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IN THIS EDITION

News Releases specific to NE Iowa:
- Winneshiek County Extension Awarded USDA Rural Development Grant
- Demonstration Garden Field Day Set for July 30
- Weather-related Livestock Losses May Qualify for Indemnity Program
- Managing Heat Stress on Dairy Farms
- School Shopping and the Iowa Sales Tax Holiday
- 2011 Cook This! Teams Named
- 2011 Stitch This! Teams Named

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

Winneshiek County Extension Awarded USDA Rural Development Grant
DECORAH – Winneshiek County Extension was recently awarded a USDA Rural Development Rural Business Enterprise Grant for $90,000. Funds will be used to hire an agricultural economic development coordinator to help expand market opportunities for local foods in northeast Iowa.

The grant was one of six awarded in the state totaling $473,400. Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission assisted with submission of the grant.

“Improving economic opportunities for rural Americans continues to be a top area of emphasis at USDA Rural Development,” said Bill Menner, USDA Rural Development State Director in Iowa. “We are pleased to be assisting these projects that will help rural communities build stronger local economies, many through improve local foods opportunities. One of USDA’s strength is working with organizations that are best positioned to help address an area’s economic needs.”

“While we have spent five years developing our local food system, several gaps limit our ability to get move to a level where local food is more readily available to people in our region,” said Teresa Wiemerslage, ISU Extension Regional Program and Communications Coordinator.

“ISU Extension is matching the USDA funds to hire a Food Value Chain Coordinator to fill some of these gaps. This person will lead discussions on product aggregation and distribution, help farmers develop new products and identify new partners and urban markets for those products in the Driftless Region,” says Wiemerslage.

The funds are provided through USDA Rural Development’s Rural Business Enterprise Grant program. Under the program, USDA Rural Development helps finance and facilitate the development of small and emerging private business enterprises. Grant funds are awarded to intermediaries to support revolving loan funds or provide technical assistance.
Supporting farmers and business development demonstrates ISU Extension’s commitment to healthy people, healthy environments and healthy economies in Iowa. For more information, visit www.extension.iastate.edu/winneshiek.

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**News Release**

**Demonstration Garden Field Day Set for July 30**

NASHUA, Iowa — Iowa State University Research and Demonstration Farms will host gardeners looking for planting ideas at field days beginning July 26.

“This year’s Home Demonstration Garden Field Days are devoted to children and cats,” said Cindy Haynes, associate professor of horticulture. “We wanted to get more children involved in gardening and what better way than to feature several flowers and vegetables named after storybook characters.”

Another section of the gardens showcases summer squash with feline-friendly names like cougar, jaguar and leopard. A variety of “bumpy” pumpkins, sunflowers and many new flowers and vegetables also will be featured.

Haynes said this year’s wet weather will provide a good test for blight-resistant tomatoes planted in the demonstration gardens. A new variety of sweet corn, a seedless cucumber, peppers, coneflowers, hollyhocks and canna also will be on display.

Many of the farms plant and maintain vegetable and flower gardens, with help from the Iowa State horticulture department, to give people gardening ideas and display new varieties available in Iowa.

The Northeast Iowa Research Farm near Nashua has set their field day for July 30 at 4 pm. The farm is located one mile west of the Highway 218 and B60 intersection in Nashua, one mile south and a quarter mile east.

The public is welcome to attend the field days, which are free and take place rain or shine.

Check for the latest information on the research and demonstration farms web site at www.ag.iastate.edu/farms/fielddays.php

If you have any questions about the guidelines, call the Research and Demonstration Farms office at (515) 294-5045.

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**News Release**

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**Weather-related Livestock Losses May Qualify for Indemnity Program**

AMES, Iowa -- Producers who have lost livestock from the recent wind storms or heat may be eligible for payment through the Livestock Indemnity Program. Iowa State University (ISU) Extension beef program specialist Denise Schwab said the “Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008” authorized the Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) to provide benefits to livestock producers for livestock deaths in excess of normal mortality caused by adverse weather.
Schwab said producers who think they have losses that might qualify should remember that LIP has eligibility requirements and application deadlines.

“To be eligible for LIP, the livestock must be owned by the producer and raised for commercial use as part of a farming operation. Pets or recreational animals do not qualify,” Schwab said. “Contract swine or poultry growers also may qualify for lost livestock if they have a written agreement with the livestock owner setting the specific terms, conditions and obligations of the parties involved.”

Payment for losses is determined by USDA calculations but is approximately 75 percent of the average fair market value of the livestock, or 75 percent of the average income loss sustained by the contract grower with respect to the dead livestock, she said. Producers also are restricted by other USDA payment limitations.

Producers who suffer livestock death losses should submit a notice of loss and an application for payment to the local Farm Service Agency (FSA) service center that maintains the farm records for their business. This application needs to be made within 30 calendar days after the loss of livestock was apparent to the producer.

People can contact their local FSA office for details and to apply.

For information on heat and heat stress in beef cattle operations, visit www.iowabeefcenter.org, or contact your ISU Extension beef program specialist.

IBC was established in 1996 with the goal of supporting the growth and vitality of the state’s beef cattle industry. It comprises faculty and staff from ISU Extension, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and College of Veterinary Medicine, and works to develop and deliver the latest research-based information regarding the beef cattle industry. For more information about IBC, visit www.iowabeefcenter.org.

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**News Release**

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**Managing Heat Stress on Dairy Farms**

NORTHEAST IOWA - Heat stress on dairy farms can be alleviated by a number of on-farm management practices and heat-abatement systems. Heat-abatement systems such as fans, sprinklers and shades are commonly used to reduce the negative effects of heat stress on the lactating cow. Here are some systems to consider.

**Know the temperature.** Heat stress is a product of both temperature and humidity (THI). If you haven’t already done so, buy a thermometer that gives you both temperature and humidity and place it in a location near you and the cows. Current research shows modern high producing cows begin to experience heat stress at a THI of 65-68, much lower than the traditional 72.

**Fans.** Make sure fans are functional by cleaning fan blades and grills, repairing damage, checking fan alignment and orientation, and calibrating thermostat. Poorly maintained fans can reduce fan efficiency by more than 40 percent.

**Access to water.** During heat stress, cows will consume 25-40 gallons/day. Almost 60% of this water will be consumed after exiting the parlor. Keep water troughs clean and enough space (3"-4"/cow) for all the cows exiting the parlor to drink. Adequate water space is also needed in the freestall barn.
Sprinklers. If you can’t install both fans and soakers/sprinklers this year, start with sprinklers. Soaking frequency should be increased when water is used without fans. Each cycle should wet the back and allow the water to evaporate before another cycle begins. Make the holding pen your number one priority for sprinklers. The holding pen creates the most heat stress and body temperatures rise rapidly.

Herd Management. In warm weather, reduce the walking distance for cows. Reduce the time in holding pen and be sure to ventilate and cool the area. Consider exit lane cooling.

Feed cows early in the morning and late in the night and don’t “lock up” during the mid-day. Push up feed often and remove old feed. Consult with your nutritionist on dietary changes that need to be made during the summer months. Don’t forget about the dry cows. Make sure they have access to shade.

Having a cooling system maintained and installed now will reap benefits in milk production and reproduction in the months to follow. Work with your local ISU Extension and industry partners to put a cooling system into place.

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News Releases

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School Shopping and the Iowa Sales Tax Holiday

Iowa - The annual Iowa Sales Tax Holiday is set for August 5-6. No Iowa or local sales tax will be charged on clothing and footwear priced below $100. A family that spends $500 on clothing during the back-to-school season could save $30 or more in sales tax if they make their purchases on those days.

The exemption applies to any article of wearing apparel and typical footwear intended to be worn on or about the human body. Some items are NOT exempt from sales tax, including: watches, jewelry, umbrellas, and sporting equipment (such as skis, roller blades, or swim fins).

Does the sales tax holiday mean that you should buy all your fall clothing on that weekend? “Not necessarily,” says Erin Ludwig, ISU Extension Family Finance Specialist. “The sales tax holiday is a good deal IF you buy items that you would normally buy, and IF you get them at a good price.”

Ludwig adds that the tax holiday can backfire on families if they go overboard.

“When families use the tax holiday to buy items they would never normally buy, then it can create problems. Likewise, when people use credit cards to buy more than they can pay for now, and then pay interest for more than 2 or 3 months, the cost of the interest will exceed the savings provided by the tax holiday,” says Ludwig.

To take full advantage of the tax holiday, Ludwig offers the following suggestions:

- Review family members’ clothing needs in advance. Identify what they already have that fits and is in good condition, and make a list of items that are needed.
- If possible, know in advance what sizes are right for each person. This will make shopping easier, especially if stores are busy.
- Keep receipts for all clothing purchases during July and August. That’s always important, but especially so during these months. Any time you return an item, the store will need to know whether you paid sales tax on it.
- Plan to have funds available by saving between now and that weekend. Delay or cancel other unnecessary purchases so you’ll have the money you need for clothing purchases.
For more information on the Iowa Sales Tax Holiday, visit [www.state.ia.us/tax/educate/holiday1.html](http://www.state.ia.us/tax/educate/holiday1.html)

For more ideas and details about planning for back-to-school spending, contact your County ISU Extension office for a planning guide.

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**News Release**

**2011 Cook This! Teams Named**
*(Includes youth from Allamakee, Winneshiek, Howard Counties)*


The 2011 Cook This! 4-H Culinary Challenge teams have been chosen. Twenty-four teams of Iowa youths are gearing up to compete in the kitchen at the Iowa State Fair.

**2011 Stitch This! Teams Named**
*(Includes youth from Allamakee County)*


Teams for the 2011 Stitch This! 4-H Design Challenge at the Iowa State Fair have been chosen. Nine teams of Iowa teens will tear up and recreate garments that capture the theme, “America the Beautiful.”

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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[www.iowafoodandfitness.org](http://www.iowafoodandfitness.org)  [www.iowafreshfood.com](http://www.iowafreshfood.com)

[www.extension.iastate.edu](http://www.extension.iastate.edu)