

6/20/2017

Full time staffing changes for NRCS in May. The Soil Con in Dodge has resigned and DC, Kathy Turner, shared between Jefferson and Dodge is covering for those duties until a replacement is hired. It is unsure when or if a replacement will be hired.

The Conservation Stewardship program planning and ranking is underway. Currently there are 5 new applications in Jefferson County. The program has changed from how it was contracted and administered in previous years. It now resembles the EQIP program. Applicants for the CSP program must be the operator of the land and are evaluated for their current level of management on cropland, pasture, farmstead and assoc agland. If the operation and management meets at least 3 resource concerns (10 total including soil, water, air, energy, wildlife, etc.) on all land uses and agree to do an additional enhancement they are eligible to be considered for a contract. It is a competitive program with contracts awarded based on ranking scores. Contracts are for 5 years and are eligible for reenrollment if successfully completed.

EQIP contracts are now being implemented with plantings completed for projects in the RCPP watershed area. Field work has begun to verify completion and certification. Other EQIP funded practices completed include implementation of No-till farming, high tunnel construction, pasture plantings for prescribed grazing, a wetland restoration project, and waste abandonment.

Nuffield International Scholars from around the world visited WI on June 19, and were part of a tour hosted by NRCS to visit farming in its many forms in our area. The Never Rest Dairy in Jefferson was chosen as one of the stops to view their robotic milking operation. They also visited a grazing operation in Columbia County and a CSA in Dane County.



Nuffield scholar WI
info.docx

There has been new interest in prescribed grazing in our area. Currently we are working with 3 new landowners. One of the most important aspects of beginning grazing is to work with experienced planners and grazers to glean info in the practice of prescribed grazing. Kirsten Jurcek from Brattset Farms is a practicing grazer who offers consulting. She and Mike Gehl from the Dodge county area are offering this service to producers who are looking for info on how to start, planning and assoc practices. Consulting fees are not covered with EQIP funding, perhaps the LWCD or committee members have some recommendations for working with producers to cover the consulting fees.

Talking Points for June 16-22, 2017 US Nuffield Scholars US Fellowship Tour in Wisconsin

Who are the Nuffield Farming Scholars – a background

In the aftermath of the Second World War Lord Nuffield, Industrialist and Philanthropist initiated a travelling scholarship scheme for British and Empire farmers, in recognition of their contribution to feeding the nation through the war, and as a method of advancing the best agriculturalist practice around the world.

The first 2 scholars were selected in 1947. Jane Kenyon and Edward Stokes from the UK paved the way for some 1000 scholars from ten participating countries that have since travelled the world studying the best agricultural practice wherever it may be. From Brussels to Washington, the paddy fields of Asia and the fantastically productive farmlands in the America's, to the most sophisticated and technologically advanced farming in the other parts of the world, Nuffield scholars have created an unrivalled network of Agriculturalists that, worldwide, are at the leading edge of their profession.

Each year, the 10 countries now participating in the scheme, award a total of approximately 50 scholarships to young agriculturalists.

The great challenge of the coming century will be supplying the rapidly increasing demand for food, not only in quantity, but meeting the demands of an increasingly quality and environmentally conscious world. This is occurring at a time when around the Western world, because of half a century of declining margins, there has been an exodus of human capital from all sectors agriculture. Student numbers have dropped, Research and Development is in decline and there are a diminishing number of farmers. The human Capital issue within agriculture is potentially the greatest barrier the West now faces in meeting the demands from agriculture that this new century will require. Nuffield, worldwide, is uniquely placed, and has an unrivalled program, to assist in meeting the challenges in the years ahead.

Past US State Participants

For the past 16 years the Nuffield Scholars have visited states such as Colorado, New York, Maryland, Virginia, California, Texas, Mississippi, Louisiana, Washington State and the District of Columbia (meeting with US Congress agricultural committees, USDA, NGO's and commodity sectors).

Scholar tours last about one week in duration and are part of the Nuffield worldwide tour. Before coming to the US the scholars usually have already visited countries in Southeast Asia, China and Europe being their last visit before coming to the US.

US Tour Goals, Objectives and Strategies

When planning for a Scholars visit there are some guiding principles that help make this visit beneficial for all parties involved (everyone benefits from the experience):

1. Because of the variety of disciplines (government, business interests, academia, farmers/ranchers, etc.) involved, there is a unique opportunity to share information and opportunities to learn from each other in a peer to peer conversation.
2. Networking is a result of interactions between all the principals involved. This offers both business and intellectual opportunities for the future.
3. We have entered a global economy whereby the understanding of other cultures is necessary and needed to be successful. Thus, there is an opportunity to experience cultural exchange.

Thus, the objective of the US Nuffield Scholars tour is to establish and create networks of peers in the field of agriculture whereby all participants benefit from explorations of new technologies and techniques in an ever-changing world.

The development of the tour is the creation of the desired learning environment that enables participants to achieve the above objective mentioned. The host state utilizes field tours, site discussions, one on one conversations utilizing Scholar backgrounds to discuss relevant challenges that inspires discussion and applicability to all parties involved. An example of this would be to meet on a dairy where a presentation is offered by the owner/manager to orient the participants to the business (successes, issues, upcoming plans) and conservation goals of the property. A question and answer segment would occur where issues are discussed from a local, state, national and international perspective.

It is anticipated that a series of “opportunity areas” would be highlighted in Wisconsin over a 5/6-day period that could feature areas like:

1. Farmers as protectors/guardians of the environment
2. Best ways to increase information exchange in family farm health
3. Machinery maintenance efficiencies
4. Co-ops assisting dairy industry
5. Fine wine marketing
6. Economic feasibility of sugar beets
7. Protective cropping in low tech greenhouses
8. Attracting and retaining young farmers (example: in sheep industry)

To bring conversations down to a very local perspective a one on one “on the ground, hands on” host family concept was created. It is anticipated that for 1-1 ½ days each Scholar would be paired up with a local farm family whereby the Scholar can experience US agriculture from the ground level (i.e. US culture, real life realities of production agriculture in the US/Wisconsin). In years past these visits were the highlight of the Scholars tour.

Partners Involvement is the Key to Success

The formula of success is founded in a team approach in hosting the Nuffield Scholars. USDA (NRCS), NACD (conservation districts), conservation NGO's (DU, NTF, etc.), agricultural businesses (local and corporate levels), academic institutions (University of Wisconsin-Madison, etc.), political (local, state, national) representatives and individual farmers/ranchers participating in parts of the tour allows for a shared time commitment. Thus, coordination of the parties/individuals involved is the key to success.

Proof of Success Is in the Experience

The best evidence that the investment of time will be well spent is easily validated by the past state participants. You are encouraged to call past participating NRCS State Conservationists and their personnel or academic institutions to discuss their experiences with the Nuffield Scholars. These are the best recommendations that the time spent is worth the rewards in the end.

Media opportunities are generated from these visits and are often used to highlight a variety of local/state specific issues by the host state.