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JEFFERSON COUNTY FARM TECHNOLOGY DAYS HOST FAMILY ANNOUNCED

The host family for the Farm Technology Days to be held in Jefferson County during July 23, 24th and 25th of 2019 was announced on Tuesday January 24th. Mike and Sarah Walter have been selected by the Jefferson County Farm Technology Days Executive Committee.

Mike and Sarah are located in northwest Jefferson County and call the Grellton area home. They farm with their two sons and their wives. Adam and Heather join with Brad and Kristi and their respective families to comprise this family farm. A daughter and two other sons with their families live nearby. The family with combined and separate business operations grows corn, soybeans, winter wheat and some alfalfa on over 6000 acres. They also own and operate a farm tiling and drainage business. There is one full-time employee and four seasonal employees.

Walter Grain Farms was selected after thorough consideration of other possibilities. Soil types, land suitability, location, available acreage, cropping plans, willingness and experience were among the factors considered by the Jefferson County Executive Committee when making their selection. Matt Glewen, Wisconsin Farm Technology Days, Incorporated, General Manager was also involved in the review.

This will be the third time that Jefferson County has hosted this event. Craig and Laura Beane combined farms with Bill and Jan Ward to host in 1956. Bernard and Beverly Walter, Mike's parents hosted in 1984. By hosting in 2019, the Walter family joins a small group of several other farm families that were able to host multiple times.

Wisconsin Farm Technology Days (WFTD) is an annual event. WFTD started in 1954 as a plowing contest. It was soon developed to demonstrate improvements for rural life and ways to mechanize the hard manual work that was common then. Starting as Farm Progress Days its name was changed to Farm Technology Days to more accurately represent the agriculture innovations of today.

Counties are selected three years in advance to allow for planning. Organizing the show will involve nearly 20 operating committees with chairs, co-chairs and members numbering in the

100s. It is expected that nearly 1500 volunteers will be involved during the show itself. Recently, Dane County hosted in 2015, Walworth County in 2016, with plans for Kewanee County in 2017 and Wood County in 2018.

This event showcases agriculture along with the newest innovations in technology for growing and producing food. In addition there will literally be something for everyone at this three-day show. Horse events, youth activities, rural and family living information, equipment and supplies for small and large acreages to name a few. Visitors will include both large and small farmers, individuals from agribusiness, families and those interested or curious in wanting to learn more about agriculture.

Jefferson County set some objectives when asked to be a host County. Acknowledging the importance of agriculture as important to the County's economic base, identifying the considerable variety of agricultural production within the County, recognizing the broad spectrum of agriculture processing within the County, encouraging the development of individual and community relationships in the planning process, using WFTD as a springboard to future activity and to enjoy this opportunity.

It is expected that 40,000 or more people will attend the three-day event. Several studies conducted by UW River Falls have accounted for an economic impact of \$1.2 to \$1.5 million for the show and the three years leading up to it.

People interested in helping with this exciting project whether volunteering or exhibiting are encouraged to contact Katelyn at the Jefferson County UWEX Office at (920)-674-7295.

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