



A California law called Prop. 12 could affect swine production in Rock County.

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.....



There's Palmer amaranth in my field. Now what?

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.....



Sen. Weber weighs in on issues facing local farmers.

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.....



Help is available for farmers affected by drought.

See page 11B

State tour highlights agriculture's role in protecting clean water



Doug Bos of the Rock County Soil and Water Conservation District addresses a group of state Clean Water Tour participants at the Rock County Rural Water plant. He points to a row of trees on the horizon that show where the Rock River is. (Mavis Fodness photo)

Rock County ag producers are increasingly called upon to protect soil and water in the communities where they operate

By Lori Sorenson

Despite living in the land of 10,000 lakes, Minnesotans aren't guaranteed quality water, especially safe drinking water.

This is especially true in southwest Minnesota where shallow wells and aquifers that feed water supplies are increasingly contaminated by practices that increase nitrogen levels.

A busload of state and local leaders with Minnesota's Clean Water Council took a field trip earlier this month through southwest Minnesota to tour projects funded by the state's Clean Water Legacy Act.

"We've been working with farmers since 2014 and big credit goes to them for making changes in their nitrogen application. Some of these practices help, but what we know from experience is that perennial grasses make the difference."

— Doug Bos, Rock County Land Management

One of the stops on the tour was the Rock County Rural Water main plant southeast of Luverne and the wellhead area surrounding it.

Doug Bos of the Rock County Land Management Office addressed the group on that part of the tour. "We struggle to

find good clean water," Bos said. "We have big demand for what we're able to produce."

Rock County's Rural Water Wellhead is considered a "nitrate hot spot"

Wellhead protection/see page 14B

'Kanaranzi Greens' working to promote farm-to-table eating

Farmers Market seller Ainsworth strives to sell fresh, safe food to the public

By Mavis Fodness

First-year Luverne Farmers Market seller Andrew Ainsworth admits 2021 is a learning year for his new business called Kanaranzi Greens.

Despite starting a garden plot from scratch and learning

how to properly manage growing crops, Ainsworth is planning to sell his homegrown leafy green and root vegetables to the public again next year. "I feel it's been a huge success,"

Kanaranzi Greens/see 3B

This year was the first growing season for Andrew Ainsworth and his Kanaranzi Greens at the Luverne Farmers Market. He focuses on growing leafy greens and root vegetables in his garden located in Kanaranzi Township. He's pictured here with some fresh green beans. His business started as a way to provide fresh food for his family of five and expanded to sell his produce at the Luverne Farmers Market. (Mavis Fodness photo)



California’s Proposition 12 (Prop 12) ballot initiative creates implications for how Minnesota farmers can raise pigs

By Kevin Barnhard
Vice president, Rock
County Pork Producers

The United States is one of the leading producers of pork in the world, and Minnesota is the No. 2 pork-producing state in the country.

Pig farmers and the businesses and industries that support the raising and harvesting of pigs are critical to delivering safe, nutritious pork to customers in Minnesota, across the country, and around the globe.

Minnesota is home to more than 3,000 family pig farms that sell nearly 17 million pigs each year. That’s a lot of pork that leaves Minnesota.

Unfortunately, vague questions put on ballots in other states are creating implications for how Minnesota farmers can raise pigs.

California’s Proposition 12 (Prop 12) ballot initiative is an important issue that will have a large impact on Minnesota farmers if and when it is enacted.

Prop 12 was brought forward and promoted by animal activist organizations in California.

The proposed rule language includes certain restrictions and specifications related to how pigs, specifically mother pigs called sows, can be housed and the number of square feet required for each animal.

It stipulates that any fresh pork products sold into the California market must meet those guidelines.

Pig farmers have many concerns about the rules that were originally intended to protect animal welfare. There are many unintended consequences to raising pigs ac-



“Pig farmers have concerns about the rules that were originally intended to protect animal welfare. ... including increased animal well-being challenges, worker safety concerns and a larger impact on the environment due to additional space, water, electricity and heating needs.

cording to Prop 12 guidelines including increased animal well-being challenges, worker safety concerns and a larger impact on the environment due to additional space, water, electricity and heating needs.

The additional space requirement actually contradicts the progress and understanding farmers have developed on how to best manage animals to promote health and well-being while reducing injury to both animals and workers.

Pigs are social animals and will form and maintain their hierarchy within their group or herd. This can cause



California’s Proposition 12 (Prop 12) ballot initiative is an important issue that will have a large impact on Minnesota farmers if and when it is enacted. The proposed rule language includes certain restrictions and specifications related to how pigs, specifically mother pigs called sows, can be housed and the number of square feet required for each animal.

aggressive fighting between animals as they establish dominance.

The proposed rule would also limit how much time a sow can be separated in an individual pen for breeding, medical care or recovery, further limiting critical tools farmers have to care for their animals.

Worker safety is a top priority for pig farmers, and Prop 12 brings the potential for more worker injuries. Sows can range from 300-500 pounds and can be aggressive when establishing their pecking order; working in those conditions requires much

care and training to keep the animals and people safe.

Prop 12 stipulates that each sow needs 24 square feet of space, compared to the common practice of 18-20 square feet.

This means more air space and floor space will be required in the barn beyond what the sow needs to be comfortable and safe.

This means wasted energy, water and space, making the farm less environmentally efficient.

Prop 12 is set to go into effect Jan. 1, 2022; however, the official language hasn’t been announced, leaving farmers

in Minnesota and other states with much uncertainty about what will be required of them to be compliant with Prop 12.

Ultimately, this impacts the California consumer. As a state, California represents 15 percent of all pork consumption in the U.S. Many Californians have ethnic traditions where pork is a staple of their diet.

Prop 12 will certainly raise the cost of pork products for California consumers. Furthermore, it will disproportionately impact those who struggle with food insecurity or access to lean, healthy proteins.

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Kanaranzi Greens gardener working to promote farm-to-table eating/continued from page 1B

he said. “If it weren’t for the Farmers Market this year, it wouldn’t have gone as well as it has.”

Through tips, trial and error, and some hard work, Ainsworth began to see his business flourish each week.

His best compliment was when lines formed at his market table in Luverne Thursday afternoons.

“That alone I feel like I’m succeeding,” he said.

Ainsworth focuses on growing leafy greens including kale, spinach, beet greens, romaine lettuce, Swiss chard and arugula.

The root vegetables include turnips, eggplant, broccoli, cauliflower, parsnips, carrots, radishes and kohlrabi. He also sells fresh herbs.

Ainsworth’s charge into the Farmers Market began several years ago when he and his wife, Jennifer, began to examine the food they were supplying to their three young boys.

They also felt a disconnect in teaching their sons where food comes from.

Ainsworth started out small — raising and butchering broilers near the family’s suburban home in Lincoln, Nebraska.

As family members placed their first batch of home-grown chickens in the freezer, news about a recall due to possible metal in the meat made the work raising and processing their own food worthwhile.

He shared the recall with Jennifer. “Isn’t it nice we don’t have to worry about this?” he asked.

The couple continues to raise broilers now on their Rock County acreage, selling what the family doesn’t need for themselves.

They keep the poultry in mobile coops, which Ainsworth moves daily to a different grass area for them to feed.

“Our animals truly only have one bad day and that is their last day,” he said.

Laying hens are allowed to roam the acreage after egg laying is finished by late morning. He also offers the eggs for sale at the Farmers Market.

The star of his business, however, is the garden.

Kanaranzi Greens takes its name from Kanaranzi Township.

The Ainsworths moved to Rock County

Kanaranzi Greens/see continued on 5B



Mavis Fodness photo/Ag Mag Kanaranzi Greens

Laying hens gather outside the coop at Kanaranzi Greens (above). Along with fresh greens and root vegetables, Kanaranzi Greens also offers fresh eggs (below, left). Fresh Swiss chard waits to be harvested (below, right).



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Ask a Trooper: Farm equipment may travel over center with proper flashing hazard lights, all must share the road

By Sgt. Troy Christianson
Minnesota State Patrol

Question: I followed a tractor that had triple wheels on each side and took up half the lane of oncoming traffic.
Following vehicles could not pass and oncoming traffic had to take the shoulder.

Answer: Farm equipment may be driven or towed to the left of the center of a roadway only if it is escorted at the front by a vehicle displaying hazard warning lights visible in normal sunlight.
The equipment also must not extend into the left half of the roadway more than is necessary.

Some of those combine headers are quite big. So if someone is not being escorted, they would be required to remove the header and tow it on the highway.

Motorists traveling on Minnesota highways this fall need to be aware of large farm equipment transporting crops to markets, grain elevators and processing plants.

Farm equipment is large and heavy, making it hard for operators to accelerate, slow down and stop.

The machines also make wide turns and sometimes cross over the center line.

In addition, farm vehicles can create large blind



Farm equipment is large and heavy, making it hard for operators to accelerate, slow down and stop. Machinery also makes wide turns and sometimes crosses over the center line. In addition, farm vehicles can create large blind spots, making it difficult for operators to see approaching vehicles.

Farm equipment may be driven or towed to the left of the center of a roadway only if it is escorted at the front by a vehicle displaying hazard warning lights visible in normal sunlight. The equipment also must not extend into the left half of the roadway more than is necessary. ...Motorists should always slow down and use caution when approaching farm equipment.

spots, making it difficult for operators to see approaching vehicles.

All of these factors can cause serious crashes.

The biggest factors contributing to farm equipment/vehicle crashes are inattention and speed.

Motorists should always slow down and use caution when approaching farm equipment.

Motorists should:
•watch for debris dropped by trucks hauling crops.

It is safer to brake or drive through debris than to veer into oncoming cars or off the road.

•wait for a safe place to pass.
•wear seat belts.
•drive with headlights on at all times.

Farm equipment operators should:
•use lights and flashers to make equipment more visible.

•use slow-moving vehicle emblems on equipment traveling less than 30 mph.

•consider using a follow vehicle when moving equipment, especially at night.

You can avoid a ticket — and a crash — if you sim-

ply buckle up, drive at safe speeds, pay attention and always drive sober. Help us drive Minnesota toward zero deaths.

For questions concerning traffic-related laws or issues in Minnesota, contact Sgt. Troy Christianson — Minnesota State Patrol at 2900 48th Street NW, Rochester MN 55901-5848, troy.christianson@state.mn.us



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Mavis Fodness photo/Ag Mag Kanaranzi Greens

Andrew Ainsworth waters his growing plants at Kanaranzi Greens — something he said he needed to do frequently this year due to drought conditions.

Kanaranzi Greens gardener working to promote local farm-to-table eating/continued from page 3B

in July 2020 to an acreage formerly owned by Jennifer’s grandparents, Mable and Knute Gyberg.

Ainsworth started fresh greens and root vegetables from organic seeds in the basement of the family home before transferring the seedlings to his 40- by-60-foot fenced-in garden.

For the market, the produce is triple-washed and bagged either as a single ingredient or as a bag of green salad or spice brassica mix.

Ainsworth feeds his family of five from the same garden.

“We want to make sure we are providing good produce for our customers as well as our family,” he said.



Kanaranzi Greens/see 16B Cherry tomatoes ripen on the vine at left. At right, a space in the basement of the Andrew and Jennifer Ainsworth home is devoted to starting seeds.

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September Weed of the Month: Palmer amaranth is in my field. Now what?'

**By Anthony Cortilet,
Minnesota Department
of Agriculture**

Palmer amaranth is a national example of how damaging invasive species can be. Estimates of heavy yield losses in row crops have been staggering in states that have widespread Palmer populations. These yield losses have led to fear and anxiety in agricultural communities that have not experienced infestations.

This increased awareness of a potential problem creates a situation where farmers are actively on the lookout for any suspect plants in their fields, enabling them to be proactive in the identification and elimination of this weed on their land.

In 2016, after years of reports that Palmer amaranth was moving into the Upper Midwest from its native origin of northwestern Mexico and the southeastern United States, infestations were confirmed in southwestern Minnesota.

Over 30 landowners were impacted by contaminated seed sown for their newly contracted Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) acres. The Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) responded to the situation quickly and began assisting farmers with eradication.

Since then, Palmer has been found in 11 counties within the state and that number is expected to increase.

The MDA's experience working with farmers impacted by this troublesome species over the past five years has shown the critical role they provide by scouting, monitoring, and treating new and current Palmer amaranth infestations. In fact, almost all of Minnesota's confirmed Palmer reports were initiated by a farmer or their crop consultant.

Minnesota's success with Palmer eradication resulted from cooperation with farmers. Not a single farmer wanted this weed on their property, and every farmer emphasized weed control in their production operations.

Palmer amaranth's arrival in Minnesota has undoubtedly changed weed management strategies for many farmers. They proved they are up to the task.

Palmer amaranth poses several key problems for modern agricultural producers.

- It is a fast-growing annual plant that produces a lot of seed.
 - Plants can reach heights of 10 feet, enabling them to shade and outcompete crops.
 - The stalks of mature Palmer amaranth plants are thick and can clog combines. Depending on the infestation size, harvest can be severely impeded.
 - Palmer amaranth and related pigweeds developed resistance to a number of important herbicide classes utilized in modern agronomic weed management.
- When all of these issues are combined, it's not



Palmer amaranth poses several key problems for modern agricultural producers. •It is a fast-growing annual plant that produces a lot of seed. •Plants can reach heights of 10 feet, enabling them to shade and outcompete crops. •The stalks of mature Palmer amaranth plants are thick and can clog combines. Depending on the infestation size, harvest can be severely impeded. •Palmer amaranth and related pigweeds developed resistance to a number of important herbicide classes utilized in modern agronomic weed management.

The point here is to become aware of the source of any products, seed, manure or the machinery that is being used in your operations and on your land. Preventing Palmer from establishing is the easiest and most cost-effective management option. If Palmer is confirmed on your property, the MDA, in cooperation with U of M Extension, can work with you to develop a management plan moving forward. The sooner a management plan is established and implemented, the better the outcome. Farmers who have been impacted by this pest experienced the benefit of immediate action and contingency planning.

difficult to see the negative impact this weed could have on production fields in Minnesota if not managed correctly.

Despite the threats Palmer amaranth poses to farmers, there is hope for the future. Minnesota has been aggressively dealing with Palmer amaranth since it first appeared in the state in 2016. Our experiences thus far have shown that with persistent management this troublesome plant can be controlled. To date, only one site out of over 40 required multiple years of treatments.

What can a farmer or a landowner do to keep Palmer amaranth from becoming a major crop pest?

- Learn how to identify Palmer amaranth. Early detection is key. It can be challenging to tell Palmer apart from other pigweeds, but it is possible to become familiar with the different species.
- Visit the MDA's Palmer webpage or the U of M's webpage and Minnesota Crop Newsletter to learn about the species. Being able to identify Palmer early on will make management moving forward much easier.
- Scout fields regularly throughout the growing season. As Palmer grows, it becomes much easier to identify. If you think Palmer is present, contact

the MDA through the newly improved Arrest the Pest reporting tool.

- Connect with your local U of M Extension Crop Specialist or your crop consultant to develop a preemptive weed management plan to minimize the likelihood of Palmer amaranth establishment in your fields.

The MDA, University of Minnesota Extension, farmers, and landowners showed that it is possible to manage Palmer infestations so that crop production is not severely impacted.

But to be successful, Minnesota farmers need to remain extra vigilant and react quickly to any emerging Palmer threats on their lands.

The MDA identified several pathways where Palmer amaranth could potentially enter the state. Any agricultural product that is contaminated with Palmer amaranth seed can be an infestation source.

Through MDA's efforts, Palmer amaranth was documented in planting seed, screenings from seed and grain, livestock feed and manure.

Livestock bedding, hay, mulch and other materials that are shipped into Minnesota from states where Palmer is a common weed could also be an infestation source.

Other probable pathways to consider are any machinery or vehicles that are used on production fields.

Custom combines and other machines that have been utilized in other states should be cleaned before they are used on your fields.

The point here is to become aware of the source of any products, seed, manure or the machinery that is being used in your operations and on your land.

Preventing Palmer from establishing is the easiest and most cost-effective management option.

If Palmer is confirmed on your property, the MDA, in cooperation with U of M Extension, can work with you to develop a management plan moving forward.

The sooner a management plan is established and implemented, the better the outcome. Farmers who have been impacted by this pest experienced the benefit of immediate action and contingency planning.

Whether you are a commercial or organic producer, there are weed management strategies that can be applied to prevent Palmer amaranth establishment.

These strategies will not only help with Palmer amaranth, but other species like waterhemp, velvetleaf, Kochia, and giant ragweed.

With increasing herbicide resistance for a variety of weed species, implementing a successful weed management plan is imperative to achieving your harvest goals.

If small weed problems escalate quickly, they turn into large expensive weed problems. The sooner you deal with serious weeds like Palmer amaranth, the better your long-term cropping strategy will be.

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Gevo Inc., which operates a plant in Luverne (pictured here), is working with the federal agencies on the “challenge” to reduce the cost, improve sustainability and expand production and use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF). SAF reduces greenhouse gas by 50 percent compared with conventional fuel.

Gevo Inc. works with federal agencies to reduce aviation carbon footprint by 50 percent by 2050

The U.S. departments of energy, transportation and agriculture recently developed a memorandum of understanding on the “Sustainable Aviation Fuel Grand Challenge.”

Gevo Inc., which operates a plant in Luverne, is working with the federal agencies on the “challenge” to reduce the cost, improve sustainability and expand production and use of Sustainable Aviation Fuel (SAF).

SAF reduces greenhouse gas by 50 percent compared with conventional fuel, and the challenge is to supply enough SAF to meet 100 percent of aviation fuel demand by 2050.

The memorandum states, in part, that “... SAF will play a critical role in a broader set of actions by the U.S. government and the private sector to reduce the aviation sector’s emissions in a manner consistent with the goal of net-zero emissions for our economy, and to put the aviation sector on a pathway to full decarbonization by 2050.”

As a near-term goal, government and aviation stakeholders pledged to achieve 3 billion gallons of SAF production and reduce aviation-related emissions by 20 percent by 2030.

“This is an exciting time for our industry,” said Gevo CEO Patrick Gruber. “We are ready to take on

“By rewarding farmers to improve their agricultural practices, by capturing carbon, by reducing run-off, and by producing large amounts of protein, Gevo can address several problems at once. Gevo believes it is possible to make this world a better place, with better nutrition, while eliminating fossil-based greenhouse gases.”

the Grand Challenge and are already approaching a potential combined off-take of 250 million gallons per year of advanced hydrocarbon products, which include SAF.”

He said Gevo currently has off-take agreements with Delta Airlines, Trafigura, Haltermann Carless, Air Total, and SAS, as well as the proposed collaboration with Chevron.

The sustainable aviation fuel challenge aims to reduce environmental impact while also supporting energy independence.

It also creates jobs in agriculture, forestry, infrastructure and in research and development and support for the transition of the energy industry to a low carbon future.

“The Grand Challenge is a roadmap to a future that allows transportation growth to continue while flattening related carbon emissions,” said Gruber.

“It’s only through this type of cross-discipline effort that the effects are multiplied.”

He said Gevo’s Net-Zero 1 Project will be the first of its kind to convert renewable energy into SAF and other energy-dense, liquid hydrocarbons.

“And we don’t expect to stop there,” Gruber said.

“Our vision is to reach a billion gallons by 2030, which will require additional facilities with the potential to achieve net-zero GHG emis-

sions across the lifecycle of the fuel.”

For agriculture-based feedstocks, Gevo encourages sustainable farming and regenerative agriculture, and the USDA has pledged to support sustainable aviation in policy development.

“We can expand our ability to power the nation’s aviation sector with fuel grown right here at home by hard-working Americans, while creating economic opportunity for American farmers, business owners and rural communities,” said USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack.

“Participating in SAF supply chains is also a big win for the aviation business, consumers and the planet.”

In addition to utilizing sustainable field corn as a feedstock for producing SAF and renewable gasoline, Gevo is also working on technology to utilize cellulosic feedstock, such as wood residues.

“By rewarding farmers to improve their agricultural practices, by capturing carbon, by reducing run-off, and by producing large amounts of protein, Gevo can address several problems at once,” the company stated in a news release.

“Gevo believes it is possible to make this world a better place, with better nutrition, while eliminating fossil-based greenhouse gases.”



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September is Life Insurance Awareness Month

Protect your farm land for future generations with life insurance

**By Barbara Anderson
Cattnach Insurance**

If you ask your friends and neighbors what their number one priority is in life, you will often hear that what they hold dear is their family.

If you have children, you spend your days and often sleepless nights worrying about their future.

You help with homework and run them to practices and appointments.

You want the best for them and work tirelessly to achieve that goal.

If your family wakes up one morning and you are no longer there to provide for them both physically and financially, what will happen to them?

Maybe they dream of taking over the farm one day or attending college to get a degree and start a career of their own. How will this be financed?

September is Life Insurance Awareness Month, and the conversation about financial security is at the forefront. Most people tell me they probably need more life insurance; however, they aren't sure how much they need.

Many find it difficult and time-consuming to apply for a policy. Gone are the days of filling out a mountain of paperwork, followed by submitting provider records, exams and waiting weeks into months for a decision. In some cases, you can apply for a policy from your phone or computer and have it issued in less than 10 minutes!



Life insurance does not replace our loved one, but it helps ease the financial burden and allows life to continue for those left behind.

Remember these important points when considering purchasing life insurance:

- The cost of life insurance increases with age and you will never be younger than you are today.
- Low monthly payment options are available.
- Replace income upon the death of breadwinner.
- Ensure children can go to college or take over the family farm.
- Provide security for the family.
- Pay off debt.

Remember these important points when considering purchasing life insurance:

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- Low monthly payment options are available.
- Replace income upon the death of the breadwinner.
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- Provide security for the family.
- Pay off debt.

End of life is one of the most difficult topics to discuss, so we

tend to put it off for another time.

I am saddened by the memory of missed opportunities – clients and friends that knew they needed life insurance but put it off until they had more time, lost weight or just didn't want to talk about it. I think about the friends and family who were diagnosed with cancer, discovered heart problems or who were tragically killed in car accidents.

Life insurance does not replace our loved one, but it helps ease the financial burden and allows life to continue for those left behind.

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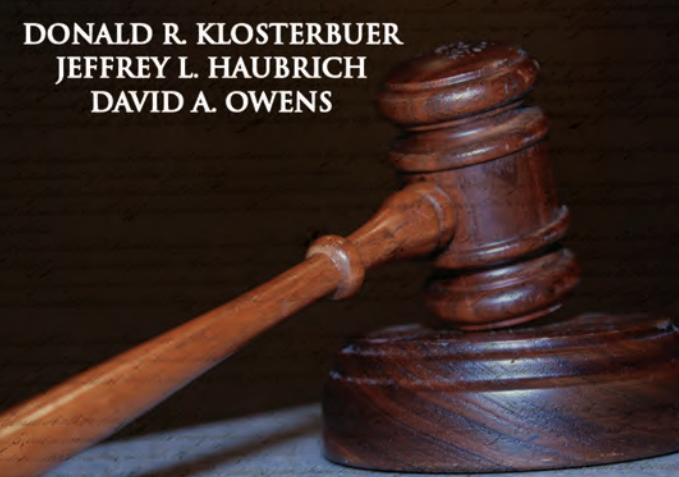
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Covering the unexpected

The amount of liability coverage you carry should be high enough to protect your assets in the event of an accident

By Shirley Top, Kozlowski Insurance
Million-dollar verdicts are no longer a rare occurrence. In the event you are underinsured, everything you have worked so hard to obtain can be taken away. It is common for clients to purchase \$1,000,000 up to \$5,000,000 umbrellas. Limits up to \$10 million are available.

The amount of liability coverage you carry should be high enough to protect your assets in the event of an accident.

An umbrella liability policy provides an extra layer of liability coverage in addition to your underlying farm, home, auto, trucks, motorcycle, motor home, ATV/UTV, snowmobiles, golf cart, jet skis, boat, workers compensation and rental properties coverage.

In the event that an accident on your property, auto, recreational vehicle or farm accident is your fault, what are you responsible to pay?

You are responsible to pay for the repair of the damages to the other person's vehicle, other property damage, signs, buildings, guardrails, bridges, rental car for the other party, medical expenses, rehabilitation, pain and suffering, emotional or physical scarring, loss of wages due to death, loss of wages due to permanent or partial disability,



funeral expenses, home and auto modification to make home and autos handicapped-accessible, and loss of companionship of a deceased spouse.

If an accident is your fault, what do you stand to lose? You stand to lose the value of your home, autos, trucks, watercraft, recreational vehicles, seasonal home, lake home, rental property, checking account, savings account, certificates of deposits, life insurance cash value, mutual funds, stocks, bonds, value of 401(k) or retirement accounts, value of farmland, farm buildings, farm equipment and future earnings.

What is the value of your total assets listed here?

The value of your total assets listed above minus current auto liability coverage equals total uninsured assets. The value of your total assets listed above minus current farm liability coverage equals total uninsured assets.

If if an accident involving your property, auto, RV or farm accident is your fault, what are you responsible to pay?
You are responsible to pay for the repair of the damages to the other person's vehicle, other property damage, signs, buildings, guardrails, bridges, rental car for the other party, medical expenses, rehabilitation, pain and suffering, emotional or physical scarring, loss of wages due to death, loss of wages due to disability, funeral expenses, home and auto modifications for handicap accessibility and loss of companionship of a deceased spouse.

If this is a negative number, in the event of a lawsuit you need to decide which of the assets you will liquidate to settle a lawsuit.

If you are underinsured in an auto, recreational or watercraft vehicle accident, the injured party will collect on their underinsured motorist.

The company paying the underinsured motorist coverage will seek reimbursement from you. Consider an umbrella if you have

assets you need to protect, operate machinery on public roads, own livestock, have a dog or a swimming pool, own watercraft or recreational vehicles, a rental or vacation property, have teenage drivers, travel extensively, or participate in volunteer activities.

In the event you are underinsured, everything you have worked so hard to obtain can be taken away.

Give me a call. Kozlowski Insurance Agency, Shirley Top 507-283-3704.



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Sen. Weber comments on ag issues facing Minnesota farmers

By Sen. Bill Weber, Luverne, Minnesota Senate District 22

It has been a strange year both from a COVID standpoint as well as weather within agriculture.

We went from unusually wet conditions to drier times.

While we were fortunate in most of Rock County in getting enough rain for a good crop, the recent storms, with strong winds, flattened a great deal of corn.

I have had requests coming in from people as to what type of programs might be available to help.

I visited with Ag Commissioner Thom Petersen, and there are few programs that are available.

His suggestion is to keep in touch with the FSA and crop insurance people.

The wind damage is greatly dependent on variety, corn on corn planting and other issues.

While there will no doubt be some loss, it is always questionable as to whether the loss will qualify for crop insurance payments which are dependent on the level of insurance one has taken out.

Much of the focus on disaster situations is on the drought condi-



There is work behind the scenes happening for a small disaster bill focusing on cattle herds, lack of feed, etc. We are, however, a ways away from anything being available. Some items were accomplished in the past legislative session for agriculture.

tions in much of Minnesota.

My colleagues are saying they are hearing of no ears actually in much of the non-irrigated corn in west central, central and northwestern Minnesota.

Silage chopping is to produce filler product only.

There is work behind the scenes happening for a potential small disaster bill focusing on cattle herds, lack of feed, etc.

We are, however, a ways away from anything being available.

Some items which were accomplished in the past legislative session for agriculture are as follow:

- Definition of family expanded to

extend homestead credit on farm property. Previously it was lineal descendants only that would qualify, but now aunts, uncles, cousins can receive homestead credit as well. This is available for the 2022 tax year.

- Additional money will be available for the installation of blender pumps to allow stations currently unable to offer higher ethanol blends to do so. Much remains to fully accomplish this.

- Provided additional money for farmer mental health and extended the farmer mediation program until 2027.

- Provided a small grant program for expansion of meat, dairy, egg or poultry processing facilities.

The small processing plants became an important element when COVID shut our larger processors down for a period of time.

Finally, next year will bring about redistricting of our legislative districts.

Our rural districts will get larger, and unfortunately there will be fewer people in the legislature who truly know or understand agriculture.

As your state senator, rest assured that I will not let them go uneducated.

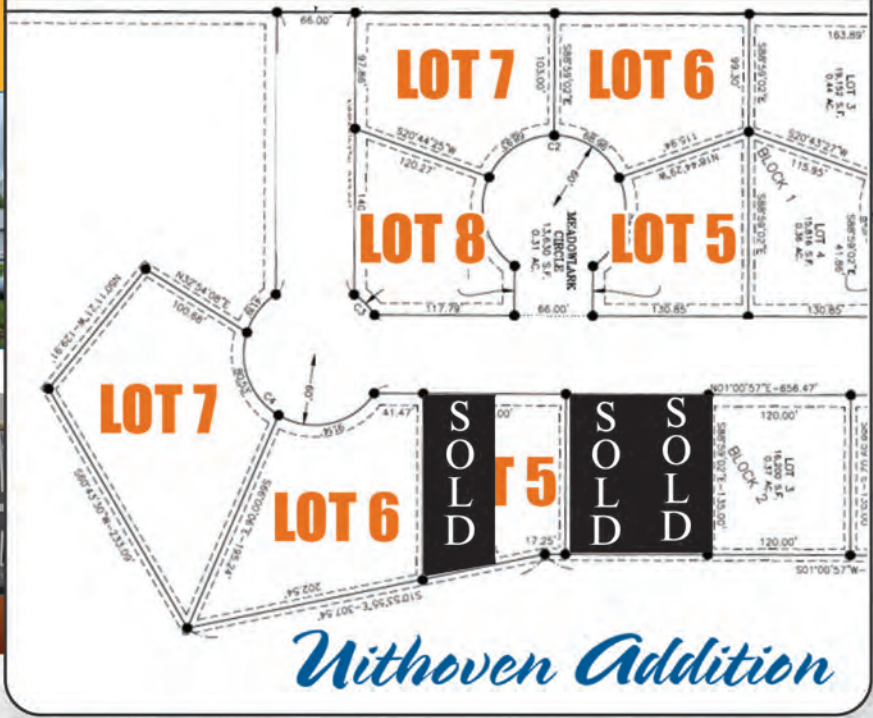
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Programs are available for Minnesota farmers facing drought

By Rep. Joe Schomacker, Luverne, Minnesota House District 22A

The year 2021 will go down as one of the most interesting years for agriculture, and not necessarily in a great way. From COVID-19 to the unpredictable weather, it has been a time of instability.

According to a recent Drought Monitor update, 63 percent of the state's croplands are in "very poor to poor condition."

And if you drive around southwestern Minnesota, you can see it, as far too many fields filled with corn and soybeans turned brown when they should still have been green.

Because of this, I would like to make sure area farmers know that federal and state resources are available for those in the fields now and unimpressed with what they find.

For example, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture has a "Drought Response and Resources" page visible when you visit its website (mda.state.mn.us).

Here you will find details on Minnesota's current assistance programs, including zero-interest loans that are available to farmers whose operations are suffering due to extreme drought conditions.

For more information about the Disaster Recovery Loan Program, please visit www.mda.state.mn.us/disasterloan.

There's also federal USDA assistance available. If you are a producer who has experienced feed losses and livestock deaths due to national disasters, you should consider pursuing the USDA's



Disaster Assistance for Drought Recovery. The Livestock Forage Disaster Program is in place to assist livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses due to the drought this year.

I've worked with a number of area farmers this year to help get them connected to grazing on public land and have seen how bad it's gotten.

Federally, USDA Disaster Assistance for Drought Recovery is available for producers who experience livestock deaths and feed losses due to natural disasters.

In addition, livestock producers who have suffered grazing losses due to drought in 2021 may be eligible for assistance through the Livestock Forage Disaster Program. To learn more about these federal programs, visit www.fsa.usda.gov/programs-and-services/disaster-assistance-program/index.

I'd also like to highlight a new state grant program that would assist milk, egg, poultry and meat proces-

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sors to begin operations on a new business, or modernize and expand their current facilities.

According to the Minnesota Department of Agriculture, it anticipates awarding up to \$750,000 through its Agricultural Growth, Research, and Innovation Meat, Poultry, Egg, and Milk Processing Grant program, using a competitive review process.

The maximum equipment award is \$150,000, and the minimum award is \$1,000.

The department notes that the intent of the program is to increase sales of Minnesota-raised livestock products by investing in equipment and physical improvements that support processing, capacity, market diversification, and market access for meat, poultry, eggs, and milk.

Stipulations from the MDA state applicants must:

- be engaged with livestock slaughter or processing, including meat, poultry, eggs, and milk.

•be an individual (including farmers), business, agricultural cooperative, or a local unit of government (including Tribal governments).

•currently reside in Minnesota or be authorized to conduct business in Minnesota.

The department adds that grantees are responsible for at least 50 percent of the total cost for the first \$25,000 and 75 percent of the total cost for every dollar after as a cash match.

Applications will be accepted until 4:00 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 28. Proposals must be submitted through the AGRI Meat, Poultry, Egg and Milk Processing Grant webpage:

<https://www.mda.state.mn.us/grants/agri-mpem-processing>

As always, if you have any legislative-related questions, do not hesitate to contact me. I can be reached by email at:

rep.joe.schomacker@house.mn or by phone at 651-296-5505.

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Rock County STAR HERALD

Klobuchar introduces bill to expand farmers’ access to precision ag equipment, climate-friendly technology

Senators Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Deb Fischer (R-NE), members of the Senate Agriculture committee, introduced bipartisan legislation to create a program within the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to provide loan financing to farmers and ranchers interested in purchasing precision agriculture equipment.

Precision agriculture encompasses a wide range of new technologies in farming and ranching that can allow producers to reduce their environmental footprint, lower costs, and improve productivity.

“America’s economic well-being depends on the health of our farmlands. This will support farmers by helping them invest in precision agriculture tools like soil mapping and aerial imagery technologies that reduce costs and help protect our environment, said Sen. Klobuchar.

“I’m proud to lead this bipartisan bill with Sen. Fischer, and I will continue pushing for policies to strengthen rural communities nationwide.”

“Farmers and ranchers take care of our land and resources, and precision agriculture equipment can help them expand on this good work,” said Sen. Fischer.

“Upfront costs, however, mean many operations struggle to access these cutting-edge and climate-friendly technologies. Our bipartisan legislation will allow more producers to invest in the equipment they need to make their operations more efficient, environmentally friendly and productive.”

The World Economic Forum estimates that if just a quarter of the world’s farms adopted precision agricultural practices, farm yields globally could increase by 15 percent. Greenhouse gas emissions and water use would decrease by 10 percent and 20 percent, respectively.

The Precision Agriculture Loan (PAL) Act would establish the Precision Agriculture Loan program within USDA’s Farm Service Agency. The program would offer low-cost and long-term loans to agriculture producers who want to adopt precision agriculture technologies but can’t afford to through traditional financing.

It would be the first federal loan program



Lori Sorenson file photo/0923 harvest 2020

The program, established through the Precision Agriculture Loan Act would offer low-cost and long-term loans to agriculture producers who want to adopt precision agriculture technologies but can’t afford to through traditional financing.

dedicated entirely to precision agriculture. Instead of paying upwards of 5 percent in interest, producers would be eligible for interest rates lower than 2 percent through the new program with loan terms from 3 to 12 years in length. These loans would cover any precision agriculture technology that improves efficiency or reduces inputs.

“Precision ag tools are an important sustainability piece in helping farmers care for their crops, while using less water, fertilizer and pesticides, but the cost can be a major hurdle,” said Kevin Paap, president of the Minnesota Farm Bureau Federation.

“Minnesota Farm Bureau applauds Senator Klobuchar for her leadership in ensuring Minnesota farmers and ranchers have the assistance they need to access these important tools.”

“The Association of Equipment Manufacturers applauds senators Deb Fischer and Amy Klobuchar for their steadfast leadership on behalf of

rural America and for introducing the Precision Agriculture Loan Program Act of 2021. This important legislation recognizes the critical role that precision agriculture technology, such as machine section control, auto guidance, variable rate technology, telematics, and precision irrigation, plays in promoting climate-smart agriculture. AEM’s own research shows that increased adoption of precision agriculture technology in the crop farming industry can have a significant environmental and economic impact for farmers in maximizing productivity, crop yields, fertilizer use, herbicide use, fossil fuel use, and water use, as well as reducing carbon emissions,” said Dennis Slater, president of the Association of Equipment Manufacturers.

“The Precision Agriculture Loan Program Act of 2021 will give U.S. farmers a whole new set of tools to help achieve climate goals while continuing to feed and fuel the world.”

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Deadline extended for pandemic assistance to livestock producers

Farm Service Agency reminds producers of upcoming pandemic program deadlines

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is providing additional time for livestock and poultry producers to apply for the Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program (PLIP).

Producers who suffered losses during the pandemic due to insufficient access to processing may now apply for assistance for those losses and the cost of depopulation and disposal of the animals through Oct. 12, 2021, rather than the original deadline of Sept. 17, 2021. PLIP is part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative.

"Livestock and poultry producers were among the hardest hit by the pandemic," said Farm Service Agency (FSA) Administrator Zach Ducheneaux.

"We want to ensure that all eligible producers have the opportunity to apply for this critical assistance. The October 12 deadline also aligns with the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2 deadline."

PLIP provides payments to producers for losses of livestock or poultry depopulated from March 1, 2020, through Dec. 26, 2020, due to insufficient processing access as a result of the pandemic. Payments are based on 80 percent of the fair market value of the livestock and poultry and for the cost of depopulation and disposal of the animal. Eligible livestock and poultry include swine, chickens and turkeys.

PLIP program details

PLIP payments are calculated by multiplying the number of head of eligible livestock or poultry by the payment rate per head, and then subtracting the amount of any



payments the eligible livestock or poultry owner has received for disposal of the livestock or poultry under the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) or a state program.

The payments will also be reduced by any Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP 1 and 2) payments paid on the same inventory of swine that were depopulated.

Eligible livestock and poultry producers can apply for PLIP through the Oct. 12, 2021, deadline by completing the FSA-620 Pandemic Livestock Indemnity Program application and submitting it to any FSA county office. Additional documentation may be required.

Visit farmers.gov/plip for more information on how to apply.

Additional assistance

Other programs within the Pandemic Assistance for Producer initiative with upcoming deadlines include:

- Oct. 12 - Coronavirus Food Assistance Program 2, which provides critical support to agricultural producers impacted by COVID-19 market disruptions.
- Oct. 15 - Pandemic Assistance for Timber Harvesters and Haulers, which provides financial relief to timber harvesting and timber hauling businesses that experienced losses in 2020 due to COVID-19.

To learn more about USDA's commitment to deliver financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and agricultural producers and businesses who have been impacted by COVID-19 market disruptions, visit farmers.gov/

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PLIP is part of USDA's Pandemic Assistance for Producers initiative.

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Wellhead protection practices incentivized by state Clean Water grants/continued from page 1B



The Minnesota Department of Health mapped the 4,500-acre drinking water supply management area, which borders the Rock River and includes a 2,706-acre highly vulnerable wellhead protection area.

The wellhead area has provided water to rural areas since 1979 and is among limited groundwater resources in Rock County. It serves 25 percent of Rock County’s population on 755 farms and five towns. Rock County Rural Water has 10 wells pumping 1.2 million gallons per day; however, three of its highest-producing wells have considerably high nitrates — up to 30 ppm (10 ppm are considered safe).

in the state in terms of contaminating local water supplies.

Bos said his office and state agencies are making some gains, thanks to grants. “Basically we received grants from MDA and BWSR to encourage producers to use Best Management Practices to reduce nitrate problems in the well head areas,” he said.

Also, multiple grants were awarded to develop cost-share incentives to encourage producers to modify nitrogen applications and plant perennial crops.

Minnesota’s Clean Water Council visited southwest Minnesota earlier this month to hear about local work being done to address drinking water, water treatment, wildlife protection and other programs that revolve around the science of water, including aquifers, groundwater and wellhead protection.

Bos said in areas where these are implemented, the nitrogen levels have improved. But in areas where row crops are encroaching, those wells are showing higher nitrate levels.

“We’ve been working with farmers since 2014, and big credit goes to them for making changes in their nitrogen application,” Bos said.

“Some of these practices help, but what we know from experience is that perennial grasses make the difference.”

He said corn and soybean production is the “bread and butter” of most farm production in Rock County, so grant funding has provided incentives that influence

decisions.

“It encourages farmers to make changes that are better for our water quality,” Bos said.

The Minnesota Department of Health mapped the 4,500-acre drinking water supply management area. It borders the Rock River and includes a 2,706-acre highly vulnerable wellhead protection area.

Forty-two people own land within the highly vulnerable wellhead protection area, and 10 easements totaling 667 acres have been enrolled, thanks to nearly \$2.5 million in state funds.

The three of the most recent and pending easements are made possible by a combined total of \$4.4 million in state and federal funds.

“Our goal is (to enroll) enough area in permanent grass to provide clean water,” Bos said.

The wellhead area has provided water to rural areas since 1979 and is among limited groundwater resources in Rock County.

It serves 25 percent of Rock County’s population on 755 farms and five towns.

Wellhead protection/continued on page 16B

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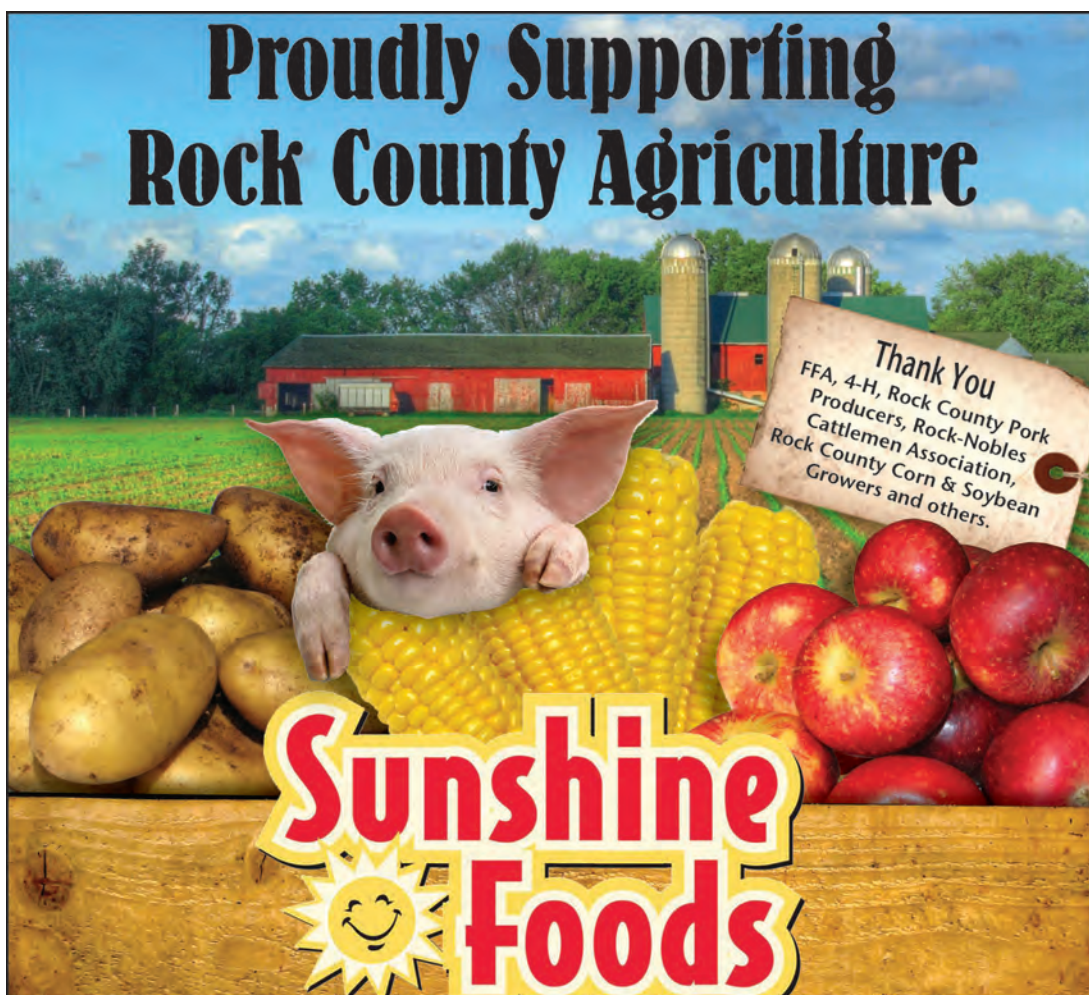


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Mavis Fodness photo/0930 wellhead protection

A busload of state and local leaders with Minnesota’s Clean Water Council took a field trip earlier this month through southwest Minnesota to tour projects funded by the state’s Clean Water Legacy Act. One of the stops was the Rock County Rural Water main plant southeast of Luverne and the wellhead area surrounding it.

Wellhead protection practices/continued from page 14B

Rock County Rural Water has 10 wells pumping 1.2 million gallons per day; however, three of its highest-producing wells have considerably high nitrates — up to 30 ppm (10 ppm are considered safe).

As such, these wells blend water with low nitrate wells and receive some water from the Lewis and Clark Regional Water System. Rock County’s wells

are more vulnerable to nitrate contamination than other areas because they’re shallow (30 to 60 feet deep) and located in course-textured soils.

These soils are a big reason why some areas of the wellhead are so easily contaminated. Corn utilizes only about 60 percent of applied nitrogen, and course-textured soils don’t “hang on” to residual nitrogen.

At the Sept. 13 tour in Rock County, state and county officials discussed the need for continued grant support for wellhead protection.

The goal is to increase cover crops and timed nitrogen applications, plant permanent cover such as alfalfa, grass, kernza wheat and pasture and enroll sensitive areas into CREP or RIM easements.

“We are an environmentally responsible farm, raising chickens and fresh produce. We make every decision with our plant and environment at the forefront of our minds while working with our local community to provide fresh, nutritional food.”

Kanaranzi Greens/from 5B

Sons — Harrison, 8, and twins, Samuel and Eli, 7 — are encouraged to eat directly from the garden because of the safe growing practices Ainsworth keeps as a focus.

“We are not certified organic,” he said. “We are very conscious of the environmental impacts.”

When necessary, he’ll turn to plant-based products for weed treatment or to get rid of pests that may damage the growing greens and vegetables.

Because soil health is important, Ainsworth often uses a broadfork to turn over the garden soil instead of deep tilling with the gas-powered tiller. The soil rests before planting to promote health bacteria and worm growth in the soil.

The process is in line with the focus included on the Kanaranzi Greens’ social media page: “We are an environmentally responsible farm, raising chickens and fresh produce. We make every decision with our plant and environment at the forefront of our minds while working with our local community to provide fresh, nutritional food.”

Next year, Ainsworth plans to expand his garden plots to be more effective and meet consumer demand, but not too large to be unmanageable by one person, he said.

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