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Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection, P.O. Box 8911, Madison, WI 53708-8911

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Something Special from Wisconsin™ gift ideas for the holidays

Lois Federman

Looking to avoid last minute shopping this year? Need original gift ideas? Want to keep dollars circulating at home? Consider giving Something Special from Wisconsin™ products certified to have the majority of ingredients or services coming directly from Wisconsin.

"Holiday giving can be a lot sweeter when you shop locally," says Jill Makovec, Wisconsin's 60th Alice in Dairyland. "It's convenient, affordable and fun."

To help you get started, Ms. Makovec has gift ideas from over 30 companies that carry the Something Special from Wisconsin™ logo and is available to talk about them as she makes over 50 media appearances traveling across the state this month.

Gift ideas range from holiday baskets loaded with gourmet confections to award-winning specialty foods and beverages to fine bath accessories and heirloom-quality furniture and travel-inspiring books.

"People feel good when they receive a gift that says, 'Made in Wisconsin'," said Makovec.

You can visit www.savorwisconsin.com for a listing of companies that carry the Something Special from Wisconsin™ logo and follow links to their Web sites for more information. Consumers are invited to purchase Wisconsin products for everyday use in addition to gift giving. The full Something Special from Wisconsin™ membership directory of over 280 companies can be found on the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection website at <http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/mktg/business/gifts/index.jsp>.

"Every dollar spent on locally-made products and services contributes to a strong Wisconsin economy," said Makovec. "Purchasing Wisconsin products positively impacts the quality of life we enjoy in both rural and urban communities."

Something Special from Wisconsin™ is a trademarked marketing program administered by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection. For more information about the program, contact Lois Federman at 608-224-5124.



Herd based diagnostic program nears the end of its first year

Dave Hansen

In January of 2007, the Rural Electric Power Services Program announced the creation of Herd Based Diagnostics, a pilot program that enlists the services of local veterinarians. The local veterinarians conduct preliminary diagnostic tests in herds experiencing mastitis/high somatic cell counts, low production or high cattle losses prior to the REPS staff veterinarian's visit.



Farms wishing to participate in the Herd Based Diagnostic Program must first request program assistance. A REPS veterinarian then discusses and outlines the program with the farmer and the preferred local veterinarian. Instructions for tests, submission forms and test equipment are then sent to the local veterinarian so testing can be initiated. REPS staff are available to provide technical assistance if needed. Two weeks after the local DVM initiates testing, a REPS veterinarian visits the farm to fill in diagnostic gaps and enhance local team building for the farmer. When testing is complete, the REPS veterinarians provide a report including how herd based diagnostic testing influenced recommendations. Following the

recommendations, the local veterinarian and the farmer are able to work together to improve herd health.

Keep in mind that the program is only for farms experiencing high instances of mastitis and/or high somatic cells counts, low milk production or high cattle losses. In all cases the farmer and the local veterinarian must agree to participate. Lab costs for all tests requested by the REPS veterinarian are covered by the REPS program. The program also pays for the local veterinarians time spent on the farm up to \$1,000.

The Herd Based Diagnostic pilot program was given a one year window in which to operate, and new participants continue to be recruited even though the program has yet to obtain all its desired goals. One of the major challenges of the program is the shortage of available time local veterinarians have to participate in the program. Veterinarians often find their days filled with farm calls and doctoring sick animals due to the shortage of large animal vets in Wisconsin and have difficulty finding time to do diagnostic testing and animal wellness work.

We continue to work through these challenges by encouraging as many veterinarians as we can to participate. The REPS program believes strongly that local veterinarians are the most important and most trusted sources of information for health care decisions on farms. Everyone involved in the program desires to include local veterinarians in the herd based diagnostic process so that trust through team building can be achieved and enhancement through follow up diagnostics are delivered. The result of this is the buy-in of recommendations for a positive change on the farm.

Stress of disasters can cause depression in farm families

Kathy Schmitt

Disasters can create a source of stress for farm families. Long after the fields dry out and roads are repaired, people can feel the effects of the stress. One symptom may be feeling depressed. Men often mask mental health issues by working excessively long hours, by isolating themselves or self-medicating with alcohol or drugs. Men are less likely to admit to depression and doctors are less likely to suspect it. Farmers are a hardy, self-reliant bunch, which makes it more difficult for them to reach out for help. The Farm Center has developed a brochure describing symptoms of depression and other mental health issues for farmers. Please contact the Farm Center for copies of the brochure or a downloadable pdf file. There are counseling vouchers available via the Sowing the Seeds of Hope program for farmers, farm family members, and/or farm workers who need to see a counselor, but lack sufficient insurance to do so. Contact the Farm Center for more information.



Sign-up begins December 3 for dairy disaster aid program

Wisconsin Ag
Connection -
11/28/2007

Eligible dairy producers can sign up for the Dairy Disaster Assistance Program at their local Farm Service Agency centers beginning December 3. DDAP-III will help dairy producers recover production losses resulting from a variety of adverse weather conditions in the last few years. The program provides \$16 million in benefits to dairy producers for production losses that occurred between January 1, 2005, and February 28, 2007, because of qualifying natural disasters.

The USDA says the program compensates producers for production losses that resulted from herd losses or dumped milk when dairy plants closed or the natural disaster damaged containment equipment. Additionally, power outages, fuel shortages, and infrastructure damage may have temporarily interrupted the flow of dairy products to markets.

To be eligible for DDAP-III, dairy producers must have suffered losses in primary and contiguous counties declared or designated a natural disaster. Also, producers in counties receiving an FSA Administrator's Physical Loss Notice determination are eligible.

Under proposed rules, USDA will calculate payments to eligible producers by multiplying the eligible pounds by the average price received for commercial milk production in the affected areas during the disaster for 2005 and 2006, and for the months of January and February 2007. If the total amount of funding (less any reserve established for disputed claims) is insufficient to compensate eligible producers for losses, then USDA will pay losses at two levels in an effort to more equitably distribute the limited funds and maximize the effectiveness of the program.

USDA provides more information on proposed DDAP-III provisions in a fact sheet posted online at: <http://disaster.fsa.usda.gov>. It is authorized by the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act.

Friar and Exum join WI Farm Center

Wisconsin Farm Center is proud to announce the addition of Frank Friar and Mike Exum to our staff.

Frank Friar began his position as an Economic Development Consultant on November 12. Friar will head the New and Transitioning Farmer program and will work closely with new dairy and livestock farmers.

Friar recently retired from Badgerland Farm Credit Services after a distinguished 30-year career with the organization. He spent the past nine years as Senior Vice President in charge of Branch Operations for Badgerland's 21 offices and over 130 employees across southern Wisconsin, while also leading the program in some new directions.

Friar will continue the work of Gwen Garvey, coordinator of the Farm Link program, who retired earlier this year.

"I look forward to building on the successes of the Farm Link program and taking on the challenge of helping new farmers succeed," said Friar.

"We are really fortunate to have a person with such a wealth of knowledge and experience taking on this important position in the Farm Center," Paul Dietmann, Farm Center Bureau Chief said of Friar.

Mike Exum will be joining the WI Farm Center December 10th as the new Community Services Specialist. Mike will be working primarily with the Mediation and Arbitration Program and will also be doing communications and program evaluation work across the Bureau.

Mike was raised on a family farm in Green County and continues to operate the farm on a part-time basis. He and his brother have a beef herd and utilize management intensive grazing. He also teaches sociology part-time at MATC. He holds a BS in Sociology and a MS in Continuing and Vocational Education, both degrees from UW-Madison.



**Wisconsin
producers
grow business
through
exporting**

Jen Pino-Gallagher

Today, a trip through most grocery stores is a lesson in geography. Whether its wine from France or grapes from Chile, imported products have made a visit to the supermarket a truly global event.

But, Wisconsin producers are turning the tables on the import/export market and selling more of their Wisconsin-made food and agricultural products overseas. Wisconsin producers are responding to global demand for quality food products and taking advantage of a favorable export environment. As a result, Wisconsin's food products can be found gracing grocery store shelves as far away as China or as near as Canada. From Wisconsin cranberries enjoyed in Japan to cheese shipped to Mexico, Wisconsin's products are finding their way onto grocery shelves and supper tables worldwide.

This year, Wisconsin producers have logged record breaking exports in a variety of categories. Year-to-date, the value of Wisconsin's agricultural exports have exceeded the 2006 total for all agricultural exports. Ag exports for 2007 are on-track to reach a record-breaking \$1.6 billion.

Key growth areas for agricultural exports include dairy products which reached record export levels for the first nine months of 2007, driven by soaring demand in Asia and Latin America. The dollar value of Wisconsin dairy exports increased from \$58 million in 2006 to \$126 million in 2007 – a 115 percent increase compared to the same period the year before. Wisconsin producers of baking ingredients and beverages are also seeing strong export growth.

But the tremendous export growth isn't limited to the human food sector. Sales of dairy genetics, a sector which Wisconsin dominates, have grown by 47% over the same period in 2006.

The State of Wisconsin is helping Wisconsin companies succeed in their exporting efforts. The Wisconsin International Trade Team, comprised of the international divisions at the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection and the Department of Commerce, offers Wisconsin companies exporting service and support. Exporting assistance includes access to market research, assistance with locating distributors, information about upcoming trade shows and access to funds to assist with international promotions. The Wisconsin International Trade Team offers these services through its membership in federally funded export organizations including: Food Export Association of the Midwest, US Livestock Genetics Export council and the US Dairy Export Council.

The trade team works with all types of agricultural companies interested in exporting, whether they are experienced exporters or new to the international export market. Wisconsin producers interested in learning more about the export services available can call the Wisconsin International Trade Team at: 1-800-462-5237 or email:

iabc@datcp.state.wi.us

**Farm Center
partners on
flood response**

Kathy Schmitt

The Wisconsin Farm Center is collaborating with Lutheran Social Services (LSS) *Project Recovery* to help with disaster response for the counties flooded last August. A number of Farm Center volunteers have been hired as peer counselors/outreach specialists by *Project Recovery*. According to Ron Hauser, head of Project Recovery efforts at LSS, Farm Center volunteers have been a valuable asset due to their training and experience. Four volunteers are currently meeting with farmers, townsfolk, and rural residents in the flooded areas. They provide a listening ear, an excellent knowledge of local resources, and for farmers, a ready connection to the Farm Center.

As part of the flood response, the Farm Center is also planning a winter farm couples' weekend retreat. Watch for future details.



Organic dairy workshops

Organic Dairy Workshops 101 for Veterinarians and Other Dairy Professionals

This winter, three workshops on herd health management will be held for veterinarians and other dairy professionals who work with organic dairies. The workshops will be held at the DATCP building in Madison on February 6, in LaCrosse in conjunction with the Upper Midwest Organic Farming Conference on February 22, and on March 13 at the American Legion Hall in Loyal, WI. To receive more information on the workshops, contact Laura Paine, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, at 608-224-5120 or laura.paine@wi.gov.



The third annual manure bio-conversion technology conference

The 3rd Annual Manure Bio-Conversion Technology Conference "The Role of Methane Digesters on Small and Medium Sized Livestock Farms" is slated for Tuesday, January 29 at the Country Springs Conference and Convention Center, Stevens Point, WI. "Quite simply, the conference focus is how to make money from manure," explained Timm Johnson, executive director, Wisconsin Agricultural Stewardship Initiative. "Attendees will learn how to convert manure into value-added products by digestion. Although electricity is an option, this conference will explore other potential products like animal bedding, heat for buildings, and alternative fuels for vehicles," Johnson explained.

Conference speakers include: Jim Harsdorf, operator of a 250-cow dairy in River Falls, WI and former state agriculture secretary. Brandon Moffat, with Conestoga-Rovers, Ontario, Canada. John Vrieze, Emerald and Baldwin Dairies, Baldwin, WI. Rod Nilsestuen, Secretary, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

Conference attendees can also select one of four breakout sessions: Using methane gas to produce electricity and use of micro-turbines; Using methane for heating greenhouses, homes, shops or drying wood; Alternative fuel-vehicles, powered by methane; More efficient separation of liquids and solids for use of bio-solids as animal bedding.

To register visit www.datcp.state.wi.us/registration/wasi.jsp. Or call (608) 224-5041.

The conference is sponsored by the Wisconsin Agricultural Stewardship Initiative in cooperation with the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

Upcoming Events

Ready-Set-Modernize! Seminar for Innovative Dairy Producers

Contact UW-Extension, Abby Huibregtse 920-834-6852

December 6, 2007 Townline Meeting Center, Green Bay

December 12, 2007 Cobblestone creek, Brillion

December 13, 2007 UW Fond du Lac, Fond du Lac

February 15-20, 2008

2008 North American Farmers' Direct Marketing Convention

Kalahari Waterpark Resort Convention Center, Wisconsin Dells, WI

[NAFDMA Annual Convention](#)

ADD Grant applications will be available soon on the DATCP website.

Deadline for applications is March 15, 2008

December						
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