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News Release
Contact: Sue Barnes, Howard County Extension, 563-547-3001, skbarnes@iastate.edu

ISU Extension Hosts Agriculture Outlook Meeting
Iowa State University Extension & Outreach will host an Agriculture Outlook Seminar in Cresco, January 14 starting at 11:00 a.m. The site is the Expo Center on the Howard County Fairgrounds at 220 7th St W, Cresco.

The seminar is designed to provide agribusiness professionals and producers with an evaluation of current and outlook market conditions and information on current topics in agriculture.

Joe Kerns, Kerns and Associates, will give an outlook for crops and livestock. Kerns will discuss the market outlook for corn and soybeans. The Midwest has experienced extreme weather variability in 2013; how big is the 2013 crop and what will happen to supply and demand in the coming months? Kerns will also be discussing how the livestock industry may respond to current production costs and future demand. What will lower grain prices and the current global economy mean for the future of the agriculture industry?

Roger McEowen, Center for Ag Law and Taxation, will discuss the top legal issues in agriculture today. McEowen will also address the tax and legal changes that will affect producers in the coming year.

Other topics covered at the meeting include weather and nutrient reduction strategy. A weather outlook will be given by John Wetenkamp, National Weather Service, La Crosse. He will also discuss weather trends, current drought status, and related weather impacts on agriculture. The nutrient reduction strategy will be discussed by Terry Basol, ISU Extension & Outreach, and Neil Shaffer, Howard County SWCD.

Meeting registration begins at 10:30 a.m. with the program starting at 11:00 a.m. Program includes lunch will conclude by 3:30 p.m.

This program is sponsored by A&K Feed & Grain, Art's Mill, Big Gain – Iowa Division, Cresco Bank & Trust, CUS Bank, Farmers Feed & Grain, Farmers Mill/Seed Solutions, First Security Bank & Trust, Innovative Ag Services, ISUEO Howard County, Peoples Savings Bank, Sovereign Grain, and Winneshiek Co-op.
The registration fee is $5.00 per person by January 8 and $10 per person for late registration. This fee includes all meeting materials and lunch. Phone registration is required on or before Wednesday, January 8 by calling (563) 547-3001.

News Release
Contact: Jennifer Bentley, Extension Dairy Field Specialist, 563-382-2949, jbentley@iastate.edu

ISU Dairy Days Feature Profitable Dairy Practices

Iowa dairy producers will have the opportunity to hear Iowa State University Extension Specialists share information on emerging dairy industry issues at the 2014 ISU Extension Dairy Days scheduled at seven eastern Iowa locations between January 20 and February 6.

The ISU Extension Dairy Team conducts this workshop each winter to help producers make herd management decisions based on the latest research. This year producers will learn about Grass/Legume Forage Mixtures for Dairy from Brian Lang or Mark Carlton, ISU Extension Field Agronomists. Kristen Schulte, Extension farm management specialist or Larry Tranel, ISU Extension Dairy Specialist will discuss Contracting Corn Silage for Your Dairy. Melissa O’Rourke, ISU Extension Farm Management Specialist will provide information on the Top Legal Issues Dairy Producers Should Know; and Jenn Bentley, ISU Extension Dairy Specialist or Lee Kilmer, Extension Dairy specialist and Professor of Animal Science, will discuss producer surveys on calf management practices.

After lunch, Dr. Lee Kilmer or Jenn Bentley will discuss best management practices with Leave No Dairy Calf Behind. Dan Huyser Extension Ag Engineer will share information on Calf Facilities and Repurposing Buildings. Dr. Leo Timms or Dr. Lee Kilmer will share information on Optimizing Your Heifer Enterprise. The final segment will include an interactive survey and discussion with Extension Dairy Field Specialists on Dairy Herd Management Practices.

Dairy Days will be offered at seven locations: Jan. 20 in Riceville, Jan. 21 in Calmar, Jan. 22 in Waverly, Feb. 3 in Bloomfield, Feb. 4 in Kalona, Feb. 5 in Holy Cross, and Feb. 6 in Ryan. Registration starts at 9:30 am and the program will conclude by 3:00 pm. Details about each date are available from your county ISU Extension office.

A $15 registration fee covers the noon meal and proceedings costs. Pre-registration is requested by the Friday before each event to reserve a meal. Vouchers may be available from local ag-service providers or veterinarians. To register online visit www.tinyurl.com/dairydays

For more information contact your local county ISU Extension & Outreach office or your local dairy specialist, Jenn Bentley at 563-382-2949 or Larry Tranel at 563-583-6496

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News Release
Contact: Denise Schwab, Beef Program Specialist, 319-721-9624, dschwab@iastate.edu

Conference Focuses on Midwestern Beef Advantages

Midwestern farmers are continually challenged by the need to feed a growing world while protecting and conserving our natural resources. However, the Midwest has an advantage compared to other regions of the United States due to our good soils, adequate rainfall, and intensive animal production systems. Livestock manure not only provides nutrients for crop production, but also helps to improve soil quality.

The most overlooked value of manure is its ability to improve soil bulk density, aggregation, organic matter, and biological activity. “The increase in soil microbial activity provides the foundation for the increase in organic matter in the soil,” says Dr. Jerry Hatfield, Director of the Laboratory for Agriculture and the Environment at ISU. “Organic matter increases are necessary for any improvement in soil quality.
and continual soil biological activity is needed as the sustaining factor in providing the mechanism for incorporating manure into a valuable soil resource."

Hatfield’s team used on-farm evaluations of manure management to demonstrate that the combination of reducing tillage by utilizing strip tillage systems as a method of incorporating liquid manure greatly improved soil quality. The increased aggregate stability increases the infiltration rate of rainfall into the soil and also decreases the potential for soil erosion.

The value of manure cannot be overlooked and Midwestern agricultural systems have the potential to become more efficient in the utilization of the natural resources, e.g., water, nutrients, and light, with the incorporation of manure as part of the management system. Improvement of soil quality provides the foundation for enhanced crop production and resilience to climate variability.

Hatfield’s project will be featured at the upcoming Driftless Region Beef conference Jan. 30 and 31, 2014, in Dubuque, Iowa. Several of the speakers will focus on the competitive advantage of integrating beef production and cropping systems in the upper Midwest.

The conference will begin at 1 p.m. on Jan. 30 and continue through 11:45 a.m. on Jan. 31. Thursday’s afternoon program will focus on the competitive advantage of grain and beef production systems, with an evening discussion focused on extending the grazing season with cover crops and annuals. Friday morning’s program includes three breakout sessions for feedlot operations and three for cow-calf producers.

Registration for the conference is $80 before Jan. 15 or $100 after Jan. 15. Additional information about the conference is available at www.aep.iastate.edu/beef. Registration will open for the conference on Dec. 1.

The Driftless Region Beef Conference is sponsored by the University of Illinois Extension, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, the University of Minnesota Extension, and University of Wisconsin Extension. The planning team strives to deliver the latest in research-based information regarding the beef cattle industry. For more information or to receive a brochure, contact Denise Schwab at 319-721-9624.

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For information about local Extension events and programs, contact:

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