



Farm Bill Meetings To Be Offered

HURON, — South Dakota Farmers Union will host Farm Bill Meetings across South Dakota in partnership with U.S. Department of Agriculture Farm Service Agency. The meetings will focus on the two commodity programs, Price Loss Coverage (PLC) and Agricultural Risk Coverage (ARC), which are included in the 2014 Farm Bill.

“The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) continues to press on with finalizing the procedures for new commodity programs under the 2014 Farm Bill and we want to ensure South Dakota’s farmers and ranchers have the information they need,” said Karla Hofhenke, SDFU Executive Director.

The 2014 Farm Bill Meeting schedule is:

- **Worthing**, Aug. 12 — 2 p.m.; Sioux Falls Regional Livestock, 28168 Commerce Ave.;
- **Sisseton**, Aug. 12 — 10 a.m.; Sisseton 4-H Building;
- **Chamberlain**, Aug. 13 — 2 p.m.; Cedar Shore, 1500 Shoreline Drive, Oacoma;
- **Parkston**, Aug. 13 — 7 p.m.; Pony Creek Steakhouse;
- **Webster**, Aug. 21 — 10 a.m.; Alley Restaurant;
- **Redfield**, Aug. 21 — 2 p.m.; Fairgrounds, 16th Ave Hwy 281;
- **Flandreau**, Aug. 25 — 1 p.m.; Royal River Casino, 607 S Veterans St.;
- **Aberdeen**, Aug. 26 — 10 a.m.; Ramkota Hotel, 1400 8th Ave. NW;
- **Watertown**, Aug. 26 — 10 a.m.; Ramkota Hotel, 1901 9th Ave. SW;
- **Brookings**, Sept. 2 — 7 p.m.; Swiftel Center;
- **De Smet**, Sept. 3 — 7 p.m.; De Smet Super Deluxe Inn, 288 Hwy 14.

No registration is necessary and these meetings are free. If you have any questions, please contact Karla Hofhenke at Karla@sdfu.org or 605-352-6761 ext. 114.

Saline, Sodic Workshop, Field Tour Set

BROOKINGS — SDSU Extension, South Dakota Corn Utilization Council and the Natural Resources Conservation Service will host the Saline and Sodic Soil Management Workshop and Field Tour Aug. 12 at White Lake, from 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. The event will be held at the American Legion Hall in White Lake, and field tours will follow in the afternoon.

The event features a packed lineup of soils experts and SDSU Extension Specialists as well as a field tour. Morning topics covered during the event include: Redefining Saline and Sodic Soil Classifications, Why There are Issues with Salty Soils and Management Options.

In the afternoon, demonstrations on site will include: Soil Stability Tests; Mapping Saline Soils on your Farm; Tools to Measure Soil Salinity (Handheld soil electrical conductivity (EC), pH meters, moisture probes); and Questions to Ask When Submitting Soils for Salt Analysis.

Weather permitting; visits to the field site will include two soil pits to demonstrate issues with saline/sodic soils; the soil amendment plots and discussion about salt type in fields and potential management options.

The event costs \$10 to attend and pre-registration by Aug. 8 is requested to guarantee lunch and seating. Registration of \$15 will be taken at the site on Aug. 12.

To register for this event visit www.sdcorn.org/page/events/sub/viewEvent/EID/79 or call 605-334-0100.

Lunch is provided by Farmers Alliance of White Lake, Farmers and Merchant State Bank of White Lake, and Gridline Tile of White Lake. Facilities and soil pit preparation is sponsored by David Gillen and Gridline Tile of White Lake.

Funding Available For NE Crop Damage

LINCOLN, Neb. — The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service announced that funding is available to Nebraska producers who experienced crop damage due to severe weather during the 2014 growing season. Interested applicants have until Aug. 15, 2014, to apply.

The Storm Damage Cover Crop Initiative will assist producers with planting cover crops to re-establish vegetative cover lost due to extreme weather conditions such as drought, floods, tornado, hail and high winds.

Nebraska State Conservationist Craig Derickson said, “Nebraska’s producers know that weather in the Great Plains can be extreme, but this year has been especially devastating. In some areas, crops have been totally destroyed, leaving bare ground exposed.”

“NRCS can help farmers and ranchers recover from these storm events by establishing cover crops to protect soil health. If soil health is degraded, the impact of this year’s extreme weather events will be felt for years to come.”

According to NRCS, cover crops can be an important tool in recovering from severe weather events like Nebraska has been experiencing. When a cover crop of grasses, legumes or small grains is planted, the soil is covered and protected from further damage from wind, water and heat. Leaving soil exposed can reduce soil health and lead to long-lasting crop production problems. Establishing a cover crop now can help protect and prepare the soil for the next growing season.

For more information about the Storm Damage Cover Crop Initiative and the other programs available from NRCS, visit your local USDA Service Center or www.ne.nrcs.usda.gov/.

Open House Set At Menno Facility

MENNO — South Dakota Farm Families and Bryan and Melissa Kludt, will be hosting an open house at their new hog barn near Menno Monday, Aug. 18, from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

The free, family-friendly event will provide guests with an opportunity to see first-hand where the pork products they enjoy get their start. Guests will be served pork loin sandwiches and have the chance to tour the newly built finish barn.

The Kludts recently finished building their 2,400-head finishing barn. Pigs will enter the building and be fed until their final market weight of 280 pounds. This style of building keeps the pigs out of the extreme South Dakota weather, and allows the Kludts to keep a close eye on the pig’s health. The building is climate controlled and completely automated, keeping the pigs comfortable and healthy 365 days a year.

The barn is located just a few miles outside of Menno. From Menno, travel 3 1/2 miles South on 431st Ave. The barn will be on the east side of the road.



PHOTO: RITA BRHEL
This 2-year-old tractor features the exterior mirrors, large window panes and downward-sloping hood that have improved operator visibility since the 1980s.

A Bigger Picture

The Importance Of Increasing Visibility On Tractors

BY RITA BRHEL
P&D Correspondent

Much has changed with tractor design during the past 30 years, increasing efficiency and ease of operation and keeping up with modern agricultural practices and farm safety recommendations, particularly that of visibility both in and out of the cab.

Advances have heightened the overall ability of the operator to see what’s happening on all sides of the tractor, reducing blind spots, through both exterior and interior visibility technology.

Shawn Ehlers, an agricultural engineering doctoral student at Purdue University in West Lafayette, Ind., shared a comparison of the typical 1980s tractor and the tractor of today in regards to visibility technology.

For example, today’s tractor design takes into account that by age 50, a person’s eyes can no longer see, has clearly as at age 20, he said. Distractions can greatly affect an older person’s visibility. That’s why most tractors have so much lighting installed on the exterior of the cab, but the angles are positioned so that the lights are not at the same plane as the operator’s eyes to reduce reflection on dust particles. At the same time, today’s tractor design has moved the air intake and exhaust locations so that there is less dust near the lights. Xenon and LED lighting on today’s tractors also lasts longer and is more energy efficient than the 1980s’ halogen lights that lasted only about 2,000 hours.

The general appearance of the tractor has also changed since the 1980s, and it’s more than trendy: It’s safer. Today’s cab design features large, unobstructed glass panels, versus the smaller, individual panes of glass on the 1980s cab, which is more intrusive to visibility, Ehlers said. Further down the tractor body, the 1980s’ hood tends to be longer and sloped downward, which increases visibility and results in tighter turning radiuses.

“We have redesigned the forward view,” Ehlers said. “This is where most of the design has been focused.”

Inside the cab, visibility technology also plays a large part in increasing the operator’s comfort level through ergonomic design. For example, the controls — which have themselves become more easily readable — are anchored on the right-side arm of the seat, which is able to rotate 40 degrees, Ehlers said. In the 1980s, seats rotated very little. The ability to rotate more has led to in-

creased reaction times.

“This allows the operator to be more aware of his surroundings,” Ehlers said.

Overall, during the last three decades, the number of mirrors has increased dramatically. While today’s tractors feature extended-arm mirrors on the outside of the cab, the 1980s’ tractor didn’t even have exterior mirrors.

“These mirrors extend out, so you can see out and around,” Ehlers said. “Extended-arm mirrors help significantly.”

Being relatively newer on the tractor design scene, researchers are still working out issues with exterior mirrors, like image distortion due to machinery vi-

sions to monitor their equipment, Ehlers said.

Available back-up camera kits designed specifically for agricultural equipment range in price from \$100 for black-and-white displays to \$500 for wireless mounts and full-color displays. Ehlers said that many operators use save money by using an existing precision monitor with video input, or by using kits designed for the auto industry, which work well but are not as robust as agricultural kits. Auto kits range in price from \$14 to \$78. Even with the more expensive units, operators should not be concerned about breakage because the back-up imaging is so effective at increasing visibility, Ehlers said.

“They are quite durable and waterproof,” he added. The camera lens can be wiped off if dirty, if not a self-cleaning model.

To determine whether back-up imaging is as useful as its being touted, Ehlers conducted a research study comparing rear visibility between using the mirrors that came with a modern tractor and combine versus the addition of a back-up camera. With the tractor, there continued to be a 60- to 68-percent obstructed rear view. With a back-up camera added, the obstructed view dropped to 35 percent. After moving the camera mount to above the PTO shaft, the obstructed view dropped further to 24 percent.

With the combine, using mirrors only had almost a fully obstructed rear view.

“Combines are just notorious for horrible rear visibility,” Ehlers said. “We always hear stories of operators backing into a grain cart or truck. So it’s quite common and can be extensive, or even tragic.”

By adding the back-up camera, the rear visibility dropped to a just 28-percent obstructed view. However, where the obstruction is, a child is still not visible behind the combine even with the back-up camera, though Ehlers said that this could be improved by experimenting with the camera’s position or adding another back-up camera. Adding LED lights around the camera can also improve visibility, particularly in low-light situations.

Additionally, Ehlers took the study further and looked at a tractor with a 1,100-bushel grain cart in tow. With the interior mirrors only, there was a 100-percent obstructed rear view. With the exterior mirrors, the rear-view obstruction dropped to 84 percent. With the back-up camera, the obstruction dropped to a mere 4 percent. Ehlers said he could accomplish a fully unobstructed rear view by adjusting the camera’s position.

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SHAWN EHLERS

brations and ways to reduce breakage. While there is now a break-away option with some extended-arm mirrors, Ehlers said that breakage continues to be a problem. With the price ranging from \$80 to \$500 per mirror, it can be costly each time a mirror needs to be replaced. Some exterior mirrors are curved to allow for a wider field of view, but these do tend to also have image distortion.

Inside the cab, there are also more mirrors now than in the 1980s. Ehlers particularly likes the hitching mirrors. But he said it’s easy for interior mirrors to become obstructed by equipment being pulled behind the tractor.

“You can also have severe obstruction from the operators themselves,” he added. “You’re looking back at a mirror, at a picture of yourself.”

The latest trend in visibility technology has been to install back-up cameras on tractors, combines and the equipment pulled behind.

“There’s been quite a push in the auto industry to equip vehicles with back-up imagine technology, and there’s been some adaption to the agricultural industry as well,” Ehlers said. “This technology is growing. It just doesn’t have the push it does in the auto industry.”

Besides improving safety, back-up imaging can be helpful in agricultural operations, such as preventing overflow during grain harvesting, assistance in backing up to a trailer, baling and so on. It’s also more ergonomic for operators, eliminating the need to put themselves in awkward, backward-looking

First CSP Participants Can Renew In Program

HURON — The first participants of the Conservation Stewardship Program have until Sept. 12 to renew their contracts and make decisions on additional conservation activities that will benefit priority natural resource issues.

CSP is offered by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and is the Farm Bill program that helps farmers and ranchers take conservation investments to the next level.

In South Dakota, about 500 CSP contracts are reaching the end of their initial five-

year contract period and may be renewed for an additional five years where participants agree to take additional conservation measures.

The program provides opportunities for farmers and ranchers who are already established conservation stewards, helping them improve water quality, soil health and wildlife habitat.

“CSP farmers are conservation leaders and go the extra mile to conserve our nation’s resources,” NRCS State Conservationist Jeff Zimprich said. “The 2014 Farm Bill continued that strong commitment and heightened the

program’s focus on generating conservation benefits.”

Since CSP began in 2009, more than 58 million acres nationwide have been enrolled in the program — an area the size of Indiana and Wisconsin combined. CSP participants boost their operations’ conservation benefits by installing new conservation activities that make positive changes in soil, water, air and wildlife habitat.

In South Dakota, more than 3.5 million acres have been enrolled with a million acres eligible to be re-en-

rolled this year. “CSP allows landowners to reach the next level of conservation and opens the door to trying new conservation activities,” Zimprich said.

To learn about technical and financial assistance available through CSP, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/Get-Started/, the Conservation Stewardship webpage or local USDA service center. For more on the 2014 Farm Bill, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/Farm-Bill/.

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