Extension Web Sites

Ag Decision Maker
www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/

Beef Center
www.iowabeefcenter.org/

Manure Management
www.agronext.iastate.edu/immag/

Pork Center
www.ipic.iastate.edu/

ISU Extension Dairy Team
www.extension.iastate.edu/DairyTeam/

Drainage and Subsurface Irrigation Program planned
Kris Kohl, Ag Engineer

Spring floods and summer droughts can both be mitigated by managing subsurface drainage. Iowa State University Extension is planning three single-day workshops in mid-March to explore the opportunities that drainage systems offer. The workshops will take place from 9 a.m. until 3 p.m. at the following locations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>County</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Phone</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>March 18</td>
<td>Kossuth</td>
<td>Bancroft Golf Course</td>
<td>515-295-2469</td>
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<tr>
<td>March 19</td>
<td>Clay</td>
<td>Extension office</td>
<td>712-262-2264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>March 20</td>
<td>Calhoun</td>
<td>Extension office</td>
<td>712-297-8611</td>
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Workshop participants will explore new drainage designs that help remove excess water in the spring, save or add water in the summer, and reduce nitrogen loss from drained fields. Current research shows that the pumping cost to add or subtract an acre inch to a field is only about 80 cents. Control structures that are needed to maintain the water table and reduce the loss of nitrogen are part of the nutrient-reduction strategy and are eligible for cost-share funding.

Surface intakes have been utilized for decades to remove ponded water from potholes. Corn stalks and other residues plug the holes, making them a maintenance headache as well as an obstacle in the fields that make them easy to damage with field equipment. New developments that provide alternatives to surface intakes will be discussed during the programs.

The final program discussion will be on the economics of the drainage system and how to structure agreements between landlords and tenants to get the projects completed. Attendees will find out how others have resolved the “money problems” on other drainage projects, so that the benefits can be realized.

The cost to attend a workshop is only $25, and lunch is provided. Space is limited, so please give the extension office a call to reserve a space for exploring drainage management opportunities on your farm.
Looking Forward to Spring Field Work
Joel DeJong, Crop Field Specialist

I had to sit down and write the article for March’s Field & Feedlot well in advance of the deadline this month. On this February morning my thermometer read a negative seventeen degrees when I got up. It seems like we have experienced many below zero days this winter, and I am starting to tire of it. So, I decided to “think spring” for the purpose of the article.

Last year the window of opportunity was a small one during the spring months. Planning for spring is one of those things you need to do at this time of year, and I encourage two plans. One plan would include what you would do if we have a “normal” spring. The other is if we have a short window again. In order to do that, I thought I would review what “normal” is from a couple of different perspectives.

“When is the last frost in the spring?” seems to be a common question. There is no exact date for that because we are dealing with weather, so we can never be certain. However, if you accumulate the data over time, there are charts that give you the odds of when certain temperatures last appear in the spring. For example, at the Castana Experiment farm in Monona County, the average date of the last 32 degree temperature is April 27. But, that means half the time it occurs after that date. Maybe a better number is the chance that 32 degrees only happens later than this date one out of ten years – which would be May 12. You might argue that 32 degrees wouldn’t cause significant damage to many crops – we need to look at 28 degrees instead. At that site the 50% chance date for 28 degrees is April 15, and the 1-in-10 date would be April 29.

Compare that to a couple of towns further north. The 32 degree 50% date for Le Mars would be April 29, and the 10% chance date averages May 13. At 28 degrees, those dates are April 20 and May 6, respectively. The Sibley weather station would have dates of May 5 and May 18 for the 32 degree 50 and 10% occurrence dates, while the 28 degree dates would be April 26 and May 10. It is obvious why we use earlier season corn hybrids as we move closer to Minnesota!

How many suitable days in the field can we expect during each week? Data from the Iowa Crop Report summaries from previous years can also give us those averages. In the Northwest Crop Reporting District’s data from 1958 – 2007, we average 1 day of suitable field work weather during the first week of April, followed by 2.9 days in week two, 3.1 days in the third week of April, and 4.1 days in week four. May averages about 4.4 days of suitable field work per week, but it approaches 5 days suitable for field work by the end of the month. Think about those numbers when you calculate how rapidly you need to progress to be timely in your planting process.

ISU’s Ag Decision Maker web page, under the crops/machinery tab, has more information on matching equipment to the needs you have for being timely at planting time. Check them out! www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm

Dairy Iowa Profitability Team Now Available
Kevin Lager, Dairy Field Specialist

Volatility may be the word that best captures dairy farming today. The unexpected swings in weather that bring drought followed by flood and snow in May, combined with the ups and downs of feed and milk price, all provide challenges. As margins tighten, resilient Iowa dairy producers are looking for ways to improve their dairy farm’s profitability. It may be producers are looking to improve one segment of the dairy or a combination of segments which may include milk per cow, milk quality, herd reproductive performance, cow comfort, management of health and culling issues within their herd, or finding more cost effective rations.

The Dairy Iowa Profit Team concept was created to help dairy producers wanting to improve their operations by offering personalized help and guidance. This concept uses the team approach to work towards improving the dairy by bringing together the dairy farm’s key farm suppliers, employees, and advisors. The team may include the herd veterinarian, nutritionist, reproductive and genetic supplier, and herdsman. They work together as team partners to evaluate the individual farm’s records and practices. The dairy operator discusses their concerns, and then the group decides on the major methods to address the challenge. This becomes a joint venture in problem solving to find practical and profitable answers. One person is chosen to serve as a facilitator and coordinator to help arrange and guide meetings, along with keeping notes and lists of to do items.

The dairy producer determines the level of information to share, amount of time needed to establish and meet with
the team, and which advisors to serve as team members. Providing more information makes it easier for your Dairy Iowa Profit Team to more quickly and accurately address your specific dairy needs, in the effort to improve profitably. The vital information shared with the team may include DHIA records, milk processor records, cash flow or financial analysis and farm business records. Time is valuable for each team member, thus it is important that team meetings be to the point and stay on task, but not too short that key points are not addressed.

Producers wanting to learn more or wanting to establish a team can contact your area ISU Extension and Outreach Dairy Specialist, Kevin Lager, to serve as the catalyst to guide you as an early facilitator or coordinator. I may be reached at (712) 737-4230, klager@iastate.edu.

For additional information on dairy production and profitability visit the ISU Extension and Outreach Dairy Team website at www.extension.iastate.edu/dairyteam/

Transition & Estate Planning
Workshop Designed to Aid Farm Businesses to Evaluate Plans

Workshop Set for March 13 in Storm Lake or March 14 in Sioux Center

Melissa O’Rourke – ISU Extension Farm & Agribusiness Management Specialist

Farmers are unique – particularly as there isn’t a distinct moment when they just walk out the workplace door to retirement as someone in a regular wage-earning job might do. Rather, farm families often need to think about how to transition the farm business to the next generation during lifetime, as well as having an estate plan in place.

“Talking about transitions and estate planning is difficult for most people – and especially for farm families,” says Melissa O’Rourke, the Iowa State University Farm & Agribusiness Management Specialist in northwest Iowa. “And actual implementation of a transition plan can be even harder.”

That’s why Iowa State University Extension offers an “Evaluating Your Estate Plan” workshop to answer transition and estate planning questions and help families prepare for the future. The one-day workshop will be held on March 13 in Storm Lake at the Buena Vista County Extension office; or on March 14 in Sioux Center at the Sioux Center Public Library. The program starts at 9:30 a.m. and ends by 4:00 p.m.

“Families and individuals should plan adequately to protect assets that they have built over a lifetime of hard work” according to O’Rourke, one of the speakers at the event. O’Rourke is an attorney experienced in agricultural law and estate planning.

Kelvin Leibold, also an ISU Extension Farm & Agribusiness Management Specialist will be the other featured speaker at the workshop. Leibold joined ISU Extension in 1987 and has vast experience in working with agricultural clients in farm and business planning.

According to Leibold, “There are options particularly suited for consideration by farm families, different ways to transition farm management and assets. This program helps farm families plan for the future.”

The workshop will discuss the language of estate planning, gift, estate & inheritance taxes, family communication, and many other areas vital to creating a good estate plan.

“We’re really excited about this workshop because it doesn’t just stop at providing valuable information for anyone concerned about estate and transition plans,” says O’Rourke. “Everyone will participate in hands-on analysis and discussion of case studies that will help folks apply the information to their own situations.”

Anyone who is unsure of how to build an estate or transition plan, or thinking about what options are best for their family should attend this workshop.

Advance registration is required and space is limited. The Evaluating Your Estate Plan workshop costs $50 per person and includes lunch and materials. To pre-register for the Storm Lake event, call the Buena Vista County Extension Office at 712-732-5056. To pre-register for the Sioux Center event, call the Sioux County Extension Office at 712-737-4230.
## BUENA VISTA COUNTY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hotlines Available For All</th>
<th>Hotlines Available to Iowa Residents Only</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Iowa Concern (800-447-1985)</td>
<td>Families Answer Line (800-262-3804)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farm On (877-BFC-1999)</td>
<td>Hortline (515) 294-3108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen Line (800-443-8336)</td>
<td>Iowa Healthy Families (800-369-2229)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETS OFF (800-BETS-OFF)</td>
<td>PORKLine (800-808-7675)</td>
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- **Mar. 5**  On-Farm Dairy Calf Workshops • Sioux County
- **Mar. 5**  Ornamental and Turfgrass Applicators Recertification • All counties
- **Mar. 6**  Beginning Farmer Risk Management Workshop • Orange City
- **Mar. 13** Swine Production Seminar • Okoboji
- **Mar. 13** Evaluating Your Estate Plan • Storm Lake
- **Mar. 14** Evaluating Your Estate Plan • Sioux Center
- **Mar. 19** Drainage Meeting • Spencer
- **Mar. 25** Cattle Issues Forum • Primghar
- **Mar. 26** Certified Handlers Recertification • All counties

*Check with your county offices for all private and commercial pesticide and manure handling certification schedules!*

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### Evaluating Your Estate Plan For Farm Families

Friday, March 13  
9:30am to 4pm

Registration begins at 9am  
Lunch, refreshments & materials included with $50 registration—register by March 7th—space is limited! Call 712-732-5056!

Buena Vista County  
824 Flindt Drive  
Storm Lake, Iowa 50588

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