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**Upcoming
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October 26, 2006

Wisconsin Health Care Reform Panel
Sponsored by: Racine Referendum Comm.
Where: City Hall
Time: 6pm-8pm

October 29, 2006

Wisconsin Health Care Reform Panel
Sponsored by: Midvale
Community Lutheran Church
Where: 4329 Tokay Blvd, Madison
Time: TBD

October 30, 2006

Wisconsin Health Care Reform Panel
Sponsored by: Grassroots Citizens of WI
Where: Dodgeville City Council Chambers,
100 E. Fountain St.
Time: 7pm-9pm

November 14, 2006

Wisconsin Health Care Reform Panel
Sponsored by: WI Council on Churches
Monroe United Methodist Church
2227 W. 4th Street
Time: 6:30-8:30 pm

October 27, 2006

Wisconsin Health Care Reform Panel
Sponsored by: SWTC
Where: Room TBD, Fennimore
Time: 9am-12pm

October 29, 2006

Wisconsin Health Care Reform Panel
Sponsored by: Grant Co. Grassroots
Mound City Motor Bank Conference Room
25 E. Pine St., Platteville
Time: 2pm-5pm

November 12, 2006

Wisconsin Health Care Reform Panel
Sponsored by: WI Council on Churches
Ebenezer United Church of Christ,
3215 Saemann Ave, Sheybogan
4-6 pm (depending on end of Packer game)

September						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30

October						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

November						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	28	30		

Celebrating 10 and 20 Years

Matthew Lange

Being able to work one-on-one with farmers and connect with the farm community has been an integral part of the Wisconsin Farm Center since the beginning. In February of 1986 a cornerstone of that effort was built, a toll-free hotline was established enabling farmers to seek financial and legal assistance. Since its inception the Farm Center has taken over 100,000 calls from individuals across the state regarding all types of issues. Whether assisting farmers in financial distress or guiding individuals to become farmers, the Farm Center Hotline has been a premier asset to the farming community. Whether in crisis situations or progressive agricultural development, the Farm Center Hotline will surely prove to help countless more Wisconsinites in the future.

Next spring will mark yet another milestone for the Farm Center as it will celebrate its 10th anniversary. The Farmers Assistance Program, predecessor to the Farm Center, began in 1984 after a committee brought forth recommendations to the WDATCP Board on how to best respond to the severe farm financial crisis. Since that time several programs have been added to the list of services offered to WI farmers. On March 11th and 12 1997, the Farmers Assistance Program and all associated services were brought under one umbrella and christened The WI Farm Center. An excerpt from a 1997 article in The Country Today best signifies the role The Wisconsin Farm Center has played:

"Wisconsin farmers now have a one-stop site for information on everything from financial counseling and farm transfers to small-business development and stray voltage. The Wisconsin Farm Center celebrated its grand opening...with a red tape cutting instead of the traditional ribbon cutting. The gesture symbolized the center's commitment to creating a farmer-friendly resource."

To help celebrate both anniversaries, the Wisconsin Farm Center is re-launching its quarterly newsletter. This will be the first of many to feature articles on various Farm Center programs and services as well as guest articles and calendar events. If you would like to subscribe to this newsletter, please email center@datcp.state.wi.us.

Message from the director

Dave Hansen

Many of you may not be aware that we in the Farm Center and in the Division of Agricultural Development are in the process of reorganizing to better serve the needs of our stakeholders in the agricultural community. It is more of a re-visioning than a re-organizing. We have been working with guidance from the Office of the Secretary to better position ourselves for future needs of our customers.

There are both a number of prospective and existing objectives that we as the Farm Center will be working towards. We want to assist new farmers entering the industry by facilitating access to services. There is a need to assist current farmers with their growth plans, expansion, improved operations, diversification and/or transition to new products and markets. We want to build in capacity for developing more outreach and community support services to meet economic and social needs of farm families and their rural communities. There won't be an addition or reduction of staff but more a redirection of time allocation and resources to meet the objectives.



Through the Years...

1984
Committee Review
of Farm Crisis

1985
Farm Mediation &
Arbitration Begins

1986
Farm Crisis Hotline
1-800-942-2474

1990
Expanded Services to
Financial Analysis

1992-1994
Counseling Services
Expanded

1995
Farm Link Program Begins

1997
WI Farm Center Grand
Opening

2007
Farm Center 10th
Anniversary



Special Guest:

"Alice in Dairyland":

Nicole (Franzen) Reese



Alice in Dairyland a Farmer?

Working through the Wisconsin DATCP, Alice in Dairyland has a strong connection to the Wisconsin Farm Center. Not only does she sit near the wonderful Farm Center staff on her few days in the office, but she also has a strong background in farming and agriculture.

This year's 59th Alice in Dairyland is no exception. I, Nicole (Franzen) Reese grew up on a 70 cow dairy farm in Sheboygan Falls, Wisconsin. The farm is owned by my grandparents and parents. My brother and I also assist in farm operations.

The farm is a tremendous part of my life. I always joke that when I left for college, I was excited to leave the 4:30 a.m. alarm for milking. But once I left, I realized where my heart was. I have a passion for the agriculture industry. It can be extremely demanding and difficult, but also one of the most rewarding careers to be a part of. Believe it or not, I still find time during my busy "Alice" schedule to milk my family's beautiful bovines!

Just like the Alice in Dairyland program has a strong history, the Wisconsin Farm Center will be celebrating its 10th anniversary. As Alice, my role has changed from the first time Alice in Dairyland was selected in 1948 at the Wisconsin State Fair. I no longer deliver cheese to Hollywood Stars, nor do I talk to visitors through a ten foot tall robot at State Fair. Today, Alice in Dairyland serves as a public relations professional who helps increase awareness about agriculture in Wisconsin.

Agriculture is an ever-changing business too. Use the Farm Center to work through your farm's changes with ease. The Farm Center staff is always ready to provide financial counseling, mediation, and linking retiring farmers, who do not want to see their farms disappear, with beginning farmers.

Please remember to take a step back sometimes and think about how much farming means to you. It comes with a lot of frustration and hard times, but it is a way of life that more and more people never get to experience and enjoy!

Drought throughout northwestern WI this year has hurt producers' bottom line. To remedy the disaster, the U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Mike Johanns in late August announced funding for a number of states to help agricultural producers deal with the ongoing drought. As part of that package, the State of Wisconsin was allocated \$575,000 to implement a Livestock Assistance Grant Program. Wisconsin was directed by the USDA to distribute the funds to aid livestock producers whose forage was adversely impacted by the 2006 drought.



The WI Farm Center is coordinating this program and has been working with the USDA as well as producers to establish guidelines for eligibility. USDA selected 13 Wisconsin counties meeting the Category D3 and D4 drought requirement and they include: Ashland, Barron, Bayfield, Burnett, Douglass, Iron, Polk, Price, Rusk, Sawyer, Taylor, and Washburn. Only operators of livestock who suffered forage production losses in eligible counties may receive payments. Assistance may be provided for such things as the cost of replacing lost forage production, supplemental feeding costs, the cost of relocating livestock to new feed supplies, increased feed transportation costs and the cost of emergency water supplies.

Producers may contact the Wisconsin Farm Center at 1-800-942-2474 to be placed on a list in order to receive information regarding the program.

WI Farm Center Coordinates Livestock Assistance Grant Program

Matthew Lange

Growing Wisconsin Farmers Working Group

Gwen Garvey

The Grow Wisconsin Farmers Working Group recently met to develop plans for continuing and improving their efforts to help beginning farmers and farm families contemplating transition.

The most immediate result of the meeting has been the development of a listserve. Several of the prioritized suggestions from the meeting involved improving communication among working group members and also with the public. The listserv is our first step in that direction. You may participate using the following instructions:

To subscribe to the list, send a mail message to imailsrv@listserv.wi.gov with the following in the body of the message: subscribe growwifarmersworkinggroup your_full_name



Scheduling for Fall and Winter workshops is beginning. Here are two workshop series that have been scheduled:

"Returning to the Farm" workshop helps farm families plan for farm succession. Families looking toward the future of their farming operations have many issues to consider. Two issues of extreme importance to the future life of the business is the development of a son, daughter, or partner to be the future manager of the business and creation of a management succession plan. The workshop, called "Returning to the Farm" will help families make these plans. The four-day workshop will be Nov. 3 - 4, 2006 and Feb. 9 - 10, 2007, on the UW-River Falls' campus. For more information about the program and

registration contact Joy Kirkpatrick, UW Center for Dairy Profitability Outreach Specialist at 608-263-3485 or by email joy.kirkpatrick@ces.uwex.edu.

Beginning farmers can learn strategic planning, mediation and negotiating skills at **"AgVentures' Building a Vision"** workshops which will be held in early 2007. The 2007 Workshops are hosted by Buffalo, Pepin and Trempealeau UW-Extension Offices and are scheduled for: County Government Center, Durand, WI: January 23, 30 and February 13. Riverland Energy Cooperative, Arcadia, WI: January 24, 31 and February 14.

If you would like more information on these workshops, please contact the local agent or Jenny Vanderlin, Center for Dairy Profitability, jmvander@wisc.edu, 608-263-7795 or Gwen Garvey, gwen.garvey@datcp.state.wi.us, 800-942-2474.

If you are aware of a local event where the "Grow Wisconsin Farmers Working Group" table top display would be useful, please call Gwen Garvey at 800-942-2474. We have a supply of several excellent publications dealing with farm succession issues and are anxious to share this information.

Health Care Reform Proposals

Kathy Schmitt

Three major health care reform bills are currently working their way through the legislative process. All three provide for substantial changes in Wisconsin health care coverage and offer opportunities for farmers to realize change in their current mode of coverage. For more information about each plan, check out the following or attend one of several Wisconsin Health Care Reform Panels scheduled this fall (see upcoming events).

For more information, visit these web sites:

Wisconsin Health Security Act

(Coalition for Wisconsin Health - Single-payer Plan)

www.wisconsinhealth.org/wiplan.html

Wisconsin Health Care Partnership Plan

(AFL-CIO Plan)

www.wisafclcio.org

Wisconsin Health Plan

(Wisconsin Health Project)

www.wisconsinhealthproject.org/plan/index.htm