

ISU Extension in Johnson County

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Upcoming Events

June 23rd-26th: Virtual Spring Field Day at the Southeast Research & Demonstration Farm

July 1st: Virtual Spring Training for Certified Crop Advisors

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Plan How Best to Work with Your Local FSA Office



By: Steve Johnson, ISU Extension
Farm Management Specialist

The ongoing Covid-19 situation has changed the way your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office will be conducting business with producers this spring. Local FSA offices are currently using alternative methods to provide service and ensure compliance with FSA provisions. Appointments can be made by phone, mail, or e-mail – rather than face-to-face interactions. Once producers have completed planting their 2020 spring crops, they should contact the local FSA office to obtain their certification maps to complete the annual acreage certification process.

The following is a 4-step process provided by a county FSA office in Iowa to their producers for completing their 2020 acreage report:

1. Your local FSA office can provide farm/tract maps upon your request. They can provide them through the mail or e-mail. Once received, write in a legible pen what crop is planted in each field, including hay ground, grassed waterways, terraces, CRP, etc. and the approximate acreage amounts in those areas.
2. Next enter the planting date for each field below the crop type.
3. If the producer shares the crop with another producer(s); list each individual/entity and their respective share of the crop. The total of listed shares must equal 100%.

If the producer is unable to legibly write the crop, planting date, acres and producer shares (if necessary); then provide a sheet of paper along with the map that lists the field number, the crop, date planted, acres and shares.

Once you have all the acreage on your tract maps accounted for, contact your local FSA office to schedule a phone appointment to go through your maps. This can be handled in one of two ways:

Option 1) You may return your completed maps to the county office for loading into the crop certification software via mail, e-mail, fax, or the drop box located outside your local FSA office.

Option 2) FSA staff can contact you and go through your maps over the phone together. This includes FSA updating your crops/dates/acres/shares and entering them into the crop certification software and allowing you to provide any other pertinent information.

Continued from pg. 1... In either case, you will subsequently receive the printed acreage form for your signature in the mail or via e-mail. Indicate to FSA your preference when contacted. Then return your signed FSA Form 578 via mail, e-mail, fax or drop box located at your local FSA office. The deadline is July 15 for filing this form annually.

Producers should plan to keep good records at planting each year and file a timely FSA Form 578. Annually these records include the date, the crop and acres planted, and producer shares along with the reference to the farm number. Do not forget you will need to include hay ground, grassed waterways, terraces, CRP, etc.

Filing an accurate and timely acreage report for all crops and land is important. This report is an essential part of determining your eligibility for critical programs, including crop insurance, price support, disaster relief and conservation programs.

Remember, both the FSA office and your crop insurance agent will need accurate planting information and your signature when you complete the acreage certification FSA Form 578. The planted acres on this form are verification for your crop insurance agent in determining your 2020 crop insurance coverage, and thus your final premium to be paid this fall.

Steve Johnson is an ISU Extension farm management specialist. Contact sdjohns@iastate.edu

Virtual Spring Field Day Webinar Series to be hosted June 23rd – 26th

By: Rebecca Vittetoe, ISU Extension Field Agronomist

CRAWFORDSVILLE, Iowa – Farmers, ag professionals, and other interested parties are invited to participate in a virtual field day webinar series being hosted by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach in conjunction with the Southeast Iowa Agricultural Research Association from June 23 to June 26.

“This virtual field day webinar series is being offered in replace of the annual face-to-face spring field day that is held at the ISU Southeast Research and Demonstration Farm due to the current COVID-19 pandemic,” said Rebecca Vittetoe, extension field agronomist. “COVID-19 hasn’t stopped the growing season and we are adapting our typical field day to the situation.”

Each webinar will start at 8:00 a.m. with a 20 minutes discussion on the topic of the day with time for a question and answers session at the end. Sessions will be limited to 30 minutes.

Topics to be featured each day of the webinar series are listed below.

- June 23: “Southeast Iowa Research Farm and Crop Update” with Cody Schneider and Myron Rees, Research farm co-managers
- June 24: “Tile Drainage: Reducing nitrogen fertilizer, increasing yield, and implementing conservation practices” with Mike Castellano, professor, Agronomy (0.5 SWM)
- June 25: “Late Season Field Scouting with UAVs” with Matt Darr, professor, Agricultural and Biosystems Engineering and Ryan Bergman, program coordinator, Agricultural Biosystems Engineering (0.5 CM)
- June 26: “Multi-tactic Approaches to Manage Herbicide Resistance” with Prashant Jha, Extension weed management specialist (0.5 PM)

This webinar series is free and open to anyone. The webinar will be offered through ZOOM. While there is no charge to attend, registration is required and can be completed by going to <http://www.aep.iastate.edu/serf>. After registering, participants will receive an email with instructions and a link for joining the webinar series. Once you register, you will be able to watch any or all the webinars.

Participants may join through their web browser, mobile phone, or tablet. Participants will need to download a free app prior to joining. Pre-registration is required and will be available until the webinar series begins. Participants should join the webinar at least 15 minutes in advance to ensure connections and software is working correctly.

Continued from Pg. 2... If you cannot attend the live webinar, a recording of each session will be posted for viewing as soon as they are available on the ISU Extension and Outreach Crops Team YouTube Channel. Also, Certified Crop Advisors can earn continuing education units (CEU's) by participating in the live webinars.

For more information, questions or if you need assistance with registration please contact ISU Extension and Outreach field agronomists Rebecca Vittetoe at 319-653-4811, or rka8@iastate.edu; Virgil Schmitt at 563-263-5701, or vschmitt@iastate.edu; or Josh Michel at [319-523-2371](tel:319-523-2371), or jmichel@iastate.edu.

Conservation Reserve Land Can Make Attractive Bee Habitat

By: Randall Cass, ISU Entomology Extension Specialist

AMES, Iowa – Iowans who want to do more to help protect bees and provide additional habitat should consider the Conservation Reserve Program.



The federal program, commonly referred to as CRP, has been protecting land and wildlife habitat for 30 years, but more recently, landowners who enroll in the program also have begun taking advantage of protecting pollinators, including honey bees.

Entomologist Randall Cass with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, wrote an article for the May-June edition of "[Acreage Living Newsletter](#)" that helps explain how CRP ground can benefit bees.

Called "[Keeping Bees in CRP](#)," the article discusses a specific part of the CRP designated for establishing pollinator habitat, called the CP 42, or Pollinator Habitat Initiative.

As Cass points out, Iowa is actually a leader in CP 42 land, with about 42% of the nation's CP 42 land coming from Iowa. And according to Cass, there is still room for growth.

He said the state is losing its bees at a staggering rate, of about 40-60% per year. With nearly 5,000 beekeepers in Iowa, that amounts to a big loss.

"Scientists point to three major stressors that contribute, synergistically, to bee decline: pesticide exposure, lack of suitable habitat for nesting and foraging, and parasites and pathogens such as the varroa mite," he said.

CRP land is desirable for pollinators because it is left unfarmed, and in the case of pollinator habitat, it contains a mix of foraging species like wildflowers and flowering legumes. Research conducted by Iowa State University has shown that honey bees on these sites perform better than when placed near agricultural sites, according to the article.

Cass said there was concern at first, as to whether keeping bees on CRP land was acceptable. He did some research and found that both the Farm Service Agency and the Natural Resource Conservation Service support "access and space for beekeepers to place their hives."

According to Cass, it's important that beekeepers and Iowa landowners understand the opportunity that exists. He said that NRCS offices are willing to connect beekeepers with CRP landowners, and landowners can connect with beekeepers by visiting the Iowa Honey Producers Association website to find contact information for a beekeeping club in their area.

For more information, Cass can be reached at randall@iastate.edu, or 515-294-2507.

Virtual CCA Training to be Offered July 1st

By Rebecca Vittetoe, ISU Extension Field Agronomist

CRAWFORDSVILLE, Iowa – Certified Crop Advisors (CCAs), agribusiness professionals, independent crop consultants, farmers, and other interested parties are invited to participate in the Southeast Iowa Research and Demonstration Farm’s virtual CCA Training being offered on July 1 from 8:00 to 11:00 a.m.

“This virtual training is being offered in replace of the annual face-to-face CCA Training that is typically held at the ISU Southeast Research and Demonstration Farm,” said Rebecca Vittetoe, extension field agronomist. “We are excited we can still offer this training in a virtual format.”

This year’s CCA Training has a special emphasis in the area of soil and water management and will feature the following topics:

- Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy: Progress and tools for scaling up practice and adoption with Jamie Benning, ISU Extension and Outreach Water Quality Program Manager
- Tile Drainage: Reducing nitrogen fertilizer, increasing yield, and implementing conservation practices with Mike Castellano, professor, Agronomy

There is a \$25 registration fee for the webinar, which be offered via ZOOM, and pre-registration is required by midnight June 29. To register for the training, go to <http://www.aep.iastate.edu/serf-cca/>. The link, password, and instructions on joining will be emailed to participants after the registration is completed with payment and prior to the start of the session on July 1.

Participants may join through their web browser mobile phone, or tablet. Participants will need to download a free app prior to joining. Participants should join the webinar at least 15 minutes in advance to ensure connections and software is working correctly.

Certified Crop Advisors can earn 3.0 Soil and Water Management CEU’s by participating in this training.

For more information, questions or if you need assistance with registration please contact ISU Extension and Outreach field agronomists Rebecca Vittetoe at 319-653-4811, or rka8@iastate.edu; Virgil Schmitt at 563-263-5701, or vschmitt@iastate.edu; or Josh Michel at [319-523-2371](tel:319-523-2371), or jmichel@iastate.edu.

WHIP+ Payments for 2018 and 2019 Crops

By Steve Johnson, ISU Extension Farm Management Specialist

USDA announced additional disaster assistance available to crop producers impacted by drought and excessive moisture/rainfall during the years 2018 and 2019. The Wildfires and Hurricanes Indemnity Program Plus (WHIP+) can provide potential payments to producers who suffered either of these types of losses. Contact your local FSA office in the county where the crop loss occurred to apply for WHIP+ assistance.

For drought, a producer is eligible if any area of the county in which the loss occurred was rated D3 (Extreme Drought) or higher on the U.S. Drought Monitor during calendar years 2018 or 2019. Because livestock losses are covered by other disaster recovery programs offered through the FSA, these losses are not eligible for WHIP+.

To be eligible for WHIP+ payments, producers must have suffered losses on certain crops in counties with a Presidential Emergency Disaster Declaration or a Secretarial Disaster (primary counties only). A WHIP+ fact sheet and a list of counties that received qualifying declaration and designations is available at: <https://www.farmers.gov/recover/whip-plus>.

Steve Johnson is an ISU Extension farm management specialist. Contact sdjohns@iastate.edu.

Preserve Summer Bounty with Food Preservation 101 Virtual Course

By Sarah Francis, Iowa State Food Science and Human Nutrition

AMES, Iowa – Spring is finally here and many gardens are being planted. Preserving your garden's summer bounty is a great way to enjoy home-grown produce year round – as long as you don't serve food borne illness, like botulism, with your home preserved foods, say nutrition and wellness specialists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

"Home food preservation is not difficult, but it does require following specific directions exactly," said Sarah Francis, ISU associate professor and nutrition and wellness state specialist. "Ignoring recommended procedures can result in home canned products that will make you, your family and friends very ill."

To help Iowans safely preserve foods, ISU Extension and Outreach is hosting a virtual Food Preservation 101 course. Food Preservation 101 is a general overview that highlights the key information Iowans need to know to get started preserving food at home.

During this free, one-hour online course, nutrition and wellness specialists will:

- Discuss various food preservation techniques – pressure canning, hot water bath canning, dehydration and freezing;
- Provide science-based, reliable food preservation resources; and
- Answer general food preservation questions.

Food Preservation 101 will be hosted numerous dates and times between May and September. These are free to Iowans across the state. To [register for Food Preservation 101](#), go to <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/humansciences/preservation-101>. The scheduled dates and times are:

- Thursday, June 18, 8-9 p.m.
- Tuesday, July 7, 10-11 a.m. and 8-9 p.m.
- Thursday, Aug. 20, 10-11 a.m. and 8-9 p.m.
- Thursday, Sept. 10, 7-8 p.m.



For more information, contact any of the following nutrition and wellness program specialists.

Jill Weber, jrweber@iastate.edu, Black Hawk County, 319-234-6811.
Kelsey Salow, ksalow@iastate.edu, Delaware County, 563-927-4201.

Holly VanHeel, vanheel@iastate.edu, Webster County, 515-576-2119.

Renee Sweers, rsweers@iastate.edu, Woodbury County, 712-870-3037.

Horticulture and Home Pest News

For more great Horticulture and Home Pest news visit hortnews.extension.iastate.edu/

The **Johnson County Master Gardener** program provides free, research-based information on lawn, garden, and landscape plant questions. Please email JohnsonComg@gmail.com



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Iowa Cash Rents Show Slight Increase

By Alejandro Plastina, Extension Economist/Assistant Professor in Economics & Ann Johans, ISU Department of Economics

AMES, Iowa – Despite another difficult year in agriculture, cash rents still posted an increase of about 1.4%, according to this year's [Cash Rental Rates for Iowa 2020 Survey](#), released earlier this month. Rates across the state averaged \$222 per acre, compared to \$219 per acre in 2019, the fourth year of relatively stable rates, but at levels about 18% lower than the historical peak reached in 2013, of \$270 per acre.

"It's surprising for me to see that cash rents are pretty stable and have not gone down," said Alejandro Plastina, associate professor and extension economist at Iowa State University. "And that's likely a reflection that government programs last year were injecting enough liquidity."

This year's survey is available in the May edition of the [Ag Decision Maker](#). The survey included nearly 1,600 responses from farmers, landowners, professional farm managers, realtors and others with knowledge of land rents, reportedly familiar with 1.6 million acres of cash-rented land across Iowa.

The percentage of increase varied across the state, with the lowest quality land showing the largest increase, at 2.7% per acre, compared to the .4% increase for high quality land.

According to Plastina, most cash rents for 2020 were determined by September 2019, during expectations of federal Market Facilitation Program payments and expectations of higher soybean exports to China.

He said the challenges of 2020 were mostly not yet considered, and could lead to some future renegotiations and softening of rates. Those challenges include economic losses from the coronavirus, delays in the Phase 1 trade deal, and decreased demand for biofuels, due to plummeting oil prices.

Plastina said the poor economic condition in agriculture will continue to pressure cash rents and land values, and that barred strong government assistance, it's possible both land values and rent could see future declines.

"It will remain to be seen whether there will be enough support to maintain the cash rents going into 2021," Plastina said.

Plastina reminds Iowans that information in the survey is "intended to serve as a reference point" for negotiating an appropriate rental rate for the next year. Rents for individual farms should be based on productivity, ease of farming, fertility, drainage, local price patterns and other factors.

Other resources available for estimating a fair cash rent include the AgDM Information Files Computing a Cropland Cash Rental Rate (C2-20), Computing a Pasture Rental Rate (C2-23) and Flexible Farm Lease Agreements (C2-21).

All of these fact sheets are on the [Ag Decision Maker Leasing page](#), including decision tools (electronic spreadsheets) to help analyze individual leasing situations.