponse/terror2.html>.

Purdue University Extension has a website that includes articles, links, audio and video at <http://www.ces.purdue.edu/terrorism/>.

Judith Myers-Walls of Purdue Extension has researched children's reactions to wars and disasters. She offers these tips and cautions:

--Listen and talk. Let children know that it's okay to talk about war and peace. Listen for misunderstandings. Let the children guide you in the discussions. Remember that there will probably be more than one discussion.

--Consider using books and art to communicate. Children may be able to express ideas in drawings that they cannot put into words. Reading a book about a topic makes

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it less threatening. It is easier to talk about someone else than to talk about our own feelings.

--Be careful about painting the other side as the enemy. It is more helpful to children to talk about "bad actions" rather than "bad people." Help children understand that people can choose their behaviors. Even if they have done something bad in the past, they can choose to do something good in the future.

--Help children understand that the U. S. is not angry with the Iraqi people. Explain that our leaders are upset with the decisions of the other government.

--Help children understand religious differences. Explain that Islam is a religion that is practiced by many people in the world. Help them understand that most Muslim people are peace-loving and friendly.

--Reassure children without ignoring the horrors of war. Talk about what you and others will do to keep the child safe. Talk about how far away the military actions probably will be, but don't ignore the terrible things that will happen in the war. Studies show that children care about people in other countries in addition to those in their own country. Support their caring attitudes.

--Teach children about what can be done instead of war. Talk about alternatives. Explain what governments and people can do to make war less likely.

Dworkin also suggests checking the Children, Youth and Family Consortium website at the University of Minnesota:

<http://www.cyfc.umn.edu/publications/newsreleases/3-10-03nr.html>.

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Web, V2, V4, C1, F1

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March 18, 2003

Corn growers faced with decision about proposed StarLink settlement

By Paul Carr, University of Minnesota Extension Service

In recent weeks farmers throughout the Midwest have received letters detailing a proposed settlement concerning a class action lawsuit against the owner of StarLink corn on behalf of farmers. StarLink was a corn that contained a protein to protect the plant against insects. Corn with this protein was sold in the U.S. from 1998-2000 and was approved for feed use, but not for human consumption or for export.

While much of the StarLink corn was channeled for feed use, some of the StarLink contaminated corn that was used for other purposes. This contamination led to fears among other nations over the safety of corn, since it was not approved for export. The result was lower exports of U.S. corn and thus, lower prices for U.S. corn.

The proposed settlement of the lawsuit, if approved, would make any farmer who planted corn in 2000 eligible for a payment from the settlement. Farmers who did not plant corn in 2000, but did in 1998, 1999 or 2001, would also be eligible, but to a lesser degree. Many farmers may believe this only applies to those who planted StarLink corn, but just the opposite is true. Anyone who planted non-StarLink corn, whether it was contaminated with StarLink or not, is eligible.

The proposed settlement amounts to \$110 million, plus interest. The settlement, if finalized, will be used to pay legal fees and two types of payments to farmers. The first

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is for entities who suffered a loss from actual contamination of their crops or other property. The second is for all entities who planted non-StarLink corn.

While the letters sent recently do not estimate an amount of money each farmer may receive, the University of Illinois has published a paper estimating the amount to be roughly a dollar per acre, and possibly up to two dollars per acre, for every corn acre planted in 2000. The paper's author estimates a farmer who planted 300 acres of corn in 2000 and fills out the paperwork would receive roughly \$300 as a settlement.

These estimates are based on the amount of corn planted in 2000 and an assumption of the percentage of farmers who will fill out the paperwork required to receive payments under the settlement. Of course, estimates can be wrong, but they do give farmers an idea of what they might receive. It will not be a nickel per acre and is not likely to be hundreds of dollars per acre.

The deadline to file most claims is May 31, 2003. If the settlement is approved, farmers will need to fill out the proper paperwork by this date to be eligible for payments. By accepting money from the settlement, a farmer gives up any chance to sue StarLink for this contamination in the future.

There is more information on a University of Illinois website at http://www.farmdoc.uiuc.edu/legal/starlink_related_table.html. This document is not a substitute for the actual letter received by farmers. It is simply a guide to help farmers make a decision. Farmers should read the letters they receive carefully or get information from the settlement website at www.non-starlinkfarmerssettlement.com.

(Paul Carr is a regional Extension educator in farm business management at Blue Earth, Minn.)

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Web,V2,V4MN,F4,X2

carr0317

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March 18, 2003

Warm spring weather can cause stored corn, soybeans to spoil

Warm spring weather can put stored corn and soybeans at risk. If the stored crops are too wet they are likely to spoil, says Bill Wilcke, engineer with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Wilcke says wet harvest conditions resulted in the storage of some wet shelled corn and soybeans last fall. Cold weather generally protected these crops from mold and insects during the winter. "Stored crops that are cooled to less than 30 degrees F during the winter can be stored at fairly high moisture levels with minimal risk of spoilage," he points out. "But during spring and summer we lose the ability to keep crops below 30 degrees F, so we need to reduce moisture content to avoid spoilage."

Wilcke says corn should be dried to 14-15 percent moisture for storage into spring, 14 percent for storage into summer, and 13 percent for longer-term storage. Soybeans should be 12-13 percent moisture for storage into spring, 12 percent for storage into summer and 11 percent for longer-term storage. Stored crops will probably mold if they are wetter than these levels and are aerated only by a small fan delivering less than 0.5 cubic feet of air per minute per bushel of grain in the bin.

Using a gas-fired dryer in late winter or early spring is an option for both corn and soybeans, says Wilcke. After drying, cool the crop to less than 50 degrees F for summer storage. That means drying needs to be completed before average outdoor temperatures rise above 50.

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Wilcke says you can expect energy costs for gas-fired drying to be about one to two cents per bushel per percent point of moisture removed. Total drying costs, including labor, depreciation and repairs, will be two to four cents per bushel per point. Labor, equipment and transportation costs for moving crops to the dryer and back to storage will add a few more cents per bushel.

“You can dry soybeans in gas-fired dryers, but the seeds will split if you dry them too fast or the temperature is too high,” says Wilcke. “Therefore, it’s important to use a much lower drying temperature for soybeans than for corn. If you plan to use any of the soybeans for seed, keep the drying temperature below 110 degrees F to avoid killing the seed embryo.”

Natural-air drying may be another option for slightly wet corn and soybeans, says Wilcke. For this you need a bin with a full perforated drying floor and a drying fan that can deliver about one cubic foot per minute per bushel. For further information check a University of Minnesota Extension Service bulletin entitled “Natural-Air Corn Drying in the Upper Midwest,” item BU-6577. It’s on the Internet at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/cropsystems/DC6577.html>.

“Spring drying must be started early,” says Wilcke. “If you wait too long and the weather gets too warm, the crop at the top of the bin will mold before it dries. The crop at the bottom of the bin will get drier than it needs to be. The wetter the crop, the earlier you need to start.”

For corn wetter than 19 percent moisture, Wilcke says the natural-air drying process needs to begin as soon as average outdoor temperatures stay above freezing. This is usually around mid-March. Turn on the drying fan and let it run until the drying

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front moves through the top of the bin. For 17-19 percent moisture corn, start drying around April 1, and for 15-17 percent corn, start drying around April 15.

The same dates apply when natural-air drying soybeans, but the moisture levels should be about two percentage points lower. This means you should start drying beans that are wetter than 17 percent moisture at mid-March. For beans that are 14-15 percent moisture, Wilcke suggests controlling the fan, either manually or with a humidistat, so that the fan only runs when relative humidity is less than about 70 percent.

For more information on drying soybeans, check the drying, handling and storage chapter in the University of Minnesota Extension Service "Minnesota Soybean Field Book," item MI-7290. This publication and "Natural-Air Corn Drying in the Upper Midwest" are both available for a nominal fee from county offices of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Or, call (800) 876-8636 or (612) 624-4900 to purchase the publications.

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Web,V2,V4MN,F4,X2

wilc0317

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March 18, 2003

Performance-tested bull sales scheduled April 4-5

Performance-tested bull sales are scheduled April 4 at Jackson and April 5 near Spring Grove. All bulls in both sales must have passed a breeding soundness exam, says Bill Halfman, regional crops and soils educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The Minnesota Beef Cattle Improvement Association will hold its annual performance-tested bull auction at the sale barn in Jackson, Minn., April 4 at 6 p.m.

The following breeds and numbers are entered into the performance test for the auction: 46 Black Angus, five Red Angus, three Gelbvieh, four Charolais, 11 Simmental, one Chi-maine and one Shorthorn. The top 75 percent of all breeds with four head or more entered will be sold.

The Minnesota Beef Cattle Improvement Association will be conducting its first private treaty bull and heifer sale on April 5 at Foundation Feeders, near Spring Grove Minn. The format for the private treaty sale is as follows:

- Bulls will have prices set by owners and will be grouped in pens of similar priced bulls for viewing.
- At 11 a.m. on April 5 buyer numbers will be handed out on a first-come, first-served basis.

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- At 1 p.m. buyers will line up in order of buyer number, and lowest numbers will get first pick on which bulls they would like to purchase.
- When all bulls are sold or all buyers have picked, then the heifers will be sold.
- The heifers will be sold using the same format as the bulls.

There will be 21 Black Angus, three Red Angus, two Charolais, one Piedmontese, one Maine Anjou and five Simmental entered in the private treaty performance bull test. A total of 22 Simmental and five Black Angus heifers will be offered for sale.

The Houston County Cattlemen's Association will serve a complimentary lunch at 11:30 a.m. For more information or to request a sale catalog, contact Lisa Heggedahl at (507) 365-8259.

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Web, B1, V2, V4MN

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March 18, 2003

Retirement won't solve all of life's problems

You don't like your job—or you're afraid you may lose it before you're eligible for retirement. If only you could retire—now.

It can be easy to think that retirement will solve your problems, says Sharon Danes, family economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "But negative perspectives aren't necessarily altered by lifestyle changes such as retirement," Danes says.

"There's no better predictor of your approach to retirement than how you view life before you retire," Danes says. She's the author of a new publication from the U of M Extension Service titled, "Planning Ahead for Retirement."

"Money is important, but it's not the only important part of retirement planning," Danes says. The publication has worksheets that can help individuals and couples sort out the important things in life. "If you have a partner, it can be easy to assume you want the same thing," Danes says. But no two people have an identical picture of their later years.

Whether your attitude toward retirement is positive or negative, retirement is change, which can be very stressful. "The more you plan for retirement, the less stress you'll be likely to experience," Danes says.

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The 80-page comprehensive guide to retirement planning includes everything you need to know to plan the retirement you want. The book gives you information on setting meaningful goals, estimating the income you will need to retire, understanding financial products, making investment choices, financial planners, and health and life insurance. Also included are several charts and tables, glossaries and resource lists.

Copies of the publication are available from county offices of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. They may also be ordered with a credit card by calling toll-free (800) 876-8636, or (612) 624-4900 in the Twin Cities area. Ask for number 07775.

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Web, V2, V4, F1, F2, F3

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March 7, 2003

Negotiation is used everywhere except in farming*By Richard A. Levins, University of Minnesota Extension Service*

As I write this, milk prices are ridiculously low. Hog farmers are still reeling from the eight-cents-a-pound fiasco of a few years ago. Grain and cotton farmers routinely face prices so low that government payments have become a way of life. Is there anything farmers can do about low prices, or are they doomed to run on an efficiency treadmill until they finally drop from economic exhaustion?

I saw an answer to this question in an airline magazine ad. In big letters, it said "In business, you don't get what you deserve, you get what you negotiate."

Neil Harl, one of the country's premier agricultural economists, put the same idea in more formal terms at a recent conference on mergers, acquisitions and vertical integration in our food system. He said that when competitive markets are compromised, classical market forces no longer determine prices. They are negotiated.

Negotiating is used everywhere in business. The one exception seems to be farming. Farmers continue to be told they are "price takers." That's true, but only if farmers continue to ignore the market power that effective negotiation can bring them.

Negotiating differs from supply management

Negotiating is often confused with supply management. Granted, the two strategies are commonly used in business, but they work in different ways. To see how they are different, consider a common experience we have all had, that of buying a car.

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Surely, the supply and demand situation for cars influences their sticker prices. The sticker price for a car, however, is only part of the story. As we all know, it is often regarded as a starting point for a bargaining process. Some people negotiate more favorable terms than others are able to get. Negotiating, in a nutshell, tries to get a better deal no matter what the level of supply and demand might be.

When a big rental car company negotiates what it will pay for cars, you can well imagine that it does better than any single buyer could ever do. The fleet buyers are in a stronger bargaining position. If they take their business elsewhere, the loss to the automobile seller will be far greater than if any single buyer goes across the street to another dealer. In the same way, an individual farmer hiring a negotiator might not see much advantage. But if the negotiator represented a substantial number of farmers selling to a single buyer, the negotiator would be bargaining from a stronger position.

An example of farmer price negotiating

Imagine that a farm organization employed professional negotiators, and the members had access to the service of those negotiators. Membership fees of one sort or another would pay the expenses of the organization and its negotiators. At the time members were either ready to sell their products, or to renew contracts to produce products for another business venture, the negotiators would become involved. Ideally, they would represent a group of members who were all dealing with the same buyer or contractor.

The negotiator would work with the buyer or contractor to gain more favorable terms for the farmers being represented. The benefit negotiated might show up directly

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as a higher price, or perhaps as a lump sum payment establishing each farmer represented as a "preferred supplier," or in any number of other ways. The important thing to remember is that it would go to members and no others. The negotiator would not represent all farmers, nor would he or she try to bargain the price of all farm products or the terms of all contracts.

Notice that negotiating would be a continuing process, not a one-time deal. This is to be expected, however. Bargaining a good price for a car gets you very little the next time you buy one. You have to start over. The same will be true in pricing farm products. The buyers usually have a full-time staff that does nothing but make sure that purchases are made on terms most favorable to the buyers. To be treated fairly, farmers will need similar, constant representation.

Now is the time for action

We must remember that negotiation is not a cure-all for farm income problems. Supply and demand will always be a big part of the story. But without the market power that negotiating can bring, farmers will not get as much from the market as they otherwise could. They will always live in a world of take-it-or-leave-it "sticker prices."

I have seen smaller farm organizations negotiate contract terms for processing vegetables and prices for organic grain crops. The time is right for larger organizations to apply these same methods on a much grander scale. Farmers know what they deserve. But as the ad I saw reminds us, they will only get what they negotiate.

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Richard A. Levins is an agricultural economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. He can be reached by phone at (612)-625-5238 and by e-mail at dlevins@apex.umn.edu. Free copies of his paper, "Negotiation, Supply Management, and Farmer Income" and other papers on farmer market power are available at www.apex.umn.edu/faculty/dlevins.

Web, V2, V4, A2

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March 4, 2003

Meat Quality and Food Safety Workshop at U of M will be April 8

How on-farm management practices affect the quality of meat from cows and bulls will be a main topic at an upcoming workshop at the University of Minnesota. The "Meat Quality and Food Safety Workshop" will be April 8 in the Andrew Boss Laboratory of Meat Science on the U of M St. Paul campus. There will be two workshop sessions with an identical program, one from 8 a.m. to 12 noon and the other from 1-5 p.m.

The workshop has a hands-on format and is designed for beef and dairy producers, meat processors, veterinarians, Extension personnel and students. It will include the following four rotations:

--Quality defects in market cows. Results of a National Market Cow and Bull Beef Quality Audit will be presented. Participants will view cow carcasses to see quality differences.

--Injection-site lesion demonstrations. Participants will be able to view a carcass that shows the impacts of injections on meat quality.

--Food safety. Sanitation, bacteria contamination and testing issues encountered in the slaughtering and processing of cow and bull carcasses will be covered.

--Consumer preferences and attitudes. Information related to consumer attitudes and preferences regarding beef products, including value-added products, will be

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presented. Participants will have the opportunity to sample irradiated ground beef patties.

The workshop fee is \$45 per person. A website at <http://www.cvm.umn.edu/outreach/03mqfs.htm> has additional information on the workshop, as well as links to a workshop brochure and on-line registration. You can also register by phone at (800) 380-8636 or by e-mail at peter415@umn.edu.

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Web,V2,V4MN,B1,D1,F6

smmrb227

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March 4, 2003

Minnesota's irrigated crop acreage continues upward trend

Minnesota's acreage of irrigated crops went up again in 2002, continuing a long-term trend. The increase was almost 3,000 acres, according to agricultural engineer Jerry Wright of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. This is about half the acreage growth that occurred in 2001.

Wright says data from the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) show 554,385 acres were permitted for irrigation in Minnesota in 2002. Minnesota landowners held 4,183 DNR irrigation permits in 2002.

For detailed irrigated crop acreage information, Wright cites the DNR's annual pumping reports. The most recent available figures, which are from 2001, show 440,843 Minnesota crop acres were irrigated in 2001. That compares with 432,888 in 2000. The permitted acreage for 2001 was 551,673 under 4,170 irrigation permits. That acreage includes 26,634 wild rice acres.

The DNR pumping reports show Minnesota growers irrigated at least 177,000 acres of corn, 113,000 acres of soybeans, 44,000 acres of potatoes, 27,000 acres of dry beans, 24,000 acres of alfalfa, 5,500 acres of sugar beets and 15,000 acres of canning crops in 2001. The reports show that corn, dry bean and potato acreages were all down slightly from 2000. However, irrigated soybean acreage continued to rise, growing over 15 percent from 2000.

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The top 10 Minnesota counties in reported irrigated acreage for 2001 were Otter Tail, Dakota, Pope, Stearns, Sherburne, Swift, Wadena, Hubbard, Morrison and Stevens.

A detailed summary of permitted and irrigated acres by county is available from Jerry Wright, c/o West Central Research and Outreach Center, University of Minnesota, PO Box 471, Morris, MN 56267. Wright can be reached b e-mail at jwright@umn.edu or by phone at (320) 589-1711.

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Web,V2MN,V4MN,F4,H7,19,29,49,56,63,77,78,80,81,85

wrig0224

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March 4, 2003

U of M Grain Marketing Program is March 19 at Jackpot Junction

Pre-harvest marketing is a key component of marketing success, and you can learn all about it at an upcoming workshop.

The program will be at the Jackpot Junction Convention Center in Morton, Minn., on Wednesday, March 19, from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Sponsors include the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council, the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Center for Farm Financial Management.

Program topics include:

- Avoiding the five common mistakes in grain marketing.
- Exploring the key elements of a pre-harvest marketing plan.
- Reviewing grain-pricing tools.
- Understanding the role of crop insurance in your marketing plan.
- Writing your personalized marketing plan.
- Practicing your marketing plan using a simulation game with daily prices.
- Fine-tuning your plan and playing the game with a different marketing year.

"This program provides a great opportunity for hands-on learning. By the end of the session, each participant will have a personalized marketing plan based on solid marketing concepts," says Kevin Klair, economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

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“Practicing your marketing plan with a simulation game is fun and provides a realistic test of your plan with daily prices,” Klair says. “Many participants immediately fine-tune their plan and play the game again with a different marketing year.”

Program presenters Edward Usset and Robert Craven from the Center for Farm Financial Management at the University of Minnesota received enthusiastic reviews last year when they presented a similar program to over 300 producers in seven cities.

The registration fee of \$25 includes lunch. For more information or to register, contact the Center for Farm Financial Management at (800) 234-1111 or (612) 625-1964.

A flyer with registration information is available at

<http://www.cffm.umn.edu/pubs/MNWomensflyer.pdf>.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, A2MN

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March 4, 2003

Managing risk can help farmers reduce stress, boost profitability

Farmers can reduce their stress levels and boost profitability in their operations by implementing strategies to manage risk. Tools are available to manage both production risk and price risk, says Bill Craig, regional educator at Warren with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Weather is always a major production risk for crop producers," says Craig. "But a good crop insurance program that emphasizes higher coverage buy-up can minimize production risk. A written marketing plan can be effective for managing price risk if it emphasizes incremental grain sales using target dates and planned pricing."

An effective marketing plan needs to include revenue-based crop insurance, says Craig. He recommends Revenue Assurance with the harvest price option or Crop Revenue Coverage. Either product allows a producer to sell grain before harvest without worry, helping to minimize stress.

"Risk management decisions need to be finalized soon," says Craig. "March 15 is the crop insurance sales closing date if you are changing coverage level or type of coverage this production year."

An Internet website can help producers compare insurance premium costs for each coverage level and product type. It's at

http://www.farmdoc.uiuc.edu/cropins/insurance/premium_index_2003.asp.

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“Before making final decisions, always check with your crop insurance agent for the latest information and for answers specific to your farm,” says Craig.

The U of M educator says producers need to have a written marketing plan in place before planting a crop. “Being poised to take advantage of historical marketing highs is important to the success of a marketing plan,” he points out. “Develop a marketing plan now and follow it through.”

There are marketing clubs in several Minnesota communities that can help producers gain marketing skills. Meeting with other producers in a structured marketing club led by a qualified instructor can help producers discipline themselves to become better marketers, says Craig.

For information on marketing workshops and other farm financial tools, check the website of the U of M Center for Farm Financial Management. It’s at <http://www.cfm.umn.edu>.

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Web,V2,V4MN,A2,F4

craig228

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March 4, 2003

Extra-deep tillage not recommended in southern Minnesota

There's a perception that deeper tillage will give you better drainage, improved rooting and higher yields. But perception is not reality in this case, says Gyles Randall, soil scientist with the University of Minnesota Southern Research and Outreach Center, Waseca.

Corn and soybean production and profitability were not improved by deep tillage in U of M studies conducted between 1981 and 2002 in southeastern and south central Minnesota, Randall says.

In many instances, Randall says deep rippers have replaced chisel plows as the primary tillage tool for corn and soybeans. The rippers operate at greater depths and are pulled at faster speeds than previously. The perception is that deep tillage (subsoiling to between 10 and 18 inches) will promote better internal drainage, greater root growth and higher yields.

However, Randall says deeper and faster tillage almost always buries more residue, leaving less residue on the surface to minimize soil erosion.

Randall cites two deep-tillage research studies conducted in southern Minnesota. The first was at Rochester on well-drained Port Byron loess soils. Deep tillage (15 inches) was performed using an in-row subsoiler each fall (except for one wet fall when the subsoiling was done in the spring).

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The deep-till system was compared to chisel plow, strip-till (eight inches deep in the fall), and no-till systems from 1997-2000. Four-year continuous corn yields averaged 163 bu/A for the deep-till system compared to 166 for the chisel, 162 for strip-till and 155 bu/A for no-till. Surface residue coverage after planting averaged 54, 26, 64 and 87 percent for these tillage systems, respectively.

When corn followed soybeans, yields were not statistically different among tillage systems, Randall says. Yields averaged 186 bu/A for the deep-till (subsoiling) system compared to 182, 183, and 182 bu/A for the one-pass (field cultivate), strip-till and no-till systems, respectively. Surface residue after planting averaged 41, 23, 57 and 67 percent, respectively.

"These data show no yield enhancement for this aggressive, high-horsepower-requiring, deep-tillage practice above other tillage systems on the well-drained silt loam soils of southeastern Minnesota," Randall says.

The second study was on the poorly drained Nicollet-Webster clay loam soils at Waseca. Deep tillage (14 inches) was performed using an in-row subsoiler on a 30-inch spacing each fall for corn after soybeans. The deep-till system was compared to one-pass (field cultivate), strip-till and no-till systems. Three-year (2000-2002) corn yields averaged 156 bu/A for deep, in-row subsoiling compared to 151, 157, and 150 bu/A for the one-pass, strip-till and no-till systems, respectively.

Surface residue coverage after planting was least with deep subsoiling (43 percent) compared to 47 percent for the one-pass, 56 percent for the strip-till, and 70 percent for the no-till systems. Soybean yields in the following year were not affected

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by the tillage systems for corn. Yields ranged from 55.8 to 56.4 bu/A for the four tillage systems.

Results were similar to those on the well-drained soils. "The data in this study do not show deep subsoiling to enhance corn or soybean yields compared to less aggressive tillage systems on these tilled soils with poor internal drainage," Randall says.

Soil compaction studies at Waseca during the 1980s also did not show beneficial corn or soybean yield responses to deep subsoiling (up to 18 inches) regardless of compaction level. The only significant response was negative, with corn yields being reduced in a very dry year by subsoiling the previous fall.

If you do choose to use deep tillage implements, operating at depths deeper than 10 inches is not recommended, Randall says.

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Web, V2, V4, F4, P1

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February 26, 2003

Agronomist: alfalfa winter injury potential is high in Minnesota

The potential for winter injury to alfalfa is high in much of Minnesota this year. That's due to some very cold weather combined with minimal snow cover, according to Paul Peterson, forage agronomist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"It takes at least four to six inches of snow to insulate alfalfa crowns from the temperature extremes that have occurred in Minnesota this winter," says Peterson.

The U of M agronomist cites several factors that affect the vulnerability of alfalfa to winter injury:

--Stand age. Because of the cumulative stress of plant diseases and physical injury, older stands are more susceptible to winter injury than younger stands.

--Variety. Varieties with greater winter hardiness and disease resistance are less susceptible to winter injury. Information on alfalfa varieties is available by going to <http://www.maes.umn.edu/maespubs/vartrial/vt-cntnt.html> on the Internet, then scrolling down and clicking on "Alfalfa Variety Trials."

--Soil potassium level. Soil potassium is very important in increasing alfalfa tolerance to winter injury. Plants stressed by a soil pH of less than 6.5 or deficiencies of other nutrients such as phosphorus, boron or sulfur are also more susceptible to winter stress.

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--Soil drainage. Poorly drained soils are more likely to lead to plant diseases and ice sheeting.

--Harvest management. More frequent cutting will normally cause more plant stress. In general, three cuts are less risky than four cuts in southern Minnesota, but often do not result in alfalfa forage of adequate quality for dairy cows.

--Stubble. Stubble from unharvested plant residue insulates the soil, catches snow for insulation, and by shading the soil surface from sunlight can minimize freezing and thawing cycles.

Peterson says an assessment tool developed by U of M agronomist Craig Sheaffer can help alfalfa growers calculate their crop's risk of winter injury. The tool is part of an article entitled "A good chance of alfalfa winter injury in Minnesota." The article is on the Internet at

<http://www.plpa.agri.umn.edu/extension/news%20releases/MNCN05.htm>.

#

Web,V2,V4MN,D1MN,B1MN,F4

petrsn225

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MSC
A27p

February 21, 2003

Farmers—keep anhydrous secure so it won't be used to make 'meth'

Growing crops and making illegal drugs would seem to have few things in common. But both may involve the use of anhydrous ammonia fertilizer, says John Shutske, agricultural safety and health specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Using anhydrous ammonia to make methamphetamine, or 'meth,' is a serious problem in rural areas," says Shutske. "Farmers and fertilizer dealers need to take specific, proactive steps to control access to their ammonia."

Meth is a highly addictive stimulant drug, Shutske points out. "On the illicit black market, a small container of stolen anhydrous ammonia can bring upwards of \$200-300 per gallon," he adds. "This is comparable to what the farmer pays per ton. So there's a strong incentive to steal anhydrous."

A common strategy thieves use is to find unsecured nurse tanks and storage facilities where they can bleed off a few gallons of anhydrous into an empty gas grill container or other storage device.

Shutske says the Fertilizer Institute recommends that farmers and fertilizer dealers watch for:

- Partially opened tank valves and/or leaking tanks;

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--Items that might be left behind after a theft, including buckets, coolers, duct tape, garden hoses and bicycle inner tubes;

--The presence of unfamiliar or suspicious-looking individuals during daylight hours. Thieves often check out a property beforehand.

Other signs of meth labs include strong odors, blacked-out windows (to obstruct observation) and large amounts of trash.

The Fertilizer Institute has prepared a one-page flyer entitled "You, too, Can Work for a Drug Free America: Keep Anhydrous Ammonia Safe and Secure!" The flyer provides detailed information and control measures farmers and fertilizer retailers can use to keep anhydrous secure. The flyer can be accessed from The Fertilizer Institute's website at <http://www.tfi.org>.

#

Web,V2,V4MN,V5MN,V9,A4,E4

shut0219

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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

February 18, 2003

Sign up for Woodland Advisor classes

Have you ever wondered why some forests are healthier, more productive and more beautiful places to be than others? Do you want your forest to be more of these things?

Here's a chance to find some answers to these and other questions by getting involved in the University of Minnesota Extension Service Woodland Advisor program. The Woodland Advisor program offers learning and leadership opportunities around forest ecology, forest productivity and agroforestry issues to the citizens of Minnesota.

What will you learn? Sessions will be offered on the following topics: growing and tending your forest, financial aspects of forest ownership, forest management for game and nongame wildlife, insect and disease issues, recreational trail design, forest history, traditional and nontraditional forest products, and more.

Sessions will be offered in partnership with local private woodlands organizations. Session availability will vary by location and season. In the first half of 2003, Woodland Advisor sessions are planned for Northeast and West Central Minnesota and the Twin Cities Metro area. For schedules or to get involved, go to the new Woodland Advisor website at www.cnr.umn.edu/cfc/wa/.

There are two ways to get involved:

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--Pay as you go: Participants can sign up for a single evening or day of training (usually \$15-30, depending on topics covered).

Pay for the series up front: Participants can also sign up for the whole series of ten "core" modules. If they sign up for the whole series, the cost is \$150 (equal to \$15 per session). However, paying up front makes you eligible to attend an additional five elective sessions free of charge.

Minnesota Forestry Association (MFA) members get a 10 percent discount if they sign up for the whole core series. There is no discount for individual sessions.

For registration materials and information, contact Susan Seabury, Cloquet Forestry Center, at (218) 879-0850 or sseabury@umn.edu. More information is also available at this website: <http://www.cnr.umn.edu/cfc/wa>.

#

Web, V2MN, V4MN, F8, T2

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A27p

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

February 14, 2003

Publication on child-rearing costs available from U of M Extension

How much of your family's yearly income is spent on children? You can get some good estimates by using a publication from the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Reasons that families need to know child-rearing costs include: planning for future costs, preparing for family emergencies, determining support needs at the time of a divorce or purchasing life insurance to provide support should a parent die.

"Families with accurate spending records can easily estimate out-of-pocket child-rearing costs," says Jean Bauer, family social scientist with the U of M Extension Service. Many families don't keep records, but still have a financial or legal need to know how much it costs to raise children.

"The costs for children in a household depend on many factors," Bauer says. The number of children in the family influences costs. Some things—such as housing and transportation—can be shared. Other items are exclusive to each child and have independent costs.

Higher-income families spend more money on their children than do lower-income families. Families in urban areas spend about the same amount on their children

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as do families in rural areas. However, Bauer says transportation and health care cost more in rural than in urban areas.

The publication walks you through a national set of figures that estimate the cost of raising children of different ages in both two-parent and one-parent homes.

Summary tables let you compare the costs for your family.

The guidelines are organized into seven areas: housing, food, transportation, clothing, health care, child care and education, and miscellaneous.

You can find the publication on the Internet at

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/businessmanagement/DF5899.html>.

You can also get a copy from county offices of the U of M Extension Service. Or, order one with a credit card by calling (800) 876-8636, or (612) 624-4900 in the Twin Cities area.

#

Web, V2MN, V4, C1

bauer2133

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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

February 11, 2003

You can get local angles from the National Ag Risk Education Library

The National Ag Risk Education Library is a good resource to help put farm families in a better position to succeed. Check it out at

<http://www.agrisk.umn.edu/Default.htm>.

There are over 1,400 documents in the library, says Kevin Klair, economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. You'll find information on crop and livestock enterprises from throughout the U.S. In addition, there are links to four regional ag risk centers.

The National Ag Risk Education Library has four major parts:

--The main library highlights new additions and allows you to do a search by topic, or do a customized search.

--A specialized crop library.

--A new budget library that has budgets for crop and livestock enterprises from all areas of the U.S.

--FINBIN, a farm financial database based on farm accounts of thousands of farmers and ranchers who use FINPACK, the farm financial planning and analysis software available through the U of M's Center for Farm Financial Management (CFFM).

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“Benchmarking your farm may sound difficult and a bit academic,” Klair says.
“But FINBIN makes it easy—you can select the right farms for your report with just a few clicks of the mouse.”

The CFFM develops and maintains the national library, which is supported by USDA’s Risk Management Agency and Cooperative State Research and Education Extension Service.

#

Web, V2, A2

klair243

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MISC
A-27p

February 7, 2003

4-State Forage Conference in Wisconsin will be March 25-26

Growing forage crops and feeding them to dairy cows will receive in-depth attention March 25 and 26 at a 4-State Forage Conference in south central Wisconsin. The event will begin at the Ho-Chunk Hotel and Convention Center at Baraboo, and will also have sessions at the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center at Prairie-du-Sac.

The event is designed for cattle and forage producers, educators, those in cattle and forage-related businesses, and other interested persons. It's sponsored by the Extension Services of the University of Minnesota, Iowa State University, the University of Illinois and the University of Wisconsin.

Alfalfa and corn silage production, including soil nutrient management, will be the focus of the opening general session. Other first-day morning topics include minerals in forages, the Relative Forage Quality Index and Midwest forage quality. Jim Linn, University of Minnesota Extension dairy scientist, will be among the presenters.

The afternoon general session March 25 will cover silage preservation and forage equipment. It will conclude with a producer panel on equipment use.

At 2:30 p.m. March 25 the event will move to the U.S. Dairy Forage Research Center. Events there will include a bunker silo facer demonstration and a hay processing equipment demonstration. There will also be presentations on bunker

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covers, manure scoring, rumen pH measurements and nitrogen and phosphorus from manure.

The March 26 session will conclude at 11:30 a.m. and will cover forage carbohydrates and digestible fiber. A producer panel on contracting forages will wrap up the conference. Paul Liebenstein of Wolf Creek Dairy at Dundas, Minn. will be one of the panelists.

The conference registration fee is \$95 per person until March 11. It's \$120 per person after that date, except for those who are livestock or forage producers. For a registration flyer or additional information, call the Wisconsin Agri-Service Association at (608) 223-1111. There is also a registration flyer on the Internet, linked to the Minnesota Dairy Calendar at <http://www.ansci.umn.edu/dairy/calendar/dairycalendar.htm>. Conference proceedings for those unable to attend the event will be available from Midwest Plan Service at (800) 562-3618.

#

Web,V2MN,B1MN,D1MN,F4MN

endres205

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NEWS & INFORMATION

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

February 7, 2003

New website for Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships

The University of Minnesota's Regional Sustainable Development Partnerships program has a newly revamped website at www.regionalpartnerships.umn.edu.

The Regional Partnerships were initiated in 1997 to extend University resources to rural communities for the purpose of fostering sustainable development. In partnership with the University, citizens in these communities work through regional boards to develop and support programs and projects that strengthen natural resources, agriculture and tourism.

There are five Regional Partnerships in Minnesota: Central, Northeast, Northwest, Southeast and West Central.

Features of the new website include:

- An easily recognizable logo and identity for all regions.
- A click-on map showing where the Regional Partnerships are located that quickly connects you to information about each region.
- Expanded, easier to find contact information.
- A listing of over 175 projects funded by the Partnerships that can be accessed through a searchable database of projects or through regional websites.

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--Updated information on the Partnership's statewide community/University ventures in local foods and local energy.

--A searchable database of University and community partners.

--Links to related University and non-University programs.

--A section on the guiding principles for the Regional Partnerships.

The Regional Partnerships are a program of the U of M Extension Service; the College of Agricultural, Food and Environmental Sciences; and the College of Natural Resources. For more information about the program, contact Cynthia Pansing, statewide coordinator, at (612) 625-9759 or pansi001@umn.edu.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, P1

pansing1293

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MSC
A27p

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

February 4, 2003

Learn how to restore shorelands to their natural beauty

You can learn how to restore shorelines so they're closer to their natural state by attending Shoreland Revegetation workshops starting soon. The three-session workshops are scheduled at locations throughout Minnesota for those interested in establishing natural habitats along lakes and rivers.

Shoreland revegetation is becoming increasingly popular as a way to reduce water pollution, improve wildlife habitat and provide a more natural appearance along lakes and rivers. The workshops cover the function of shoreland vegetation, shoreland design process, plant material selection, site preparation, planting strategies and site maintenance.

Participants actually plan and plant a restoration project, says Mary Blickenderfer, a regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service at Grand Rapids.

Following is the first date for each workshop and local contacts. All sessions start at 8:30 a.m. and end at 4 p.m. Second sessions and planting dates are scheduled for each.

Feb. 22—Ramsey County Extension Office, St. Paul, Ron Struss (651) 215-1950.

March 27—Mentor Community Center, Mentor, Ray Bisek, (218) 935-2226.

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April 5--Prairie Woods Environmental Learning Center, Spicer, Amy Rager, (320) 669-4471.

May 14--Lake Washington County Park, Kasota, Brad Carlson, (507) 332-6109.

May 16--Crosslake Community Center, Crosslake, Eleanor Burkett (218) 587-8280.

Registration materials, agendas and dates for all 2003 workshops are available online at www.extension.umn.edu/water/shore. Or, call the contact for the workshop you're interested in. Registration is \$50 per individual or \$80 for two people from the same household.

"Extension also provides continuous in-depth training and follow-up after the workshops," Blickenderfer says. The result: sustainable, local networks of trained, interested and motivated leaders.

Shoreland Revegetation and Shoreland Volunteer workshops are part of a Shoreland Education Program being offered by the U of M Extension Service statewide. A third workshop, Shoreland Plant Id, covers the value and identification of aquatic plants and will be offered at Rush City, Crosslake and Ortonville in July 2003.

#

Web, V2MN, V4MN, T2

liuk213

Source: Barbara Liukkonen (612) 625-9256, liukk001@umn.edu

Writer: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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February 4, 2003

Here's your chance to help protect our lakes, rivers and wetlands

Shoreland Volunteer workshops are scheduled throughout Minnesota starting March 1. The sessions are designed for those who want to learn more about lakes, rivers and wetlands and take steps to protect them.

The workshops will cover the basics of how lakes and rivers work, shoreland regulations and land use practices that impact water quality. Also covered will be tips on how to share that knowledge in your community.

Shoreland volunteers make a commitment to return 20 hours of community service in the next year—a concept based on the University of Minnesota Extension Service's successful Master Gardener program.

Following is the workshop schedule and local contacts:

March 1, Dakota County Northern Service Center, West St. Paul, Daniel Huff,
(651) 480-7734.

March 8, Martin County Human Resources Center, Fairmont, Billee Rabbe,
(507) 235-3341.

March 15, Warner Lake Nature Center, Clearwater, Karen Sherper Rohs, (763)
241-2720.

April 25-26, Camp Bluewater, Grand Rapids, Julie Miedtke, (218) 327-4177.

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May 2-3, Vacationaire Lodge and Supper Club, Park Rapids, Will Yliniemi, (218) 732-3391.

Registration materials, agendas and dates for all 2003 workshops are available online at www.extension.umn.edu/water/shore. Or, call the contact for the workshop you're interested in. Registration is \$50 per individual or \$80 for two people from the same household.

Shoreland Volunteer and Shoreland Revegetation workshops are part of a Shoreland Education Program being offered by the U of M Extension Service statewide. A third workshop, Shoreland Plant Id, covers the value and identification of aquatic plants and will be offered at Rush City, Crosslake and Ortonville in July 2003.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, T2

liuk1313

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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

February 4, 2003

Hands-on swine barn ventilation workshops set at 3 Minnesota locations

Managing swine barn ventilation systems will be the subject of hands-on demonstration workshops at three Minnesota locations in March. Larry Jacobson, engineer with the University of Minnesota Extension Service, will present information at all three workshops. A U of M animal scientist will also be on the program at each location.

Dates and locations for the workshops will be March 11 at Waseca at the U of M Southern Research and Outreach Center, March 12 at Morris at the West Central Research and Outreach Center, and March 13 at Lamberton at the Southwest Research and Outreach Center. The workshops will run from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., and are designed for swine facility managers and workers.

The workshops will include classroom sessions on ventilation principles, animal requirements, management guidelines, and troubleshooting tools and techniques. Participants can also get hands-on experience setting fan controllers and adjusting inlets, and can check static pressure effects on fan performance. The demonstrations will take place using a six by eight-foot mobile ventilation room equipped with two variable speed fans, one single-speed fan, three types of inlets, controllers and other equipment.

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University of Minnesota animal scientists Sam Baidoo, Lee Johnston and Bob Koehler will also present information on swine environmental needs and management at Waseca, Morris and Lamberton, respectively.

The workshop fee is \$40 per person, which includes handouts, lunch and breaks. Pre-registration is required by two days before each workshop. To pre-register, call (800) 767-5287 at the University of Nebraska. For further information on the workshops, call Jacobson at (612) 625-9733.

Workshops featuring the mobile ventilation room have also been planned in South Dakota, Iowa and Nebraska. The workshops are a cooperative project of the University of Minnesota, South Dakota State University, Iowa State University and the University of Nebraska, with some financial assistance from the Pork Producers Associations in each of the four states.

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Web,V2,S2,X5

jacob130

Source: Larry Jacobson, (612) 625-9733
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NEWS & INFORMATION

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

February 4, 2003

Lack of snow cover is causing septic systems to freeze

The most common reason why septic systems freeze is lack of snow cover and cold temperatures combined with a construction or "use" issue. Unfortunately, the sparse snowfall in Minnesota this year is causing a rash of problems, says Ken Olson, a regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"If your septic system is frozen, your first step is to call an onsite professional," says Sara Christopherson, an engineer with the U of M Extension Service Onsite Sewage Treatment Program. If you have a pump and hear water constantly running in a pump tank (a possible indication of a frozen system), disconnect your pump and call an onsite professional.

This will likely be a pumper or an installer who can help determine the cause of the problem and offer solutions. The U of M Onsite Sewage Program website is one place to go to locate a professional:

<http://septic.coafes.umn.edu/homeowner/index.html>. Many pumpers and installers have devices called steamers and high-pressure jetters to try to unfreeze system piping. Unless the cause of freezing is corrected, the piping will refreeze.

Other methods used to help fix a freezing problem include adding heat tape and tank heaters. Cameras can be sent down the pipes to determine where the freezing is occurring and if repairs are needed. If the treatment area is full of ice, or there is

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evidence of leaking, there is no need to thaw the lines leading to the treatment area, since it can't accept liquid until the area thaws in spring.

If it is not feasible to correct the problem or equipment is not available in your area, the only other option is to use the septic tank(s) in the system as a holding tank until the system thaws naturally. You will need to contact a pumper who, on a regular basis, will empty the tanks when they are full. This can be very costly, especially with normal volumes of water use (50 to 75 gallons per person per day).

Reduce water use by limiting the number of toilet flushes, taking short showers, using the dishwasher at full capacity, limiting running water to get hot or cold and doing laundry at a laundromat. It is smart to find the cause of the freezing problem so that it can be addressed in the spring, preventing future freeze-ups. Again, more information on proper use of septic systems is available at <http://septic.coafes.umn.edu/Homeowner/index.html>.

The most common reasons an onsite system freezes are a waterlogged system, cold air entering the system, lack of snow cover, compacted soil or lack of plant cover. Others include irregular use of the system, leaking plumbing fixtures or a pipe that's not installed with the proper change of elevation.

Preventing your septic system from freezing. There are many things you can do to prevent your system from freezing in the future. Depending on your system, location, and water use, you may never have a freezing problem. Here are some precautions if you have had a past problem or are concerned about having a future problem. It is not necessary to do all of these, but pick and choose based on your situation.

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1. Place a layer of mulch (8-12 inches) over the pipes, tank and soil treatment system to provide extra insulation. This is particularly important if you have had a new system installed late in the year and no vegetative cover has been established. If your system is currently frozen, ignore this step as it will delay thawing come spring.
2. Let the grass in your lawn get a little longer over the tank and soil treatment area in the late summer/fall. This will provide extra insulation and help hold any snow that may fall.
3. Use water; the warmer the better! The Onsite Sewage Treatment Program is usually an advocate of water conservation, but if freezing is a concern, increasing low use to normal water use can help the system. This includes spreading out your laundry schedule to possibly one warm/hot load per day, using your dishwasher and maybe even taking a hot bath. DO NOT leave water running all the time, as this will hydraulically overload the system.
4. If you know you are going to be gone for an extended period, plan accordingly. This could include having someone use sufficient quantities of water in the home regularly, or pumping out your tank before leaving.
5. Fix any leaky plumbing fixtures or appliances in your home. This will help prevent freezing problems and help your system work better year-round.
6. Keep all types of vehicles and high-traffic people activities off of the system. This is a good rule to follow year-round.
7. Make sure all risers, inspection pipes and manholes have covers on them. Sealing them and adding insulation is a good idea.

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8. Keep an eye on your system. If any seeping or ponding occurs, contact an onsite professional to help determine the cause and remedy.

For more information, check the website. Otherwise, give Sara Christopherson or Ken Olson of the University of Minnesota Onsite Sewage Treatment Program a call at (800) 322-8642.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, C4, T2

olson233

Sources: Sara Christopherson or Ken Olson (800) 322-8642
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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MSC
A-7p

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

January 31, 2003

U of M workshops on 'Making Your Meetings Work' set at 10 locations

A workshop series for city, county and school officials on "Making Your Meetings Work" will take place at 10 Minnesota locations in March and April. The University of Minnesota Extension Service is sponsoring the events.

The workshops are designed for county commissioners, school board members, city council members, mayors, township board members, nonprofit leaders and community-based volunteers. The registration deadline for March workshops is Feb. 21; for April workshops it's March 14.

There will be three workshops at each location. The first workshop on "Managing Group Interaction" will cover ice breakers, ground rules, staying on track, group dynamics and working with large groups. The second workshop, "Making Group Decisions," will cover decision-making strategies and processes and how to decide who makes what decisions. The final workshop will be on "Dealing with Group Conflict." It will cover dealing with on-going conflict and handling problem meeting behaviors.

To register, call Nina Van De Linde at (612) 624-7714 or e-mail her at vande028@umn.edu to request a registration flyer. The fee is \$35 per workshop or \$95 for the series.

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The workshop locations, dates and times are:

--Litchfield, March 6, 13, 20; 1-3 p.m.

--Owatonna, March 6, 13, 20; 2-4 p.m.

--St. Cloud, March 11 and 25, April 8; 9-11 a.m.

--Morris, April 1, 8, 15; 1:30-3:30 p.m.

--Park Rapids, April 1, 8, 15; 5-7:30 p.m.

--Rochester, April 2, 9, 16; 9-11 a.m.

--New Ulm, April 3, 10, 17; 9-11 a.m.

--Alexandria, April 3, 10, 17; 9-11 a.m.

--Moorhead, April 3, 10, 24; 6-8:30 p.m.

--St. Paul, April 9, 16, 23; 2:30-4:30 p.m.

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Web,V2MN,V4MN,V5MN,E1

hoel0129

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MSL
A-14

<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

January 31, 2003

Rural energy conference will be March 5-7 in St. Paul

Energy issues in rural areas will be the focus of the 41st Annual Rural Energy Conference and Pre-conference Seminar March 5-7 in St. Paul. The event will be at the Holiday Inn St. Paul East, I-94 and McKnight Road. It's sponsored by the University of Minnesota, the University of Wisconsin and the Midwest Rural Energy Council (MREC).

The conference and seminar are designed for electric utility officials, electricians, educators, rural electric cooperative board members and others interested in rural energy.

Among the program topics are electrical phenomena, earth currents, stray voltage and contact current research. Break-out sessions will center on distributed generation, automatic meter reading, and stray voltage from a veterinarian's perspective. There will also be presentations on energy research at Iowa State University, the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin.

Stray voltage in the dairy industry will be the topic of the pre-conference seminar on March 5. The seminar's objective is to improve understanding and application of equipment used in measuring 60 Hz and higher frequency voltage/current.

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For registration information, contact the Wisconsin College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALs) at (608) 263-1672. A conference flyer is on the Internet at <http://www.mrec.org/confer.html>.

The Midwest Rural Energy Council is a non-profit organization of investor-owned utilities and rural electric cooperatives in Minnesota and Wisconsin. Members include utilities in Iowa, Minnesota and Wisconsin; representatives from the Universities of Minnesota and Wisconsin; government officials; educators; equipment dealers and individuals. Engineer Vance Morey is the U of M representative to the MREC.

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Web,V2,A4,E3

energy03

Source: Vance Morey, (612) 625-8775
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

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January 31, 2003

De-icing salt on streets and highways damages trees and shrubs

It happens every year: de-icing salt applied to Minnesota highways and city streets damages trees and shrubs. Come spring, leaves of trees and shrubs that got doses of road salt over winter may have the same "scorched" look you'd expect in the middle of a summer drought.

"Despite the safety benefits of de-icing salt, its extensive use causes widespread damage," says Gary Johnson, urban and community forestry specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. De-icing salt has caused the disfiguration of trees and shrubs along highways, and may have contributed to the decline and death of many city shade trees.

It can be difficult to diagnose salt injury, Johnson says, since it has the same symptoms caused by many other stressors, including diseases. Injury occurs when salt is deposited by spray or drift on dormant stems and buds of deciduous woody plants, and on the stems, buds and needles of evergreens.

Injury may also occur when excessive amounts of salt accumulate in the root zone of these plants. Both spray salt and soil salt can cause stem and foliage disfigurement, reduce growth and even cause death.

High salt levels in the soil complicate control of infectious diseases, Johnson says. For example, the Dutch elm disease epidemic forced the removal of many elms along

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streets and boulevards. The young replacement trees were subjected to accumulated salt in their planting holes as well as the dangers of additional salt spray.

Unfortunately, there's not much you can do now to head off the salt damage. In the longer term, you can take some preventive measures, such as using only plants that are more tolerant of the expected exposure to salt. This is the only successful technique in high-salt locations, Johnson says.

You can find more information, including lists of trees and shrubs that are more tolerant of salt, in the U of M Extension Service publication "Minimizing De-icing Salt Injury to Trees." You can find it at <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/naturalresources/DD1413.html#Minimizing>.

You can get paper copies by calling (800) 876-8636, or (612) 624-4900 in the Twin Cities area. Purchases may be charged to a credit card. Or, you can get copies from county offices of the U of M Extension Service.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, G1

johns1283

Source: Gary Johnson (612) 625-3765, johns054@umn.edu
Writer: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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January 29, 2003

U of M agricultural drainage conferences set at Crookston, N. Mankato

Subsurface tile drainage and related agricultural drainage topics will be on the agenda at upcoming conferences at Crookston and North Mankato. The conferences will be Feb. 27 at the Northland Inn in Crookston and March 6 at the Best Western Hotel and Conference Center in North Mankato. The University of Minnesota Extension Service is sponsoring the events in partnership with the Minnesota Land Improvement Contractors Association.

The conferences are designed for elected officials, lenders, farmers, landowners, soil and water resource advisers, tile drainage contractors, crop consultants and other decision-makers. The program is similar at each location. It will include discussions on U of M subsurface tile drainage research projects, economics, environmental concerns and local tiling experiences. A drainage products exhibit hall will be available part of the day.

Pre-registration is required. For a registration and program flyer, contact Jean Spohr at (320) 589-1711 or spohrjm@mrs.umn.edu. A flyer can also be downloaded and printed from the Internet by going to <http://d-outlet.coafes.umn.edu/> and clicking on the "Meetings/Events" icon. The fee is \$75 per person. Certified crop adviser credits for the conference have been requested.

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For further information contact Jerry Wright in Morris at jwright@umn.edu or (320) 589-1711, or Gary Sands in St. Paul at grsands@umn.edu or (612) 625-4756.

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Web,V2,A2MN,C4MN,F4MN,61,07

wrig0127

Source: Jerry Wright, (320) 589-1711

Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

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January 28, 2003

Time is running short for pruning oak trees

There's not much time to waste if you have oak trees that need pruning. Oaks should be pruned when they're dormant—before the spring growing season starts.

"That means you have only two months, and you'll need to arrange for an arborist right away if you haven't already done so," says Gary Johnson, urban and community forestry specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Fresh pruning wounds in spring or early summer leave oak trees susceptible to oak wilt. "Many valuable oak trees have been lost only because they were pruned too late in the dormant season," Johnson says. "The oak pruning season has ended as early as April 1 in recent years."

"It's important to find a professional you can trust," Johnson says. He suggests using a contractor who employs International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) certified arborists. You can find more information on pruning oak trees, including a list of certified arborists, by going to the Forest Resources Extension home page at <http://www.cnr.umn.edu/FR/extension> on the Internet.

You can also contact the Forest Resources Extension office at (612) 624-3020.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, G1

johns1273

Source: Gary Johnson (612) 625-3765, johns054@umn.edu

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MSC
A27p

January 28, 2003

Sidedress nitrogen application for corn should be applied early

Corn producers who apply sidedress nitrogen fertilizer can increase their chances of getting maximum benefit by planning an early application. There is no benefit to delaying the application until a later plant growth stage, according to soil scientist George Rehm of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Rehm cites results of a University of Nebraska study on nitrogen for corn. The Nebraska researchers established different nitrogen deficiency levels early in the growing season by applying various rates of fertilizer N immediately after planting. They then applied additional N at different times during the growing season. The total amount of nitrogen applied was 230 pounds per acre for all treatments. They used ammonium nitrate (33-0-0) as the N source.

In the study, the corn reached the V4 growth stage 13 days after emergence and the V8 stage 30 days after emergence. Early-season growing conditions were good.

“Results of this study apply to corn production in Minnesota,” says Rehm. “In general, the highest yields resulted from applying some of the nitrogen at planting and the rest at the V4 growth stage. Delaying the second application to the V8 growth stage did not improve yields. It’s also important to note that high yields resulted with a single N application at the time of planting.”

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The study found that as the time of sidedress N application was delayed, corn yields tended to decrease.

“Early sidedress nitrogen application for corn has been a suggested management practice in Minnesota for several years,” says Rehm. “This study confirms the practice’s value.”

The importance of applying some fertilizer N at planting was also demonstrated in the Nebraska study, says Rehm. Therefore, he recommends that corn producers who plan to use a sidedress application of N also used some N at planting. The N at planting can be in a starter band or with a pre-emergence herbicide in a weed-and-feed program.

“Early application of sidedress nitrogen is a management practice that will improve corn production,” Rehm concludes.

Further details on the Nebraska study are on the Internet in an article entitled “In-Season Nitrogen for Corn.” Go to <http://www.plpa.agri.umn.edu/extension> and click on the icon for “2003 Minnesota Crop News.”

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Web,V2,V4MN,F4MN

rehm0117

Source: George Rehm, (612) 625-6210
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

January 24, 2003

Will farmers profit from 'functional' foods?

Some 85 percent of American consumers want to learn more about "functional" foods, according to a survey by the American Dietetic Association (ADA).

The ADA survey concluded consumers are concerned about nutrition, know they could and should eat healthier, but don't want to sacrifice taste and convenience. "Functional foods provide a health benefit beyond basic nutrition," says Zachary Fore, a regional cropping systems specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The ADA defines functional foods as "any potentially healthful food or food ingredient that may provide a health benefit beyond the traditional nutrients it contains." Fore says examples of functional foods include products with oat fiber or soy protein (heart healthy) and butter-type spreads that contain benecol (cholesterol reducing).

"What does this have to do with agriculture? Potentially, a great deal," Fore says. "Functional foods may require production of customized raw materials. The functional foods market in the U.S. alone is currently at \$8 billion per year, and growing at eight percent annually."

Don't confuse functional foods with "farmaceuticals." "Farmaceuticals are likely to be produced on a very small number of acres by a very small number of farms," Fore

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says. "But functional foods will be produced on many acres and provide opportunity for many farmers."

Whoever is first to identify and provide what consumers want will profit from functional foods. "But if the past is any indication, it won't be farmers," Fore says "Consumer expenditures for food products have grown dramatically in the last 30 years, but what farmers are getting has grown very little."

Consumers are paying more, but farmers are not sharing in that increased value. "Who is getting it? The food companies who are adding value to the raw materials," Fore says.

Farmers can profit from the functional foods market, but they won't profit by waiting for someone to come and offer a premium price for products they produce, Fore says. To share in the profits, Fore says farmers need to work with commodity groups, universities and other support organizations to develop and own nutritionally enhanced plant and animal traits. Farmers must also own the processing and/or marketing of functional food products.

"A lot of money will be made in the functional foods business," Fore says. "If farmers are wise and aggressive in their thinking, develop partnerships and invest in well-researched value-added opportunities, it can be them."

Fore may be reached at (218) 253-4401, forex002@umn.edu.

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Web, V2, V4, A2, A4

fore1223

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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

January 23, 2003

Make 2003 a more profitable year for your farm

By Zachary Fore, University of Minnesota Extension Service

There are few things so good they cannot be improved. Your farm probably falls in this category.

And there are few people so wise they cannot learn. All of us fall in this category. With the 2002 crop year behind us, it is time to reflect, learn and determine how to make 2003 a more successful and profitable year. During and immediately after harvest, while observations made on the combine are fresh in your mind, is the best time to assess your operation.

What did you do in 2002 that worked well? What didn't work well? What did other farmers do that did or did not work well? Write down all your observations. (It is important that you physically write down your observations on real paper).

Next, look at the list of things you did that worked well. Are they management practices you can incorporate into the way you farm? Or, are they things that were just lucky or unusual – things that you can't control, or don't want to incorporate into the way you farm. Here are a few examples of things that may have worked well:

1. I scouted my wheat fields for disease and applied fungicide only where variety, crop condition and weather justified it.

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2. My most profitable field was where I got hail, collected insurance and then harvested part of a crop.

3. My highest yielding soybeans were the ones I planted in early June.

Field scouting is a practice that you may want to incorporate into your operation.

The second item, hail, is an unusual event that you can't control, but this may indicate that you want to continue to take out hail insurance. And the late planting of soybeans is probably just luck. Best yields usually don't come from late planting, and late planting significantly increases the chances of losses due to late-season frost. You don't want to make late planting of soybeans a standard practice.

Now study the list of things that didn't go well. Here are some examples:

1. The spring was wet and my wheat was planted two weeks later than optimum.

2. I planted a reduced rate of soybeans on some fields to save on seed costs. These fields seemed to yield less.

3. I lost soil and had ditches fill in due to wind erosion.

4. I contracted a third of my crop early at a price that seemed very good at the time. However, prices went up and I would have been better off to sell it all at harvest.

Can you implement management practices to overcome these problems? Would surface and/or tile drainage address number one? For item two, would it be a better idea to pay the extra seed cost and plant a full rate? Could residue and tillage management alleviate erosion in item three? Was the price change in item four

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(forward contracting) anything that could have been predicted with any degree of consistency? Marketing is an area where the potential for second guessing is immense.

Item four may suggest that it is better not to contract ahead, but to sell at harvest. However, long-term data indicates that prices at harvest tend to be the lowest. This is a good example of a strategy that didn't work well this year, but that you wouldn't necessarily want to change in the future.

Doing small things a little better. I believe that this yearly assessment of what is working and what isn't is critically important. Why? Because I believe that the future success of most farms is a matter of doing a lot of small things a little better each year, not doing a few big things a lot better. Agriculture is a very competitive business.

Although we have recently seen some higher commodity prices, it is unlikely these higher prices will continue for long. Richard D. Taylor, Won W. Koo and Andrew L. Swenson, agricultural economists at North Dakota State University, recently published an article titled "2002 North Dakota Agricultural Outlook: Representative Farms, 2002-2011." (You can get the article at this web address: <http://agecon.lib.umn.edu/cgi-bin/detailview.pl?paperid=5290>).

Looking very far into the future is an uncertain business, but these economists use past price and yield trends and the new farm program to estimate farm profitability up to 2011. Their conclusion is that, on the average, net farm income will decrease and debt-to-asset ratios will increase for farms of all size and profitability categories. That's the bad news.

The good news is that there is opportunity to continually improve and to be better than average. A key part of beating the odds is to do a yearly, in-depth farm

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assessment--learn from what is working and what isn't, and then make the needed changes.

There are some excellent farm planning resources available. Here are a few: "Discover Your Priorities: Develop a Needs Assessment," and "Strategic Planning: Drafting a Blueprint for Your Farm Business," by James Hanson and Dale Johnson, University of Maryland, at

<http://www.agnr.umd.edu/MCE/Publications/Category.cfm?ID=1>.

Another is "A Strategic Management Primer for Farmers," by Kent Olson, http://agecon.lib.umn.edu/cgi-bin/pdf_view.pl?paperid=3836&ftype=.pdf. Olson is an Extension farm management economist at the University of Minnesota.

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(Zachary Fore is an Extension regional cropping systems specialist at Red Lake Falls, Minn. He may be reached at (218) 253-4401, forex002@umn.edu)

Web, V2MN,V4MN,A2MN,A4

fore1213

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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

January 22, 2003

Switching to ridge-till, strip-till will be focus of Feb. 4 conference

Switching to conservation tillage for planting corn and soybeans is not difficult, according to soil scientist George Rehm of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Farmers who have made the switch will describe their experiences at the Midwest Ridge and Strip-Till Conference Feb. 4 in New Ulm. The annual conference will be from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Holiday Inn in New Ulm.

"The program will feature highly successful ridge and strip-till farmers," says Rehm. "They will talk about everything from manure management in ridges to building a planter."

Rehm points out that the new federal Farm Program will emphasize soil conservation. "The ridge and strip-till planting systems are excellent for conserving soil without having any negative effects on crop production," he says.

Rehm encourages farmers who are thinking about switching to ridge-till or strip-till to attend the conference, citing it as "an excellent opportunity to learn about these planting systems."

The conference registration fee is \$35 per person. For more information, contact Rehm at (612) 625-6210 or rehmx001@umn.edu.

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Web,V2,A2MN,C4MN,F4,X2,08

rehm0121

Source: George Rehm (612) 625-6210

Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

January 22, 2003

Low protein content puts Minnesota soybeans at market disadvantage

Soybeans grown in Minnesota are below average in protein content, putting them at a competitive disadvantage in the marketplace. Planting varieties that are higher in protein can help, according to University of Minnesota agronomist Daryl Hexum.

“According to the 2002 soybean quality survey by Iowa State University, Minnesota ranks last out of the seven western Corn Belt states in soybean protein level,” says Hexum. “And Minnesota soybeans are one percent lower in protein than the national average.”

Hexum says variety selection is the most powerful tool available to lift the protein level of the state’s soybeans. “Varieties vary greatly in both protein level and yield,” he points out. “Additionally, varieties exist that are not only high-yielding but above average in protein level. By selecting varieties that have both high yield and high protein, Minnesota producers can increase the overall protein level of their crop. This will increase the profitability of Minnesota soybeans by making them more desirable in the marketplace.”

To assist producers in choosing varieties, the University of Minnesota Extension Service has compiled lists of “winners” (varieties with both high yield and above-average protein) and “losers” (varieties with low protein). The lists come from two

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sources—Minnesota Soybean Grower Strip Trials and University of Minnesota Variety Trials. These lists are on the Internet and can be reached by going to <http://www.soybeans.umn.edu>, clicking on the icon for “2002 Protein Results” and then clicking on the icons for the lists. Those without Internet access can have the lists printed at county offices of the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

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Web,V2MN,V4MN,F4MN,X2

soyhex

Sources: Daryl Hexum, (612) 625-0210; Seth Naeve, (612) 625-4298

Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

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January 17, 2003

4-state dairy conference in Carver Co. will be Feb. 17

Improving dairy cow comfort and health along with accelerated calf growth will be topics at a four-state dairy conference Feb. 17 in Carver County. The 11th Annual Carver County Dairy Expo and 4-State Dairy Conference will be at Central High School between Norwood and Young America.

The event includes a trade show, and is for dairy producers, those in dairy-related industries and other interested persons. Registration is at the door and opens at 9:30 a.m. Presentations begin at 10:30 a.m. and wrap up at 3 p.m.

The program features one speaker each from the University of Minnesota, Iowa State University, the University of Illinois and the University of Wisconsin. Each speaker will make a presentation before lunch and another after lunch. Topics and speakers will be:

--Drenching and diets for transition cows, Marcia Endres, Extension dairy scientist, University of Minnesota;

--Reducing stress on the cow and calf at calving, Howard Tyler, dairy scientist, Iowa State University;

--Preventing diseases that lead to abortion and infertility, Dick Wallace, Extension veterinarian, University of Illinois;

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--Stall use and freestall bases, Roger Palmer, dairy scientist, University of Wisconsin;

--Cow behavior and cow comfort, Endres;

--Cow behavior in a parlor vs. a robotic milking system, Palmer;

--Accelerated calf feeding, Tyler;

--Reproductive programs for heifers, Wallace.

For further information contact Vern Oraskovich at (952) 442-4496 or Marcia Endres at (612) 624-5391. For a conference flyer on the Internet go to www.ansci.umn.edu/dairy/calendar/dairycalendar.htm and click on the icon for the expo.

Sponsors for the event are the Extension Services of the University of Minnesota, Iowa State University, the University of Illinois and the University of Wisconsin.

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Web,V2,V4MN,D1,X3

lynn114

Sources: Vern Oraskovich, (952) 442-4496; Marcia Endres, (612) 624-5391
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

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January 14, 2003

U of M offers workshops on 'Working with Hmong Families'

Businesses and service organizations can learn to build better relationships with the Hmong population and other diverse audiences through a series of upcoming University of Minnesota workshops. The series includes three workshops on "Working with Hmong Families" and one on "Customer Service for Multicultural Customers and Clients."

The workshops will be in Minneapolis at the Hennepin County Extension Office, 1525 Glenwood Ave. They have a registration deadline of Feb. 3. They are designed for those who work in public or private organizations that employ and serve multicultural populations. This includes administrators of organizations, intercultural educators, entrepreneurs, healthcare professionals and social service professionals.

"Hmong Family Dynamics," the first workshop in the series, will be Feb. 12 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This workshop will generate strategies for working with Hmong families and will address cultural concerns such as gender roles and generational expectations. Participants will also examine whom Hmong families trust as they seek information.

"Hmong Families and the School Systems" will be Feb. 26 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This workshop will consider what it is like for Hmong parents to raise children in the American culture, as well as what it is like to be a child in a Hmong family in

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America. The attitudes and conceptions Hmong parents bring to their relationship with the school will be explored.

“Health and Wellness and the Hmong Culture” will be March 5 from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. This workshop will provide health care workers with insights on how the Hmong view physical and mental health. Special attention will be paid to Hmong elders as “the fading Hmong generation.”

“Customer Service for Multicultural Customers and Clients” will be March 12 from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. This workshop will focus on customer service from the perspective of interacting and communicating with persons from different cultures. It will help participants learn how to avoid common mistakes when serving or employing a diverse population.

Presenters at all four workshops will be Krystal Vujongyia and Laura Au-Yeung, regional educators with the U of M Extension Service. Cynthia Messer, U of M campus-based Extension educator and author of several customer service programs, will also be a presenter at the March 12 workshop.

To obtain a registration brochure and workshop fee information, call (612) 374-8430 or e-mail aueyu001@umn.edu. Registrations must be received by Feb. 3. For more information on the program, call Vujongyia at (651) 704-2057 or Au-Yeung at (612) 374-8430.

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Web, V4MN, V7, A3, E1MN, F1MN, H2MN, T1MN, Y1MN

among

Source: Joyce Hoelting, (612) 625-8233
Editor: Joseph Kurtz, (612) 625-3168, jk@umn.edu

MSC
A27p

January 10, 2003

Ag tile drainage design workshops at Crookston, North Mankato set

Agricultural tile drainage design and water management will be the subject of three-day workshops Feb. 25-27 at Crookston and March 4-6 at North Mankato. The University of Minnesota Extension Service is planning the workshops in cooperation with several other agencies.

The workshop at Crookston will be at the Northland Inn and the one at North Mankato will be at the Best Western Hotel and Conference Center. Pre-registration is required by mid-February. For a registration flyer contact Jean Spohr at (320) 589-1711 or spohrjm@mrs.umn.edu or go to <http://d-outlet.coafes.umn.edu/> on the Internet. The fee is \$175 per person for the three-day workshop, \$125 for two days or \$75 for a single day. Certified Crop Adviser credits have been requested for the workshop.

The workshop is designed for farmers, landowners, tile drainage contractors, crop consultants, soil water resource advisers, lenders, elected officials and other interested persons. It will cover subsurface tile drainage design, including planning, tile sizing, lateral spacing and the Minnesota Drainage Guide. Hands-on tile drainage design exercises will be included. Presenters will include U of M faculty, farmers and a tiling contractor.

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Day one will cover subsurface tile drainage design basics. Day two will cover intermediate design topics and hands-on exercises, while day three will include discussions on University research projects, economics and local tiling experiences.

A drainage product and service exhibitor hall will be part of the workshop.

For more information contact Hans Kandel, regional Extension educator in Red Lake Falls at (218) 253-2897 or kande001@umn.edu; David Pfarr, regional Extension educator in Mankato at (507) 389-8325 or dpfarr@umn.edu; Jerry Wright in Morris at jwright@umn.edu; or Gary Sands in St. Paul at grsands@umn.edu.

The workshops are sponsored by the Extension Services of the University of Minnesota, North Dakota State University, South Dakota State University and Iowa State University in partnership with the Minnesota Land Improvement Contractors Association.

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Web,V2,V4MN,A2MN,C4MN,F4MN,07,61

wrig0108

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NEWS & INFORMATION

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January 7, 2003

U of M Master Marketer program set for Marshall

The six-day "Master Marketer" educational program for grain producers and ag professionals will be held in Marshall at the Best Western Marshall Inn Jan. 29-30, Feb. 12-13 and Feb. 26-27, 2003.

Now in its fifth year, Master Marketer is designed to develop and improve the marketing skills needed for success. The 2003 Master Marketer Program is sponsored by the University of Minnesota's Center for Farm Financial Management.

In the past four years, over 270 growers have participated in the Master Marketer Program, according to Bob Craven, farm management economist with the U of M Extension Service. Craven is also director of the Center for Farm Financial Management.

The program aims to improve marketing skills, increase farm revenues and encourage the development of marketing clubs, Craven says. Topics covered in the workshop include marketing strategies using futures and options, integrated risk management, fundamental and technical price analysis, crop insurance, weather trends and outlook, and marketing clubs.

Speakers include two of the premier grain analysts in the country, Bill Tierney of Kansas State University and Robert Wisner of Iowa State University. Top-notch ag meteorologist Elwynn Taylor of Iowa State University is also on the program.

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Edward Usset, University of Minnesota grain marketing specialist, will lead the workshop. The registration fee for the six-day session is \$350 per person, and includes lunches and handouts. Spouses can attend for an additional \$200.

For a brochure or to register, contact the Center for Farm Financial Management at (800) 234-1111 or (612) 625-1964. An on-line brochure is available at www.cffm.umn.edu/pubs/MasterMarketer2003.pdf.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, A2

craven163

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St. Paul, Minnesota 55108

December 4, 1995

Early Scouting of Corn Yields Benefits

It's important to scout your corn fields regularly from emergence to the six-leaf stage. Ken Ostlie, entomologist with the University of Minnesota's Extension Service, cites the benefits.

"Early detection and diagnosis of stand loss problems helps avoid unnecessary stand loss, the resulting yield loss, and even the need to replant," says Ostlie. "Considering the money spent putting the seed in the ground, it's worth the effort."

If you notice injured plants or stand loss, take a closer look at the field, says Ostlie. Focus your attention on the injury, how common it is, where it's occurring, and what might be causing it.

--First, what does the injury look like? Look closely for insect damage to the leaves, stem, roots, or seed. If you're seeking someone else's advice, dig up plants with typical symptoms to show what you're seeing.

--Second, how prevalent is the injury? Take some counts of the surviving stand and injured plants.

--Third, is there any pattern to where the injury is occurring? Does it only occur in certain rows? In localized areas

(over)

of the field? All over? Think about the field's history and your production practices as they relates to the pattern you see. If consulting with someone, be prepared to discuss your practices for the current spring and in preceding years.

--Finally, look for likely insects causing the injury or stand loss. They might be feeding on the injured plant part, or they might have moved on to an adjacent healthy plant, or they might be hiding in the soil or under crop debris up to 12 inches away from the corn plant. Put the insects you find in alcohol to examine later or to show if you're seeking professional help in insect identification. Caterpillars should be briefly dropped into boiling water to fix their color, then preserved in alcohol.

The information from scouting prepares you to diagnose what's happening and determine what you can do about the injury or stand loss.

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GOPH, MNF, DTN, V2, F4

NAGR5172

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