

**Lincoln County**  
**LAND INFORMATION, CONSERVATION AND UNIVERSITY EXTENSION COMMITTEE**  
**Lincoln County UW-Extension**  
**Ag Development and Natural Resources Education**  
**Needs for the Future**  
**Monday, September 19, 2011 at 7:00 p.m.**  
**Lincoln County Service Center, Assembly Room (Upper Level)**  
**801 N. Sales Street**  
**Merrill, WI 54452**

**MINUTES**

**1. Welcome and Introductions**

The meeting was called to order by committee Secretary Frank Saal at 7:00 p.m. Besides Mr. Saal, those attending the meeting were committee members Ray Bloomer, Ramona Pampuch, and Hans Breitenmoser, Jr. Also in attendance were Debbie Moellendorf, Randy Scholz, Jim Gooch, Paul Reinsbach, Tom Schmitz, Bill Jelinek, Karen Olsen, Bernie Haring, Tom Kuehn, Diana Smith, Robert Smith, Jim Wise, Kevin Kleinschmidt, Paul Daigle, Stacy Petit, David Williams, Roger Nelson, Mary Kluz, Donald Radtke, Bill Wengeler, Mark Wallace, Matt Peplinski, Marty Sosnovske, and Art Lersch.

**2. Overview of Ag and Natural Resources Programs - Dave Williams, Assistant State Program Leader for Ag and Natural Resources Program Area**

Following introductions, Mr. Williams provided a statewide snapshot of current Extension Ag and Natural Resources programming, including a summary of the current status of county and specialist positions. He mentioned that the primary purpose of this meeting was to identify high priority needs in the county related to Ag and Natural Resources programming.

**3. A Snapshot of Agriculture in Lincoln County – Dave Williams**

Mr. Williams mentioned that the county has 575 farms, down about 3% from a decade ago. There are 53 dairy farms. The average size of the farms is about 150 acres. He stated that there are almost 700 direct farming jobs in the county. Payroll is nearly \$5 million. He also mentioned that about 87,000 acres in the county are devoted to farm production. Discussion took place about these statistics.

**4. Summary of Lincoln County Comprehensive Plan (Ag and Natural Resources Section) – Art Lersch, Lincoln County Community Resource Development Educator**

Mr. Lersch mentioned that the county is currently revising its initial comprehensive plan which was developed in 2001. State statutes require that local government comprehensive plans be revised every 10 years. He stated that the revised comprehensive plan will focus on five community elements: transportation, housing, land use, economic development and agriculture and natural resources. He explained that former Extension agriculture educator Tom Cadwallader worked with a group to develop the draft Ag and Natural Resources section of what is to become part of the revised county comprehensive plan. Seventeen stakeholders took part in those discussions. They identified one primary goal “to sustainably manage and develop for current and future generations the rich yet finite agricultural, natural and cultural resources...” of Lincoln County. Lersch indicated that the comprehensive plan revision would likely be completed sometime in early 2012.

**5. Overview of the Purpose and Process for Exploring Broad Needs for Agriculture and Natural Resources in Lincoln County – Tom Schmitz, Central District Director Cooperative Extension and David Williams**

Mr. Schmitz and Williams outlined a process for discussing three primary questions. Those questions were:

- What are the major opportunities and challenges facing the farms, agribusinesses, and agricultural organizations in Lincoln County?
- Of the opportunities and challenges identified, which ones are most effectively addressed through UW-Extension's education, research, and facilitation?
- What issues will need the new Lincoln County Agricultural Educator's priority care and attention in his/her first one-two years in the position?

(A complete list of responses to these questions can be found in the session summary report.)

**6. Next Steps in the Hiring Process – Tom Schmitz, Randy Scholz, Debbie Moellendorf, and David Williams**

Schmitz explained that the university is currently under a six month hiring suspension. This means that the position cannot be filled until the suspension expires. He said that there is currently an interim Ag Educator coming into the Lincoln County office twice a week to provide limited services. He indicated that the county committee overseeing Extension wanted the visioning process to move forward to discern the needs of the community. He said that in the past the Ag position was shared with Marathon County. Thus, Marathon County will be going through its own visioning session to determine agricultural educational needs.

Randy Scholz explained that the county has removed dollars from the 2012 budget that would have supported the position. If it is desired, those dollars through the contingency funds could be restored. The process for doing so would be for the position to be formerly endorsed by the oversight committee, approved by the Personnel Committee and then by the County Board.

Discussion ensued about the status of the position and how best to provide agricultural education services to the county.

**7. Wrap up and Thank You**

Schmitz, Williams and Moellendorf thanked the group for its participation and mentioned that the notes detailing the input from the meeting would be sent to all participants. The meeting was adjourned at approximately 9:40 p.m.

Minutes prepared by Art Lersch, Debbie Moellendorf and Terri Pankow