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NEWS & INFORMATION

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

January 6, 2004

New research shows phosphate fertilizer may increase soybean protein

Soybean yields increase about 15 percent when you apply recommended rates of phosphorus fertilizer when soil test levels are low or very low. In addition, new research shows that the added phosphate may increase the protein percentage by about one percent, says George Rehm, soil scientist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

You can expect the 15 percent yield increases when phosphorus as measured by the Bray procedure is 10 parts per million (ppm) or less, Rehm says. If phosphorus is extracted by the Olsen test, expect a positive response to phosphate fertilization if the value is 8 ppm or less.

“Profit from the added phosphate can be substantial,” Rehm says. With a yield potential of 40 to 50 bushels per acre and a low soil test for phosphorus, the value of the added yield can be in the range of \$42 to \$56 per acre with \$7 soybeans. The fertilizer cost for the increase is about \$12.50 per acre.

The value of the additional protein could be \$4 to \$5 per acre, Rehm says. So the net benefit of the phosphate fertilization is in the range of \$29 to \$44 per acre after the cost of the phosphate fertilizer is subtracted.

“Although initial research shows the positive effects of phosphate fertilization on soybean protein, there’s much more to learn and this requires extensive field research,” Rehm says.

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Web, V2, V4, F4

rehm01054

Source: George Rehm (612) 625-6210, rehmx001@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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January 9, 2004

Tips to reduce chances of frozen septic systems

Unfortunately, it's just like last year: Lack of snow and cold temperatures are causing some septic systems to freeze. But you can take some precautions to avoid the problem, says Ken Olson, an educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Not many septic systems have frozen yet," Olson says. But if your system has frozen, Olson says you should contact a professional sewage pumper or installer who can help determine the cause of the problem and offer solutions. The U of M Onsite Sewage Program Web site at <http://septic.umn.edu/homeowner/index.html> has detailed information on septic system freezing problems. It can also help you locate a professional in your area.

Many pumpers and installers have "steamers" and "high-pressure jetters" to unfreeze system piping. "Unless the cause of freezing is corrected, the piping will re-freeze," Olson says.

There are many things you can do to reduce the chances of your system freezing yet this winter. Here are some precautions if you've had a problem or are concerned about having one. It's not necessary to do all of these, but pick and choose based on your situation:

- Add a layer of mulch (8-12 inches) over the pipes, tank and soil treatment area to provide insulation. A mulch of loose, fluffy hay or straw works well.
- Use normal amounts of water; the warmer the better! If freezing is a concern, increasing water use from low to normal (normal is 50 to 75 gallons per person per day) can help the system. This includes spreading out your laundry schedule to possibly one warm/hot load per day, using your dishwasher and taking a hot bath. DO NOT leave water running all the time, as this will hydraulically overload the system. Also, DO NOT add antifreeze to the system.

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- If you know you are going to be gone for more than a couple of days, plan accordingly. This could include having someone visit and use sufficient quantities of water in the home regularly. If you are going to be gone for an extended period (weeks or months), pumping the tank before leaving may be the best option.
- Fix any leaky plumbing fixtures or appliances in your home. This will help prevent freezing problems and help your system work better year-round. If you have a high-efficiency furnace that trickles water into a drain, collect the water in a large container and empty it periodically.
- Keep all types of vehicles--including ATV's and snowmobiles--and high-traffic people activities off of the system. This is a good rule to follow year-round.
- Make sure all risers, inspection pipes and manholes have covers on them. Sealing them and adding insulation is a good idea.
- 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, talk to your septic contractor or check the U of M septic Web site.

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Web, V2, V4, H4, T2

olsonK01094

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

January 16, 2004

Lots of good information at the Midwest Ridge and Strip Till Conference

Farmers throughout the region who are interested in ridge-till and strip-till planting systems should make plans to attend the Midwest Ridge and Strip Till Conference.

This year, the conference is scheduled Feb. 4 at the Arrowwood Conference Center at Spirit Lake, Iowa. The conference starts at 10 a.m. and ends at 3 p.m. But for those who arrive early, there's an open round-table session for a free exchange of information.

"Sometimes it's really educational to listen to others who have a lot of practical experience with these planting systems," says George Rehm, soils specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Rehm says the conference program is designed to interest those who are "just thinking" about these systems as well as those who have used them for a number of years. "There's always a lot of good information for everyone," he adds.

There's a registration fee of \$35, but pre-registration isn't necessary. For more information, contact George Rehm at (612) 625-6210 or rehmx001@umn.edu.

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Web, V2, V4, C4, F4

rehm01154

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January 16, 2004

'Get it right' with research-based wheat management

Wheat management workshops based on the latest research are scheduled at four Minnesota locations the first week in February.

"True intensive wheat management should be based on the most recent research," says Hans Kandel, regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The day-long educational programs will feature researchers who received grants from the Minnesota Wheat Research and Promotion Council. They'll summarize the latest information on soil fertility, varieties, diseases and other critical issues.

Specialists from the University of Minnesota and their topics include Beverly Durgan, weed management; Jim Anderson, wheat breeding; George Rehm, soil fertility management; Jochum Wiersma, agronomy; Char Hollingsworth, plant disease management; and Ian MacRae, insect management.

Regional Extension educators on the program are Zach Fore, Hans Kandel, Doug Holen, and Russ Severson, covering agronomy topics, and Bill Craig, financial management. Speakers may vary according to location.

Talks will cover decisions to be made before you plant, at planting time, during vegetative growth, and heading into harvest. Topics include water management, crop rotation, variety selection, soil management and fertility, plant populations, planting dates, seed treatments, wheat growth and development, diseases, weeds, and breeding for scab resistance and other characteristics

The program is organized by the University of Minnesota Extension Service in cooperation with the Minnesota Association of Wheat Growers and Wheat Research and Promotion Council. Admission is free to all producers, thanks to the sponsorship of the Minnesota Wheat Checkoff.

The meetings are scheduled from Feb. 3-6, from 8:30 a.m. to 4 p.m., as follows:

- Feb. 3, Moorhead, Convention Center—Courtyard by Marriott
- Feb. 4, Greenbush, Community Center
- Feb. 5, Crookston, Northland Inn
- Feb. 6, Fergus Falls, Bigwood Event Center

For more information, contact Hans Kandel or Zach Fore at (218) 281-8027 or (888) 241-0781.

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Web, V2, V4, F4, X7

kandel01154

Source: Hans Kandel ((218) 281-8027 or (888) 241-0781, kande001@umn.edu)
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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January 23, 2004

Variety selection can boost corn yields by 10 bushels per acre

There's a good chance you could increase corn yields 10 bushels per acre by selecting the highest yielding hybrids, says an agronomist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"The three most important traits to use in corn variety selection are yield, yield and yield," says Extension agronomist Dale Hicks. "Yields pay the bills, and unlike soybeans, there aren't a lot of other traits you need to consider," he says.

Within each maturity group of tested hybrids, a yield difference of 40-45 bushels from the highest to lowest yielding hybrid is common, Hicks says. "In Iowa performance trials, average yields of the most widely grown eight or nine varieties are no different from that of all hybrids—180 varieties or so. That tells me you should be able to beat the average with judicious variety selection."

"I can't tell you which variety will be the highest yielding next year, but you can't go wrong by basing your selection on the highest yielding varieties within each maturity group. Start with the highest on the list and work from there. Those with the highest yields have the highest probability of also being the highest yielding varieties in the coming growing season."

Another reason to scrutinize hybrid varieties carefully is the rising price of hybrids—up to \$160-170 per bag. Seed cost now approaches fertilizer cost in direct expenses.

For more information, contact a regional center office of the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Hicks may be reached at hicks004@umn.edu, or (612) 625-1796.

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Web, V2, V4, F4

hicks01224

Source: Dale Hicks (612) 625-1796, hicks004@umn.edu
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<http://www.extension.umn.edu/News>

January 27, 2004

Workshops on strengthening local economies set for four Minnesota locations

“You and Your Economy” workshops organized by the University of Minnesota Extension Service are scheduled for four Minnesota locations in March and April.

You’ll be able to visit about Minnesota’s economy and learn about Extension programs that can help local communities and strengthen their economies.

Anyone interested in Minnesota’s future is invited, including community leaders, public officials, business owners, nonprofit leaders and county and city administrators. Presenters are specialists from Extension, the Department of Applied Economics and the Humphrey Institute. Topics will include trends in Minnesota’s economy and developing “cutting edge” industry clusters in rural areas.

Check-in for the all-day workshops is at 8:30; the program begins at 9 a.m. Topics and speakers for the morning program include:

--Minnesota’s economy, Tom Stinson, state economist. He will describe trends in Minnesota’s economy over the past 40 years that spell out long-term shifts that we’ll face in the next 10 years.

-- Industry clusters in Minnesota, Lee Munnich, Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs. Munnich will discuss his recent research, which identifies potential cutting edge industry clusters in different regions of Minnesota. With community action, these clusters can shape economic development in rural areas.

Other morning topics include Extension’s Business Retention and Expansion program, rural health programs, and new research about the success of small stores in a “big-box” world.

Afternoon speakers will discuss e-commerce programs, a new publication featuring social and economic characteristics of Minnesota, and ways to assess tourism development and management in your area.

The date and location for each workshop and a contact person are as follows:

--March 11, Cloquet Forestry Center, Cloquet, Liz Templin, toll-free (888) 241-0719

--March 25, Heinz Building, Rochester, Bruce Schwartau, toll free (888) 241-4536

-- April 1, Chippewa County Courthouse, Montevideo, David Nelson, toll free (888) 241-4532

--April 8, Moorhead Regional Extension Center, Michael Darger (612) 625-6246

Registration is \$35 per person, and the registration deadline is 10 days before each event. For registration information, contact Joan Sigmundik, 463 Coffey Hall, 1420 Eckles Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108-6070. Telephone (612) 624-7714 or e-mail sigmu001@umn.edu.

More information about the workshops is available at www.extension.umn.edu/UandEconomy.

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Web, V4MN, V5MN, E1

hoelt01214

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

February 6, 2004

Rural energy conference is March 3-5 in Eau Claire

The 42nd annual Rural Energy Conference will be held March 3-5, 2004 at the Ramada Inn and Convention Center in Eau Claire, Wis. It's sponsored by the Midwest Rural Energy Council (MREC) together with the University of Minnesota, Iowa State University and the University of Wisconsin.

Program topics include stray voltage, wind power, interconnect rules, and transmission in the Midwest, says Vance Morey, a professor in the Department of Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering at the University of Minnesota. There will also be presentations on rural energy research at the three universities.

The topic of the pre-conference seminar (March 3) is "The Role of Utility Personnel in Litigation." The objective of the seminar is to enhance the understanding of litigation.

Click on <http://www.mrec.org/confer.html> for a copy of the conference/seminar brochure, on-line registration and other information. Questions should be directed to the Wisconsin College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS) Conference Office at (608) 263-1672.

MREC membership consists of utilities throughout the upper Midwest; Iowa State University, the Universities of Minnesota and Wisconsin; trade allies; government officials; educators; equipment dealers; and individual members from throughout the US.

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Web, V2, V4, E3

morey02054

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February 6, 2004

Women's Marketing Program is March 11

Pre-harvest marketing is a key component to marketing success, and you can learn all about it at the 2004 Women's Marketing Program. It's at the Jackpot Junction Convention Center in Morton, Minn., Thursday, March 11, from 9 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Sponsors include the University of Minnesota Extension Service, the Risk Management Agency, the Minnesota Soybean Research and Promotion Council, 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. It's fun!
- 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, everyone will have a personalized marketing plan based on solid marketing concepts," says Kevin Klair, Extension economist at the University of Minnesota. "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 350 producers in five states.

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, V2, V4, F4

klair02054

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February 13, 2004

Farmers interested in CSP program should take a 'close look'

Farmers who were looking forward to participating in the new Conservation Security Program (CSP) will want to take a close look at the proposed implementation rule. It was issued Jan. 2, and is open for a 60-day comment period until March 2, 2004, says Les Everett, water quality project coordinator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"Statements at public listening sessions around the state indicate a need for considerable change in the proposed rule to make it attractive to farmers," Everett says.

The CSP was written into the 2002 Farm Bill as the first-ever conservation program to be available to all producers who sign up and meet program requirements, similar to commodity support programs. Everett says it was designed to bring all producers into a conservation plan, increase conservation on the land and reward producers for on-going conservation efforts.

However, the proposed rule was written to fit the program into a small, first-year appropriation. It places severe restrictions on geographic eligibility, prerequisite conservation performance, eligible practices, base payment rates and practice cost-share rates. Critics say there's little incentive for producers to participate.

Just after publication of the proposed rule, Congress passed the FY2004 Consolidated Appropriations Act (Omnibus spending bill). It restored the program to an uncapped entitlement status in FY2005, removing the need to limit enrollment after this October. Unless USDA issues a revised proposed rule to accommodate the restored status of the program, restrictions of the current proposed rule will apply for the life of the program, Everett says.

The proposed rule and fact sheets can be obtained through the NRCS home page at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov>. Select "Farm Bill."

Some suggested changes to the proposed rule are posted on the Web site of the Midwest Sustainable Agriculture Working Group, <http://www.msawg.org>, under "Issues and Actions." Comments on the proposed rule should be emailed or faxed before March 2.

The email address is david.mckay@usda.gov (Attn: Conservation Security Program). The fax address is Conservation Security Program Comments, Attn: David McKay, Conservation Operations Division, NRCS, fax number (202) 720-4265.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, V5MN, C4, A4

everet02134

Source: Les Everett (612) 625-6751, evere003@umn.edu
 Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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February 13, 2004

Control drainage design featured in upcoming U of M Extension workshop

The design of controlled drainage systems is a new feature this year at the annual Drainage Design Workshops in North Mankato. The workshops are March 2-4, and are offered by the University of Minnesota Extension Service

“Day three of the three-day workshop, Thursday, March 4 this year, is typically reserved for advanced and issue-oriented presentations,” according to Jerry Wright, Extension engineer. The decision to begin teaching design of alternative systems like controlled drainage stems from the increased attention this practice is getting in the upper Midwest.

“Controlled drainage is one of several techniques that can potentially reduce seasonal drainage volumes and nitrate-nitrogen loads to surface waters,” says Gary Sands, Extension engineer and workshop instructor. The workshop session will illustrate how designing for controlled drainage differs from traditional drainage design.

Sands is a member of the national Agricultural Drainage Systems Management (ADMS) task force whose goal is to increase awareness and adoption of improved drainage practices through applied research and education. The ADMS task force is also attempting to streamline state and federal agency programs in support of these practices.

Information and registration forms for the Annual Drainage Design Workshops can be found at <http://d-outlet.coafes.umn.edu/events> or by contacting Jean Spohr at spohrjm@mrs.umn.edu, or (320) 589-1711.

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Web, V2, Z5, C4

sands02134

Source: Gary Sands (612) 625-4756, sands@umn.eduEditor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

February 17, 2004

Conservation tillage book, CD-ROM available from Midwest Plan Service

Any farmer currently using or thinking about adopting a conservation tillage system has two excellent resources available from Midwest Plan Service (MWPS).

The book "Conservation Tillage Systems and Management" (second edition) has been expanded to 270 pages and provides information for corn, soybean, wheat and cotton farmers. The new Conservation Tillage CD-ROM includes the entire book, plus four smaller books, video clips and PowerPoint presentations in an easy-to-use format.

There are many benefits of conservation tillage, says Jonathan Chaplin of the University of Minnesota Biosystems and Agricultural Engineering Department. They include soil erosion management, water conservation, improved soil tilth, lower input costs and labor efficiency.

Among the book's 29 chapters are sections devoted to crop response to tillage systems, costs and returns, wind and water erosion, crop residue and irrigation water management, and water quality. Also included are chapters about nutrient management; weed, insect, rodent, and disease management; and precision agriculture. Other chapters discuss residue management at harvest, estimating residue cover, soil compaction, controlled traffic, and converting CRP to crop production.

"Conservation Tillage Systems and Management," MWPS-45, is available for \$25 per copy. The CD-ROM alone is also \$25. Discounts are available if you order both, and may be available for multiple copies. Order on-line at the catalog section of the MWPS website, www.mwpsdq.org, by phone at (800) 562-3618, by fax at (515) 294-9589, by e-mail at

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mwps@iastate.edu, or by mail from MWPS, 122 Davidson Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011-3080.

The book and CD were prepared under the direction of the MWPS Crop Production Committee, chaired by Randall Reeder, Extension agricultural engineer, Ohio State University. More than 60 university and industry specialists including agricultural and biological engineers, Extension specialists, conservationists, entomologists, plant pathologists, weed and soil scientists, and agronomists contributed to the publication.

Reeder says the new Conservation Tillage CD-ROM, which was produced in cooperation with the Conservation Tillage Information Center (CTIC) and John Deere, has many high-tech features that make it an ideal companion for the print version of the book. The CD has six historic movie clips of the Dust Bowl and one on water erosion. "This is a valuable resource for farmers, consultants and educators," he says.

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Web, V2, V4, C4

chapln02134

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February 24, 2003

Ventilation workshops scheduled for pork producers

Pork producers can receive hands-on training to improve their knowledge of ventilation system management at three workshops in Minnesota and western Wisconsin in March.

The workshops, "Managing Your Unseen Employee: The Ventilation System," are scheduled as follows:

--March 9, Rotary Christmas Lights Building, LaCrosse, Wis.

--March 10, Stearns County Hwy. Dept. Maintenance Building, Waite Park, Minn.

--March 11, South Central Technical College, Mankato, Minn.

Programs at all locations begin at 9 a.m. and end at 3:30 p.m., according to Larry Jacobson, engineer with the University of Minnesota Extension Service and one of the workshop presenters.

The hands-on demonstrations include setting fan controllers, adjusting inlets, static pressure and dirty fan effects, and other real-life situations facing livestock producers. The demonstrations will be conducted using a six-foot by eight-foot by eight-foot mobile ventilation room equipped with two variable speed fans, one single speed fan, three types of inlets, controllers and other equipment. The demonstrations will use three to four demonstration boards comprised of various brands of ventilation controllers wired to small fans and lights to simulate heating systems.

The classroom session will include the basics of ventilation systems, effective temperature requirements, troubleshooting tools and technique, and other ventilation situations.

The program cost is \$50 per person, which includes handouts, lunch and refreshment breaks. Pre-registration is required two days before the event.

For a program brochure and registration form, contact the Minnesota Pork Board at (800) 537-7675 or www.mnpork.com. The University of Nebraska's Pork Central is centrally collecting registrations for this multi-state effort.

To register by phone call (800) PORKCTR, or (800) 767-5287. Visa and Master Card are accepted. Sponsors for this educational program include the University of Minnesota Extension Service and Pork Checkoff.

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Web, V2, V4, S2

jacobsn02204

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

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March 5, 2004

It's foodborne illnesses, not mad cow disease

To quote Alison Young in the Seattle Times, "In the days since the mad cow disease was announced in the United States, more than one million Americans were sickened by food they ate. About 6,000 became so ill they were hospitalized and nearly 100 died, but mad cow disease was not the culprit. Not a single American is known to have contracted the human form of the disease from eating food in this country."

So much attention has been focused on the beef from one Washington State Holstein, but few pay attention to the general foodborne diseases, according to LouAnn Jopp, regional food science educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

So what has taken this huge toll on Americans' health? Common forms of bacteria like Campylobacter, Clostridium botulinum, salmonella, E. coli, and listeria were probably some of the culprits. Thousands of types of bacteria are naturally present in our environment. The bacteria that cause disease are called pathogens. When certain pathogens enter the food supply, they can cause food borne illness. Most of these cases of food borne illness can be prevented!

Bacteria may be present on products when you purchase them. Remember that raw meat, poultry, seafood, and eggs are not sterile. Neither is fresh produce such as lettuce, tomatoes, sprouts, and melons. Safely cooked, ready-to-eat foods can become cross-contaminated with bacteria transferred from raw products, meat juices or other contaminated products, or from food handlers with poor personal hygiene.

So what do we consumers need to know? It's pretty basic--always follow basic safe food handling rules so the foods you and your family eat are safe. These include:

- Clean--wash hands and surfaces often. Keep everything clean while preparing meals. Wash hands and kitchen surfaces often with soap and water. Wash cutting boards, dishes, and utensils after preparing each food item and before going on to the next item. Paper towels are recommended for cleaning up kitchen surfaces.

- Separate--don't cross-contaminate. Separate raw meat, poultry, and seafood from other foods when shopping at the grocery store and storing them in your refrigerator. Use one cutting board for raw meat, poultry, and seafood and a separate one for other food. Never place cooked food on a plate that previously held raw meat, poultry, or seafood unless the plate has been thoroughly cleaned.
- Cook to safe temperatures. Use a food thermometer to make sure meat, poultry, and egg dishes are cooked to safe temperatures. Do not second-guess the internal temperature of cooked foods - follow recommended temperatures. Keep hot food hot, 140°F or above. When reheating, leftovers should be thoroughly heated to 165°F; sauces and soup should be brought to a rolling boil.
- Chill--refrigerate promptly. Refrigerate or freeze perishables, prepared food, and leftovers within 2 hours. Place leftovers into shallow containers for rapid cooling. The refrigerator should be maintained at 40°F or below and the freezer at 0°F or below. Use an appliance thermometer to check the temperature.

When buying fresh, packaged, or canned food, always check to be sure the package or can is intact before purchasing. Do not purchase packages that are punctured or appear to have been opened. Don't consume food if the safety seal has been broken. For canned goods, do not eat the contents if the cans are dented, cracked, or bulging. These are warning signs that the product may not be safe.

Clean the top of the container before opening. After opening, inspect the product. Do not use products that are discolored, moldy, or have an off odor. If you have questions about a product, do not taste the product to determine if it is safe. Do not use packaged food received in the mail if you do not know where it came from.

Always remember this advice about food safety: if in doubt, throw it out!

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Web, V2, V4, F7, H2

jopp03034

Source: LouAnn Jopp (320) 203-6050 or (888) 241-4591, joppx001@umn.edu
 Adapted from Food Safety and Inspection Service, USDA
 Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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March 5, 2004

Extension offers teacher training for high school financial planning program

Here's some evidence that high school students need financial planning help: Some 30 percent of youth report that their parents rarely or never discuss saving and investing with them.

Another 47 percent say their parents rarely or never discuss household budgeting with them. One in five teens has their own credit card or access to a parent's card. And university administrators say they lose more students to credit card debt than to academic failure.

But here's the good news: Research has shown that as little as ten hours of personal finance education positively affects students' spending and savings habits.

The Cooperative Extension Service, the National Endowment for Financial Education (NEFE) and the National Credit Union Association have joined together to offer the "High School Financial Planning Program" curriculum and student guides free of charge to teachers and schools nationwide. This six-unit program teaches high school teens how to manage their money wisely.

The program uses games, simulations and exercises to provide hands-on experience for students to test and apply financial principles and concepts being taught. Students learn to identify and prioritize personal money management goals, develop a budget, track income and spending, understand the cost of using credit, protect assets and comprehend the impact of time on the value of their money.

The six-unit course can be completed in as few as 10 classroom hours. More information about the curriculum can be found at: <http://www.nefe.org/pages/educational.html>.

The University of Minnesota Extension Service in collaboration with NEFE and the Minnesota Credit Union Network, will offer teacher trainings this spring for the "High School Financial Planning Program." Workshops will include instruction on using the curriculum; credit research and updates; new legislation regarding consumers; credit and bankruptcy; and a CD-ROM with new teaching aids for teachers. A light dinner and certificate of attendance will also be provided.

Workshops are scheduled from 5 p.m.-7:30 p.m. at 10 sites throughout the state as follows:

--April 26, Jordan, Scott County Extension Office.

--April 27, Fergus Falls, West Ottertail Extension, US Bank Bldg.; Grand Rapids, North Central Research and Outreach Center; Marshall-SW/WC Service Cooperatives.

--April 28, Thief River Falls, Pennington County Courthouse.

--April 29, St. Paul, McNeal Hall, U of M St. Paul Campus; Duluth, Duluth Public Library; St. Cloud, Midtown Office Bldg.; Mankato, Blue Earth County Government Center; Rochester, UCR-Heintz Center.

Instructors for the workshop are regional Extension educators in family resource management. The cost of the workshop is \$10. To register for one of the workshop sites, visit the Extension Web site at www.extension.umn.edu/hsfpp.html, call (800) 876-8636 or (612)624-4900, fax (612) 625-6281, or mail your registration to the Extension Service Distribution Center, 405 Coffey Hall, 1420 Eckles Ave. St. Paul, MN 55108-6281.

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Web, V4, V5, V8, F3

crymns03044

Source: Sara Croymans (320) 589-1711 or (888) 241-4532, croym001@umn.edu

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

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March 9, 2004

'Normal' teenager behavior changes rapidly

Conflict and rebellious behavior is the image many parents have of teenagers. But it doesn't need to be that way, and a series of workshops for professionals who work with families of teens will address the challenges of parenting teenagers.

The workshops, titled "What's New with Teenagers and Their Families--Research Update for Professionals," are sponsored by the University of Minnesota Extension Service and will be held at 10 Minnesota locations. Extension specialists will summarize the latest research for professionals who serve families. The workshops are intended for school personnel, social workers, counselors, faith-based staff and others who work with teenagers and their families.

"Dealing with teenagers is challenging, but not something to be fearful of," says Colleen Gengler, family relations specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "Teenagers are learning, growing and changing rapidly in many ways," Gengler says. "Those changes are normal and go both ways. Parents influence their teens, and teens influence their parents."

All workshops begin with registration at 8:30 a.m. and go from 8:45 to noon. They're scheduled as follows:

March 30, St. Paul, Ramsey County Extension Office, 2020 White Bear Ave.

April 2, Marshall, Lyon County Government Center, 607 W. Main St.

April 13, Worthington, Extension Regional Center, 1567 McMillan St.

April 15, Glenwood, Pope County Courthouse, 130 E. Minnesota Ave.

April 16, Mankato, Blue Earth County Government Center, 410 S. 5th St.

April 27, Rochester, Extension Regional Center, UCR-Heintz Center Rm. 114, 1926 College View Rd. SE.

April 28, Moorhead, Family Service Center, 715-11th St. N.

April 28, Grand Rapids, Extension Regional Center, North Central Research and Outreach Center, 1861 E. U.S. Hwy. 169.

April 29, St. Cloud, Extension Regional Center, Midtown Office Complex, First St. N.

April 30, Duluth, DeWitt-Seitz Marketplace, Canal Park, 394 Lake Ave. S.

Early bird registration (up to three days before the workshop) is \$35, late and on-site registration is \$40.

Registration information is available at www.extension.umn.edu/workshop/teenupdate.

For more information, contact Colleen Gengler at (507) 372-3907, gengl003@umn.edu.

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Web, V2, V4, V5, F1

gengl03084

Source: Colleen Gengler (507) 372-3907, gengl003@umn.edu

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

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March 12, 2004

Children who eat fast food have less healthy diets, study shows

Fast food consumption may be a contributing factor to increasing obesity rates in children, according to a new report in "Pediatrics" journal.

The article is summarized by Marla Reicks in the February 2004 issue of "Nutrinet," published by the University's Department of Food Science and Nutrition. Reicks is a nutritionist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service and you can find her article at <http://fscn.che.umn.edu/nutrinet>.

The researchers used a nationally representative sample of over 6,000 children and adolescents ages four to 19. They examined diet quality and compared values between children who ate fast food during a one-to two-day period and those who did not. The children who ate fast food consumed more total energy, fat, carbohydrates, sugars and sugar-sweetened beverages; but less fiber, milk and fewer fruits and non-starchy vegetables.

"Consumption of fast food among children in the United States seems to have an adverse effect on dietary quality in ways that could increase risk for obesity," the journal article says.

"In light of these findings, measures to limit marketing of fast food to children may be justified," Reicks says.

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Web, V2, V4, V5, H2

reicks03104

Source: Marla Reicks (612) 624-4735, mreicks@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

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NEWS & INFORMATION

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

March 16, 2004

What's behind the low carb bandwagon?

The popularity of low-carb diets is partially a backlash to the low fat-dietary advice over the past two decades.

The "low-fat message" over the past 20 years has helped reduce fat consumption from about 40 percent of total calories to about 34 percent, says Craig Hassel, nutritionist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. But at the same time, the percentage of obese Americans has continued to increase.

Low-fat diets are almost always high carb diets, Hassel says. And this has led some people to see a cause-effect relationship between high-carb diets and increased obesity and Type 2 diabetes across the population.

Researchers say overall calorie consumption has increased over the same period of time—by 100 to 300 kcal/day. "So while it's true that we're eating more carbohydrates as a percentage of calories, we're also just eating more food and total calories each day," Hassel says. "We're also eating out more, and portion sizes in restaurants have increased."

While consumers flock to low-carb diet plans, researcher Sarah Ash of North Carolina State University has posed some critical questions:

- How long can low-carb dieters stick to the plan?
- Will people eventually tire of its restrictive nature?
- Are early decreases in serum cholesterol (associated with weight loss) maintained on a diet that can be relatively high in saturated fat?
- Does a low-carb diet provide enough vitamins, minerals, fiber and other potentially beneficial non-nutrients like the phytochemicals in fruits and vegetables to protect against other chronic diseases like cancer?
- Does the high protein content contribute to significant calcium loss, increasing the risk for osteoporosis?

Professional nutritionists don't have all the answers, Hassel says, largely because few studies have been done on low-carb diets. For now, he suggests following the "five a day" of fruits and vegetables plus "the old standbys of moderation, variety, balance and physical activity."

Hassel has written a longer article on low-carb diets in the March 2004 issue of "Nutrinet," published by the University's Department of Food Science and Nutrition. You can find it at <http://fscn.che.umn.edu/nutrinet>.

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Web, V2, V4, V5, V6, V7, P2

hassel03154

Source: Craig Hassel (612) 624-7288, chassel@umn.edu

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

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March 16, 2004

Extension schedules regional workshops on teaching 'Positive Parenting'

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. Family relationship 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. The "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.

Please register for one workshop; they will be held at the following sites for the remainder of 2004:

- April 28, Dakota County Extension and Conservation Center, 4100 220th St. W., Suite 101, Farmington
- May 17, Clay County Courthouse, Room B, 807 11th St. N., Moorhead
- July 28, Blue Earth Co. Government Center, Frontier Room, 410 South 5th St., Mankato
- Aug. 10, Central Lakes College, 501 W. College Dr., Brainerd
- Sept. 24, Ramsey Co. Extension Service, 2020 White Bear Ave., St. Paul
- Nov. 4, Regional Extension. Center, 46352 State Highway 329, Morris

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 on-line registration feature, visit the Positive Parenting Web site at <http://www.parenting.umn.edu> or contact Kay Syme at (612) 624-4938 or ksyme@cce.umn.edu. Contact Kathleen A. Olson, family relations specialist, University of Minnesota Extension Service at either (507) 536-6306 or (888) 241-4536, or via e-mail at kaolson@umn.edu for questions on curriculum content or training.

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Web, V4, V5, F1

N

Source: Kathleen A. Olson (507) 536-6306 or (888) 241-4536, kaolson@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

*The University of Minnesota, including the University of Minnesota Extension Service,
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March 26, 2004

How much water do we need?

Instead of counting water consumption by the glass or ounce, just drink when you're thirsty. A new report from the Institute of Medicine's Food and Nutrition Board says most healthy people adequately meet their daily hydration needs by letting thirst be their guide.

In addition, the report says coffee and other caffeinated beverages can contribute as much to daily hydration needs as noncaffeinated beverages. "While concerns have been raised that caffeine has a diuretic effect, available evidence indicates that this effect may be transient. There is no convincing evidence that caffeine leads to cumulative total body water deficits."

The new report was summarized by Marla Reicks, nutritionist with the University of Minnesota Extension, in the March 2004 issue of "Nutrinet" newsletter, <http://fscn.che.umn.edu/nutrinet>.

The report doesn't offer any thumb rules based on how many glasses of water people should drink each day because our hydration needs can be met through a variety of sources in addition to drinking water. "While drinking water is a frequent choice for hydration, people also get water from juice, milk, coffee, tea, soda, fruits, vegetables and other foods and beverages. On a daily basis, people get adequate amounts of water from normal drinking behavior, which involves consumption of beverages during the day and by letting their thirst guide them."

About 80 percent of our total water comes from drinking water and beverages--including caffeinated beverages--and the other 20 percent is derived from food.

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Web, V2, V4, V5, H2

reich03164

Source: Marla Reicks (612) 624-4735, mreicks@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

MSC
A27p

March 30, 2004

There were record yields from ratty looking, early planted corn

Much of the early planted corn in Minnesota the last two years wasn't much to look at when it first emerged. Spacing between plants wasn't uniform and final stand counts were lower than expected.

But both 2002 and 2003 were excellent corn production years for Minnesota growers, says Dale Hicks, agronomist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The state average yield was a record 157 bushels in 2002 and an impressive 146 bushels per acre in 2003. In both years, much of the state's corn acreage was planted before May 1.

Uniform stands--both the spacing between plants and time of emergence--are important to give all plants equal competition for water and nutrients. However, non-uniform stands are productive and profitable because late-emerging plants do contribute to yield.

"There will be years again like the past two where stands won't be as good as growers would like," Hicks says. "But these early-planted stands have a higher yield potential than the later-planted stands that emerge more uniformly and appear to grow faster. Early planting sets the stage for high yields and the greatest profitability," he says.

There are two planting windows in Minnesota, Hicks says. The first is between April 15 and May 5; then there's a higher probability of rainfall that stops field work. The second window for planting begins about May 15.

"Times and durations of these planting windows vary every year, but the pattern is the same. For maximum profitability, don't miss the first planting window," Hicks says.

More detailed information is available in an article Hicks wrote for "Minnesota Crop eNews," at <http://www.plpa.agri.umn.edu/extension/news%20releases>. He may be reached at hicks004@umn.edu, or (612) 625-1796.

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Web, V2, V4, F4

hicks03294

Source: Dale Hicks (612) 625-1796, hicks004@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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March 30, 2004

Get the latest farm financial management information

You can check the latest information on farm financial management at a University of Minnesota Web site.

Just go to the Center for Farm Financial Management site at <http://www.cffm.umn.edu/>.

There's information on the latest farm management software. You'll also find new farm management publications written by educators with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Topics include transferring the farm, estate planning and a land rent survey of southern Minnesota counties

A series of publications on transferring the farm covers topics such as factors to consider before transferring the farm, farming together, partnerships and corporations. It also addresses selling real estate, gifting farm assets, tax considerations, treatment of heirs, help for beginning farmers and writing a transfer plan.

Another series on estate planning details establishing a will, gifting assets, trusts, income tax issues, life insurance and steps in estate settlement. And the land rent survey report gives detailed information on cash rents in 27 southern Minnesota counties.

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Web, V2, V4, A2

hach03304

Sources: Center for Farm Financial Management (800) 234-1111 or (612) 625-1964

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

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

April 6, 2004

‘Sufficient’ phosphate fertilizer levels are most economical

You can apply phosphate fertilizer to get high yields without adding additional amounts to build soil test levels, according to University of Minnesota soil scientists George Rehm and John Lamb.

The economic return to the concept of building soil test values for P is questionable, the soil scientists say in the April 2 edition of “Minnesota Crop e-News,” published by the U of M Extension Service. It’s available at <http://www.plpa.agri.umn.edu/extension/news%20releases>.

“Some believe you need high soil test values before it’s possible to achieve very high yields,” Rehm and Lamb say in the article. This “build and maintenance” concept is designed to first build soil test values to some predetermined value, then maintain them by using crop removal values.

A second concept for recommendations is the “sufficiency” concept, which adjusts the recommended fertilizer rate for the level of that nutrient in the soil. There’s no plan to create high or very high levels of immobile nutrients.

To determine which approach is most economical and leads to higher yields and higher soil test values, Rehm and Lamb cite results of long-term research studies. The studies were designed to compare fertilizer recommendations from soil testing laboratories that used contrasting recommendation philosophies. The comparisons were made in Nebraska and Minnesota.

In both states, money was spent for additional phosphate to increase soil test values for P. There was an increase in soil test P, but no increase in corn yield. “So a plan to purchase additional phosphate fertilizer to increase soil test P can be questioned,” they say.

“Research from several universities clearly shows you can’t get high corn yields if you don’t apply phosphate fertilizer when soil test P values are medium or below,” Rehm and Lamb say. “At the same time, results from the Nebraska and Minnesota studies tell us that high soil test values for P are not a prerequisite for high yields.”

The “crop sufficiency” approach to fertilizer recommendations can produce yields equal to those of the “build and maintenance” approach, they conclude.

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Web, V2, V4, C4, F4

rehm04054

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

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

April 6, 2004

'Green eggs and ham' are normal

Don't be alarmed by a bit of green color on the hard-cooked eggs or baked ham that you may be serving at Easter.

The green ring around the yolk of a hard-cooked egg is harmless and safe to eat, says Suzanne Driessen, University of Minnesota Extension Service educator specializing in food safety. And if there's a greenish or yellowish tinge on the ham you've bought, this is also normal and the ham is safe, Driessen says.

The green ring around the yolk of a hard-cooked egg is due to hydrogen in the egg white combining with sulfur in the yolk. This is apt to happen when the eggs are boiled too hard for too long. But Driessen says the green ring can also be caused by high iron levels in the cooking water.

Although the green ring is harmless, there's a good chance you can avoid it by hard-cooking, instead of hard-boiling the eggs. Driessen suggests these steps:

- Place the eggs in a single layer in a saucepan and cover with cold tap water to at least one inch over the eggs.
- Bring the water to a boil, then turn the burner off.
- Cover the pan and let it sit for 20 minutes, then drain it.
- Cover with cold water immediately. This helps keep the green color from forming around the yolks.
- If you're coloring the eggs, follow the directions on the box of color tablets.
- Store hard-cooked eggs in the refrigerator, but use them within one week.

To prevent the "normal" greenish or yellowish cast on ham and other cured meats, wrap the meat in airtight packages and store it away from light.

There is one potential food safety hazard with hams that you want to avoid: Don't leave the meat out for people to "graze" on. "It can be convenient to leave leftovers out instead of putting them away, but it could make someone sick," Driessen says.

The *Staphylococcus aureus* bacteria causes foodborne illness, and it's been found in high-protein foods, even salty ones like ham. "These bacteria are found on our hands, in our noses and in infected cuts and can be transferred to food very easily," Driessen says.

Symptoms of this foodborne illness show up within one to six hours after eating the contaminated food. To avoid getting sick, it's important to wash hands well and refrigerate leftovers within two hours of preparing them.

For more information on food safety, including safe cooking of Easter hams, call the University of Minnesota AnswerLine at (800) 544-1678 to talk directly to an Extension household expert.

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Web, V2, V4, V7, V8, F7

driessen04014

Source: Suzanne Driessen (320) 203-6057, Driessen@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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April 9, 2004

Minnesota State Cattlemen's Tour is July 14-15

The 2004 Minnesota State Cattlemen's Tour is July 14-15 based out of Mora, Minn. Tour highlights include visits with eight innovative beef producers in central Minnesota, says Lori Schott, regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Tour stops will include these beef operations and businesses: Richard and Phyllis Erickson, Isle; Duane and Sheila Munsterteiger, Ogilvie; William (Bill) and Diane Skelnik, Isle; Ash Farms (Paul and Scott Ash), Milaca; Roger and Nancy Wagner, Milaca; Dan and Karen Schafer, Mora; K & R Custom Meats, Mora; and the Berg Farm, Oligvie.

Also included on the stops are short educational programs on animal ID, nutrition, carcass quality and reproduction. U of M Extension specialists and their topics include:

- Meats specialist Deb Roeber, demonstrating carcass defects and carcass evaluation criteria, at K & K Custom Meats, Mora.
- Cow-calf specialist Cliff Lamb, reproductive technology, at Bill and Diane Skelnik's, Isle.
- Beef and swine specialist Alfredo DiConstanzo, nutritional programs, at the Berg Farm, Oligvie.

A new program for spouses features a garden tour organized by Kanabec County Master Gardners and a program on safe food preservation by the Extension food science team.

See <http://www.snakerivercattlemens.org> for program and registration information, or contact Todd Kruse at (763) 689-0055. Sponsors are the Snake River Valley Cattlemen's Association and the University of Minnesota Extension beef team.

#

Web, V2, V4, V5, B1

schott04064

Source: Laurie Schott (320) 225-5050 or (888) 241-4528, wedd1002@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

April 9, 2004

Keep foods safe when you're eating out in the field

Planting season means keeping on the go and long days, but you need to take the time to eat something healthy.

"Food helps you refuel so you're alert and have the energy to work those long hours," says Suzanne Driessen, University of Minnesota Extension Service regional educator in food safety.

A basic principle is to keep hot foods hot and cold foods cold. Driessen offers some other tips to help keep foods safe when you're eating out in the field:

- It's difficult to keep foods hot without a heat source. Insulated casserole dishes keep things hot for an hour or so. Wrapping containers in newspaper helps keep food hot, and a Thermos works well for hot dishes or soups. Eat hot food within two hours of cooking.
- For the cold foods, keep foods like lunchmeats, cooked chicken and potato or pasta salads in a cooler. Hard-surface coolers keep food colder longer than soft-sided ones. Pack your cooler with several inches of ice or use frozen gel-packs, frozen juice boxes, or frozen water bottles to keep the food at 40 degrees F or colder.
- Block ice keeps longer than ice cubes. Use clean, empty milk or water jugs to prefreeze blocks of ice. Store food in watertight containers to prevent contact with melting ice water.
- Remember to keep the cooler out of the sun. You can cover it with a heavy bath towel for further insulation.
- Some foods don't need to be kept cold. These include whole fresh fruits and vegetables, juice boxes, nuts, trail-mix, unopened canned meat spreads, peanut butter and jelly sandwiches and bread jerky. However, cut-up fruits and vegetables need to be kept cold.
- It's important to wash your hands to remove dirt or the residue from handling seed. The ready-to-use antibacterial gels aren't effective at removing bacteria from dirty hands. Disposable wipes or moist towelettes with a dab of soap work well. These can be packed in a zip lock baggy. If you can't wash your hands, use a napkin or paper towel to eat finger food.
- Don't forget the water. Drink extra water to avoid dehydration when you're out in the sun.
- Finally, leftover food taken to the field should be thrown out. Plan ahead and bring only the amount of food that will be eaten.

For more information on food safety, call the University of Minnesota AnswerLine at (800) 544-1678 to talk directly to an Extension household expert.

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Web, V2, V4, V5, H2

driessen04064

Source: Suzanne Driessen (320) 203-6057, Driessen@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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

April 13, 2004

U of M Dairy Days, other research available on CD

If you didn't make it to one of the University of Minnesota Dairy Days last January, the next best thing may be purchasing the CD. It includes all Dairy Days presentations, and more.

Slide presentations from the 2004 Dairy Days on the CD include these topics:

- U of M Dairy Research Update
- Revisiting Forage Quality
- Dairy Forage Production Update
- Using Culling/Replacement Strategy to Improve Profit
- Reproductive Management That May Influence Profitability

The CD includes several background papers with details on the research behind the presentations. In addition, there are 20 "bonus" papers, reports and presentations from other conferences and research projects that will be useful to both farmers and consultants working with dairy farmers.

There's an interesting preliminary report of a research and demonstration project for the treatment and disposal of milk house waste water. This preliminary report is based on several farms located in east central Minnesota, and the project is being expanded to southeast Minnesota in 2004.

Pastures, corn silage, forage species selection and feed quality analysis are discussed in several papers. And if reproductive management is a current topic on your farm or that of a client, five reports plus the 2003 W.E. Peterson Symposium proceedings will help.

The 2004 Dairy Days CD will be sent free of extra charge to anyone who attended the Dairy Days and requested a copy of the proceedings. For others, the CD may be ordered from the University of Minnesota Extension Service, Dairy Extension, 225 Haecker Hall, 1364 Eckles Avenue, St. Paul, MN 55108-6118. The CD is \$15 per copy, and checks should be made out to the "University of Minnesota."

Contact Bonnie Rae, (612) 624-4995 or bjrae@umn.edu, with ordering questions.

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Web, V2, V4, D1

rae04074

Source: Chuck Schwartau (507) 536-6301, cschwart@umn.edu

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

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April 20, 2004

(CORRECTION from an earlier release—please note the correct tour date below)

Minnesota State Cattlemen's Tour is July 16

The 2004 Minnesota State Cattlemen's Tour is July 16 based out of Mora, Minn. Tour highlights include visits with eight innovative beef producers in central Minnesota, says Lori Schott, regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Tour stops will include these beef operations and businesses: Richard and Phyllis Erickson, Isle; Duane and Sheila Munsterteiger, Oligvie; William (Bill) and Diane Skelnik, Isle; Ash Farms (Paul and Scott Ash), Milaca; Roger and Nancy Wagner, Milaca; Dan and Karen Schafer, Mora; K & R Custom Meats, Mora; and the Berg Farm, Oligvie.

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Web, V2, V4, V5, B1

schott04064R

Source: Laurie Schott (320) 225-5050 or (888) 241-4528, wedd1002@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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NEWS & INFORMATION

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

April 20, 2004

Check with crop insurance agent if weather delays or prevents planting

In a perfect world, the weather would cooperate and you'd get all the crops planted early. But if weather delays or prevents planting and you have Federal Crop Insurance, it's essential to contact your insurance agent immediately.

You can find the details in a new publication from the University of Minnesota Extension Service titled "Federal Crop Insurance: Delayed and Prevented Planting Provisions." It was written by regional Extension educator Gary Hachfeld and Kim Lee of Crop Insurance Services, Mankato.

Delayed planting on the insured acres must be due to a weather event, not personal choice. And under the "prevented planting" provision, the weather conditions that kept a producer from planting must be general and widespread to the area, Hachfeld says.

The new publication includes changes for the 2004 crop year, coverage definitions and examples. You can find it on the University's Center for Farm Financial Management Web site at <http://www.cffm.umn.edu>.

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Web, V2, V4, V5, A2

hach04184

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

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April 23, 2004

New travel certification program from U of M Tourism Center

Minnesota travel counselors can now become certified through a program developed by the University of Minnesota Tourism Center.

“Certification results in travelers who stay longer and are more satisfied since they receive better information from travel counselors,” says Ingrid Schneider, Tourism Center director. By receiving certification, travel counselors are recognized by their peers for achieving a standard of excellence in travel information and customer service.

People who provide information to travelers in Minnesota may become certified by passing an exam, which will be offered online from the Tourism Center, and annually at the Minnesota Office of Tourism’s Travel Counselor Institute. The exam has questions about Minnesota’s attractions, history, geography, customer service and traveler safety.

“We encourage front-line staff people who deal directly with the traveler to participate in this program and become certified ,” says Char Vaughan, manager of operations and consumer services for the Minnesota Office of Tourism. Tourism is a nine billion dollar industry in Minnesota and employs over 230,000 people.

Minnesota is one of just eight states offering Travel Counselor Certification, which is endorsed by the Travel Industry Association and the National Council of State Tourism Directors. More information, including details on how to prepare for and take the exam, is available at www.tourism.umn.edu.

The University’s Tourism Center strengthens tourism through education and research for Minnesota, the U.S. and other countries, Schneider says. It conducts tourism research and provides education and outreach programs for the tourism industry, community groups and students.

The Center offers experienced personnel with diverse interests and expertise who are available to develop and implement projects that address critical questions for communities, businesses or destinations. It’s housed in the College of Natural Resources and is a partner with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

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Web, V4, V5, V7, T1

schn04204

Sources: Ingrid Schneider (612 624-2250, ingridss@umn.edu)
Char Vaughan (651) 297-3559

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

MSC
A27p

May 4, 2004

Season-long series of grazing, pasture events planned at Morris

"Managing the Spring Flush" is the topic for the first monthly pasture walk May 12 at the West Central Research and Outreach Center (WCROC), Morris.

"Pastures grow rapidly in the spring and create challenges for farmers with rotational grazing systems," says Dennis Johnson, dairy scientist at the Morris center. The program starts at 12:30 p.m. at the office building one mile east of Morris on Highway 329. Dates and locations of other programs in the pasture walk series are:

- June 9, Forbord Farm, Starbuck, "Developing Pastures for Grass-Fed Beef"
- July 14, WCROC, "Avoiding the Mid-Summer 'Browns'"
- Aug. 11, Dan and Rosie Middendorf farm, Verndale, "Irrigation in the Pasture System"
- Sept. 8, WCROC, "Storing Forage for Winter Feeding"
- Oct. 13 (location to be announced), "Extending Grazing into the Fall"
- Nov. 10, WCROC, "Preparing Pastures and Livestock for Winter"

In addition, a two-day event, "Effective Grazing Workshop" will be held at the WCROC June 8-9. The goal of this workshop is to develop more effective pasture systems through a highly interactive workshop focused on the learner's goals. "Every question brought by a registrant will be addressed by the end of the workshop," Johnson says.

Presentation topics include whole farm planning and goal setting, economics of grazing systems, forage species and management, soil and water considerations, animal health and management, and putting it together in a grazing plan. Farmers, researchers and educators are the resource people.

Preregistration is required and the registration charge is \$100. For more information and a registration form contact Jean Spohr at (320) 589-1711 or spohrjm@mrs.umn.edu.

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Web, V2, D1

johnson05044

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NEWS & INFORMATION

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

May 4, 2004

4-State Professional Dairy Management Seminar is June 16-17

A 4-State Professional Dairy Management Seminar is scheduled for the Grand River Center in Dubuque, Iowa June 16-17, 2004. It's sponsored by the Extension Services of Iowa State University, the University of Illinois, the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin.

A pre-seminar technical symposium on trace minerals begins at 8:30 a.m. June 16; sponsored by Chelated Minerals Corp. Breakout sessions in the afternoon will be held on the role of biotin, Lepto hardjo, teat sealants, short dry periods and pasteurizing waste milk. A session on hoof care will follow.

The morning session on June 17 will cover antibiotic use in food animal production, antioxidants and understanding and using forage test results. The session concludes with a dairy producer panel on managing forage feeding programs.

Presenters include specialists from the four sponsoring Extension Services, other Land Grant universities and private industry. For registration information, contact the Wisconsin Agri-Service Assn., 6000 Gisholt Dr., Suite 208, Madison, WI 53713-4816; phone (608) 223-1111 or fax (608) 223-1147. The registration fee is \$95 before June 8; \$120 after June 8 and at the door.

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Web, V2, D1

linn05044

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May 7, 2004

NEWS & INFORMATIONMSC
A27p**There's growing enthusiasm for Minnesota farmland, U of M economist says**

Minnesota farmland prices--near the Twin Cities and in rural areas--have always been affected by non-agricultural factors.

But recently there's a heightened enthusiasm for farmland throughout the state, says Steve Taff, economist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. "All lands are increasingly desired for reasons other than farming, including recreation, retirement, investment and development," Taff says "This results in some parcels selling for far more than we might expect if we simply focused on their farm income potential," he says.

Taff is the author of the annual Minnesota farmland and timberland sales price report, and the 2003 version is available at the Minnesota Land Economics Web site at <http://www.apec.umn.edu/landeconomics>. The Web site permits users to examine individual sales or averages over any combination of cities, townships or counties.

"We now have 35,855 sales in the database," Taff says, "stretching from 1990 until last fall. The story doesn't change much from year-to-year. Average prices are still increasing throughout the state, substantially in some areas."

Statewide median prices for farmland increased from \$1,500 per acre in 2002 to \$1,519 in 2003. Although the median price didn't change much, Taff says prices on the high end increased substantially, but were offset by a continuing supply of cheaper land.

Southeastern Minnesota had some of the more expensive land, with some selling for \$4,000 to \$5,000 per acre. Much of it was near Rochester, Winona and the Dakota County area, on the southern fringe of the Twin Cities metro area.

Check the Web site for details. There's information on farmland and timberland sales, from 1990 to present; and land values as estimated by county assessors, from 1993 to present. In addition, there are land productivity ratings as calculated by U of M soil scientists, soil rental rates, RIM easements and property tax assessments and levies.

If you have questions after looking through the report, Taff may be reached at sttaff@umn.edu.

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Web, V2MN, V4MN, V5, V7, V8, A2, A4

taff05034

Source: Steve Taff (612) 625-3103, sttaff@umn.eduEditor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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May 10, 2004

Farmers may need to return government payments

Farmers who accepted the first advanced Counter-Cyclical Payment (CCP) last fall for the 2003 crop may need to give it back. The reason is the increase in corn, soybean and wheat prices, says Gary Hachfeld, regional educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

The CCP advance for corn was \$0.077 per bushel; for wheat it was \$ 0.031. Prices were high enough for soybeans that there was no advanced CCP made. "Producers will be receiving or may have already received a letter from the Farm Service Agency (FSA) alerting them to the repayment issue," Hachfeld says.

The refund policy offers two options for repayment. Option 1 allows producers to essentially do nothing, and the repayment will be subtracted from their 2004 final Direct Payment (DP) and/or the 2005 crop DP to be made in fall 2004. The producer will not have to write a check to the Commodity Credit Corporation (CCC) and there will be no interest charge on the repayment amount. A repayment statement will be issued showing the producer has satisfied the obligation. Option 1 is the default option and the producer does not need to take any action for the repayment to be made automatically.

Under Option 1, the producer will have more than enough DP funds to cover the cost of the CCP repayment. The total DP for corn is \$ 0.28 per bushel; and for wheat the total DP amount is \$ 0.52 per bushel. The 2004 final DP payment is half that, and the advance DP for 2005 is also half that amount.

Together, the DP amount is well above the CCP advances that may need to be refunded to FSA. To calculate the repayment amount, multiply the DP/CCP contract acres by the DP/CCP yield times .85 times the CCP advance amount.

Producers have a second choice for repayment. Under Option 2, the producer will be subject to the Debt Collection Improvement Act of 1996 (DCIA). The producer will be sent an initial notification of the repayment obligation followed by a first demand letter 30 days later. At that time, producers can settle the obligation by simply writing a check to CCC. If payment is not made within the 30 day period following the first notification, a second demand letter will be sent and at that time interest will begin accruing.

In order for a producer to select Option 2, they will need to notify their local FSA Office by June 15, 2004.

Exact overpayment amounts won't be known until the end of the commodity marketing period, Hachfeld says. Those periods are July 2004 for wheat and October 2004 for corn and sorghum. Once the end of the marketing year arrives, the final repayment amount will be calculated. Producers will then need to make the repayment, if warranted.

If producers did not elect to take the 2003 crop advanced CCP, they will not receive the FSA letter and won't have to make a repayment. If you have questions, Hachfeld says you need to contact your local FSA office.

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Web, V2, V4, V5, A2

hach05074

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May 21, 2004

Vegetable farming publications available from U of M Extension Service

“Simple and Successful Vegetable Farming” is the title of a series of easy-to-understand publications from the University of Minnesota Extension Service. They’re available in English, Spanish and Hmong.

Any farmer needing basic information on the fundamentals of vegetable farming management will find the information useful. Immigrant farmers with minimal English literacy will find them especially helpful.

Topics covered in the four publications include how to keep your soil healthy; pest control, including integrated pest management; how to pick, store and sell the vegetables; and marketing.

They’re available as an educational package of four publications and a video, or as single publications. The publications are free if you read them online at <http://www.extension.umn.edu>.

You can also purchase them from the Extension Distribution Center by calling (800) 876-8636, or (612) 624-4900 in the Twin Cities metropolitan area. Ask for item number 07616.

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Web, V2, V4, V5, G1, H7

vegfarm05204

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

May 26, 2004

Editors: a photo is available from Catherine Dehdashti, (612) 625-0237 or ced@umn.edu

Cara Miller is new executive director of Minnesota 4-H Foundation

The Minnesota 4-H Foundation has named Cara Miller as its new executive director.

The foundation supports 4-H program and community youth development work at the Center for 4-H Youth Development through the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

Miller's fund development career includes executive director roles for the Colorado 4-H Youth Fund and Habitat for Humanity in Knoxville, Tenn. Most recently, she was the director of development for Search Institute in Minneapolis. Miller brings a strong capacity to raise private funds for youth development programming and is currently the vice president of education for the Minnesota Chapter, Association of Fundraising Professionals.

"I am pleased that Cara has chosen to join the 4-H Foundation as its executive director," says Dorothy McCargo Freeman, the state 4-H program leader. "She brings a proven history of fund generation and a sound understanding of positive youth development programs. This makes Cara ideally suited to raise funds on behalf of our young people," Freeman says.

Dale Blyth is the director for the Center for 4-H Youth Development, which is located on the Minneapolis campus of the University of Minnesota. He says, "Our youth development efforts in Minnesota depend on leveraging private and corporate gifts and sponsorship to enhance our public work around the state. Cara will strengthen our ability to attract those resources and increase our impact."

Miller was raised in Iowa, where she enjoyed participating in 4-H. "It brought me skills I use today, such as public speaking and other leadership skills," she says. "And it was fun!" "Minnesota is really progressive in how it has modernized the 4-H program and trained youth workers from other programs. They have created opportunities that are relevant for all kids today, whoever they are and wherever they live. That excited me."

-over-

What is the Minnesota 4-H Foundation?

Private gifts form a partnership with public funds to support 4-H. The Minnesota 4-H Foundation was incorporated in 1981 to generate these private funds -- through businesses and corporations, associations, foundations, and individual donors. Our Board of Trustees includes community and business leaders, geographic representatives, extension staff and other representatives of the supporting community. The Minnesota 4-H Foundation works in partnership with the University of Minnesota Extension Service and the Center for 4-H Youth Development to build private sector program investors.

The foundation exists to support the education programs offered through the Minnesota 4-H Youth Development Programs and other youth development programs of the Center for 4-H Youth Development. The foundation, Minnesota 4-H, and the center programs are committed to the positive development of young people. The foundation acquires resources to support 4-H at state, regional, and county levels. Foundation resources also support community youth development and other programs of the center.

Minnesota 4-H Foundation website: <http://www.fourh.umn.edu/foundation/>

Minnesota 4-H Foundation phone: (612) 624-7971

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Web, V2, V4, Y1

4h05234

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June 20, 2004

Too much rain for soybean aphids?

Late June and early July is when soybean aphids typically show up in Minnesota soybean fields. And farmers are holding their breath, wondering if they'll see infestations like last year when aphids claimed over \$120 million in losses, says Ken Ostlie, entomologist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service.

"News that some farmers in southeastern Iowa have begun treating aphids is raising anxiety levels, but so far no aphids have appeared in Minnesota soybean fields," Ostlie says. Whether the aphids will cause major problems in Minnesota is a bit unknown at this time, but Ostlie hopes the wet weather was a bit too much for them.

"The ideal climate for soybean aphids is a 'cool drought,' so heavy rains in May and early June may have curtailed their numbers," he says. "The severity of aphid problems depends on winter survival, control by beneficial insects and how weather affects spring buildup of aphids on buckthorn. As the aphids colonize young soybean plants, they're especially vulnerable to heavy rain. The next two weeks will tip us off on the potential for problems this summer."

Ostlie says the pattern so far is reminiscent of 2002, when very little soybean acreage was treated, compared to insecticide sprays on three to three and one-half million acres in 2003. With last year's losses averaging nearly 9 bu/acre, or \$70 dollars per acre, Ostlie says growers are planning an aggressive approach in 2004.

"However, we shouldn't spray fields for aphids as 'insurance' against infestations without scouting fields," Ostlie says. Many aphid species are resistant to insecticides, and multiple or poorly-timed insecticide applications favor development of resistance. He recommends scouting to ensure insecticides are needed and well-timed.

Ostlie says aphid populations build rapidly, and may reach several thousand aphids per plant at their peak in early August. When this occurs, soybean yield losses may top 50 percent.

"Insecticides only suppress soybean aphid populations for 7-14 days," says Ostlie. "Applications through pod set have had the greatest yield benefit. Earlier applications risk rebound of aphid numbers later, while waiting too long leads to less-than-desired benefits."

"To identify heavily infested fields, scout one to two times per week through pod set," says Ostlie. "Look for aphids on the undersides of the upper three leaves in vegetative soybean and flowering soybeans. Consider treating with insecticide if aphid numbers average more than 250 per plant."

However, Ostlie says scouting fields for the aphids can be a challenge for three reasons:

--Soybean aphids are small and hard to see. It's especially hard to identify them if you're not familiar with what they look like, or if you wear bifocals.

--Economic infestations may occur from mid-vegetative stages through podfill. This long scouting window and the re-distribution of aphids among fields as the summer progresses makes repeated visits a necessity.

--Aphid distribution on the plant changes during the summer. While it would be nice to sample upper leaves only, aphids move lower during pod development. There is no stable sampling unit except the entire plant.

A Web site at <http://www.soybeans.umn.edu/> has additional information, including close-up pictures to help you identify the soybean aphid and insecticides labeled for aphid control. When applying insecticides, Ostlie recommends following precautions to minimize bee kills and communicating treatment plans to beekeepers.

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Web, V2, V4, F4

ostlie06154

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June 16, 2004

Beef ID systems will be featured at Minnesota State Cattlemen's Tour

Last April, U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman announced the framework for implementing a National Animal Identification System (NAIS).

The bottom line: with over 95 million cattle in the U.S., the process for implementing the national identification will have long-lasting impacts on beef producer's management systems. And beef identification systems will be on the agenda at the 2004 Minnesota State Cattlemen's Tour and Trade Show.

It's scheduled July 16 at the Kanabec County Fairgrounds in Mora, Minn., says Lori Weddle-Schott, regional livestock systems educator with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. Registration for the tours starts at 6:30 a.m. and the first tour bus leaves at 7 a.m.

BeefOrigins™, a South Dakota business owned and operated by livestock producers, will demonstrate their animal identification system at the Dan and Karen Schafer Ranch. BeefOrigins was designed specifically to assist beef producers in the Northern Plains region, enhance their management capabilities and expand marketing opportunities through animal identification and traceability solutions. Beef producers will be able to see options for registration systems, animal identification, software and online reporting.

While many livestock species in the U.S. can be identified through a variety of systems, a verifiable system of national animal identification will be utilized to enhance USDA's efforts to respond to intentionally or unintentionally introduced animal disease outbreaks more quickly and effectively. While there is currently no nationwide animal identification programs in place for all animals of a given species, some segments of certain species are required to be identified as part of current program disease eradication activities.

The July 16 tour is sponsored by the Snake River Cattlemen's Association and the University of Minnesota beef team. The event also hosts a simultaneous spouse program that will feature garden tours and food safety and preservation education.

The event is open to the public; registration is due July 9. For more information, registration forms or travel directions, visit the tour Web site at www.snakerivercattlemens.org. Or, contact Lori Weddle-Schott at (320) 225-5050 or weddl002@umn.edu.

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Web, V2, V4, V5, B1

schott06154

Source: Lori Schott (320) 225-5050, weddl002@umn.edu
Editor: Jack Sperbeck (612) 625-1794, sperb001@umn.edu

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

July 6, 2004

Learn how to dry wood at kiln drying course

Interested in learning how to add value to hardwood lumber by drying it? Consider attending the 27th annual Kiln Drying Short Course, Aug. 16-19, 2004, at the University of Minnesota's St Paul Campus.

"Many people now have small portable saw mills and may be interested in drying their own lumber," says Harlan Petersen, forest products specialist with the University of Minnesota Extension Service. The course is designed to provide basic training for dry kiln operators and supervisors.

But Petersen says anyone who wants to learn more about kiln construction, operation and wood-moisture relations is welcome. No previous drying experience or training is necessary. Instruction will include lectures, demonstrations and "hands-on" kiln drying experience.

Conventional kiln drying of hardwood lumber will be emphasized, but dehumidification drying, solar drying and air-drying will also be covered. There will be ample time for group interaction and individual consultation.

Extension and the U of M Department of Wood and Paper Science sponsor the course, in cooperation with the University Wisconsin-Madison's Department of Forest Ecology and Management. For more information, contact Petersen at (612) 624-3407, Harlan@umn.edu.

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Web, V4, V5, F8, F9

petersen06284

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