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

4-H Judges Training Set

Individuals interested in learning how to judge 4-H projects and exhibits are invited to an upcoming training on February 25 in Independence.

People with skills or expertise in any project area are encouraged to attend this regional training. Participants who complete training are eligible to be included on the Iowa 4-H judges’ database and judge county fairs and 4-H events in their respective project area. Project areas covered include communications, photography, personal development, food and nutrition, agriculture/natural resources and science/technology, in addition to with a session focusing on 4-H judging basics.

Registration will begin at 8:30 AM with the workshop starting at 9:00 AM. Refreshments and handouts are included with the registration fee.

The training program will be held at Immanuel Lutheran Church in Independence. Pre-registration and payment is required by Feb. 15. Contact your local ISU Extension and Outreach office for more information about this opportunity.

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News Release
Contact: Craig Chase, coordinator, Iowa Food and Farm Program and interim coordinator, Leopold Center Marketing and Food Systems Initiative, (515) 294-1854, cchase@iastate.edu; or Laura Miller, Leopold Center communications, (515) 294-5272, lwmillr@iastate.edu

Advisory Council Appointed For Local Food And Farm Program
DES MOINES, Iowa – A six-member advisory council met for the first time to review progress on Iowa’s new Local Food and Farm Program that seeks to increase farmer profitability and the number of jobs in local foods.

Craig Chase, interim coordinator of the Marketing and Food Systems Initiative at the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, coordinates the new state program. He met with the newly appointed Local Food and Farm Program Advisory Council January 17 in Des Moines.

Coordinated within the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS), the advisory council has representatives from IDALS, the Iowa Farmers Union and Iowa Farmers Market Association, plus three people appointed by the Governor’s Office to represent Iowa’s Resource Conservation and Development Areas, a food processor or retailer and an expert in local food systems.

Members are:

- Maury Wills, bureau chief at IDALS and organic apple grower near Adel;
- Rick Hartmann, Iowa Farmers Union and owner of Small Potatoes Farm near Minburn;
- Barb Ristau, Iowa Farmers Market Association board member, Hampton;
- Warren Johnson, Executive Director of the Iowa League of RC&Ds, Chariton;
- Teresa Wiemerslage, coordinator of the Northeast Iowa Food & Farm Coalition and natural beef farmer in Allamakee County, and
- Andrea Geary, local food program manager at the University of Northern Iowa’s Center for Energy and Environmental Education and coordinator of the Northern Iowa Food & Farm Partnership, Cedar Falls.

“The Iowa Local Food and Farm Plan that the Leopold Center prepared for the legislature, and is the basis for this program, had 29 operational recommendations divided into six sections,” Chase said. “We’re looking at major barriers to developing a vibrant food system in Iowa and then at what we could do to eliminate these barriers.”

The six areas are: business development and financial assistance; processing; food safety; issues relevant to beginning, minority and transitioning farmers; program assessment and implementation of local food incentives. Leaders are assessing current challenges and successes, identifying what’s needed, and suggesting future activities.

“Some recommendations from the plan have been accomplished, such as adding a farmer member to the Iowa Food Safety Task Force. Others will require more attention, such as the food safety training that already has begun in northeast Iowa,” he said.

Chase said aggregation, storage, processing and distribution of locally grown food are among the larger issues, but he’s confident those efforts will grow, too.

Learn more about the Iowa Local Food and Farm Program at www.leopold.iastate.edu/marketing/iowa-local-food-and-farm-plan.

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**News Release**

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

**ISU Extension Hosts Milk Quality Workshops**

NORTHEAST IOWA -- With changes in milk quality standards, producers need to be at the top of their game with herd management practices that lead to improved cow health and milk quality. ISU Extension
and Outreach in partnership with area milk, veterinary, nutrition, and milk equipment associates are hosting several workshops to help producers evaluate their own operation’s milk quality standards.

Dr. Leo Timms, ISU Extension Dairy Specialist and recognized expert on udder health topics will start the discussion at each farm. Topics include milking practices, milking equipment, discussion on treatment and problem cows and re-evaluating your somatic cell count.

Three workshops will be held in northeast Iowa: Feb. 27 at the Buddenberg Dairy, 1340 State Hwy 9, Decorah; and Feb. 28 at the Jason Volker Farm, 9141 M. Ave, Maynard. Feb. 29 at Brumm Dairy, 2370 465th Street, Stacyville.

The program will run from 1-3:30 pm. There is no cost to attend, but an RSVP is requested to aid material planning. Please contact the ISU Extension office in Winneshiek County at 563-382-2949 or ISU Dairy Specialist Jennifer Bentley at jbentley@iastate.edu. More details are available at www.extension.iastate.edu/winneshiek.

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**News Release**

Bob Hauer, Consumer Horticulture Specialist, (641) 394-2174, bhauer@iastate.edu
Teresa Wiemerslage, Communications Coordinator, 563-794-0599, wiemer@iastate.edu

Download the new map here.

https://picasaweb.google.com/106185327649991097992/ISUExtensionRegion4ColumnMaterials#5703779369808322130

**New Plant Hardiness Zone Map Has Iowa in Zone 5**

Gardeners and researchers have a new, updated plant hardiness zone map to consider as they make plant selection decisions this year. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) recently released the new version of the map — the first update since 1990 — with much of Iowa now considered Zone 5.

That is—except for most of northeast Iowa. Large portions of Howard, Winneshiek, Allamakee, Fayette and Clayton counties are a few of the places still classified as Zone 4.

Plant hardiness zone designations represent the average annual minimum temperatures at a given location. The new version has 13 zones, two more than the previous map, which were determined by data measured at weather stations during the 30-year period 1976-2005. Each zone is a 10-degree Fahrenheit band, further divided into A and B 5-degree Fahrenheit zones. Zone 5 has a -10 to -20 degree annual minimum average. Compared to the 1990 version, zone boundaries in the new edition of the map have shifted in many areas.

According the USDA, some of the changes in the zones are a result of new, more sophisticated methods for mapping zones between weather stations. These include algorithms that considered for the first time such factors as changes in elevation, nearness to large bodies of water, and position on the terrain, such as valley bottoms and ridge tops. Bob Hauer, ISU Extension horticulturist for northeast Iowa, encourages gardeners to consider the zone map as a guide and remember to factor in location details when making their plant selections.

“It isn’t as simple as concluding that the same plants can be grown in New Hampton and Ames just because both cities are located in Zone 5a,” Hauer said. Hauer said growers also need to consider the differences between rural and urban areas, low-lying areas near streams and hilltops, and other local factors that affect temperatures when making their plant selections.
Hauer said he would not encourage gardeners living in northeast Iowa to immediately plant large numbers of Zone 5 plants. “Over the next few years, gardeners in our area may experiment with a few plants labeled as hardy in Zone 5a, but the most reliable choices for our part of the state are still Zone 4 plants,” he said.

The USDA map is addressing some of the issues pointed out by Hauer, by providing a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based interactive format of the map. Specifically designed to be Internet-friendly, the map website incorporates a "find your zone by ZIP code" function. The intent is to increase accuracy and detail. The new map — jointly developed by USDA’s Agricultural Research Service (ARS) and Oregon State University’s (OSU) PRISM Climate Group — is available online at www.planthardiness.ars.usda.gov. ARS is the chief intramural scientific research agency of USDA.

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News Release
Contact: Teresa Wiemerslage, Communications Coordinator, wiemer@iastate.edu, 563-794-0599
Bob Hauer, Consumer Hort Specialist, bhauer@iastate.edu.

Annual Horticulture Chautauqua Scheduled for March 3

NEW HAMPTON -- March is the month that most gardeners come out of hibernation. Pruning, raking, tilling and clean-up will start in earnest. Iowa State University Extension and Outreach can help you ease into the bustle and have some fun by coming to the 9th Annual Horticulture Chautauqua in New Hampton.

The Chautauqua was popular 100 years ago when people attended lectures for current information. Today, everything is on the internet, but it is still hard to beat a real person who can answer your questions!

The Northeast Iowa Horticulture Chautauqua will be held on Saturday, March 3 from 9 am to 3 pm at the New Hampton Middle School. Twelve presentations will be offered covering a wide variety of topics. Participants will choose four sessions to attend that day.

The topics are diverse. Learn about plant care by attending a session on prairie and native plants, growing mini-hostas, and great woody plants for the landscape. Learn about garden projects featuring natural materials including baskets and wreaths. Enjoy your bounty by learning about container vegetables, growing blueberries and cool season gardening. All sessions feature local experts and resources.

Advanced registration is due March 1 and includes lunch. The program is coordinated by the Iowa State University Extension Consumer Horticulture Program in northeast Iowa.

More information about the Chautauqua is available from your local ISU Extension office or online at www.extension.iastate.edu/chickasaw.

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News Release
Contact: Linda Kruse, Mitchell Co. WLL, 641-737-2237

Crop Insurance Women Can Understand

OSAGE - The Mitchell County Women, Land and Legacy is hosting a discussion about crop insurance on February 15. Over a hundred crops are insurable with federally subsidized crop insurance and many are
also eligible for half a dozen other kinds of policies. Come to the meeting to hear answers and how insurance varies from county to county.

Derek Mauser from Mauser Insurance Company will share his expertise and talk about choices for crop insurance. The meal is sponsored by Little Cedar Coop Elevator and Northern Country Coop. The program and facilities are sponsored by Mauser Insurance Company, Johnson Chemical and ISU Extension and Outreach.

The meeting will be held at the Cedar River Complex Krapek Family Fine Arts Center Conference Room (North of the high school), 809 Sawyer Drive, in Osage. At 5:30 pm a light meal (soup/sandwich) will be served with the presentation starting at 6:00 pm.

RSVP’s are encouraged but not required. Please RSVP to FSA at 641-732-3735 or NRCS at 641-732-5504 by February 10.

USDA is an equal opportunity employer, lender, and provider. For special needs, please contact NRCS.

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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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