February 14, 2011

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Photos & Captions
Contact: Teresa Wiemerslage, Communications Coordinator, wiemer@iastate.edu, 563-794-0599

Food & Farm Expo Attracts Crowd
Download photo here
Anna Herzmann from KyMar Acres (right) and Kassie Rizzo from LocalDirt.com (left) talk about marketing websites at the NE IA Food & Farm Expo.

Download photo here
Farmers packed a classroom as they listened to Andy Larson from ISU Extension talk about marketing websites for local producers. Over 150 people attended the first Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Expo in Calmar on Feb. 5. The event was hosted by Iowa State University Extension, NICC and the Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition. The NIFF Coalition is part of the Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative—a partner of the W.K. Kellogg Foundation Food & Community program. The coalition is creating opportunities for farmers to engage in the local food system through production, processing, distribution, storage and market opportunities. For more information, visit www.iowafreshfood.com.

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Photos & Captions
Contact: Teresa Wiemerslage, Communications Coordinator, wiemer@iastate.edu, 563-794-0599

Download photo here
Farmers Complete Farm Food Safety Certification
Sixteen northeast Iowa farmers have completed a day-long course in On-Farm Food Safety presented by Iowa State University Extension and the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture. The farmers
traveled to Oelwein from 7 counties. Instructors and participants in the On-Farm Food Safety class (L to R). Row 1: Dr. Paul DeMoto, Terri Andrews, Kay Vifian, Francis Martin. Row 2: Sharon Phillips, Atina Dooley, Ashley Meyer, Max Andrews, Dr. Cathy Strohbehn, Mrs. Reuben Fox, Mrs. and Mr. Erik Unruh. Back row: Dr. Margaret Smith, Kayla Willis, Waunita Bruncheon, Charles Downs, Vic Vifian, Richard Murray, Rodney Swales. Not pictured is Shelly Bagge. Submitted photo.

News Release

Contact: Teresa Wiemerslage, Communications Coordinator, wiemer@iastate.edu, 563-794-0599
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Public Information Meetings for Gypsy Moth Management Scheduled in Northeast Iowa

NORTHEAST IOWA--The Iowa Gypsy Moth Management Team will be holding informational meetings in northeastern Iowa in March to discuss gypsy moth management actions for the summer 2011. The meetings are free and open to the public.

The European gypsy moth, a well-known pest of trees, has been in the eastern United States for over 150 years. Iowa has monitored the westward expansion of the gypsy moth since 1970 using pheromone traps. In 2010, more than 2,200 moths were captured in these traps, indicating that pockets of this invasive insect are developing in eastern Iowa.

“The gypsy moth caterpillar has a ravenous appetite for the tree foliage of several hundred species, but oak leaves are their favorite food,” said Mark Shour, ISU Extension entomologist. “Without corrective action, repeated defoliation of trees by the gypsy moth can cause tree death or weaken trees to attack by diseases and other insects.”

In the coming year, Iowa will be part of the federal Slow the Spread program, a project that has successfully slowed the rate of the advancing front of gypsy moth defoliations. Efforts to limit establishment of gypsy moth in Iowa will use aerial application of mating disruption pheromone. Applications are proposed in specific areas of Allamakee, Winneshiek, and Jackson Counties.

Two informational meetings to address this insect and the proposed action to control it, as well as to make comment, will be held March 2 at 1:30 pm at the Allamakee County Farm Bureau Building, 14 First Avenue NE, Waukon, IA and 6:30 pm at the NE Iowa Dairy Foundation Center, 1527 Highway 150 South, Calmar, IA.

The Iowa Gypsy Moth Management Team is an interagency, cooperative effort of Iowa State University Extension, Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, Iowa Department of Natural Resources, United States Department of Agriculture - Forest Service, and United States Department of Agriculture - APHIS, Plant Protection and Quarantine.

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News Release

Contact: Denise Schwab, ISU Extension Beef Specialist, 319-472-4729, dschwab@iastate.edu
Teresa Wiemerslage, ISU Extension Region 4 Communications Coordinator, 563-794-0599

Eastern Iowa Hay Producers Association Annual Meeting & Conference To Feature Dr. Undersander

WELTON -- Area hay and forage producers are invited to attend the 28th Annual Eastern Iowa Hay Producers Association Annual Meeting and Conference on March 10 at Buzzy’s in Welton.
This year’s conference features Dr. Dan Undersander, Professor of Agronomy at the University of Wisconsin Extension, discussing alternative harvest methods to reduce drying time including the economics and feasibility of baleage and wide swath windrows to speed drying.

Dr. Undersander’s research program has four major objectives that include: determining factors affecting alfalfa plant health and survival; best management for harvested forage; optimum management practices for intensively grazed pastures; and developing equations for Near Infrared Reflectance spectroscopy.

Other speakers include Virgil Schmitt, ISU Extension Field Agronomist, and Denise Schwab, ISU Extension Beef Specialist, with regional updates. Schmitt will discuss winterkill of alfalfa and weather effects on forage stands. Schwab will discuss the results of the Iowa Beef Center’s forage testing project and the implications of feeding the 2010 hay crop.

Registration will begin at 10:00 a.m. with the program scheduled to begin at 10:30 a.m. The annual meeting of the Eastern Iowa Hay Producers Association (EIHPA) will take place shortly after lunch and will include their election of officers and directors. A special presentation will be made to Neal and Norman Sawyer from Scott County who recently received the Iowa Forage and Grassland Council 2010 Livestock/Forage Producer Award. Since they were unable to attend the IFGC conference, their award will be presented at the EIHPA annual meeting.

Registration for the conference is $30 and includes a membership to EIHPA and meal. Tickets can be purchased at the door. Certified crop advisor credits have been applied for. This conference is sponsored by EIHPA, Iowa State University Extension, and the Iowa Beef Center.

The Eastern Iowa Hay Producers Association provides educational workshops and field days for forage producers in Jackson, Jones, Clinton, Cedar, Scott and Muscatine counties. However, forage producers from other counties are also welcome to participate. For more information contact Denise Schwab at dschwab@iastate.edu or Kevin Brown at brofarm@netins.net or 563-872-4475.

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**News Release**

Contact: Erin Ludwig, ISU Extension Family Resource Management Field Specialist, eludwig@iastate.edu or 563-380-1475, New Hampton.

**Understanding Changes to Social Security Withholdings**

NEW HAMPTON -- Workers’ paychecks may have seen an increase this year since Social Security withholdings were reduced by 2%. For lower-wage workers however, the result may not meet their expectations.

“Fortunately, there may be a way to improve your cash flow,” says Erin Ludwig, Iowa State University Extension Family Resource Management Specialist.

First, some background. The “Making Work Pay” Credit was created by Economic Recovery legislation in early 2009. Beginning in April 2009, less income tax was withheld from paychecks, giving workers an extra $400/year in take-home pay – about $33/month. When that credit ended, workers’ take-home pay was slated to go down by about $33/month beginning January 2011.

Policy-makers were conflicted. They did not want take-home pay going down just as there were signs of economic recovery, but they also didn’t want to extend the Making Work Pay Credit, which posed technical difficulties. So they tried another approach by reducing employees’ withholding for Social Security from 6.2% to 4.2% for 2011 which increased take-home pay for all workers.
The change helps some more than others. Take Worker A, who earns $50,000 a year. The 2% reduction in Social Security tax increases his take-home pay by $1,000 for the year. So Worker A lost $400/year (Making Work Pay Credit), but gained $1,000 – coming out ahead!

Worker B, who makes $20,000 a year (about $10/hour), comes out even – the $400 gained from the Social Security change offsets the loss of the $400 Making Work Pay Credit.

What about Worker C, who makes minimum wage? At $7.25/hour full-time, Worker C earns about $14,500 per year. The Social Security change added 2% to Worker C’s take-home pay – about $290 for the year. That is less than the $400 Making Work Pay Credit in 2010 which means Worker C has less money to spend.

Let’s be clear: the policy changes are putting more money in everyone’s pockets compared to 2008, before the Making Work Pay Credit was created. But for some people who expected their take-home pay to increase in 2011, their first paychecks of the year will be disappointing.

A solution for some. People feeling pinched by take-home pay, but who typically receive a sizeable tax refund, have the option to adjust their payroll withholding. This is especially practical for low/moderate-income families with children, who often receive tax credits which increase their refund.

Workers who change their W-4 form to increase take-home pay will have a smaller tax refund a year from now, but they will benefit each month by having more take-home income. For many families on a tight budget, that is a very good trade-off, since it means fewer late fees, less interest paid, AND less stress! If you’re not sure, talk with your income tax preparer and your payroll office about your specific situation.

Families with low to moderate earned income can save by having their taxes prepared by certified, volunteer tax preparers. Since volunteer preparers electronically file returns, refunds can usually be directly deposited in a bank account within 7-14 days. This free service is offered by the AARP and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) programs in northeast Iowa.

To locate the nearest Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) site, call 1-800-906-9887 or to locate the nearest AARP Tax-Aide site, call 1-888-227-7669. For more information, contact Erin Ludwig, ISU Extension Family Resource Management Specialist at 563-380-1475 or eludwig@iastate.edu.

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News Release

NOTE: Optional media photo for presenter Elwynn Taylor available at: http://www.extension.iastate.edu/emms/staffph/TaylorElwynn/

Predictions on Crop Yields and Grain Marketing for 2011

NASHUA -- As we approach the 2011 crop season with record market prices and uncertainties of climate on crop production, don’t miss out on the latest 2011 crop production predictions from Elwynn Taylor, ISU Extension Climatologist, and grain market trends from Chad Hart, ISU Grain Market Specialist.

Taylor and Hart are the featured speakers at the annual meeting of the Northeast Iowa Agricultural Experimental Association on March 17. Farm Superintendent Ken Pecinovsky will also present a summary of farm research results from 2010.

The meeting will take place at the Borlaug Learning Center, Northeast ISU Research Farm, Nashua. The meeting begins at 9:30 am with Association business. The speakers start at 10:00 am and wrap up around 12:30. Stay for a Dutch-treat lunch served by 4-H.
The program is free and open to the public. CCA credits available. Directions to the Borlaug Learning Center: from the Jct of Hwy 218 and Co. Rd. B60 at Nashua, go west 1.1 miles to Windfall Ave., then south 1 mile to 290th St., then east 0.2 miles to the Borlaug Center at the Northeast ISU Research Farm.

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**News Release**

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Jennifer Bentley, Extension Specialist, 563-382-2949, jbentley@iastate.edu

**NE IA Dairy Foundation Annual Meeting is March 10**

CALMAR -- The annual meeting of the Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation will be held on Thursday, March 10 at the NE IA Dairy Foundation Dairy Center near Calmar.

Two speakers will be featured in the morning program which starts at 11 am. Dave Lawstuen will talk about Training Tomorrow's Dairy Professionals and Ron Mortenson from Dairy Gross Margins, LLC will present on the Livestock Gross Margin Insurance for Dairy. After the noon meal, the annual meeting and election of officers will take place at 12:30 pm. There will also be displays from leading dairy industry businesses that support the Dairy Foundation.

The Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation is a nonprofit, grassroots organization born from the foresight and community concern of dairy farm families and related businesses who identified a need to retain young people in rural areas while bolstering the economic impact of dairy farms in northeast Iowa through education, demonstration and research. Counties served by the Northeast Iowa Community Dairy Foundation include: Allamakee, Black Hawk, Bremer, Butler, Buchanan, Chickasaw, Clayton, Delaware, Dubuque, Fayette, Floyd, Grundy, Howard, Jackson, Jones, Mitchell and Winneshiek.

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**News Releases**

Contact: Teresa Wiemerslage, Communications Coordinator, 563-794-0599, wiemer@iastate.edu

**Learn to Use Quickbooks for Your Farm or Business**

NORTHEAST IOWA -- Set a goal to organize your farm or business finances in the new year. Get started now by setting up Quickbooks to take advantage of the efficiency and organization you can gain by using the program. Quickbooks manages all the financial records for a single business.

The Northeast Iowa Business Network is hosting Quickbooks Workshops this winter in several locations. Participants will learn how to set up accounts receivable and payable and how to prepare invoices and bills. Quickbooks can manage your inventory and keep track of the number of items in stock and the value of your inventory after every purchase and sale. Quickbooks Payroll is a quick and convenient way to pay your employees at each pay period.

The workshop is a three-part series. The workshop schedule and registration info is below.
Mar. 15, 23, 30 from 5:30-7:30 pm at the NICC Cresco Center. For more information or to register, contact Howard County Economic Development at 563-547-3434.

Mar. 15, 22, 29 at the ISU Extension--Delaware County office, Manchester. For more information or to register, contact Delaware County Economic Development at 563-927-3325.
April 6, 13, 20 from 6-8 pm at the Allamakee County Economic Development office in Waukon. Call 563-568-2624 or email neiatourism@mchsi.com to register.

The workshop series is coordinated by the County Economic Development offices, NE Iowa Business Network, ISU Extension, the NE IA Food & Farm Coalition, and the Community Vitality Center.

The NE IA Food & Farm Coalition has scholarships available for any farmers or food entrepreneurs from Allamakee, Chickasaw, Clayton, Fayette, Howard or Winneshiek counties interested in taking this class. Call Teresa Wiemerslage at 563-794-0599 or email wiemer@iastate.edu for more information.

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News Release

Contact: Joe Papp, CIRAS, jpapp@iastate.edu, 515-231-1452 (cell)
Teresa Wiemerslage, Communications Coordinator, 563-794-0599, wiemer@iastate.edu

Building a Lean Culture Workshop Offered in Calmar

CALMAR -- If you are serious about implementing lean in your business, here is the opportunity to learn firsthand how Toyota, an industry pioneer in lean culture, does it. The Center for Industrial Research and Service (CIRAS) at Iowa State University is hosting three lean management workshops across the state in March on how to implement lean business methods in manufacturing and service industries.

Most companies embarking on a lean journey soon become frustrated with kaizen events and isolated improvement projects that yield great short-term results but have no sustainability. They are searching for something more: the culture of continuous improvement with its philosophy, processes, and people aligned to cultivate problem solving.

The class instructor is Michael Hoseus, a co-author of the Shingo Award-winning book Toyota Culture, developed his TPS skills at Toyota Motor Manufacturing Kentucky where he worked at the General Manager level in both Production and Human Resources being mentored by his Japanese sensei. His Toyota process experience includes production, engineering, maintenance, safety, personnel, employee relations, benefits/payroll and training and development. He learned first-hand how Toyota’s success hinges on integrating their production and human systems to create the Toyota Way.

The workshops will be held at the Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation Center on March 22 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 pm. For complete details about content and registration, go to www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/leanculture/home/html.

Since 1963, CIRAS has been helping Iowa State University Extension and the College of Engineering carry out their land-grant university mission to improve the quality of life in Iowa by enhancing the performance of Iowa industry. For more information about CIRAS and its programs for Iowa businesses, visit www.ciras.iastate.edu/.

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This information has been sent to you by Teresa Wiemerslage, Regional Communications Coordinator for Region 4 ISU Extension, wiemer@iastate.edu, 563-794-0599.
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**Clayton:** Rita Severson, 563-245-1451, ritas@iastate.edu

**Fayette:** Kathy Steege, 563-425-3331, ksteege@iastate.edu

**Howard:** Sue Barnes, 563-547-3001, skbarnes@iastate.edu

**Winneshiek:** Bonnie Sorum, 563-382-2949, bsorum@iastate.edu

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