

Executive Committee being formed for Farm Technology Days 2019

By Alexa Zoellner azoellner@dailyunion.com | Posted: Tuesday, December 13, 2016 9:37 am

JEFFERSON — Formation of the Executive Committee for Wisconsin Farm Technology Days 2019, which will be held in Jefferson County, is well under way.

LaVern Georgson, University of Wisconsin-Extension agriculture agent for Jefferson, said that thus far, 14 persons have made a three-year commitment to serve on the panel.

“The Executive Committee provides the guidance and direction to Farm Technology Days,” said Georgson, who will be serving as executive director of the July 2019 event, the mission of which is to “promote technology and share knowledge in, and of, agriculture and related industries through joint efforts of communities, business and industry, education and agencies.”

“They provide steering and oversight,” he continued. “They’re responsible for signing of contracts, managing the budget, establishing some policies and then, at the conclusion of the show, establishing some criteria for the distribution of funds.”

Currently, the members of the Executive Committee include: Scott Schneider, chair; Paul Hadler, co-chair; Melissa Gerner, secretary; Heather Reu, treasurer; Tim Finger; Dale Gaugert; Linda Wright; Lloyd Zastrow; Tracy Brandel; Mark Schnell; Brent Payne; Matt Hanson; Luke Wiedenfeld and Amy Listle.

While the officers are set, there might be some further adjustments to membership, pending ongoing discussions.

“We’ve had a couple of people who have, for personal reasons, decided that the commitment to the Executive Committee might not work well for them and their families,” Georgson said. “There are a couple other people I’m following up with to see if they’re willing and able to be involved for the length of time that the Executive Committee needs to supervise the show.”

Georgson said he expects operating committees to begin forming in January, February and March of 2017.

“There’s going to be plenty of opportunities for people to contribute to the success of this event,” he said. “The (number of) committees varies a little bit by the county. There’s 18 standard committees and there may be some additional ones or some may be combined depending on what the county’s individual needs are.”

Meanwhile, a host farm has been selected and contract negotiations are under way. The name of the host farm is not being released until contract negotiations are finalized.

“There were a few changes to the contract, so those changes are being reviewed by (the county’s) corporate counsel right now,” Georgson said. “As soon as I get that back from him, we’ll be getting the (revised) contract in the hands of the host farm and, as soon as they’ve had a chance to review it, we’ll get the signatures and we’ll be good to go. In a perfect world, it would be done by the end of this week.”

Previously known as Wisconsin Farm Progress Days, the show began as a plowing contest in 1954 in Waupaca County. It was the idea of Henry Ahlgren, the first chancellor of UW-Extension, and started as a partnership between the agriculture industry and UW-Extension.

Since its inception, Wisconsin Farm Technology Days has been held in more than 30 counties, including twice in Jefferson County, in 1956 and 1984. The latter event took place at the Bernard and Beverly Walter farm in Grellton, southwest of Watertown.

In 2009, Crave Brothers Farm in the Dodge County Town of Portland near Waterloo hosted the show.

Walworth County was Farm Technology Day’s host this past summer. Next year, the show moves to Kewaunee County, and then Wood County in 2018.

For more information on Farm Technology Days committees, contact the UW-Extension office at (920) 674-7295.