

2009 Annual Plan of Work
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PROGRAM TITLE:

Crop Production Management

SITUATION STATEMENT:

Grain production is a significant part of both Jefferson and Columbia County agricultural makeup. Grain production accounts for roughly 25% of the \$209 million of agricultural products produced annually in Jefferson County and greater than 40% of the \$166 million of agricultural products produced in Columbia County (2007 Census of Agriculture).

In addition to grain production, Jefferson County also has over 27,000 acres of forage production that is primarily used to feed over 40,000 beef and dairy cattle in the county. Columbia County uses the majority of its 37,000+ acres of forage as feed for over 53,000 beef and dairy cattle in the county.

In order to maintain high grain and forage production, growers in Jefferson and Columbia Counties have to adapt to the changes in crop production practices and management to stay profitable. Crop production management education in Jefferson and Columbia County focuses on three different areas: corn management, soybean management, and integrated pest management for all field crops.

PROGRAM OUTCOMES:

1. Farmers will increase their knowledge of new production practices to increase profitability in their cropping enterprise.
2. Farmers and agri-business professionals will increase their knowledge about pest management practices to minimize the impact of pests, prevent pest resistance, and eliminating unnecessary pesticide applications.

RESPONSE/ACTIVITIES:

First Quarter: (January – March)

1. Host Agronomy Update meeting with topics including corn, soybeans, small grains, and alfalfa management.
2. Host Crop Decisions webinar meetings. Provide additional information at the local site in the areas of weed management and disease management in corn and soybeans.
3. Coordinate and teach Pesticide Applicator Training at three locations.
4. Gather and write articles for the Jefferson County *From the Ground Up* newsletter

Second Quarter: (April – June)

1. Collaborate with the Land and Water Conservation offices from Columbia and Dodge Counties to offer pasture walks.

2. Collaborate with local farmer to evaluate the effectiveness of preemergence herbicides in soybeans.

Third Quarter: (July – September)

1. Collaborate with the Land and Water Conservation offices from Columbia and Dodge Counties to offer pasture walks.
2. Write article about soybean aphid management for the Wisconsin Agriculturist Magazine.
3. Monitor and report pest issues via state reporting systems, local media outlets, and UW-Extension newsletters.
4. Coordinate Columbia County Corn Growers summer meeting with officer team.
5. Collaborate with local farmer to evaluate the effectiveness of foliar fungicides on corn grain production.

Fourth Quarter: (October – December)

1. Collaborate with the Land and Water Conservation offices from Columbia and Dodge Counties to offer pasture walks.
2. Host Pest Management Update Meeting with topics including weed, insect, and disease management in corn, soybeans, winter wheat, and alfalfa.

Year Round:

1. Gather and write articles for the Columbia County Ag Reporter UW-Extension monthly newsletter (April- December).
2. Complete radio and newspaper interviews and news releases as opportunities and needs arise.
3. Visit farms on an as-needed basis and also continue to meet producers in the county.
4. Managed the Team Grains website to provide timely grain production information.

PROGRAM TITLE:

Soil and Nutrient Management

SITUATION STATEMENT:

Nutrient management has been a growing concern for farmers the past couple of years. Limitations on the volume applied along with restrictions on when and where manure can be applied has caused producers to reevaluate their manure spreading strategy. As dairy farms continue to increase in size, scrutiny from the public has made manure management one of the most regulated parts of a farming operation.

In addition to manure management challenges, fertilizer management has also been under the radar the past couple of years. The 2008 crop was the most expensive ever planted, mainly because of record high fertilizer prices. With the continued economic challenges that farmers are facing, growers have to decide if it would be economical to reduce or eliminate fertilizer applications throughout their entire cropping system or continue their current fertilization strategy.

Farmers have also increased their attention to soil management. The first major change in soil management happened decades ago when farmers switched from moldboard plowing to chisel plowing in an effort to reduce soil loss. Now farmers are taking the next steps in soil management. They are evaluating how much tillage is needed for their farms, changing farm operations to limit compaction, and using precision technologies to efficiently and effectively manage their fields. All of these efforts are being made to improve the financial situation of their farming operation.

Needs assessments in both Jefferson and Columbia Counties showed the need for nutrient management programming in each county. The top areas within nutrient management decided by farmers included: 1) Soil Fertility; 2) Manure Management; and 3) Soil Management.

OUTCOMES:

1. Farmers will increase their knowledge about and implement nutrient management plans.
2. Farmers will increase their knowledge of fertilizer management to reduce their use of fertilizer or use their fertilizer in a more economic way.
3. Farmers will increase their knowledge about different soil management strategies to enhance soil quality characteristics.

IMPLEMENTATION:

Third Quarter: (July – September)

1. Wrote scripts for the general farm and manure management tours at Farm Technology Days.

Fourth Quarter: (October – December)

1. Collaborated with UWEX specialists, Columbia County Land and Water Conservation, and the WI DNR to host a manure spill response demonstration (49 attendees).
2. Wrote a soil compaction article as a part of the “Responding to a Difficult Harvest” initiative that Team Grains organized.

Year Round:

1. Gathered and wrote articles for the Columbia County Ag Reporter UW-Extension (two issues).
2. Completed radio and newspaper interviews and news releases as opportunities and needs arise.
3. Visited farms on an as-needed basis and also continue to meet producers in the county.