

TIES TO THE LAND NEWSLETTER
RACINE KENOSHA MILWAUKEE FARM SERVICE
AGENCY
1012 VINE ST.
UNION GROVE, WI 53182



Racine Kenosha Milwaukee County NRCS Office
1012 Vine St., Union Grove, WI 53182
262-878-1243 x3
Website: www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov

Ties to the Land Newsletter



October-December 2015

DIRECTORY OF AGENCIES

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Racine County Land Conservation Division

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Kenosha County Land and Water Conservation

19600 75th St., Suite 185-3, Bristol, WI 53104 (262) 857-1900

Kenosha County UW-Extension

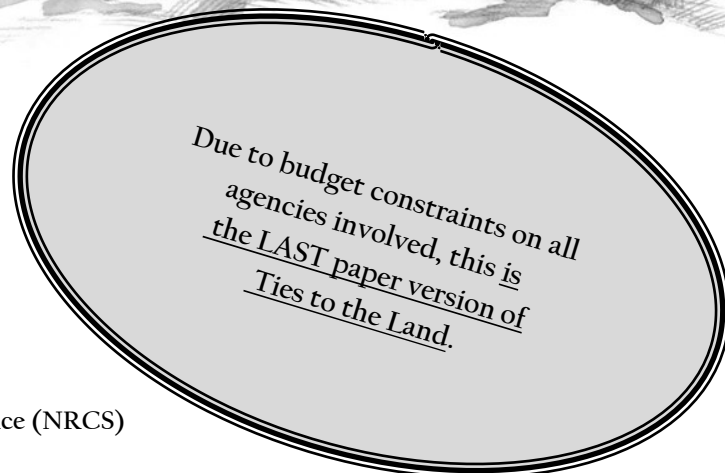
19600 75th St., Suite 2, Bristol, WI 53104 (262) 857-1945

Racine County UW-Extension

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Racine Kenosha Milwaukee Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS)

1012 Vine St., Union Grove, WI 53182 (262)878-1243 x 3



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Farmers, ranchers, and private forest landowners can now do business with USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) through a new online portal. [Conservation Client Gateway](#) gives producers the ability to work with conservation planners online to access Farm Bill programs, request assistance, and track payments for their conservation activities.

Conservation Client Gateway enables farmers, ranchers and private landowners to securely:

- Request NRCS technical and financial assistance;
- Review and sign conservation plans and practice schedules;
- Complete and sign an application for a conservation program;
- Review, sign and submit contracts and appendices for conservation programs;
- Document completed practices and request certification of completed practices;
- Request and track payments for conservation programs; and
- Store and retrieve technical and financial files, including documents and photographs.

Conservation Client Gateway is entirely voluntary, giving producers a choice between conducting business online or traveling to a USDA service center. Customers can log in 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, to electronically sign documents. Through Conservation Client Gateway, producers have their conservation information at their fingertips and they can save time and gas money by reducing the number of trips to USDA service centers.

Conservation Client Gateway is available to individual landowners and will soon be extended to business entities, such as Limited Liability Corporations. It is part of the agency's ongoing Conservation Delivery Streamlining Initiative, which will feature additional capabilities in the future.

For more information about Conservation Client Gateway, visit: www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway

UW-EXTENSION LEARNING STORE

Curious about apple varieties suitable to Wisconsin growing conditions or interested in identifying the weeds popping up in your pasture? Visit the UW-Extension Learning Store at www.learningstore.uwex.edu. The Learning Store offers over 900 fact sheets, guides and other publications developed by Cooperative Extension researchers and staff to support healthy and financially secure families, food safety, environmental issues, agriculture and farming, community and economic development.

ESTABLISHING LAND RENTAL AGREEMENTS

As we move through fall into winter, farmers and landowners are already thinking about plans for next year. One important item many will be addressing is farmland rental. Here are a few tips to consider when establishing and negotiating a rental arrangement.

1. Determine the appropriate type of lease. There are generally three types of leases: fixed-cash leases, crop-share leases, or flexible leases. In a fixed-cash lease, the tenant pays a fixed price for land rental – these are very common in agriculture and typically only last one season. Crop-share leases allow the landowner and tenant to share in the risks and rewards of farming, with both parties contributing to input costs and receiving a share of the crop. Flexible leases allow the final rental rate to vary as market prices and/or crop yields vary, or as revenue per acre exceeds targets. With lower crop prices expected over the coming years and input costs not projected to decline any time soon, now may be a good time to renegotiate a fixed-cash rental rate or look into lease agreements that are more flexible and potentially fairer for both the landowner and renter.

2. Determine a fair rental rate. There are several factors that affect rental rates – soil quality and productivity, field location and accessibility, and field size are just a few. This explains why farmland cash-rental rates can vary widely within the same geographic area. To determine a rate that works for both parties, a landowner may consider what others are paying/charging, his/her land ownership costs and desired return on their equity invested in land, and the amount the renter can afford to pay. These are just some beginning considerations to help determine a fair arrangement. For worksheets that can help determine rental rates, visit www.aglease101.org. To get a general sense of what farmland is renting for in Wisconsin counties, visit [www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics by State/Wisconsin/Publications/County Estimates/](http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Wisconsin/Publications/County_Estimates/).

3. Put it in writing. While oral lease agreements are common practice in agriculture, a written lease serves as a reminder to all parties involved of the terms discussed and provides evidence of the lease terms in case a dispute arises at a later date. Even an informal rental agreement between family members can benefit from simply writing down the terms to ensure mutual understanding. At the very least, a basic written rental agreement should include the date the agreement was established, names and addresses of the landlord and the tenant, a basic description of the rented land, the duration of the lease term, the rent or payment amount, and signatures of parties involved. Visit www.aglease101.org to view sample lease forms.

If you have questions on establishing a fair rental rate or developing a lease agreement, contact Leigh Presley, UW-Extension Agriculture Educator for Racine and Kenosha Counties at 262-767-2905 or 262-857-1948.

WISCONSIN FARM ACCOUNT AND RECORD BOOKS AVAILABLE

The Wisconsin Center for Dairy Profitability is placing bulk orders for 8.5" x 11" farm record books for 2016. These will be distributed via UW-Extension offices throughout the state. If you are interested in purchasing a farm record book, please contact Leigh Presley, Kenosha/Racine County UW-Extension Agriculture Educator at 262-857-1948 or 262-767-2905 by October 28th, 2015. Price to vary depending on order amount, but will be less than \$10.00/book.



2016 RACINE COUNTY LAND CONSERVATION TREE AND SHRUB PROGRAM

Please find the enclosed 2016 Tree Order form for Racine County. The ordering deadline is February 26, 2016. Feel free to call 262-886-8440 #3 with any questions regarding the program.

PLANNING GRASSED WATERWAYS IN 2016? PLANT WHEAT THIS FALL

Racine County staff continues to see a high demand for grassed waterways. Gullies can be repaired with technical and cost-share assistance. During this process, staff will visit the site, survey elevations, note existing tile issues, and interpret the best management practice for your location. Planting winter wheat during the fall allows staff to survey and design your project. Staff can put together a construction plan while you have an opportunity to sign all necessary contracts, permits, and related documents to prepare for 2016 construction. After wheat is harvested, this leaves a longer time frame for construction to occur.



KENOSHA COUNTY ANNUAL TREE PROGRAM

A wide variety of trees and shrubs are available for sale through the Kenosha County Tree Program. Kenosha County has offered these native species for more than 25 years and, in that time, nearly one million trees have been sold. The program offers transplants and seedlings of a variety of evergreens, hardwoods and shrubs in bundles of 25 at a cost of \$20-\$25 per bundle. The Kenosha County Tree Order Form is included in this newsletter. If you did not receive an order form, or would like additional copies, just visit our website at <http://www.kenoshacounty.org/DocumentCenter/View/1670>

The deadline for ordering trees is March 4, 2016.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT PLANNING

Nutrient management is a way for Kenosha farmers to ensure that their crops get the right source of nutrients at the right rate, time and place to match crop needs and minimize nutrient losses from fields. A nutrient management plan accounts for all activities on the farm and in individual fields that affect nutrient needs and losses during one crop rotation.

Are you tired of high fertilizer and fuel costs??

Would you like to avoid buying fertilizer your fields do not need??

Do you want to apply only the manure and fertilizer your crops really demand??

Would you like to help protect our groundwater, rivers and lakes??

If you said yes to one or more of these questions then developing a nutrient management plan for your farm may be the answer. Kenosha County Land & Water Conservation may be able to help by providing cost-sharing for nutrient management planning on your farm. You can receive up to \$28 per acre to test your soil and follow a 4-year nutrient management plan for your farm. Apply for your 2015/16 nutrient management planning today. Soil tests can be completed this fall, plans written over the winter and followed in spring. Contact our office to apply for the program at 262-857-1900. If followed, nutrient management plans protect the environment due to less over-application and saves you money.