

Applications available for stewardship program

The ranking period cut-off date for the Conservation Stewardship Program is Jan. 13, U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service announced last week.

The program is offered in all 50 states and the Pacific and Caribbean areas through continuous sign-ups. The program provides conservation benefits including improvement of water and soil quality, wildlife habitat enhancements and adoption of conservation activities that address the effects of climate change.

Eligible lands include cropland, pastureland, rangeland, nonindustrial private forest land, and agricultural land under the jurisdiction of an Indian tribe.

Producers interested in the stewardship program should submit applications to their local Conservation Service office by

the deadline so their applications can be considered during the first ranking period of 2012.

"CSP is one of our most popular conservation programs, and we expect to receive many applications," National Resource Conservation Service Chief Dave White said. "I encourage all farmers and ranchers who are interested in applying to contact their local Conservation Service office as soon as possible so they can meet the deadline."

A Stewardship program self-screening checklist is available to help potential applicants determine if the program is suitable for their operation. The checklist highlights basic information about eligibility requirements, contract obligations and potential payments. It is available from local Conservation Service offices and on the Conservation Stewardship

Program Web page at <http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/financial/csp>.

As part of the application process, applicants will work with field personnel to complete the resource inventory using a Conservation Measurement Tool. The tool determines the conservation performance for existing and new conservation activities. The applicant's conservation performance will be used to determine eligibility, ranking, and payments.

In 2010 alone, nearly 21,000 applicants enrolled in the Stewardship Program, putting additional conservation on 25.2 million acres – about the size of the state of Kentucky – to improve water and soil quality, enhance wildlife habitat and address the effects of climate change.

Deadline approaching for disaster applications

The expiration date for filing applications for Emergency Disaster loans by farmers and ranchers in Logan, Gove and Thomas counties is Jan. 10, according to Dwight A. Jurey, Farm Loan Manager, for the Farm Service Agency.

Jurey advised that those needing farm credit as a result of drought, wildfires and high winds during 2011 and who think they are eligible for Farm Service assistance, should make their applications at the county office before the expiration date.

"Loans covering physical and/or production losses may be made at 3.75 percent interest rate, and are scheduled for repayment as rapidly as feasible, consistent with the applicant's reasonable ability to pay," said Jurey.

Farm Service loans covering physical losses

may be used to replace installations, equipment, livestock or buildings (including homes), lost through this disaster.

Loans covering production losses may be used to buy feed, seed, fertilizer, livestock, or to make payments on real estate and chattel debts. "Funds can also be used for other essential operating and living expenses," Jurey said.

To be eligible for an emergency disaster loan, an applicant must be operating a family size farm or ranch, must be unable to get credit elsewhere, and must have suffered a qualifying physical and/or production loss from the disaster.

Farmers who suffered at least a 30 percent reduction to at least one cropping enterprise, may have a qualifying production loss.

Prescribed burn workshop planned for Jan. 10 in Larned

K-State Research and Extension is teaming up with the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Farm Service Agency and the Pawnee County Conservation District to hold a Prescribed Burn Workshop on Tuesday, Jan. 10.

The workshop, designed for anyone interested in conducting a safe prescribed burn, will be held from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the J.A. Haas Exhibit Building, 400 E. 18th St. in Larned.

Presentations will include reasons for burning; notification, regulations and permits; weather; liability;

using a burn contractor and burning assistance; equipment, hazards and firebreaks; and planning and conducting a prescribed burn.

A \$10 fee includes workshop materials and lunch and can be paid at the door. Organizers ask that participants register by Wednesday, Jan. 4, by contacting the K-State Research and Extension Pawnee County office at (620) 285-6901 or e-mailing rwallace@ksu.edu to ensure that enough materials and meals are available.

More young people going into farming

By Dinesh Ramde
The Associated Press

MILWAUKEE (AP) – A Wisconsin factory worker worried about layoffs became a dairy farmer. An employee at a Minnesota nonprofit found an escape from her cubicle by buying a vegetable farm. A nuclear engineer tired of office bureaucracy decided to get into cattle ranching in Texas.

While fresh demographic information on U.S. farmers won't be available until after the next agricultural census is done next year, there are signs more people in their 20s and 30s are going into farming: Enrollment in university agriculture programs has increased, as has interest in farmer-training programs.

Young people are turning up at farmers markets and are blogging, tweeting and promoting their agricultural endeavors through other social media.

The young entrepreneurs typi-

cally cite two reasons for going into farming: Many find the corporate world stifling and see no point in sticking it out when there's little job security; and demand for locally grown and organic foods has been strong enough that even in the downturn they feel confident they can sell their products.

Laura Frerichs, 31, of Hutchinson, Minn., discovered her passion for farming about a year after she graduated from college with an anthropology degree. She planned to work in economic development in Latin America and thought she ought to get some experience working on a farm.

She did stints on five farms, mostly vegetable farms, and fell in love with the work. Frerichs and her husband now have their own organic farm, and she's confident they'll be able to earn a living.

"There's just this growing consciousness around locally grown foods, around organic foods," she said. "Where we are in the Twin

Cities there's been great demand for that."

Farming is inherently risky: Drought, flooding, wind and other weather extremes can all destroy a year's work. And with farmland averaging \$2,140 per acre across the U.S. but two to four times that much in the Midwest and California, the start-up costs can be daunting.

Still, agriculture fared better than many parts of the economy during the recession, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture predicts record profits for farmers as a whole this year.

"People are looking at farm income, especially the increase in asset values, and seeing a really positive story about our economy," said USDA senior economist Mary Clare Ahearn, citing preliminary statistics. "Young people are viewing agriculture as a great opportunity and saying they want to be a part of it."

Our office will be closing
Monday, Dec. 26th for Christmas
& Monday, January 2nd for New Years.



Wishing you & your family
a wonderful holiday season!

Thank you for your buisness this past year!



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There will be no paper Dec. 26th or Jan. 2nd!

Christmas Services

First Presbyterian Church

Christmas Eve - Saturday Dec. 24:

Christmas Eve Worship ~ 11 p.m.
Lessons, Carols & Candlelight Service

Christmas Day - Sun. Dec. 25 ~ 11 a.m.

Rev. Carol Rahn
515 W. 4th • 785-462-6342



Advent, Christmas & New Year's Eve Worship Services

Advent Worship - December 21 • 6:45 p.m.

Advent Meals served 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

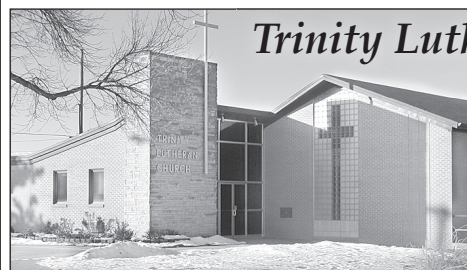
each Wednesday before Advent Worship

Christmas Worship - December 24 • 7 p.m.

Celebrative Candlelight Service, NO Communion

Christmas Day - December 25 • 10:30 a.m.

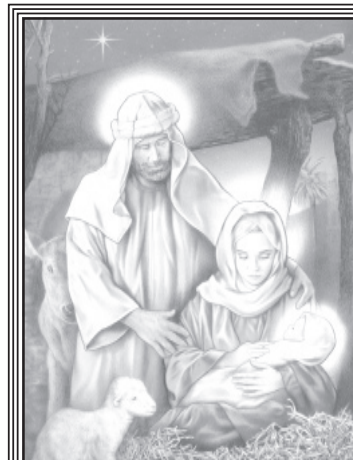
New Year's Eve - December 31 • 5:30 p.m.



Trinity Lutheran Church

Tell all your family & friends to join us for this Christmas Season!

East 5th & Country Club • 785-462-3497 • Rev. Robert Alexander



Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Christmas Eve • Sat. Dec. 24

Services: 4 p.m.

7 p.m. (Children's Mass)

Christmas Day • Sun. Dec. 25

Service: 9 a.m.

New Years Eve • Sat. Dec. 31

Service: 5:30 p.m.

New Years Day • Sun. Jan. 1

Service: 8 a.m.

10 a.m.

Father Dana Clark
585 N. French • 785-462-2179

College Drive Assembly of God

Christmas Eve - Sunday, December 24th
Candlelight Service at 7 p.m.

Christmas Day
Sunday, December 25th
Worship Service
at 10:15 a.m.



Pastor Steve Todd

245 W. College Dr., Colby • 785-462-8234

Colby United Methodist Church

Christmas Eve - Saturday Dec. 24:

Evening Services ~ 6:30 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.

Church Service - Sunday Dec. 25:

Morning Services ~ 8:30 a.m. & 11:00 a.m.

Pastor James Mardock

950 S. Franklin • 785-460-2761

