

Women and Minority Farmers Research and Outreach Project: *Promoting agricultural sustainability on Wisconsin's farms*

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Resources for Wisconsin Women Dairy Farmers

The following web-based resource links can get you started to identify sources of information for your farm. This list is focused on Wisconsin sustainable agriculture and dairy farming, including links to organic farming organizations and information. The Wisconsin Farm Center of the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection provided the links to several of these sites.

Funding Sources for Agriculture Businesses

Agriculture Innovation Center, "Looking for Money?"

This site lists several locations where an agricultural entrepreneur can go to get loans or grants, and provides information about business planning and start-up.

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/aic/startup.cfm#funding>

Included in the above web site is a link to a **Department of Agriculture publication, "Got MOO-LA?"**. This publication provides a compilation of grants, loans, equity capital and other financial resources.

http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/mktg/business/business_resources/pdf/Wisconsin_Business_Resources.pdf

The Wisconsin Farm Center (1-800-942-2474) can provide business planning assistance to farmers. They can be of help in identifying ways to capitalize your operation.

(www.datcp.state.wi.us)

Farm Service Agency (FSA): farm loan programs

FSA makes direct and guaranteed farm ownership and operating loans to family-size farmers and ranchers who cannot obtain commercial credit from a bank, Farm Credit System institution, or other lender. FSA loans can be used to purchase land, livestock, equipment, feed, seed, and supplies. Loans can also be used to construct buildings or make farm improvements. FSA is the lender of choice for the majority of the state's beginning farmers.

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=fmlp&topic=landing>

The Farm Service Agency has programs that give preference to beginning farmers and 'socially disadvantaged' farmers. If you make an appointment with an FSA agency representative, they'll help you sort through the various programs and find the best financing packet to put together. There are some interesting programs with low down-payment plans in the 2008 Farm Bill.

<http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/webapp?area=home&subject=fmlp&topic=bfi>

Building Sustainable Farms, Ranches and communities: Federal Programs for Sustainable Agriculture, Forestry, Entrepreneurship, Conservation and Community Development, a guidebook to federal programs to foster innovative enterprises in agriculture and forestry.
<http://www.sare.org/publications/ruralplaces.htm>

Grant Opportunities (usually for on-farm research and outreach):

USDA National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA): web site lists information sources and funding opportunities through the federal government for family and small farms:
<http://www.csrees.usda.gov/familysmallfarms.cfm>

Sustainable Agriculture Research and Extension (SARE) grant programs: Note that Wisconsin is in the North Central Region. Web-site provides information on sustainable agriculture research, outreach activities, and grants. General website: <http://www.sare.org/> . Grants website: <http://www.sare.org/grants/>. SARE is a competitive grants program providing grants to researchers, agricultural educators, farmers and ranchers, and students.

Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service (MOSES): MOSES has put together an excellent web site with information about a wide variety of grant programs for producers in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. Includes federal, state, and independent funding sources.
<http://www.mosesorganic.org/fundsforfarmers.html>

Resources for Dairy Farmers

UW-Extension - The local county agriculture agent is an extremely valuable resource for farmers. They offer educational programs, technical assistance, and the ability to connect with campus-based specialists on a wide range of topics. <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/ctv/>. Extension professionals have written publications on numerous topics and these are available from the UW Extension Learning Store <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/index.aspx> .

Center for Dairy Profitability – The Center for Dairy Profitability of the U.W.-Madison focuses on research on business management, human resource management, production systems, and finance and marketing systems. Their website features tools for decision making, budgeting, and dairy modernization. <http://cdp.wisc.edu/>

Grazing Resources & Research: The website with information on pasture management and managed grazing systems from UW Cooperative Extension, maintained by Rhonda Gildersleeve, UW grazing research specialist. <http://fyi.uwex.edu/grazres/about/>

U.W. Forage Research and Extension: Information about establishment, production, harvesting and storage of forages, maintained by Dr. Dan Undersander.
<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/forage/>

University of Wisconsin- Extension Forage Resources: Information on planting, harvesting, and management of a range of forage crops.

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/crops/uwforage/uwforage.htm>

University of Wisconsin- Extension Forage Resources – Pasture Management & Grazing: (different than above, maintained by UW River Falls), for links to specific information on pasture management, animal health, fencing systems, water systems, pasture management, and much more. <http://www.uwrf.edu/grazing/>

Grassworks, Inc. provides information about grazing and sponsors pasture walks, workshops, and an annual grazing conference in Wisconsin. <http://www.grassworks.org/>

Cornell Forage Livestock Systems website: www.css.cornell.edu/forage/forage.html

GRAZE Magazine: www.grazeonline.com (608) 455-3311, PO Box 48 Belleville, WI 53508, email: graze@ticon.net

Milk Volume Production (MVP) Loan Program - This is part of the Department of Commerce's Dairy 20/20 Initiative to provide equity gap financing to dairy producers who plan to increase milk production by expanding their dairy herds. The MVP loan provides financing of \$500/cow for between 40-400 cows.

<http://www.commerce.state.wi.us/bd/BD-AG-MilkVolumeProduction.html>

Wisconsin Healthy Farmers, Healthy Profits Project: fact sheets on time saving tools that increase farm safety, UW Dept of Biological Systems Engineering. <http://bse.wisc.edu/hfhp>

Agrability - If a farmer has any sort of physical limitations or disability, it would be worth a call to Agrability; funds may be available for accommodation equipment.

<http://bse.wisc.edu/agrability/>

Utility company programs - If a farmer is going to be doing any remodeling of buildings that will include rewiring or new electrical equipment, they should contact their local utility provider to inquire about programs. Many of them offer combination grant and loan programs at very attractive rates for upgrading electrical infrastructure on the farm.

Farm Energy Conservation and Efficiency – Energy Calculators and other tools

ATTRA (Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas): Farm energy calculators are planning tools designed to help producers save electrical energy, fuel or fossil-fuel-based fertilizers. http://attra.ncat.org/energy_calculators.html. Also see: "Keeping Energy Costs Down" http://attra.ncat.org/newsletter/attranews_1108.html

NRCS: The Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) has developed four energy tools designed to increase energy awareness in agriculture and to help farmers and ranchers identify

where they can reduce their energy costs. The results generated by these tools are estimates based on NRCS models and illustrate the magnitude of savings. Contact your local NRCS office for additional assistance. <http://energytools.sc.egov.usda.gov/>

Wisconsin Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Resource: this web site is from the University of Wisconsin Biological Systems Engineering Department. It contains a collection of information on energy conservation and utilization for agricultural enterprises. The resources available include publications, articles, spreadsheets, audit tools, and links to other sites. <http://www.uwex.edu/energy/AgEnergy.html>

Energy Self-Assessment tools to figure out whether your farm can save energy in a cost effective way can be found at: www.ruralenergy.wisc.edu/esa . Developed by the UW Madison Biological Systems Engineering Department , they include: (a) Energy efficiency tools, (b) Dairy, greenhouses, irrigation, grain drying, lighting, potato storage, ventilation, water fountains, (c) Renewable energy (Wind, solar PV, solar water heating, Biogas, Biomass combustion).

Programs for Beginning Farmers

The Wisconsin Farm Center (1-800-942-2474): The Beginning and Transitional farm program offers assistance in developing financial projections and feasibility assessment, writing farm business plans, matching beginning farmers with late-career farmers, developing operating agreements, and providing on-going mentoring. Contact Frank Friar.

UW-Extension, see above under ‘Resources for Dairy Farmers’.

Dairy 20/20 Early Planning Grants - This program, offered through the Department of Commerce Dairy 20/20 Initiative, provides cost-sharing to hire a consultant to write a business plan. For more information, contact Irv Possin at Department of Commerce, (920) 322-1888.

Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers (SBDF) - This is part of the UW-Madison Farm and Industry Short Course but it is targeted specifically to people who are planning to start their own farm operations. There is a heavy emphasis on business planning and also on management-intensive rotational grazing. <http://www.cias.wisc.edu/dairysch.html>

UW-Madison Farm and Industry Short Course (FISC) - FISC is a course from the UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences and prepares students for careers in agriculture. Courses run for 17 weeks, scheduled such as not to interfere with the busiest months of the year in agriculture. <http://fisc.cals.wisc.edu/>

WI Tech College System farm business & production management classes - These courses are offered around the state and the sessions are usually held either mid-day or evenings during the winter months. The courses cover a variety of topics; typically with a strong emphasis on farm accounting and record-keeping. FSA usually requires beginning farmers to

enroll in their local tech college farm management course before getting a loan.

<http://www.witc.edu/pgmpages/farmbus/wtcs.htm>

Minnesota Inst. for Sustainable Agriculture. “Building a Sustainable Business: A Guide to Developing a Business plan for Farms and Rural Businesses,”

<http://www.misa.umn.edu/vd/bizplan.html>

Conservation Organizations

County-based Departments of Land and Water Resources provide conservation implementation services to private landowners and land users in order to protect and enhance soil and water resources. Check them out through your county government offices.

The **Natural Resources Conservation Service** is the federal agency that works with landowners on private lands to conserve natural resources. NRCS is part of the [U.S. Department of Agriculture](#). Formerly called the Soil Conservation Service or "SCS", the agency provides individual technical assistance to help farmers and ranchers develop conservation systems. <http://www.wi.nrcs.usda.gov/>

Organic and Sustainable Agriculture:

ATTRA – Appropriate Technology Transfer for Rural Areas is a USDA sponsored educational site providing resources and articles on organic and sustainable farming practices.

<http://attra.ncat.org/>

CIAS – the Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems, is the University of Wisconsin sustainable agriculture research center. CIAS has many projects and reference materials on integrated cropping systems, local food, rotational grazing, and organic agriculture.

<http://www.cias.wisc.edu/>

DATCP: Wisconsin’s Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection has a wide range of information, programs, and services. For information about DATCP’s **Organic Agriculture Program**, contact Laura Paine, Grazing & Organic Agriculture Specialist, at 608-224-5120, Laura.paine@wi.gov, or visit <http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/>

MOSES: The Midwest Organic and Sustainable Education Service provides resources on organic and sustainable production including field days, workshops, and mentorships. They sponsor the annual ‘Organic Farming Conference’ and ‘Organic University,’ three days of educational and conference programs for farmers. <http://www.mosesorganic.org/index.html>

Organic Valley Family of Farms is the largest organic farmer-owned cooperative in North America. Their website has a large amount of educational information for farmers and consumers. <http://www.organicvalley.coop/>

Transitioning to organic production <http://www.sare.org/publications/organic.htm>

A whole-farm approach to managing pests. <http://www.sare.org/publications/farmpest.htm>

Direct Marketing, Value-added, and Local Foods Initiatives

The **University of Wisconsin's Agriculture Innovation Center** offers resources on direct marketing, developing specialty food products, and business feasibility planning for agricultural entrepreneurs and the people who serve them.

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/agmarkets/aic/index.cfm>

Marketing Strategies for Farmers and Ranchers

<http://www.sare.org/publications/marketing.htm>

Direct marketing resource guide

<http://www.sare.org/publications/dmrg.htm>

Direct Marketing Meat: A resource for farmers in Wisconsin, written by the UW Extension Emerging Ag Markets Team & DATCP. Available from your County Extension office or from UW-Extension Publishing: 1-877-WIS-PUBS(947-7827) <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/index.aspx>