

**Pierce County Agriculture and Extension Education
Committee Report-January 13, 2003
Greg Andrews, Agriculture Agent**

The Top 10 Agriculture and Extension Stories of 2003

1. The Drought of 2003



The Drought of 2003 cost farmers over \$20 million in losses. As the drought intensified in late summer, I developed early estimates to be included in a state and federal disaster declaration request. Coordinated information went to the USDA-FSA committee, Land Conservation and this AEEC. The joint-sponsorship of area Crop Insurance Meetings with AGSTAR and a Pierce/St. Croix Fall Harvest Field Day reached another several hundred farmers in the two-county area. The EXTENSION RESPONDS website was an important resource we revised and provided statewide.

**2. Western Wisconsin Renewable Energy Cooperative (WWREC)
and other Ethanol Plant Development**



Five Ethanol Production Plants in Wisconsin are producing ethanol or under construction in 2003. Seven of the participants who are owners or founding board members of the plants were participants in my 2002 Ethanol Study Tour in Minnesota. In fact, **One out of every five rows of corn grown in Wisconsin go to Ethanol Production.** The two founding board members of the WWREC are in this photo. While a lot went in to Wisconsin Ethanol Industry Development, the tour played a prominent role in the decision-making statewide. Some participants made decisions not to support the development of Wisconsin's ethanol industry.

3. National Association of County Agriculture Agents Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference Hosted by Wisconsin (Green Bay, Wisconsin)



The culmination of 5 years of planning, \$300,000 raised, showcasing Wisconsin Agriculture and the best professional development provided to 1600 participants. I had the privilege to serve as a member of the Executive Board and a Committee Chair.

4. All-time Record Beef Prices: Wisconsin Beef Cow-Calf Day Hosted at Pierce County Farm-Fenske's.

For the first time in history, slaughter cattle prices exceeded \$1.00 per pound. In March, Pierce Extension and the Fenske's hosted the state educational event. Over 100 beef producers from around the state learned from the Fenske's creative equipment designs for handling beef cattle. In addition, beef producers learned how to capitalize on this historic opportunity of expected cattle prices with feeder cattle price opportunities.

5. Crop Care Clinic Diagnostic Site Continues 6th Year of Learning- Hosted by Nellessen Grain Farms



Growers gained pest management skills and learned about technology developments, opportunities and the risks associated with some of them. 45 growers and consultants gained hands-on experience at the site I manage. Since 1997, close to 300 area growers and consultants have learned and used the information demonstrated at the Crop Care Clinic sites.

6. AgriGrowth Council and Pierce County Dairy Promotion Committee Highlight-Economic Development Connection

AgriGrowth-Economic Development Luncheon Why Farming and Dairying Still Matters to Wisconsin And the Pierce County Region

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Following a presentation by Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board CEO-James Robson, we collectively presented information to Pierce County Economic Development oriented individuals and businessmen. The regions business sector is more mindful of the economic importance of agriculture and is looking for innovative ways to partner. In addition to those successes, I was awarded the Pierce County Dairy Service Award by at the 52nd Pierce County Dairy Recognition Banquet, an award shared with office staff.

7. Nations First Report of BSE Mad Cow Disease- local Extension Ag. Responds

History was made with the Nations first confirmed BSE infected cow. I first read the news on December 24th in the Des Moines Register. On Friday-December 26th, we began to build lists of resource information in the absence of Extension specialists, and later, web resources on the Extension Responds website were created and built.

8. Winterkill of 20,000 acres of Alfalfa in Pierce County



The winter of 2003 generated the deepest frost and coldest soil temperatures in recent history. The severe winterkill problem generated dozens of requests for on-farm consultations and recommendations. Hay prices climbed rapidly and stay high. Other programs and assistance to growers and ag. consultants included: diagnostic training for consultants, rotation suggestions and pricing rental values of rented hayland and pastures. digital diagnostics, conservation plan revisions needed by LCD and NRCS,

9. Brown Root Rot in Alfalfa-Discovered and Confirmed

The first case of phoma sclerotodes (Brown Root Rot) was discovered by Lee Milligan and myself on a Northern St. Croix County farm. This triggered more research in WI.

10. Son-Bow Farms Wins Outstanding Young Farmer from U.S. Jaycees.

Jay and Kristi Richardson were nominated jointly by Extension and the Pierce County Dairy Promotion Committee, Inc., and won this prestigious award.