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Activities focus on water quality and soil health at UW-Extension Education Station

Algoma, Wis. – Interactive demonstrations, discussions and displays – both inside and outside of UW-Extension’s Education Station will highlight stewardship of the land, water and environment.

Scientists from the Wisconsin Geological and Natural History Survey will use a karst landscape model to demonstrate water movement through fractured bedrock systems and the unique geologic features of such a topography. Karst landscapes are found throughout Kewaunee and Door Counties. Ken Bradbury, Director and State Geologist, will be featured in Specialist Central on Thursday, where he will talk about regional groundwater systems.

Visitors to Wisconsin Farm Technology Days can have their well water tested for nitrate, the most common health-related contaminant found in Wisconsin’s groundwater. This is a free on-the-spot test, and it will only take a few minutes to get the results. If you would like to have your water tested, simply bring one cup of your well water in any clean container to the UW-Extension Education Station.

“In Wisconsin, about one out of every 10 private wells may contain unsafe levels of nitrate,” said Kevin Masarik, UW-Extension groundwater educator. “Areas of the state with a greater intensity of agriculture generally have more issues with nitrate in well water at concentrations of concern. Certain geology or soils can make areas more prone to groundwater contamination as well.”

Infants or pregnant women should not consume water with nitrate-nitrogen levels greater than 10 mg/L. If elevated levels of nitrate are present then other tests may be recommended. Specialists at the display will be on hand to answer questions about groundwater and can assist in deciding what other tests well owners may want to consider.

Farmer interest in cover crops, and thus the need for objective, research-based information, has exploded in recent years. UW-Extension experts will provide information about the innovative use of cover crops and soil health, including cover crop demonstration plots and hands-on activities on measuring soil health. Various pieces of cover crop planting and interseeding equipment will also be on display. A soil pit will highlight soil properties as well as new tile drainage technologies.

The outside education stations will be hosted in conjunction with USDA-NRCS, Fox Demonstration Farms, Discovery Farms, and Kewaunee, Brown and Outagamie LCD.

Wisconsin Farm Technology Days will be held July 11-13, 2017 in Kewaunee County. For more information about Wisconsin Farm Technology Days, visit www.wifarmtechnologydays.com.

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