

Multi-Year Plan of Work
(2009-2011)
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Program Title: Crop Production Education

	2009	2010	2011
Days Planned	70	80	90

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.

Results from needs assessments given to Jefferson County producers in 2008 and Columbia County producers in 2009 indicated that the two main areas of focus should be Crop Production and Nutrient Management. Within the area of Crop Production, the top three ranking subjects were: 1) Corn Management; 2) Soybean Management; and 3) Integrated Pest Management. It is logical that these areas were priorities during a needs assessment based on the acreage of both corn and soybeans in the county along with the associated pest challenges in all crops.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

1. Farmers will implement cropping practices that results in a reduced cost of production and/or increase productivity in their cropping enterprise.
2. Farmers and agri-business professionals will adopt pest management practices to minimize the impact of pests, prevent pest resistance, and eliminating unnecessary pesticide applications.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

1. Host Agronomy Update Meeting with topics including management of corn, soybeans, small grains, and alfalfa management (January, annual)
2. Host a Biomass Management Meeting to inform farmers of the advantages and disadvantages of producing biomass for ethanol production (January, 2010)
3. Educate the Columbia County Corn Growers about which crop production techniques worked in 2009 and provide management strategies to consider for 2010 (January, 2010)
4. Host Pesticide Applicator Training at three locations (Annual)
5. Teach pest management principles in conjunction with MATC-Reedsburg Farm Management Instructor (February, 2010).
6. Collaborate with the Land and Water Conservation offices from Columbia and Dodge Counties to offer pasture walks (annual)
7. Host "Sweep Net Club" to educate growers on the value of scouting for insect pests in alfalfa (June, 2009, 2011)
8. Host Pest Management Update Meeting with topics including weed, insect, and disease management in corn, soybeans, winter wheat, and alfalfa (December, annual)

EVALUATION PLAN:

- Pre and/or post-meeting written evaluations
- On-farm visits and interviews in order to gain more in-depth feedback on programming
- Feedback from agri-business professionals such as crop consultants and industry representatives who work with producers

RESOURCES:

1. UW-Extension County Agriculture Agents, primarily those from the Grains and Forages Teams.
2. UW-Extension Specialists in Agronomy, Entomology, Plant Pathology, Biological Systems Engineering, Agriculture and Applied Economics, and the NPM program.
3. Local agronomists
4. Team Grains and Forages Websites.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

1. Grains Team Meetings
2. Team Forages Meetings and In-Services
3. Wisconsin Crop Management Conference
4. Pest Management Update Meetings
5. Agronomy Update Meetings

6. Farm Technology Days
7. UW Pest Management Field Day
8. UW Diagnostic Troubleshooting Clinic
9. UW Agronomy Field Day

PROGRAM TITLE:

Soil and Nutrient Management Education

	2009	2010	2011
Days Planned	60	70	80

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.

DESIRED OUTCOMES:

1. Increase the number of farms that implement nutrient management plans.
2. Farmers will adopt fertilizer management to reduce their use of fertilizer or use their fertilizer in a more economic way.
3. Farmers and custom manure haulers will implement practices that reduce the risk of nitrogen and phosphorus runoff.
4. Farmers will adopt soil management strategies to enhance soil quality characteristics such as reduced tillage.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN:

1. Work with Columbia County Land Conservation to coordinate and teach nutrient management plan writing workshops (winter, annual)
2. Host a manure spill response demonstration (October, 2009)
3. Assist in the teaching of the custom manure haulers level 1 certification with other UW-Extension agents (January, 2010, 2011)
4. Educate Columbia County farmers about the soil fertility implications of crop biomass for ethanol production (January 2010)
5. Host Soil Quality Field Day (Summer or Fall 2011)

Evaluation Plan:

- Pre and/or post-meeting written evaluations
- On-farm visits and interviews in order to gain more in-depth feedback on programming
- Feedback from agri-business professionals such as crop consultants and industry representatives who work with producers

RESOURCES:

1. UW-Extension County Agriculture Agents, primarily those from the Nutrient Management Team
2. UW-Extension Specialists in Soil Science, Agronomy, Biological Systems Engineering, and the NPM program
3. Local agronomists

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT:

1. Nutrient Management Team Meetings
2. Wisconsin Crop Management Conference
3. UW Agronomy Field Day
4. UW Soil, Water, and Nutrient Management Update Meetings
5. Wisconsin Farm Technology Days