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# PEORIA COUNTY

## Soil & Water Conservation District

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*Fall 2024*



# RESOURCE REPORT

[peoriacountyswcd.tripod.com](http://peoriacountyswcd.tripod.com)

### SAVE THE DATE

We are pleased to announce our 84th Annual Meeting will be held on February 15th at the Brimfield American Legion.

Last year's event went very well at the new location and we are looking forward to having it there again this year.

In our Winter issue of the Resource Report, we will have more details, including tickets, times, and some annual reporting information.

The program will be a breakfast meeting with a few updates on County programs, Election of Directors and of course the fabulous door prizes. If you missed last year, it turned out that every person who attended received one! While that was a product of a smaller attendance in our first year back from a 3 year break due to covid, our Board Members always do a great job of lining up lots of great prizes.

Please mark your calendars for Feb. 15th!

### **Cold Water Fish Sale NOW TAKING ORDERS**

We are happy to bring back our specialty fish sale, working with Herman Bros to provide alternative species than our regular Fish Sale.

Unlike the regular sale, this will be delivery only. Similar to regular sale, orders over \$750 will be free. Orders under \$750 will have a \$95 delivery charge within Peoria County. Staff from Herman Bros will contact you regarding delivery dates and times when fish are available.

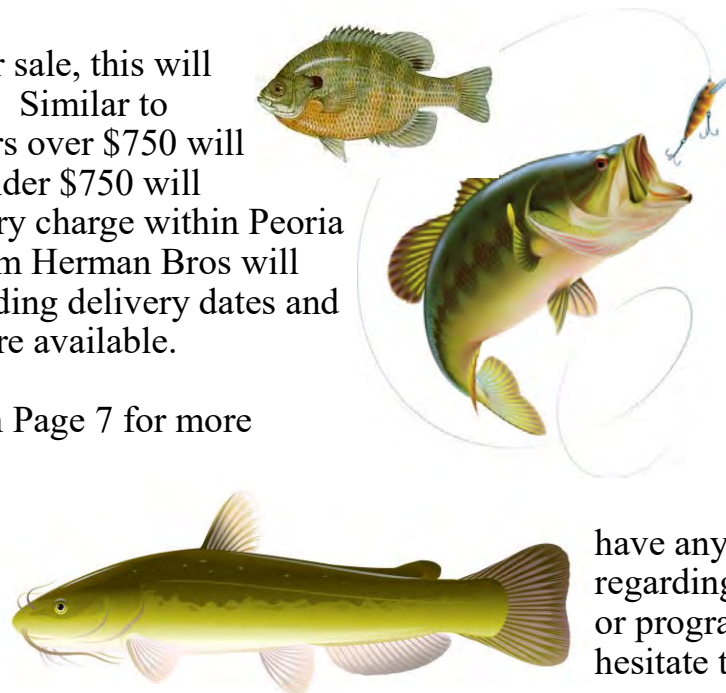
See order form on Page 7 for more details and call us with any questions at 309-671-7040 ext 3

### **Fall Fish Sale Order Form Is Now Available**

If you missed out on the Spring Sale, or are ready to supplement what you currently have swimming around in your pond, the time is now to consider placing an order for our Fall Fish Sale.

Please see Page 6 for the order form. You can also find the form on our website (see above) or we can mail one to you.

As always if you have any questions regarding any of our sales or programs please don't hesitate to call.



# Peoria County SWCD

## Directors

Chairman

**Jerry Wyatt**

Vice-Chairman

**Ted Gilles**

Secretary

**Chuck Schafer**

Treasurer

**Troy Wagenbach**

Director

**David Wagner**

## Associate Directors

Ron Gilles, Anita Lorance, Marty Behrends, Betty Gorman, Arlan Janssen, Charles Rice, Dennis Herrmann

## SWCD Staff

Karla Smith - Administrative Coordinator  
Josh Joseph - Resource Conservationist  
Al Schneider - Civil Engineer

## NRCS Staff

Jeremy Beck, District Conservationist  
Dan Sahn, Soil Conservationist  
Vicki Morrical, Landscape Architect  
Wilson Yingling, Soil Conservationist  
Ethan Scholl, Ag Engineer

Find us on the Web at  
[peoriacountyswcd.tripod.com](http://peoriacountyswcd.tripod.com)

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## 2024 DATES TO REMEMBER

Sep 27	Grass Carp Orders Due
Oct 11	Regular Fish Orders Due
Oct 14	Columbus Day - OFFICE CLOSED
Oct 19	Fish Sale Pickup
Oct 25	Cold Water Fish Sale Orders Due
Nov 11	Veteran's Day - OFFICE CLOSED
Nov 28	Thanksgiving - OFFICE CLOSED
Dec 25	Christmas Day - OFFICE CLOSED

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination against its customers. If you believe you experienced discrimination when obtaining services from USDA, participating in a USDA program, or participating in a program that receives financial assistance from USDA, you may file a complaint with USDA. Information about how to file a discrimination complaint is available from the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights. USDA prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, and where applicable, sex (including gender identity and expression), marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, political beliefs, genetic information, reprisal, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) To file a complaint of discrimination, complete, sign, and mail a program discrimination complaint form, available at any USDA office location or online at [www.ascr.usda.gov](http://www.ascr.usda.gov), or write to:

USDA -- Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights  
1400 Independence Avenue, SW.  
Washington, DC 20250-9410

Or call toll free at (866) 632-9992 (voice) to obtain additional information, the appropriate office or to request documents. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing, or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay service at (800) 877-8339 or (800) 845-6136 (in Spanish). USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (e.g., Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at (202) 720-2600 (voice and TDD).



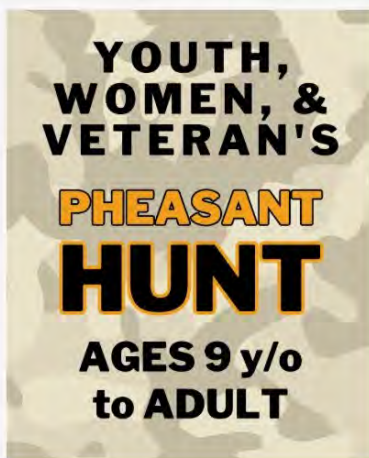
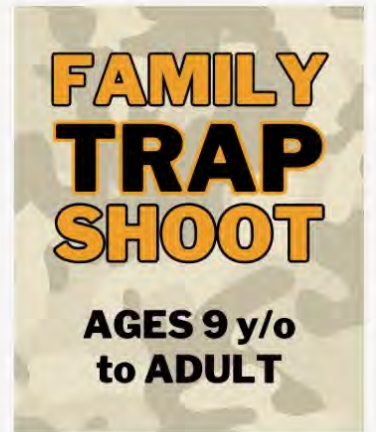
## TWO GREAT EVENTS HOSTED BY GILLES FAMILY FARMS AND ILLINOIS VALLEY CHAPTER #178



### Family Trap Shoot:

We'll be at Gilles Family Farms, 22025 N. Maher Rd, Princeville, on Sat, Sep. 21st & Sun, Sep. 22nd Please call ahead to book a 1-hour time slot starting at 8 AM until 4 PM. Guns & 2 boxes of shells are provided or bring your own.

Call Mike Aldrich at [309-229-4090](tel:309-229-4090) to register.

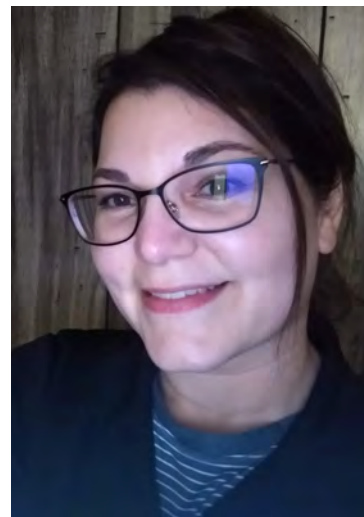


### Youth/Women/Veterans Pheasant Hunt:

Join us at Gilles Family Farms, 22025 N. Maher Rd, Princeville, on Nov. 30th and Dec. 1st. We'll provide 2 birds per hunter, along with guns & shells, or bring your own. **Must have successfully completed the Hunter Safety Course** (this year's or previous). Ages 9 and up.

## Meet our newest FSA Program Technician

Hello, I am Stacey Schisler and I started with FSA in April 2024! I grew up in Fulton County on a beef cattle operation and showed beef cattle for over 20 years with my brothers. I thoroughly enjoyed my time growing up with livestock and being involved with 4-H and FFA. After high school I attended Spoon River College and finished at Western Illinois University with a bachelor's degree in Ag Science. I currently live in rural Fairview, IL with my husband Nick and 7-year-old son, Blake. Blake has been showing bucket calves for the last 3 years and we hope he wants to continue his project. Through my experiences working with the University of Illinois Extension, Fairview Sale Barn, and in crop insurance I have found that working with farmers and in the agricultural industry is where I want to be. I am looking forward to working with and helping producers in Peoria County!



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### CRP/Mid-Contract Management Meeting February 2025

Stay tuned for details on a winter meeting that we are now planning. If you have a CRP contract, are approaching deadlines for mid-contract management, have recently purchased property that has a contract on it, or are thinking about enrolling some ground in one of the CRP practices, this meeting should give you some valuable information to help with your planning. A date has not been set yet, but will be announced in our winter issue of this paper, and we will hopefully also be sending out some one on one invites to folks where possible. Feel free to call our office with questions or if you are interested in attending this meeting.

### CRP Mid-Contract Management and CRP Maintenance is Required

Participants in the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) are responsible for maintaining the acreage under contract to the minimum specifications and acreages as required by their conservation plan and supporting documents. This includes not only controlling excessive weeds, invasive species, and trees in grass practices, but completing required management on CRP practices as scheduled in your conservation plan. Please do not hesitate to contact the Peoria County USDA Service Center at (309) 671 7040 ext. 2 if you have any questions.



### Applying for Farm Storage Facility Loans

The Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Farm Storage Facility Loan (FSFL) program provides low-interest financing to help you build or upgrade storage facilities and to purchase portable (new or used) structures, equipment and storage and handling trucks.

Eligible commodities include corn, grain sorghum, rice, soybeans, oats, peanuts, wheat, barley, minor oilseeds harvested as whole grain, pulse crops (lentils, chickpeas and dry peas), hay, honey, renewable biomass, fruits, nuts and vegetables for cold storage facilities, floriculture, hops, maple sap, rye, milk, cheese, butter, yogurt, meat and poultry (unprocessed), eggs, and aquaculture (excluding systems that maintain live animals through uptake and discharge of water). Qualified facilities include grain bins, hay barns and cold storage facilities for eligible commodities.

Loans up to \$50,000 can be secured by a promissory note/security agreement, loans between \$50,000 and \$100,000 may require additional security, and loans exceeding \$100,000 require additional security.

You do not need to demonstrate the lack of commercial credit availability to apply. The loans are designed to assist a diverse range of farming operations, including small and mid-sized businesses, new farmers, operations supplying local food and farmers markets, non-traditional farm products, and underserved producers.

For more information, contact your Peoria County USDA Service Center at 309-671-7040 x2 or visit [fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport](http://fsa.usda.gov/pricesupport).

### Update Your Records

FSA is cleaning up our producer record database and needs your help. Please report any changes of address, zip code, phone number, email address or an incorrect name or business name on file to our office. You should also report changes in your farm operation, like the addition of a farm by lease or purchase. This includes updating records to show the proper succession of deceased owners. You should also report any changes to your operation in which you reorganize to form a Trust, LLC or other legal entity.

FSA and NRCS program participants are required to promptly report changes in their farming operation to the County Committee in writing and to update their *Farm Operating Plan* on form CCC-902. Reporting your updates earlier in the year allows us to update your information more completely and reduces complications created by waiting until contract sign-up or acreage reporting to make those updates.

To update your records, contact your Peoria County USDA Service Center at (309) 671 7040 ext. 2.

### Direct Deposit/Hardship Waiver

If you are currently receiving your FSA/CCC program payment by paper check, or if you have just become eligible to begin receiving an FSA/CCC payment, you should elect to receive your payment by direct deposit through the financial institution of your choice. FSA/CCC makes payments electronically through a program called direct deposit, which is safe, convenient and a reliable way to receive your FSA/CCC payment directly to your bank account. Hardship waivers are available if payment by EFT would impose a hardship because of a physical or mental disability, the individual faces a geographic, language or literacy barrier to receiving payment by EFT and/or payment by EFT would impose a financial hardship. If you are still receiving paper checks, please contact the Peoria County USDA Service Center at (309) 671 7040 ext. 2 so that we may assist you in either setting up your direct deposit for FSA/CCC payments or filling out a hardship waiver to continue receiving paper checks.

#### ⇒ **Electronic payments are faster:**

- Paper checks take days to arrive in the mail and can require additional time to cash or deposit the check.

#### ⇒ **Electronic payments are cheaper:**

- Every check that is converted to an electronic payment saves the American taxpayer and allows the government to save tens of millions of dollars.

### Submitting Production Losses for Disaster Declarations

Farmers and ranchers know all too well that natural disasters can be a common, and likely a costly, variable to their operation. The Farm Service Agency (FSA) has emergency assistance programs to provide assistance when disasters strike, and for some of those programs, a disaster designation may be the eligibility trigger. When natural disaster occurs, there is a process for requesting a USDA Secretarial disaster designation for a county. You can play a vital role in this process.

If you have experienced a production loss as a result of a natural disaster, you may submit a request to your local FSA county office for your county to be evaluated for a Secretarial disaster designation. Once a request is received, the county office will collect disaster data and create a Loss Assessment Report. The County Emergency Board will review the Loss Assessment Report and determine if a recommendation is sent forward to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture for the designation.

For more information on FSA disaster programs and disaster designations, contact your Peoria County USDA Service Center at (309) 671 7040 or visit [fsa.usda.gov/disaster](http://fsa.usda.gov/disaster).

### Making Farm Reconstitutions

When changes in farm ownership or operation take place, a farm *reconstitution* is necessary. The reconstitution — or recon — is the process of combining or dividing farms or tracts of land based on the farming operation.

To be effective for the current Fiscal Year (FY), farm combinations and farm divisions must be requested by **August 1 of the FY** for farms subject to the Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program. The 2023 Reconstitution request period for ARC/PLC has ended, but reconstitution requests for 2024 can begin to be processed Oct. 1, 2023. A reconstitution is considered to be requested when all of the required signatures are on FSA-155 and all other applicable documentation, such as proof of ownership, is submitted.

Total Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) and non-ARC/PLC farms may be reconstituted at any time.

The following are the different methods used when doing a farm recon:

**Estate Method** — the division of bases, allotments and quotas for a parent farm among heirs in settling an estate

**Designation of Landowner Method** — may be used when (1) part of a farm is sold or ownership is transferred; (2) an entire farm is sold to two or more persons; (3) farm ownership is transferred to two or more persons; (4) part of a tract is sold or ownership is transferred; (5) a tract is sold to two or more persons; or (6) tract ownership is transferred to two or more persons. In order to use this method, the land sold must have been owned for at least three years, or a waiver granted, and the buyer and seller must sign a Memorandum of Understanding

**DCP Cropland Method** — the division of bases in the same proportion that the DCP cropland for each resulting tract relates to the DCP cropland on the parent tract

**Default Method** — the division of bases for a parent farm with each tract maintaining the bases attributed to the tract level when the reconstitution is initiated in the system.

For questions on your farm reconstitution, contact the Peoria County USDA Service Center at (309) 671 7040 ext. 2.

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**PEORIA COUNTY  
FARM BUREAU NEWS**

**We want to welcome our new  
Farm Bureau Manager,  
Charlie Hensley.**



I want to start off by saying it's good to be in Peoria County! I got all settled in and started my new role as manager on July 8th. The first several days I focused on meeting members and traveling to different areas of the county. I was astounded by the amount of fruit that we distributed on July 10th. We had great volunteer help, and I was able to meet several members. To give some background on where I come from. I am originally from Bushnell, Illinois. Bushnell is about one hour west of Peoria and is a small community with strong agricultural and industrial roots. I grew up on a farm there and attended the University of Illinois after high school. For the last several months I have been in Washington and Perry County as their Farm Bureau manager. It has been rewarding to meet so many new Farm Bureau members and attend all the programs that take place here in Peoria County. Between the fruit programs and the committee meetings there has been a lot happening. I want to thank all the members that have volunteered their time to help at an event. The Peoria County Farm Bureau team is strong!

Seasons are getting ready to change here in Illinois. Football is coming back, and it looks like we are going to have an outstanding crop throughout the state. My first couple months at Peoria County Farm Bureau have been great, and our team is working hard every day.

As we head into harvest, I want to give a couple quick reminders to everyone. National Farm Safety and Health Week is taking place from September 15<sup>th</sup> through the 21<sup>st</sup>. The theme for 2024 is 'Don't Learn Safety By Accident.' The theme is dedicated to raising awareness about the various hazards associated with agricultural work. It's crucial for everyone to prioritize health and safety of those who labor to supply our food, fiber, and fuel.

Another reminder to Farm Bureau members, be on the lookout for citrus and nut order forms coming out in October. Order forms will be made available in October through our website and by calling into the office. We had an outstanding response from members on peaches and blueberries this summer. We hope that response continues into the Fall with citrus and nuts.

As we head into harvest, I want to reiterate how important it is to be safe. If you feel tired, take a break and get some rest. Accidents happen when we work too fast, and when we're tired. All signs point to an outstanding crop in 2024. Peoria County has had ideal weather conditions during the growing season, and everything is on time. As always, feel free to contact the Peoria County Farm Bureau office for updates on programs! Have a safe and successful harvest.

Charlie Hensley  
Peoria County Farm Bureau  
1716 N University St, Peoria, IL 61604  
309.686.7070



For an electronic copy of the Resource Report, e-mail Karla at: [karla.smith@il.nacdnet.net](mailto:karla.smith@il.nacdnet.net)

**\*NOTICE\***

Mailing List - If you have had:

- Name Change
- Death in the family
- No longer wish to receive

Regarding the newspaper, please feel free to contact Karla Smith at 309-671-7040 ext 3 and we can either remove or make changes to the name and address we have on file for our newspaper mailing list.

*Join the*  
**Peoria County  
Farm Bureau**



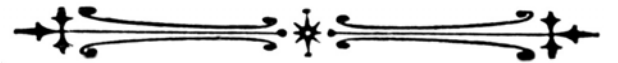
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Labor Day always signals the end of summer. Summer vacations have been taken, school is back in session and the days are getting noticeably shorter. Before jumping into Fall, it is good time to look back at the last few months in the office. In Peoria County, we have obligated nearly \$631,000 in new contracts for EQIP and CSP. These contracts represent conservation activities such as cover crops, nutrient management, no-till, basins and brush management. We also saw many conservation practices get implemented throughout the County.

This summer, our office also had the pleasure of hosting two Pathway Interns: Mia Nollett, Soil Conservationist Trainee studying at Iowa State University and Gabriela Davis, Engineering Trainee studying at the University of Illinois. This summer provided them exposure to many of the practices and programs that NRCS has to offer, as well as an opportunity to see what a career with NRCS would entail. Illinois NRCS will soon be looking for interns for the summer of 2025. If you know of any student that may be interested, please have them contact our office.

As we shift our focus to Fall activities, many producers will be seeding cover crops to address soil erosion, soil health and weed suppression. The Midwest Cover Crop Decision Tool (<https://covercroptool.midwestcovercrops.org/covercroptool/>) provides seeding dates, seeding rates and cover crop species characteristics for variety of common cover crops in Illinois. If you have not tried cover crops yet, but are interested, now is a great time to start the conversation. Funding for our conservation programs in Fiscal Year 2025 looks very promising and will encompass cropland, livestock, forestry, and wildlife practices just to name a few. While no application deadlines have been set yet, producers and landowners can stop by the office any time to fill out an application.



Dan Sahm, Soil Conservationist, took Mia and Gabriela to a concrete block chute site to check on it's stability.



Jeremy, District Conservationist, and Katie Rebbe, Area Ag Engineer, discuss subsurface drainage options with interns at the site of a wetland project funded through the Wetland Reserve Enhancement program.



Ethan Scholl, Area Ag Engineer, discusses topography and drainage areas with interns on the same wetland site.

## Popular Conservation Practices Highlight of NRCS Video Series

CHAMPAIGN, IL – July 18, 2024 — Across Illinois and around the country, farmers, ranchers and forest landowners are working with [USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service](#) to implement conservation practices across agricultural working lands. These conservation practices help protect and improve natural resources on their operations.

To assist land managers in achieving their goals and objectives, NRCS's [Conservation at Work video series](#) introduces conservation practices featuring the farmers and landowners using them. The videos share from the landowner's perspective how working with NRCS to install conservation practices such as nutrient management, no-till and wetland restoration, has benefited their operations. The series now includes more than 75 videos, with more on the way, and most are shorter than two minutes.

"By sharing the conservation successes of our customers, we hope these videos will help educate those already working with NRCS to conserve natural resources while motivating more farmers and landowners to consider conservation," said Illinois NRCS state conservationist Tammy Willis. "These videos are a great way to reach the next generation of producers and show them from a producer's perspective how conservation practices are making a lasting difference on operations throughout the country."

Housed on [YouTube](#) and featured on [farmers.gov](#), the series was designed with the concept of "show, don't tell." The videos shine the spotlight on farmers, ranchers, and forest landowners from across the U.S. through their first-person testimonials as they share their conservation stories, and how practices are helping them protect and improve natural resources while saving time and money.

Videos featuring conservation practices that could be helpful to producers in Illinois include:

- [Cover Crops](#)
- [Grassed Waterway](#)
- [Roof Runoff Structure](#)

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**PEORIA COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
6715 N Smith Road, Edwards, IL 61528 Phone: 309-671-7040 Ext 3

## FALL FISH SALE 2024

**Saturday, October 19th, 2024**

The Fall Fish Sale is now in progress and many varieties and sizes of fish are available. The Fisheries Biologist with the IL Dept of Natural Resources recommends the following stocking rates for ponds with no fish: 750 bluegill; 250 redear; 100 channel catfish and 100 bass. All rates are per acre of water surface and are fingerling fish (1-3"). By initially stocking the correct number of fingerlings, rather than releasing a smaller number of adult fish, a lake will produce sport fishing in less time and without stunting. Triploid Grass Carp are available again. Recommended stocking is five (5) grass carp to an acre of surface grass or algae in a pond.

**GRASS CARP** need to be ordered by **Friday, September 27th**  
All other fish must be ordered by **Friday, October 11th.**

			Quantity	Cost
Hybrid Sunfish	(1-2")	250/bag-\$98.00/bag	_____	_____
Hybrid Sunfish	(3-5")	100 for \$126.00	_____	_____
Bluegill	(1-2")	250/bag-\$98.00/bag	_____	_____
Bluegill	(3-5")	100 for \$126.00	_____	_____
Redear	(1-2")	250/bag-\$102.00/bag	_____	_____
Black Crappie	(2-3")	100 for \$100.00	_____	_____
Largemouth Bass	(3")	100 for \$152.00	_____	_____
Largemouth Bass	(5-8")	100 for \$365.00	_____	_____
Channel Catfish	(6-8")	100 for \$135.00	_____	_____
Albino Catfish	(6-8")	\$5.00 each	_____	_____
Fathead Minnows		\$10.00 per pound	_____	_____
Grass Carp	(8-11")	\$13.00 each	_____	_____
Delivery Fee	orders under \$750=\$95	over \$750 = Free	_____	_____
			Check box for delivery <input type="checkbox"/>	_____
			<b>TOTAL</b>	_____

Please include payment with order. Make check payable to: Peoria County SWCD

Name *	<b>PLEASE FILL IN IF PURCHASING GRASS CARP</b>		
Address *	Legal Owner		
	Township		
Phone/Cell *	County		
	Section		
* Required for all orders	Pond Size		

This year we are offering these products and services. Please call the office if you are interested in **HB All Seasons Blend Bacteria; Triton High Protein Fish Food; Texas Hunter Automatic Fish Feeder.**

**Please bring 35 gallons of pond water for every 100 (6-8 inch) Channel Catfish ordered!**

All orders over \$750 can receive free delivery to your pond.

### FALL FISH SALE Now taking orders

Hopefully many of you are finishing up your planting season and finding time to slow down a bit and enjoy some moments with your rod and reels. It is time to take stock of what you are pulling out of your ponds and see if you have a need for supplementing your fish populations.



We are taking orders now through **September 27th for grass carp**, and through **October 11th for all other fish**. Pickup will be on **Saturday October 19th**, here at our office.

Herman Brothers Lake and Pond Management is adding Albino Catfish to the list this year, as their operation continues to grow. See above for sizing and pricing. Having the fish delivered to your pond is a great choice if you want to avoid the standard pickup. If your order is above \$750, delivery is FREE! If your order is under \$750 then it will cost you \$95, but still may be a good option. If you want your fish delivered please check the box on the order form. For all deliveries, Karla will coordinate with Herman Brothers and you to determine delivery date and time.

So, if you are ready to place an order, feel free to send it in anytime. We are taking orders now through **September 27th for grass carp**, and through **October 11th for all other fish**. Pickup will be on **Saturday October 19th**, here at our office.



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**Cold Water FISH SALE 2024**

**Planning for November Delivery**

We are excited to again offer a specialty fish sale focusing on cold water fish. All orders will be delivered this year, with delivery date being determined at a later time. This is the second time we have been able to offer this type of sale, so if you are in the market for some great sport fish for your pond or lake, here is your chance.

All orders due by **Friday, October 25th**

		all prices - each	Quantity	Cost
Northern Pike	(10-12")	\$16.00	_____	_____
Tiger Muskie	(10-12")	\$26.00	_____	_____
Pure Muskie	(10-12")	\$26.00	_____	_____
Walleye	(4-6")	\$1.85	_____	_____
Walleye	(5-7")	\$2.95	_____	_____
Yellow Perch	(3-4")	\$1.25	_____	_____
Yellow Perch	(4-6")	\$2.20	_____	_____
Delivery Fee	orders under \$750=\$95 over \$750 = \$0.00		Check box for delivery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
		<b>**Peoria County Only</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>				_____

Please include payment with order. Make check payable to: Peoria County SWCD

Name \* \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address \* \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone/Cell \* \_\_\_\_\_

**This year we are offering these products and services. Please call the office if you are interested in HB All Seasons Blend Bacteria; Triton High Protein Fish Food; Texas Hunter Automatic Fish Feeder.**

All orders over \$750 can receive free delivery to your pond. Orders under \$750 will be delivered for a \$95 delivery fee.

\* Required for all orders

\*\* (Deliveries outside of Peoria County may be an extra cost)



**Yellow Perch**



**Northern Pike**



**Walleye**

**BOBCAT STUDY ONGOING IN CENTRAL ILLINOIS**

The North Central Illinois Bobcat Project, led by PhD students Ellen Audia and Katherine Buckman at Southern Illinois University Carbondale, is studying bobcats in Peoria and surrounding counties. In collaboration with the IDNR, the team will begin their final field season this November, where they will be trapping and placing GPS collars on bobcats to better understand their habitat, movement, reproduction, and survival. Their research will help inform bobcat management in Illinois and this north central region. For more information about the project and to contact Ellen and Katherine regarding bobcat sightings please visit <https://ncillinoisbobcats.siu.edu/>.

Thanks!

**Ellen M Audia**  
 PhD Student  
 Cooperative Wildlife Research Laboratory  
 Southern Illinois University – Carbondale  
 Carbondale, IL, 62901  
 Project Website: [North Central Illinois Bobcat Project](https://ncillinoisbobcats.siu.edu/)



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## Ensuring Resilience: Emergency Management in Soil and Water Conservation

By Jason Marks, Director of Emergency Management and Preparedness  
Peoria County Emergency Management Agency

In the face of increasing climate variability and extreme weather events, the importance of effective emergency management within soil and water conservation districts has never been greater. Extreme weather events such as floods and droughts pose significant threats to soil and water resources. These events can lead to soil erosion, water contamination and the destruction of vital habitats. The consequences not only impact the environment but also the agricultural productivity and safety of our communities.

Our county approach to emergency management is rooted in thorough planning and preparedness. We continuously assess the vulnerabilities within our communities and develop appropriate comprehensive emergency response plans. These plans are designed to mitigate risks, protect critical infrastructure, and ensure a swift response to any incidents. Key components of our preparedness strategy include:

1. **Risk Assessment:** Regularly conducting risk assessments to identify and prioritize potential threats.
2. **Community Education:** Engaging with local communities to raise awareness about emergency preparedness and response.
3. **Training and Drills:** Providing training for staff and conducting drills to ensure readiness for real-world scenarios.

**Resource Management:** Maintaining an inventory of necessary equipment and supplies to be deployed during emergencies.

Effective emergency management requires collaboration across various stakeholders. We work closely with local governments, emergency services, and community organizations to create a cohesive response network. These partnerships are essential for sharing information, resources, and expertise.

Looking ahead, we are committed to building resilience against future emergencies. This involves not only reactive measures but also proactive strategies to enhance the natural defenses of our landscapes. Practices such as reforestation, sustainable agriculture, and improved watershed management are integral to our long-term resilience planning.

Together, we can ensure that our soil and water conservation district remains a strong and resilient part of our community, now and for future generations. Please reach out to us if we can be of assistance in your planning efforts.

## Understanding the Threat of H5N1 Influenza

*Free protective equipment offered to dairy industry.*

By Jason Marks, Director of Emergency Management and Preparedness  
Peoria County Emergency Management Agency

The agricultural community is facing a new challenge with the emergence of the H5N1 avian influenza virus. Traditionally associated with birds, recent reports have confirmed cases in dairy cattle, raising concerns about animal health, food safety, and economic impact on the dairy industry. You may be aware that as of May 30, 2024, H5N1 influenza has been identified in multiple domestic animal species to include poultry, dairy cattle, and cats. Additionally, as of June 06, 2024, there have been three reported cases of H5N1 in individuals. The close interface between animals and humans in various settings such as farms and households increases the potential for cross-species transmission. Given the potentially severe public health implications of zoonotic viruses that can infect humans it is imperative that we adopt a multidisciplinary approach to address this potential threat effectively.

### What is H5N1?

Commonly known as avian influenza or bird flu, the virus primarily affects birds. However, it has shown the ability to infect other species, including humans and, recently, dairy cattle. The virus is known for its rapid spread and severe health impacts on infected animals. The detection of H5N1 in dairy cattle is a significant development. While the incidence is currently low, the potential for the virus to spread within herds is a serious concern. Infected cattle may exhibit symptoms such as respiratory distress, decreased milk production, fever, and lethargy. In severe cases, the virus can lead to high mortality rates.

The impact to the agriculture community has yet to be determined, but the presence of H5N1 in dairy cattle can have far-reaching consequences:

- **Economic Impact:** Reduced milk production and the potential need for culling infected animals can lead to substantial financial losses for dairy farmers.

- **Food Safety:** Although there is no evidence that H5N1 can be transmitted to humans through milk consumption, public concern can impact market demand and consumer confidence.

**Animal Welfare:** Ensuring the health and well-being of dairy cattle is paramount. H5N1 infections necessitate strict biosecurity measures to prevent spread and protect livestock.

Farmers and industry stakeholders must implement rigorous biosecurity protocols to prevent the introduction and spread of H5N1 in dairy herds:

- **Surveillance and Monitoring:** Regular health checks and monitoring for symptoms of avian influenza in cattle are essential.

- **Biosecurity Practices:** Limit access to farms, disinfect equipment, and ensure that workers follow hygiene protocols to reduce the risk of virus transmission.

- **Vaccination and Veterinary Care:** Consult with veterinarians about the possibility of vaccination and other preventive treatments for livestock.

**Isolation and Quarantine:** Quickly isolate any suspected cases and quarantine new animals before introducing them to the herd.

Collaboration between agriculture and public health sectors is essential for effectively managing any potential H5N1 outbreaks in our community. The Illinois Department of Public Health is being proactive and distributing free personal protective equipment to support the dairy industry. Please reach out to your local County Farm Bureau if you are interested in free protective gear.

By understanding the risks and implementing effective preventive measures, the goal is for the dairy industry to mitigate the impact of this virus and safeguard the health of both animals and consumers. For more detailed information on managing H5N1 in dairy cattle and accessing resources, please contact your local agricultural extension office or the IDPH State Public Health Veterinarian.



## The Wisdom of Preparedness at ICC North

September 30th, 2024 from 3-5 pm

“Are you aware of the hazards in your neighborhood, community, or Peoria County? Do you have an emergency preparedness kit and plan? If your answer to these questions is no, then join us for discussion on how we can prepare as individuals and families in making our community more resilient to disaster. Learn about how first responders and community partners collaborate in identifying threats to the community and preparing to respond and recover from them.

*The Wisdom of Preparedness* will take place at 3:00 PM on September 30 at Illinois Central College's Peoria Campus, hosted by Peoria County Emergency Management Director Jason Marks. Sign up for this free two-hour course at <https://campusce.icc.edu/acp/course/course.aspx?C=3737&pc=20&mc=0&sc=0> “



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