ISU Extension Scheduling Farm Bill Overview Meetings

Iowa farmers and landowners will learn about the new programs authorized by the Agricultural Act of 2014 (commonly referred to as the Farm Bill) at informational meetings conducted by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and local USDA Farm Service Agency staff members. Meetings will be held across the state to explain options available under the new Farm Bill.

Farm Bill – Program Overview meetings will focus on the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC) that will be administered by USDA Farm Service Agency, and the Supplemental Coverage Option (SCO) administered by USDA Risk Management Agency through federal crop insurance providers.

“Extension farm management specialists are prepared to discuss decisions farmers and landowners need to make in the coming months regarding Price Loss Coverage, and Agricultural Risk Coverage Individual and County options,” said Chad Hart, ISU Extension and Outreach economist and program coordinator. “Local FSA staff members who administer the programs will be available to answer questions.”

The timeline for when decisions need to be made along with information about online Farm Bill decision tools also will be shared at the meetings. Topics that will be covered during the meetings include base reallocation, yield updating, price loss coverage, ag risk coverage, and dairy and crop disaster programs.

Meetings are planned throughout northeast Iowa in November and December, including: Nov. 5 and Nov. 18 in Elkader; Nov. 13 and Nov. 19 in West Union, Nov. 13 and Nov. 25 in Cresco, Nov. 14 in New Hampton, Nov. 17 in Waukon, and Dec. 3 and Dec. 10 in Calmar.

Farm Bill meetings for upcoming months continue to be added to the ISU Extension and Outreach Statewide calendar at www.extension.iastate.edu. For the most current listing of meeting locations, dates and times, contact your county ISU Extension office.
For Immediate Release
Contact: Teresa Wiemerslage, Regional Program Coordinator, 563-794-0599, wiemer@iastate.edu

**2015 Nutrition Calendars Available**

With its 2015 Healthy & Homemade calendar, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach is making healthy, home-cooked meals easier than ever!

Each month features an easy-to-prepare recipe plus menu ideas and an activity tip. The calendar supports MyPlate messages from USDA about balancing calories and avoiding oversized portions and also includes preparation and storage tips. Each month, an illustration shows a complete menu and gives the MyPlate breakdown of proportions.

The calendar has many other key features, including space for goals, daily activity tracking and appointments, as well as menu photos.

Each menu also includes a nutrition analysis that looks just like a package label. The back pages of the calendar provide tips for increasing family meals and conversation starters for children of different ages.

The Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative (FFI) is proud to be a sponsor of the 2015 Nutrition Calendar in Allamakee, Clayton, Chickasaw, Howard, Fayette and Winneshiek counties. Contact the county Iowa State University Extension and Outreach office in those counties for your free copy.

The FFI is working to create community environments that support access to locally grown, healthy, affordable food and safe environments for physical activity and play. Learn more at [www.iowafoodandfitness.org](http://www.iowafoodandfitness.org).

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

**Iowa Food Hub Benefits from USDA Grant for Local Food Promotion**

The United States of Agriculture (USDA) recently announced the awards for the Local Food Promotion Program (LFPP). One of the grants was awarded to Upper Explorerland Regional Planning Commission in partnership with the Iowa Food Hub.

Iowa Food Hub (IFH) will receive $88,000 to implement a regional branding campaign to further increase local food recognition on rural grocery store shelves within its service area. IFH is an outgrowth of the Northeast Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative and its partners including ISU Extension and Luther College.

Launched in 2012, IFH is sponsored by the 501c3 nonprofit, Allamakee New Beginnings. What started as several small pilot projects renting cooler space at a grocery store in Decorah, has grown into a food distribution business helping over 50 northeast Iowa farms connect to markets and buyers within a 150 mile radius. IFH currently has over $30,000 of sales a month.

"We connect farmers to markets," said Nick Mabe, IFH Coordinator. "The food hub is not a retail business. Rather, we provide the infrastructure to connect public and private schools, hospitals, universities, grocery stores and workplaces to good food grown by our region’s farmers."
IFH recently announced plans to relocate to West Union to accommodate their growth and expansion. Some of the grant funds will be used to install cold storage at their new location and to hire additional staff.

The food hub focuses on small and medium-sized farm viability, food access and equality, local economic development, job creation and retention, beginning and established farmers, food system research and education.

USDA’s Ag Marketing Service awarded over $27 million in competitive grants to expand marketing through the new Local Food Marketing Promotion Program (LFPP) and the Farmers Market Promotion Program (FMPP). LFPP will invest millions annually in marketing and promotion activities for local food enterprises including food hubs, aggregation businesses, local food processors, farm to institution activities and other similar efforts. The LFPP is authorized through the Agricultural Act of 2014 (the 2014 Farm Bill).

Learn more about Iowa Food Hub and its services at www.iowafoodhub.com.

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For Immediate Release
Contact: Teresa Wiemerslage, Regional Program Coordinator, 563-794-0599, wiemer@iastate.edu

Local Schools Celebrate Farm to School Month

Northeast Iowa schools, students and agricultural producers will celebrate National Farm to School Month in October. The celebration is designed to increase awareness about the benefits of rapidly growing Farm to School initiatives around the country.

Farm to School is alive and growing in northeast Iowa schools because of the support of the NE Iowa Food and Fitness Initiative (FFI). Adopted in 2009 as a way to connect children to agriculture and their food, NE Iowa Farm to School is led by staff of Iowa State University Extension and Outreach and Luther College Center for Sustainable Communities.

During the month, students across the region will enjoy locally grown foods for lunch. Participating schools may also schedule visits to nearby farms, offer volunteer opportunities for community members, work in the school gardens and engage in other Farm to School activities that are a priority in their districts.

“Farm to School benefits our students, their families, communities, farmers and the local economy. It’s a positive on so many levels and Farm to School Month is a great way to celebrate that success,” said Teresa Wiemerslage, Iowa State University Extension Program Coordinator.

“Parents, students and educators know that good nutrition is essential if our kids are to be healthy and ready to learn. Small- and mid-size farmers whose products have largely been absent from America’s lunch trays can offer our children fresh, minimally processed choices and a chance to learn how and where their food is grown,” said Wiemerslage. “Farm to School is good for our kids and for our farmers.”

In the 2013-14 school year, NE Iowa schools purchased over $33,000 of products from local farms. The schools are on track to exceed that mark this year thanks to services provided by the Iowa Food Hub – a local food distribution business.

Grant funds from the USDA, the Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture and the NE Iowa Food & Fitness Initiative are allowing the food hub to study the logistics and challenges of marketing locally-grown and minimally-processed foods to schools.

You can learn more about NE Iowa Farm to School at www.iowafoodandfitness.org/wegrow.
School specific information
Local products purchased by schools in October from Iowa Food Hub:
Allamakee CSD: apples, broccoli, cabbage, squash, yogurt, green peppers, pork, frozen strawberries, watermelon.
Central CSD: apples, cabbage, carrots, cucumbers, squash, sweet potatoes, watermelon.
Clayton Ridge CSD: butter, carrots, cucumbers, cauliflower, salad turnips, watermelon.
Decorah CSD: Cabbage, pork, potatoes, sweet potatoes, watermelon.
N. Winn CSD: apples, butter, carrots, ground pork, yogurt
North Fayette CSD: apples, pears, watermelon, salad greens
Oelwein CSD: sweet corn, cabbage, squash
Postville CSD: apples, baby potatoes, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, tomatoes, cucumbers, yogurt, green peppers, frozen strawberries, watermelon
Riceville CSD: watermelon, tomatoes, cucumbers
S. Winn CSD: watermelon
Turkey Valley CSD: pears, pork roasts, yogurt
Valley CSD: apples, tomatoes
West Central CSD: apples, onions, pears, tomatoes, watermelon

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For Immediate Release
Contact: Jenn Bentley, Extension Dairy Field Specialist, 563-382-2949, jbentley@iastate.edu

Midwest Dairy School is Focused on Robotic Milking Systems

Dairy producers interested in utilized robotic milking systems on their farm are encouraged to attend this year’s Midwest Dairy School on Maximizing Robotic Milking Systems.

This year the Midwest Dairy School will provide you with more in-depth information on robotic milking systems specifically with research and nutrition.

This program, set for November 13 from 9:30am – 2:30pm, is open to dairy producers, students, lenders and industry persons. ISU Extension and Outreach, the Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation and Northeast Iowa Community College are hosts for the annual event.

Marcia Endres, University of Minnesota Associate Professor and Extension Dairy Scientist, will share her findings from her research study on 52 dairy farms in Minnesota and Wisconsin that use robotic milking systems. Participants will then have an opportunity to take part in a Q and A while visiting an active robotic milking system at Iowa’s Robotic Dairy Center.

After lunch the program will continue with nutrition information from Jim Salfer, Dairy Extension Educator from University of Minnesota Extension. The day will conclude with a panel of dairy producers utilizing robotic milking systems along with area nutritionists feeding robotic herds.

This program is free of charge, generously supported by local businesses. Register now by calling NICC 800-728-2256, ext. 399 or register on line at www.nicc.edu/solutions by Thursday, November 6.

If you have any questions on the Midwest Dairy School for Maximizing Robotic Milking Systems, please contact Kyra Bellrichard at NICC 563-562-3263, ext. 380, Megan Kregel 563-534-9957, ext. 107 or Jennifer Bentley at ISU Extension and Outreach.

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For information about local Extension events and programs, contact:
Allamakee: Julie Christensen, 563-568-6345, juliechr@iastate.edu
Chickasaw: Danielle Day, 641-394-2174, daday@iastate.edu
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
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