



# Farm & Field News

*Chippewa Valley Agriculture Newsletter*

**Eau Claire County—(715) 839-4712**  
 Mahlon Peterson – Agriculture Agent  
 Erin LaFaive—Horticultural Educator

**Chippewa County—(715) 726-7950**  
 Randy Knapp – Agriculture Agent  
 Jerry Clark – Crops & Soils Educator

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## Good Day!!

For all of you who have been lamenting the fact that winters are not what they used to be – **are you happy now?** I really like winter more than most people I know. I can dress for cold weather better than I can dress for hot weather and once the snow has been handled and put into its place winter driving is fairly normal.

I've often said what we remember about winter in our younger days may be different than reality. The snow banks and snow piles all looked bigger when we were younger. I remember the first few years after my mother and I moved back to the farm, we did not have a tractor that was dependable and often had to shovel the driveway with scoop shovels so that the milk truck driver could make his way to the barn. Going back to school seemed like a vacation after many snowfalls.

Special congratulations to **Gary and Barb Olson** being recognized as Forage Pacesetters by the Midwest Forage Association and the Chippewa Valley Forage Council for their work with forages on their dairy farm near Allen.

"Continue to Farm Smarter"

*Mahlon Peterson*

Mahlon Peterson  
 UW-Extension Agricultural Agent

[mahlon.peterson@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:mahlon.peterson@ces.uwex.edu)

## Calendar

### February

- 5 Private Applicator Training—River County Plaza in Cadott
- 7 Master Gardener "Read, Set, Grow" Winter Seminar—CVTC
- 14 Valentines Day**
- 19 Private Applicator Training—Unity Bank in Augusta
- 21 Chippewa Master Gardeners "Think Spring" winter gardening seminar
- 23 Meat Animal Project—Expo Center
- 24 Cattle Care Clinic—Cadott & Ladysmith

### March

- 3/4 Eau Claire Farm Show—Indoor Sports Center
- 5 Heart of the Farm Seminar—Florian Gardens
- 8 Daylight Savings Time begins**
- 17 St. Patrick's Day**
- 19 Private Applicator Training—Chippewa Co Courthouse
- 20 Spring begins**
- 24 Dairy Facilities Tour
- 26 Chippewa Valley Forage Council Seminar at Cadott
- 30 Meat Animal Project Meeting - Fall Creek High School

Please call our office for more details, registration information, etc.

# Something To Chew On . . .



*Mahlon Peterson Ag Agent  
Eau Claire County*

## Introduction to Bees and Beekeeping Workshop Scheduled

The Dunn County Beekeepers and the University of Wisconsin-Extension are sponsoring an Introduction to Bees and Beekeeping Workshop on Saturday, Feb. 7, 2009 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. at the Disabled American Veterans Building (DAV) north of Menomonie. The workshop is designed to provide the basic information necessary to start beekeeping in Wisconsin and is intended for those who have no experience with bees and beekeeping.

In this 8-hour course, you will be guided through your first year of being a beekeeper, from a general understanding of how honeybee colonies are started and managed, the procedure of how to order a package of bees, and the purchasing and assembling of equipment you and your bees will need for a successful first year. Discussions of basic bee biology, colony development, diseases, pests, summer management and honey extraction will help provide a basic knowledge of the beekeeping. The course is intended for those who have never had a honeybee colony. Anyone interested in bees and their impact on our environment are welcome to attend.

Program topics include:

- Beekeeping History and Races of Honey Bees
- Basic Bee Biology and Life in a Bee Hive
- Basic Beekeeping Equipment
- First Year Planning Calendar and Apiary location
- Installing Package Bees
- The First Two Weeks
- First Summer Management
- Disease Management; Pests and Prevention
- There's More Than Honey in a Hive
- First Fall and Winter Management
- Dunn County Beekeeper Mentoring Program

"Honey bees are very important to all. Over 100 crops rely on honey bees for pollination and make up over 1/3 of the U.S. diet. Without pollination we would no longer have those fruits, nuts and vegetables for consumption as well as the tens of thousands of flowering plants," UW-Extension agriculture agent Jim Faust said.

He added, "The disappearance of honey bees termed "colony collapse disorder" has become a major concern. Researchers are working hard to address the problem. At the current rate of colony loss the honey bee would become extinct in 2035."



The cost of the program is \$40 per person, \$8 for each additional family member. Make check payable to: Dunn County Beekeepers. Mail check to: Jim Faust, UW-Extension, 800 Wilson Avenue, Rm. 330, Menomonie, WI 54751. Registration deadline is Wednesday, February 4th. Late registrations and registrations at the door will be \$50. Fees include program, lunch, hardcover book, materials and one year membership to the Dunn County Beekeepers.

Directions to the DAV: Take WI-25 (Exit 41) North off I-94 about 2 miles to County Road BB and turn right to the Disabled American Veterans Building.

## Sainfoin Not Recommended As Forage In Wisconsin

With some producers showing interest in planting Sainfoin to replace alfalfa this species is not recommended for Wisconsin, according to University of Wisconsin-Extension forage specialist Dan Undersander.

"Although there are some positive traits to the plant, the negatives

outweigh the positives," Undersander said.

He noted, "The lack of yield in the seeding year, adaptation to high pH, low tolerance of wet soils, and, susceptibility to crown rot causing short stand life indicate that this species is not likely to be useful in Wisconsin."

Sainfoin (*Onobrychis vicifolia*) is deep-rooted and very drought-resistant. It yields best on high pH, deep, well-drained soils, and will not withstand wet soils or high water tables. It is not as winterhardy as some cultivars of alfalfa. Sainfoin is short lived where root and crown rots are a problem.

Sainfoin has 6 to 14 pairs of pinnate, alternate leaves that are oblong. Sainfoin has pale pink flowers, grows taller than alfalfa and has a hollow stem. Although very coarse, the forage is highly nutritious and is not known to cause bloat. Because the plant is rich in tannins, proteins tend to bypass the rumen and be absorbed in the abomasum. It is highly palatable to both sheep and cattle, being preferred over alfalfa. It is relished by deer. Sainfoin may be grazed or used for hay, either alone or in mixtures with grasses.

The "seed" used to establish this crop is actually a pod which contains a single seed. Even without the pod, the true seed is large; there are only 28,000 seeds per pound. The recommended seeding rate is 30 to 40 lbs/acre so seed cost will be about \$100/acre. For good establishment and growth Sainfoin must be inoculated with a special rhizobium just before planting.

Sainfoin does not tolerate competition well during establishment. The vigor of the plants is decreased by clipping during the seedling year so Sainfoin should not be harvested in the seeding year. Nitrogen-fixing bacteria have been short-lived or ineffective so that

**Continued from page 2 . . .**

nitrogen fertilization may be required.

Sainfoin begins growth in the spring about the same time as alfalfa, but flowers one to two weeks earlier. First cutting hay yields have exceeded those of alfalfa in Montana, but alfalfa yields are greater in subsequent cuttings.

Undersander added, "New varieties of Sainfoin have been released in Montana with improved yield, however these varieties have not been tested in Wisconsin and they are not expected to have improved seeding year yield or longer stand life."

**UW-Extension Presents Midwest Manure Summit At Lambeau Field**

Agriculture producers and agri-business professionals interested in manure handling and storage should make plans to attend the Midwest Manure Summit at Lambeau Field on March 24 and 25. University of Wisconsin-Extension will be bringing the most knowledgeable individuals from around Wisconsin, the U.S. and Germany to talk about manure handling and processing.

Manure handling is one of the most important issues that impacts the agricultural community. It is a major stumbling block for expanding dairies and a lightning rod for controversy. The Midwest Manure Summit brings new ideas to manure handling and processing. Speakers will focus on technology and information that will help manure handling become more economical and sustainable.

Topics and speakers include:

- Creating designer manure, the technology to control levels of phosphorus in manure; Dr. Jactone Arogo Ogejo, Virginia Tech.
- Farm scale composting: the environmental benefits,

challenges, and economics; Dr. Frederick C. Michel, Jr., The Ohio State University.

- Air emissions, NR445, EPA - What's coming in 2010 and what should you do? John Ferguson, P. Eng, Conestoga-Rovers & Associates.
- Economics of sand handling; Dr. Joe Harner, Kansas State University.
- Wisconsin's Focus on Energy's Experience with Biogas Digesters; Larry Krom, Focus on Energy.
- Mitigating Odor on Farms Using Modern Technology; Dr. Frank M. Mitloehner, Air Quality Extension Specialist, UC Davis.
- Making the Most of Manure: Emerging Waste-to-Energy Treatments; Dr. Keri B. Cantrell, USDA Agricultural Research Service, South Carolina.
- Examining Bio-energy Potential with GIS; Matt Kures, CCED UW-Extension
- Manure Digesters in Europe - Applications to the United States; Manfred Faatz, EBA - GmbH, Triesdorf, Germany. Manfred works in Germany with farmers to set up digesters and will give an overview of the latest technology being used in Germany and the rest of Europe.

The two day event includes a tour of Lambeau Field at the end of the first day. Registrations can be made online at [www.midwestmanure.com](http://www.midwestmanure.com) or by contacting Kathy DeChamps at 920-203-4610. Hotel and travel information is also available at the website. If you have questions about the conference contact either Paul Dyk, UW-Extension-Fond du Lac County at 920-929-3171 or [paul.dyk@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:paul.dyk@ces.uwex.edu) or Mark Hagedorn, UW-Extension-Brown County at 920-203-4610 or [mark.hagedorn@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:mark.hagedorn@ces.uwex.edu).

**Stable Managers Workshop Offered**

Stable managers and owners are encouraged to attend the Stable Managers Workshop scheduled for Feb. 18, 2009 from 5:30-9 p.m. at the Kenosha County Center in Bristol, Wisconsin.

The program features Yvonne Ocrant, an attorney with Hinshaw and Culbertson, who will talk about reducing legal risk in equine activities. Following this will be a discussion of insurance needs for a stable operation with Suzanne Lois from Mangold Insurance. The program will end with a panel discussion that highlights a local stable – Sunflower Farms in Bristol and how they manage liability issues. Both Yvonne and Suzanne will be part of the panel to answer additional questions.

Early registration fees are \$20 per adult and \$10 for youth, ages 18 and under. Early registration must be postmarked by Feb. 13. Late registration for adults is \$30 per person or \$15 for youth, ages 18 and under. Refreshments will be served at the workshop.

Registration can be completed online through the University of Illinois Lake County's website: <http://web.extension.uiuc.edu/lake/>. Information on the workshop is also available on the website, look at the Upcoming Events section. For further information or to request a brochure contact Rose Skora with Kenosha County University of Wisconsin-Extension at 262-857-1945.

This program is being organized and sponsored by the University of Illinois and Wisconsin Extension Systems.



# Greenhouse Gossip . . .

*Erin LaFaive*

*Eau Claire County Horticulture Educator*



## Houseplant Care

Houseplants are a wonderful addition during these cold winter months as they provide something green and growing to look at in homes and offices. To ensure continued health of these plants remember that each plant type has different light, humidity, and moisture requirements. The primary cause of plant death is improper water.



To determine if your plant needs watering insert a finger approximately one inch below the soil surface to feel for moisture. Water only if the soil is dry. Too little water can lead to stunted growth, wilting, and eventual plant death. However, succulents and cacti need to be kept dry when they are not flowering.

Proper drainage helps to prevent against over-watering. Excess water causes roots to suffocate because of lack of oxygen and can contribute to problems with root rots, resulting in yellowing of foliage, and eventual wilting or death of the plant. During the season when your plant is actively growing, apply water until it starts to seep through the drainage holes at the bottom of the pot. Allow the water to drain into a saucer or a sink for 10 to 20 minutes and remove excess water from the saucer. **DO NOT** allow a plant to stand in water unless this is a specific requirement for the plant. When using tap water, allow the water to sit for at least 24 hours prior to use to allow time for chlorine and fluoride (chemicals that can cause tip burn on many

houseplants) to evaporate.

Low humidity causes plants to lose water through their leaves faster than the roots can replace it. Adding humidity to the air can be addressed with a humidifier or misting the leaves daily. Some lower maintenance activities include grouping plants together which helps maintain humidity levels around the leaves. Also, try setting pots on top of a stone filled tray and a little water. This will allow the plant leaves to catch some of the evaporating water.

Another way to help your houseplant maintain an adequate amount of moisture in the soil is to repot it. Plants that have not been repotted in sometime tend to get root bound because as the plant grows bigger the roots grow longer and outgrow the pot. The overgrowth of roots occupies most of the space in the pot, depletes the soil of nutrients, and subsequently reduces the amount of soil needed to hold moisture. Houseplants that need to be repotted typically



# Randy's Rumors . . .

Randy Knapp, Chippewa County Agricultural Agent



## Skills of Financially Successful Farmers

At few times in history has making the right decisions at the right time in agriculture been more important than now. A recent survey of several hundred farmers showed farmers rated financial management skills and risk management skills as the most important for their success. They indicated that they were more proficient at these skills than others. It was production management skills and personnel management skills that were more related to financial success. This suggests that all farmers may need to be on top of the financial and risk side of the business just to compete, but production management and personnel management distinguish the financially great farmer from those that might just be getting by. The survey indicated for farmers in business today, success appears to be built on the basics of producing crops, tending livestock, and managing their work force.

## What Farmers Value vs. What They Do

Survey questions were developed by Purdue and an email notification linked to an on-line survey was sent to an email list of farmers as part of a Farm Futures magazine survey. For a list of 38 items, survey respondents were asked to indicate both how important each skill might be to a financially successful farm, and secondly if their farm had adopted that practice (See Table 1). The 38 items fit into one seven categories. Farmers were asked to answer questions that related to their financial success: profitability, gross revenues, return on equity, increase in net worth, their own subjective rating of their success; and also their age, education, and farm size, among a number of other factors. The survey was voluntary and all individual responses were coded to ensure anonymity and confidentiality.

## Relating to Financial Success

The skills of financially successful farmers vs. those less successful were not always clearly different. Financially

successful farmers were higher adopters of all skills in general, but production management and personnel management were the most correlated with financial success. Ironically farmers rated the importance of personnel management relatively low and also indicated that they were doing a poorer job of it. Table 2 illustrates how the adoption of various practices related to overall farm profits, one of the financial success measures.

Previous studies have shown that age can make a

Table 2

2006 Profit, Thousands of Dollars

0-50 50-100 100-200 200+

Skill Category	Adoption Index (100=Highly Adopted)			
	0-50	50-100	100-200	200+
Production Management	58	63	66	76
Procurement and Selling	58	62	65	72
Financial Management	69	74	76	81
Personnel Management	26	31	37	47
Strategic Positioning	51	56	58	63
Relationship Management	60	64	63	70
Risk Management	61	66	68	70

difference—one study showed that farm profitability increased until the operator reached 50 years, at which time the farm often begins to undergo a transition. Young farmers are often willing to take more debt and adopt more skills to help grow the business. Larger farms also tend to be more profitable. In all cases, data was adjusted for these factors.

## Summary

The management capabilities of a farmer are critical for success, and an analysis of the importance and current adoption status of those specific skills could help both managers and educators better direct their efforts. While farmers rate financial management and risk management skills as more important and say they are better at those than others, production management and personnel management seem to be more tied to the current financial success of today's farmers.

-Source: Jason Oliver and Bruce Erickson, *Top Farmer Crop Workshop Newsletter*, December 2008

Table 1

Importance Index	Adoption Index	
Skill Category	100= Most Important	100= Highly Adopted
Production Management	73	62
Procurement and Selling	69	61
Financial Management	81	72
Personnel Management	51	31
Strategic Positioning	70	55
Relationship Management	74	62
Risk Management	79	64

## Jerry Jargon

Jerry Clark

Chippewa County Soil & Crops Educator



## WHY BIN-RUN SOYBEANS DON'T PAY

Dramatic increases in soybean seed costs for 2009 (25% to 109%) have many growers rethinking their soybean seed options. The most drastic alternative being floated in coffee shops is brown bagging or planting "saved" soybean seed. Before a grower considers this option, we must revisit the legal issues and agronomic considerations associated with this practice.

First, we will address the legal issues surrounding planting saved seed. In Wisconsin alone, 90% of the soybean crop planted in 2008 was herbicide tolerant, and these patented varieties can not be legally saved for planting purposes. A soybean grower agrees to this statement when delivery is accepted. It is likely, given the economic climate we are under, that field monitoring procedures will be ramped up in 2009 to "catch" growers that plant patented varieties. It is also apparent that those growers that are caught will be prosecuted and fined to the legal extent of the law to discourage other growers from attempting this practice.

The remaining 10% of the soybean crop planted in Wisconsin that was not identified as herbicide tolerant will likely fall under the umbrella of either a patented variety or under the 1994 Plant Variety Protection Act (PVPA) and Title V. This means that you can only save what is needed to plant on land you operate.

If a grower has established the legal right to plant saved seed, we must next address the agronomic considerations associated with planting saved seed. Essentially, the "saved" soybean seed will be genetically identical to that they purchased. Therefore, yield losses associated with saved seed will likely be due to seed quality issues related to harvest timing, storage conditions, and handling procedures.

Most growers that are considering planting saved seed in 2009 likely did not plan this activity in advance; therefore, significant reductions in seed quality can be expected.

Most of the data related to planting saved seed was collected in the late 1980's and early 1990's. Significant advances in seed technology have been developed since this time, so the yield differences will likely be greater today. In North Carolina, research on 204 saved vs. professional grown seed comparisons (16 locations, 6 years, 35 varieties) found a 1.9 bushel advantage to certified seed over saved seed. Wisconsin research data indicated a 2.2 bushel advantage to certified over saved seed.

One strategy that growers may employ to improve the quality of their saved seed is to have the seed custom cleaned or conditioned. Remember, it may be a violation to custom clean or condition seed of protected varieties. Seed conditioning encompasses many operations, including the application of seed treatments and inoculants. If you offer these services, make sure you are certain you know the origin of the seed you are working with. If suspect you are cleaning or conditioning RR® seed, keep in mind there is an ImmunoStrip that can quickly verify the presence of this trait. Custom cleaners and conditioning operations can further protect themselves through signed waivers.

Given the legal risks associated with planting saved seed, coupled with the expected yield loss linked with this practice and the likelihood that most growers did not plan on saving seed, it is risky both legally and economically to save soybean seed for the 2009 growing season.



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Eau Claire County UW-Extension Office  
227 1st Street W  
Altoona WI 54720

