Dear Winnebago County Farmers,

I would like to wish you farewell as I depart UW-Extension to become an Agri-Business, Farm Operations, and Soils Instructor at Fox Valley Technical College. I started teaching agriculture marketing and soil science at the end of February. This career change gives me the opportunity to work more closely with our next generation of farmers and agribusiness people while remaining in the community.

It has been a pleasure working with the farmers of Winnebago County for the past six years. I have been touched by the kind and supportive words you have shared with me since I announced my departure. I would like to thank my colleagues and support staff for their camaraderie and teamwork. Finally, I would like to thank the UW Extension Education and Agriculture Committee for granting me the opportunity to serve in Winnebago County.

As the Winnebago County UW Extension office works through its visioning processes over the next couple of months, please consider supporting the process by providing feedback of your vision for the future of this community service. If you have questions, please feel free to contact the UW-Extension office at 920-232-1971.

Sincerely,

Nick Schneider
### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

#### April

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>8:30 am to 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Youth Tractor and Machinery Safety Class, Berlin</td>
<td>Berlin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>7:00 pm</td>
<td>Meat Animal Bylaws meeting, J.P. Coughlin Center</td>
<td>J.P. Coughlin Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>8:30 am to 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Women Caring for the Land, Dodgeville</td>
<td>Dodgeville</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>8:30 am to 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Women Caring for the Land, Viroqua</td>
<td>Viroqua</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>8:30 am to 3:00 pm</td>
<td>Women Caring for the Land, Monroe</td>
<td>Monroe</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>Schedule Appointment</td>
<td>Clean Sweep Program, Omro, Outagamie and Menasha</td>
<td>Omro, Outagamie and Menasha</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>Schedule Appointment</td>
<td>Clean Sweep Program, Harrison Town Hall</td>
<td>Harrison Town Hall</td>
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#### May

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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9:00 am to 12:00 pm</td>
<td>Sheep and Goat Weigh In, Sunnyview Expo Center</td>
<td>Sunnyview Expo Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>9:00 am to 4:00 pm</td>
<td>Natural and Organic Expo, Sunnyview Expo Center</td>
<td>Sunnyview Expo Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>7:00 pm to 9:00 pm</td>
<td>MAQA Animal Health Products meeting, J. P. Coughlin Center</td>
<td>J. P. Coughlin Center</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>7:00 pm to 9:00 pm</td>
<td>MAQA Animal Health Products meeting, J. P. Coughlin Center</td>
<td>J. P. Coughlin Center</td>
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#### June

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>8:00 am to 12:00 pm</td>
<td>June Dairy Breakfast, Kevin and Kim Radloff's Dairy Farm</td>
<td>Kevin and Kim Radloff's Dairy Farm</td>
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<tr>
<td>22-26</td>
<td></td>
<td>Grow Your Future</td>
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Do you want to receive the most current University of Wisconsin research information by e-mail? The Winnebago County agriculture list receives a weekly update during summer on crop conditions, pests to watch out for, and events. If you would like to be included on this list, please send an e-mail to michelle.peplow@ces.uwex.edu.
A LETTER FROM THE UW-EXTENSION OFFICE

You have read from the cover page that Nick Schneider has decided to pursue a new career path. As we wish him well in his new endeavors, we also want to answer the question “What does this move mean for my farm’s UW-Extension support? And/or when will Nick be replaced?”

We are thankful for all the programs Nick provided Winnebago County. He has helped identify agriculture-related needs in the county and suggested what to look for with the next Agriculture Agent. Until the position is filled, you will see some changes in the programs that were offered through the Winnebago County UWEX. We have secured assistance from Agents in Outagamie County and Fond du Lac County; however, that support is limited. We won’t be able to arrange any farm calls or have test plots until the agent position has been filled. The process for filling the position has begun with a vision session scheduled for April and a position posting in April/May. We are hopeful the position will be filled this summer.

Now let’s get to the good news. Need your soil tested? Not a problem for the UWEX staff! Bring your sample anytime between 8:00 am-4:30 pm Monday through Friday and we can help you out. Do you have a question about something unusual growing on your fruit trees? Our office is staffed with a part-time Horticulturist and a Plant Health Advisor line run by our county’s Master Gardeners. We will also keep you up-to-date with important events and any news from the FSA and the Land and Water Conservation offices through our newsletter and the UWEX website.

As always, we would like to thank you for your continued support of our office and the ag newsletter. If you have any questions about this transition, contact our office at 920-232-1971.

To a new season!

Christine Kniep
Department Head, Winnebago County UW-Extension
Join us and other future agricultural workers for a Four-day residential immersion training.

We will travel regionally to see first-hand how sustainable initiatives are applied at farms and business that bolster the agriculture sector. Participants will tour the UW Oshkosh Environmental Research and Innovation Center (ERIC), on-farm and urban electricity generating biodigesters, a concentrated animal feeding operation, a modern dairy farm with robotic milking and feeding, a direct marketing beef farm, an urban farm and Fox Valley Technical College.

Learning will be facilitated through hands-on experiences, classroom instruction and large scale demonstrations.

Visit us online at uwosh.edu/go/grow

Or call the UW Oshkosh Division of Lifelong Learning and Community Engagement at (920) 424-1129 or toll-free at (800) 633-1442
DAIRY BREAKFAST VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

We need more than 100 people to make this event a success. If you, your family, or club would like to volunteer at the dairy breakfast, please contact Amy Zentner at 426-1056 or amy.zentner@aol.com
WOMEN’S EDUCATIONAL LAND CONSERVATION SESSIONS

Tuesday, April 22 - Dodgeville, WI
Wednesday, April 23 - Viroqua, WI
Thursday, April 24 - Monroe, WI
8:30 am – 3:00 pm

Are you a female landowner in Wisconsin looking to learn more about land conservation and to connect with various local resources and other women landowners? Come to a Women Caring for the Land session, an innovative program facilitated by the Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES) and the Women, Food & Agriculture Network (WFAN) to support women landowners in learning about conservation practices and building local connections this April.

These workshops are free for women to attend and run 8:30 am – 3:00 pm. The agenda includes an informational morning session followed by lunch and a bus tour of area conservation practices in action. Pre-registration is required and space is limited.

To register, and for more information, see: www.womencaringfortheland.org/wisconsin

Southwest Badger Resource Conservation & Development Council (RC&D) is serving as the regional host for these workshops.

Any questions, contact: Lisa Kivirist, MOSES Rural Women's Project, lisa@innserendipity.com
FARMERS CAN DISPOSE OF HAZARDOUS WASTES AT AGRICULTURAL CLEAN SWEEP PROGRAM

Friday, April 25, 9:00—11:00 am
Omro Fire Department, 520 W. Huron Street

Friday, April 25, 9:00 am—11:00 am
Outagamie County Shiocton Highway Garage, W7517 Hwy 54

Friday, April 25, 3:00 pm—6:00 pm
City of Menasha Public Works Garage, 455 Baldwin St

Saturday, April 26, 9:00 am—noon
Harrison Town Hall, Hwy 114 and State Park Rd.

Several free, one-day agricultural hazardous waste Clean Sweep collection sites have been scheduled in April for farmers.

Hazardous agricultural materials such as pesticides, herbicides and chemicals found on both active and abandoned farms can be brought to the sites. Banned substances such as DDT, Chlodane and Silvex 2,4-D will be accepted.

Items that are NOT ACCEPTABLE include fluorescent light bulbs, vehicle batteries, propane cylinders, explosives and ammunition, and latex paint.

Winnebago, Outagamie and Calumet County farmers can deliver hazardous wastes to any of the sites listed above by scheduling an appointment.

To schedule an appointment call: 920-832-5277 ext. 3

For more information or questions about the program:
Outagamie County, 920 832 5277 ext. 3
Winnebago County, 920 232-1850
Calumet County, 920 849-1450 ext 3

This program is funded by the sponsoring counties and by grant funds provided by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.
ATTENTION ALL SWINE EXHIBITORS!
Due to a mandate from the state vet, there will not be a county fair spring weigh-in for swine this year. The ban on spring weigh-in for pigs is state wide. The state vet is also recommending that all county fairs hold terminal shows for swine. Because of that recommendation and the risk involved with doing a non-terminal show, both the Fair Board and the Meat Animal Board have decided that the 2014 fair will be a terminal show for all swine exhibits. A terminal show for swine exhibits will mean that any pig brought to the county fair in August will have to be shipped for harvest on Sunday. No pigs will be allowed to be taken home.

We will provide additional details at a later date regarding spring identification, sale eligibility requirements and your trucking options for that Sunday of fair week. We can say now that all general rules still apply for the sale which means that your pig has to weigh a minimum of 220lbs and a maximum of 285lbs.

If you have any questions you can contact Jeanne Mahlke at (920) 420-2337.

MEAT ANIMAL BOARD UPDATES
Sheep & Goat Weigh In
• Saturday, May 3, 2014, 9:00 am-12:00 pm at the Fairgrounds

Meat Animal Board Bylaws will be reviewed at the following meetings:
• Wednesday, April 9, 2014, 7:00 pm at the Coughlin Center

MAQA - Animal Health Products meetings will be held:
• Thursday, May 15, 2014, 7:00-9:00 pm at the Coughlin Center
• Wednesday, May 21, 2014, 7:00-9:00 pm at the Coughlin Center

Attending one of the listed MAQA meetings counts as an educational event required by the Meat Animal Board to sell at the Winnebago County Fair. MAQA may also be required for showing at events outside the Winnebago County Fair. Registration is expected by NOON of the meeting date to ensure enough materials for participants. Please call 920-232-1974 to register.
2014 FARM BILL

ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME
Adjusted gross income (AGI) provisions have been simplified and modified. Producers whose average AGI exceeds $900,000 are not eligible to receive payments or benefits from most programs administered by FSA and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). Previous AGI provisions distinguished between farm and non-farm AGI.

PAYMENT LIMITATIONS
The total amount of payments received, directly and indirectly, by a person or legal entity (except joint ventures or general partnerships) for Price Loss Coverage, Agricultural Risk Coverage, marketing loan gains, and loan deficiency payments (other than for peanuts), may not exceed $125,000 per crop year. A person or legal entity that receives payments for peanuts has a separate $125,000 payment limitation. Cotton transition payments are limited to $40,000 per year. For the livestock disaster programs, a total $125,000 annual limitation applies for payments under the Livestock Indemnity Program, the Livestock Forage Program, and the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees and Farm-Raised Fish program. A separate $125,000 annual limitation applies to payments under the Tree Assistance Program.

ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN FARMING
Producers who participate in the Price Loss Coverage or Agricultural Risk Coverage programs are required to provide significant contributions to the farming operation to be considered as “actively engaged in farming.” The Act requires the Secretary to promulgate regulations to define “significant contribution of active personal management” as part of this determination.

COMPLIANCE
The Act continues to require an acreage report for all cropland on the farm. The acreage report is required to be eligible for Price Loss Coverage; Agriculture Risk Coverage; transition assistance for producers of upland cotton; marketing assistance loans; and loan deficiency payments.

Compliance with Highly Erodible Land Conservation (HELC) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions continues to be required for participation in most FSA and NRCS programs. These provisions place restrictions on the planting of an agricultural commodity on highly erodible land or wetlands. Further, they prohibit the conversion of a wetland to make possible the production of an agricultural commodity. The Act adds premium assistance for crop insurance as a benefit subject to compliance with HELC and WC provisions. New provisions are created for determinations, administration, and penalties relating to HELC and WC provisions that are unique to crop insurance.

Continued on next page....
FSA will make HELC/WC eligibility determinations for crop insurance participants based on NRCS technical determinations of HELC/WC compliance.

**PRICE LOSS COVERAGE (PLC) AND AGRICULTURAL RISK COVERAGE (ARC)**

**Base Reallocation and Yield Updates:** Owners of farms that participate in PLC or ARC programs for the 2014-2018 crops have a one-time opportunity to: (1) maintain the farm’s 2013 bases through 2018; or (2) reallocate base acres (excluding cotton bases). Covered commodities include wheat, oats, barley, corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, sunflower seed, rapeseed, canola, safflower, flaxseed, mustard seed, crambe and sesame seed, dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas, large chickpeas and peanuts. Upland cotton is no longer considered a covered commodity, but the upland cotton base acres on the farm are renamed “generic” base acres. Producers may receive payments on generic base acres if those acres are planted to a covered commodity.

A producer also has the opportunity to update the program payment yield for each covered commodity based on 90 percent of the farm’s 2008-2012 average yield per planted acre, excluding any year when no acreage was planted to the covered commodity. Program payment yields are used to determine payment amounts for the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program.

**Price Loss Coverage (PLC):** Payments are issued when the effective price of a covered commodity is less than the respective reference price for that commodity established in the statute. The payment is equal to 85 percent of the base acres of the covered commodity times the difference between the reference price and the effective price times the program payment yield for the covered commodity.

**County ARC:** Payments are issued when the actual county crop revenue of a covered commodity is less than the ARC county guarantee for the covered commodity and are based on county data, not farm data. The ARC county guarantee equals 86 percent of the previous five-year average national farm price, excluding the years with the highest and lowest price (the ARC guarantee price), times the five-year average county yield, excluding the years with the highest and lowest yield (the ARC county guarantee yield).

Both the guarantee and actual revenue are computed using base acres, not planted acres. The payment is equal to 85 percent of the base acres of the covered commodity times the difference between the county guarantee and the actual county crop revenue for the covered commodity. Payments may not exceed 10 percent of the benchmark county revenue (the ARC guarantee price times the ARC county guarantee yield).

*Continued on next page...*
**Individual ARC:** Payments are issued when the actual individual crop revenues, summed across all covered commodities on the farm, are less than ARC individual guarantees summed across those covered commodities on the farm. The farm for individual ARC purposes is the sum of the producer’s interest in all ARC farms in the state. The farm’s ARC individual guarantee equals 86 percent of the farm’s individual benchmark guarantee, which is defined as the ARC guarantee price times the five-year average individual yield, excluding the years with the highest and lowest yields, and summing across all crops on the farm. The actual revenue is computed in a similar fashion, with both the guarantee and actual revenue computed using planted acreage on the farm. The individual ARC payment equals: 65 percent of the sum of the base acres of all covered commodities on the farm, times the difference between the individual guarantee revenue and the actual individual crop revenue across all covered commodities planted on the farm. Payments may not exceed 10 percent of the individual benchmark revenue.

**Election Required:** All of the producers on a farm must make a one-time, unanimous election of: (1) PLC/County ARC on a covered-commodity-by-covered-commodity basis; or (2) Individual ARC for all covered commodities on the farm. If the producers on the farm elect PLC/County ARC, the producers must also make a one-time election to select which base acres on the farm are enrolled in PLC and which base acres are enrolled in County ARC. Alternatively, if individual ARC is selected, then every covered commodity on the farm must participate in individual ARC. The election between ARC and PLC is made in 2014 and is in effect for the 2014 – 2018 crop years. If an election is not made in 2014, the farm may not participate in either PLC or ARC for the 2014 crop year and the producers on the farm are deemed to have elected PLC for subsequent crop years, but must still enroll their farm to receive coverage. If the sum of the base acres on a farm is 10 acres or less, the producer on that farm may not receive PLC or ARC payments, unless the producer is a socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher or is a limited resource farmer or rancher. Payments for PLC and ARC are issued after the end of the respective crop year, but not before Oct. 1.

In 2015, producers in PLC have an additional option. Producers enrolling in PLC, and who also participate in the federal crop insurance program, may, beginning with the 2015 crop, make the annual choice whether to purchase additional crop insurance coverage called the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO). SCO provides the producer the option of covering a portion of his or her crop insurance deductible and is based on expected county yields or revenue. The cost of SCO is subsidized and indemnities are determined by the yield or revenue loss for the county or area.

Crops for which the producer has elected to receive ARC are not eligible for SCO benefits.

*Continued on next page...*
Producers who enroll their 2015 crop of winter wheat in SCO may elect to withdraw from SCO prior to their acreage reporting date without any penalty. This allows producers additional time to make an informed decision related to whether to enroll in the Average Crop Revenue Program (ARC) or the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. If they choose ARC, they will not be charged a crop insurance premium so long as they withdraw from SCO prior to their acreage reporting date.

MARKETING ASSISTANCE LOANS (MALS) AND SUGAR LOANS
The Act extends the authority for sugar loans for the 2014 – 2018 crop years and nonrecourse marketing assistance loans (MALs) and loan deficiency payment (LDPs) for the 2014 – 2018 crops of wheat, corn, grain sorghum, barley, oats, upland cotton, extra-long staple cotton, long grain rice, medium grain rice, soybeans, other oilseeds (including sunflower seed, rapeseed, canola, safflower, flaxseed, mustard seed, crambe, and sesame seed), dry peas, lentils, small chickpeas, large chickpeas, graded and non-graded wool, mohair, honey, unshorn pelts and peanuts. Provisions are mostly unchanged from the 2008 Farm Bill, except marketing loan gains and loan deficiency payments are subject to payment limitations.

DAIRY PROGRAMS
The Act extends the Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC) from Oct. 1, 2013, through the earlier of the date on which the Secretary certifies that the Dairy Margin Protection Program is operational or Sept. 1, 2014. Dairy producers who were enrolled in 2013 do not need to re-apply. MILC payments are issued when the Boston Class I milk price falls below $16.94 per hundredweight (cwt), as adjusted by a dairy feed ration formula.

The Dairy Margin Protection Program replaces MILC and will be effective not later than Sept. 1, 2014, through Dec. 31, 2018.

The margin protection program offers dairy producers: (1) catastrophic coverage, at no cost to the producer, other than an annual $100 administrative fee; and (2) various levels of buy-up coverage. Catastrophic coverage provides payments to participating producers when the national dairy production margin is less than $4 per hundredweight (cwt). The national dairy production margin is the difference between the all-milk price and average feed costs. Producers may purchase buy-up coverage that provides payments when margins are between $4 and $8 per cwt. To participate in buy-up coverage, a producer must pay a premium that varies with the level of protection the producer elects.

In addition, the Act creates the Dairy Product Donation Program. This program is triggered in times of low operating margins for dairy producers, and requires USDA to purchase dairy products for donation to food banks and other feeding programs. Continued on next page...
Dairy Indemnity Payment Program (DIPP)
The DIPP provides payments to dairy producers when a public regulatory agency directs them to remove their raw milk from the commercial market because it has been contaminated by pesticides and other residues.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP)
The Act continues CRP with modifications. The acreage cap is gradually lowered to 24 million acres for fiscal years 2017 and 2018. The requirement to reduce rental payments under emergency haying and grazing is eliminated. Rental payment reductions of not less than 25 percent are required for managed haying and grazing.

Producers also are given the opportunity for an “early-out” from their CRP contracts, but only in fiscal year 2015. The rental payment portion of the Grassland Reserve Program enrollment has been incorporated into the CRP.

The Transition Incentive Program (TIP) continues to allow for the transition of CRP land to a beginning or socially disadvantaged farmer or rancher so land can be returned to sustainable grazing or crop production. TIP now includes eligibility for military veterans (i.e., veteran farmers).

BIOMASS CROP ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (BCAP)
BCAP provides incentives to farmers, ranchers and forest landowners to establish, cultivate and harvest eligible biomass for heat, power, bio-based products, research and advanced biofuels. Crop producers and bioenergy facilities can team together to submit proposals to USDA for selection as a BCAP project area. BCAP has been extended through 2018 and is funded at $25 million per fiscal year.

NONINSURED CROP DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (NAP)
NAP has been expanded to include buy-up protection, similar to buy-up provisions offered under the federal crop insurance program. Producers may elect coverage for each individual crop between 50 and 65 percent, in 5 percent increments, at 100 percent of the average market price. Producers also pay a fixed premium equal to 5.25 percent of the liability. The waiver of service fees has been expanded from just limited resource farmers also to include beginning farmers and socially disadvantaged farmers. The premiums for buy-up coverage are reduced by 50 percent for those same farmers. Grazing land is not eligible for buy-up coverage. NAP is also made available to producers that suffered a loss to a 2012 annual fruit crop grown on a bush or tree in a county declared a disaster by the Secretary due to a freeze or frost.

Continued on next page...
EMERGENCY LOANS
A Secretarial disaster designation or a Presidential declaration provides producers with emergency loans to help cover the recovery costs for physical and production losses. Farm bill revisions expand the type of entities eligible for loans.

FARM OPERATING LOANS AND MICROLOANS
Farm Operating Direct and Guaranteed Loan Programs provide low-interest financing for producers to purchase farm and ranch operating inputs. The FSA is authorized to implement the program through the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, also known as the Con Act. The 2014 Farm Bill revisions expand the types of entities eligible, provide favorable interest rates for joint financing arrangements, increase loan limits for microloans, make youth loans available in urban areas, and eliminate term limits for guaranteed operating loans.

FARM OWNERSHIP LOANS
Farm Ownership Direct and Guaranteed Loan Programs provide low-interest financing for producers to purchase farms and ranches and other real estate related needs. The FSA is authorized to implement the program through the Consolidated Farm and Rural Development Act, often referred to as the Con Act. The 2014 Farm Bill revisions expand the types of entities eligible, provide favorable interest rates for joint financing arrangements, provide a larger percent guarantee on guaranteed conservation loans, increase the loan limits for the down payment program, and authorize a relending program to assist Native American producers purchase fractionated interests of land.

DISASTER PROGRAMS
The following four disaster programs authorized by the 2008 Farm Bill have been extended indefinitely (beyond the horizon of the Act). The programs are made retroactive to Oct. 1, 2011. Producers are no longer required to purchase crop insurance or NAP coverage to be eligible for these programs (the risk management purchase requirement) as mandated by the 2008 Farm Bill.

Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP):
LFP provides compensation to eligible livestock producers that have suffered grazing losses due to drought or fire on land that is native or improved pastureland with permanent vegetative cover or that is planted specifically for grazing. LFP payments for drought are equal to 60 percent of the monthly feed cost for up to five months, depending upon the severity of the drought. LFP payments for fire on federally managed rangeland are equal to 50 percent of the monthly feed cost for the number of days the producer is prohibited from grazing the managed rangeland, not to exceed 180 calendar days.

Continued on next page...
Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP):
LIP provides benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather or by attacks by animals reintroduced into the wild by the federal government. LIP payments are equal to 75 percent of the average fair market value of the livestock.

Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honey Bees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP):
ELAP provides emergency assistance to eligible producers of livestock, honeybees and farm-raised fish for losses due to disease (including cattle tick fever), adverse weather, or other conditions, such as blizzards and wildfires, not covered by LFP and LIP. Total payments are capped at $20 million in a fiscal year.

Tree Assistance Program (TAP):
TAP provides financial assistance to qualifying orchardists and nursery tree growers to replant or rehabilitate eligible trees, bushes, and vines damaged by natural disasters.

NON-FARM BILL PROGRAMS
The following programs continue under laws other than the 2014 Farm Bill.

Emergency Conservation Program (ECP)
ECP is authorized by Title IV of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978, Section 401 (P.L. 95-334)(16 U.S.C. 2201). ECP provides emergency cost-share assistance to farmers and ranchers to help rehabilitate farmland and ranchland damaged by natural disasters and to carry out water conservation measures during periods of severe drought. Cost-share assistance may be offered only for emergency conservation practices to restore land to a condition similar to that existing prior to the natural disaster.

Emergency Forest Restoration Program (EFRP)
EFRP is authorized by Title IV of the Agricultural Credit Act of 1978, Section 407 (16 U.S.C. 2206). EFRP was established to provide financial and technical assistance to owners of non-industrial private forest land damaged by natural disaster to carry out emergency measures to restore damaged forests and rehabilitate forest resources.

Farm Storage Facility Loan Program (FSFL)
FSFL provides low-interest financing for producers to build or upgrade farm storage and handling facilities.
THE NEXT FRONTIER IN YIELD: SOIL HEALTH

By Patrick Lake

WI Natural Resources Conservation Service Soil Health Team, Oshkosh

There is no question that biotechnology, fertilization, and genetics have played a critical role in the amazing yield increases we’ve experienced over the past three generations. Should we expect those yields to continue to climb presuming our technology and genetics continue to advance? Yes, we should. But consider this: Should any of us expect seeds from the best varieties with the best traits and with optimum fertilization to grow in a watered brick? Of course not. But, this is exactly the scenario we will face more frequently if our soils continue to degrade. I’m not talking about erosion here necessarily, but about soil quality as measured by the amount of pore space for water, for air, and in particular for organic matter. A field day held last August during a critical time for soybean pod development showed this point rather dramatically.

A soil pit was dug across a fence line from a conventionally-tilled farm (corn, soybean, winter wheat, fall and spring chiseled with manure) to a corn-and-soybean farm under 20 years of continuous no till. Rings were placed in the ground in all three areas and water equal to one inch of rain was poured in simultaneously and timed. The simulated one-inch rainfall soaked into the no-till field in just under 15 minutes. Conversely, the water in the conventional field took almost that long to start infiltrating and at least a quarter-inch of that ‘rain’ was still in the ring an hour later. Here’s the amazing part…that same inch of rain took 17 seconds to completely soak into the soil in the fence line area. No gimmicks, no tricks.

The third week of August soybean leaves were rolling during the day. Rain was needed badly to fill pods. What did our simple field test show? It showed that a badly-needed one inch of rain was only going to soak in and benefit the plants if it fell either in the no-till field or in the fence line. That same inch of rain, even if falling over the course of an hour, would still have resulted in runoff in the conventionally-tilled field and would have been unavailable to help fill the pods.

Continued on next page....
These are the facts: Every time we till soil, we temporarily fluff it and artificially aerate it. When we do this, bacteria ‘eat’ an unnaturally high amount of residue and more organic matter is being ‘burned-out’ of the soil profile than is retained. Then, over the course of the growing season, the soil settles back down and gets hard again. The loss of organic matter, the loss of macropores (earthworm channels) and micropores (root channels) that were destroyed by tillage results in soil that is harder and denser that it was the year before. So, we till to fluff it up again, then it settles even more densely-packed and harder than before, and so on. This is a cycle that must be broken if we want to avoid having to try to grow our crops in a brick.

It can take as little as 3 years of intensive management to get your soil to the point where it will begin to gain organic matter and naturally develop pore space that is critical to infiltrate water effectively. Here’s what you can do:

- Keep the soil covered as much as possible with plant residue.
- Till the soil as little as possible or not at all.
- Keep plants growing throughout the whole year to create organic matter, create pore spaces, and to feed the soil.
- Diversify as much as possible using crop rotation and cover crops.

If you would like more information about soil health or would like a free soil health evaluation on your farm, call me at 920-424-0329 Extension 111.

NRCS also provides EQIP funding to help Producers implement soil health practices such as No-Till/Strip Till and cover crops.

For more information on EQIP funding opportunities, contact Merrie Schamberger at Extension 110.
YOU ONLY HAVE SO MUCH MONEY FOR FERTILIZER.
Do you ever wonder where you should put your money?
Would you make small changes if you could continue to make your own pro-
duction decisions and continue to make a profit?
Would you like to possibly save twenty to sixty dollars per acre?
Would you like to review your soil fertility and crop nutrient needs?
Would you like to have a better understanding of where to haul your manure
(if you have it)?
Would you like to have a better understanding of where to place your fertilizer,
for the greatest return?
Would you like to know how much topsoil you may be losing?

I would be happy to assist you in finding ways to be more efficient and
hopefully save you money. You can contact me, Sheila Kiddy at
(920) 232-1950, Winnebago County Land & Water Conservation Department.

TILLAGE: LET’S KEEP OUR SOIL IN OUR FIELDS!
By: Sheila Kiddy

Tillage operations must not be conducted within 5 feet of any surface waters.
Soil savings tip: Work with the contour of the land where possible.

Manure handling and spreading: Manure is a valuable commodity; don’t
let it float away!

The following setbacks and separation distances are required for all sources of
manure spread within the county.

Manure and organic byproducts shall not be applied to the following areas
unless injected or incorporated within 72 hours:

- Within 200 feet of any surface water or direct conduit to surface water.
- Within 200 feet up-hill and 50 feet down-hill of sinkholes, cracked bedrock,
or wells.
- Manure and organic byproducts shall not be spread in waterways, non-
cropped wetlands, terrace channels, ditches or any other direct conveyance
to surface water.

I’d be glad to help you create and understand manure spreading restriction
maps; just call me to set up a time (920)232-1950. Happy hauling and have a
good spring!
WHAT’S NEW ON UWEX WEB PAGES?

Winnebago County UWEX Homepage: http://counties.uwex.edu/winnebago/

General Agriculture:
Winnebago Co. Farmland Preservation: http://fyi.uwex.edu/winncofarming/
UW-Extension Agriculture and Natural Resources: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/ag/
UWEX Farming FYI Sites: http://fyi.uwex.edu/topic/farming/
UW Publications: http://learningstore.uwex.edu/

Dairy and Livestock:
Dairy Cattle Nutrition: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/dairynutrition/
Milk Quality: http://milkquality.wisc.edu/
Livestock: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/animalscience/
Center for Dairy Profitability: http://cdp.wisc.edu/
Manure Management: http://fyi.uwex.edu/wimanuremgt/
Youth Livestock: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/animalscience/youthlivestock/index.cfm

Crops and Soils:
Soybeans and Small Grains: http://soybean.uwex.edu/
Corn Agronomy: http://corn.agronomy.wisc.edu
Forage: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/crops/teamforage/
http://www.uwex.edu/ces/forage/
Crop Plant Pathology: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/croppathology/
IPM Wisconsin Crop Manager Newsletter: http://ipcm.wisc.edu/
Soils: http://www.soils.wisc.edu/extension/
Horticulture: http://hort.uwex.edu/
UW PlantDOC for plant health diagnoses observations and comments: http://www.uwex.edu/ces/ag/plantdoc/