



Farm & Field

Chippewa Valley Agriculture Newsletter

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Good Day!

It's hard to believe that a new year lies ahead. As you reflect on 2008 take some time to evaluate the decisions you made and what changes you will make in the future. The beginning of a new year brings both great opportunities and challenges in your private and professional life. We have a great deal of control relating to certain aspects of our lives and less in others. We just need to be wise enough to know the difference and adjust to those situations.

2009 will bring changes for all of us including a new US President, a new farm bill, a new economy and the everyday challenges of daily life. I hope that we are all ready to face whatever awaits us in the coming year.

With the new year comes many educational programs and opportunities that may assist you as you manage your business. Our office continues to expand those opportunities and to offer educational programs that better serve the needs of farmers, landowners, youth and families. Be sure to attend our inter-agency meetings on January 12 at the Town of Washington, Unity Bank and Fall Creek Schools. The primary focus will be new programs, the Farm Bill and conservation.

Mahlon Peterson

Mahlon Peterson
 UW-Extension Agricultural Agent

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Calendar

January

- 7 Western WI Ag Lenders Conference at UW Stout
- 8 Agronomy Update Mtg— Holiday Inn, Campus
- 10 PAT Training—Ag & Re source Center in Altoona
- 10 Chip Valley Forage Council Banquet at Connell's II - Chippewa Valley Airport
- 12 Agency Update Mtg – Town of Washington (10 AM), Unity Bank (1:30 PM) & Fall Creek Schools (8:00 PM)
- 14 Dairy Road Show - 29 Pines
- 16-17 – Wisconsin Outstanding Young Farmer Program - Ramada Inn
- 19 **In-service Training Day—Office Closed**
- 21 Holstein Steer Meeting - Ruby's in Bloomer
- 29 PAT Training -People's Bank in Bloomer

February

- 5 PAT Training - River Country Plaza in Cadott
- 19 PAT Training - Unity Bank in Augusta
- 23 Meat Animal Project meeting - Expo Center
- 24 Cattle Care Clinic at Cadott & Ladysmith

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

For more Extension Information go to our website:
www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/eauclaire/

Something To Chew On . . .



Mahlon Peterson Ag Agent
Eau Claire County

Dairy Road Show Offers Farmers a Competitive Edge

Make plans to attend the 2009 University of Wisconsin-Extension Dairy Road Show in January. This year's Road Show entitled "Gaining the Competitive Edge - A Dairy Seminar Series" will be offered locally at the Eagle's Club in Lake Hallie on Wednesday, January 14, from 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM.

The topics will include:

- **Farm Business Management Strategies for Uncertain Times**, with the current uncertainty in our input and output markets, our old risk management practices may not work, so what farm management strategies should we employ in these uncertain times by Dr. Greg Hadley, UW-River Falls Extension Ag Economist.
- **Livestock Gross Margin for Dairy**, a new insurance product available for Wisconsin dairy producers that protects the gross margin (milk value less feed costs) against unexpected price declines, by Dr. Victor Cabrera, UW-Extension Ag Dairy Management Specialist.
- **Myth-Busting Milking Routines**, the "real scoop" on what research shows about milking routines, in this presentation, we will "bust" some of common milking procedure myths by presenting research data about fore-stripping, pre-dipping, prep-lag time, use of towels and other practical aspects of milking, by Dr. Pamela Ruegg, UW-Extension Milk Quality Specialist.
- **Ventilation in Calf Barns**, why ventilation does not always reach calves in indoor pens or hutches, by Dr. Brian Holmes, UW-Extension Ag Engineer.

The fee for the program, which includes lunch and materials, is \$25 per person. Registrations are due one week before the seminar by contacting the Chippewa County office at 726-7950.

Returning To The Farm Workshop Helps Farm Families Plan For Farm Succession

University of Wisconsin-Extension and UW Center for Dairy Profitability will host a workshop to help farm families plan for a son, daughter or partner to return to the farm and eventually take over the farm business. The four-day workshop will be Jan. 30-31 and Feb. 20-21, 2009, at the Byron Center in Brownsville, Wisconsin.

Families looking toward the future of their farming operations have many issues to consider. Two issues of extreme importance to the future life of the business are the development of a son, daughter, or partner to be the future manager of the business and the creation of a management succession plan. The *Returning to the Farm* workshop helps families make these plans.

Returning to the Farm is open to all farm families who want to learn more about planning for farm succession. Families are expected to participate in both sessions. At the end of the February session, families will have completed the framework of a working succession plan.

Through this program, students and their families will:

- ◆ Determine if an existing operation is large enough to support an additional partner.
- ◆ Uncover alternatives for the transfer of farm assets.
- ◆ Recognize personalities and learn to work with each individual's strengths.
- ◆ Write long- and short-term business and family goals.
- ◆ Learn how to address major issues that can lead to failure in a multiple generation farm business.
- ◆ Hear the current issues and information on the tax implications of farm transfer.
- ◆ Understand the tools of estate planning and business succession planning.

- ◆ Receive business succession and estate planning resources.

The early bird registration fee for this four-day program is \$250 per farming unit (up to four people per farm). This includes materials, meeting room costs, refreshment breaks and lunches.

The early bird registration deadline is Jan. 12, 2009. The price of the four-day program after Jan. 12 is \$300 per farming unit. If you have more than four people in your farming unit attending the workshop, \$75 will be charged for each additional participant.

Overnight accommodations for the Friday evenings of each weekend are available at the Byron Center. For more information about the program, registration or overnight accommodations contact Joy Kirkpatrick, UW Center for Dairy Profitability Outreach Specialist at 608-263-3485 or by email joy.kirkpatrick@ces.uwex.edu.

Corn Conference Meetings Slated For January

The 2009 Corn Conference meetings, sponsored by University of Wisconsin-Extension and the Wisconsin Corn Growers Association, will be held Jan. 20, 21 and 22 in West Salem, Waupaca and Kiel.

These conferences are designed to provide technical insight and practical advice to improve on-farm results. The meetings use the latest information available from university and industry research to help producers raise a crop with maximum yield, quality and profitability. The program is an in-depth learning experience with an opportunity to interact with corn production experts and fellow growers.

All three meetings will cover the same topics, which include:

- Corn production and management recommendations
- What's ahead for Wisconsin corn growers
- Getting the most out of your fertilizer dollar
- Marketing decisions for corn producers
- Tips for successful corn production and profitability

Sessions start at 9:30 AM with registration and conclude at 3:45 PM. The dates and locations of meetings are:

- * Jan. 20, West Salem, Maple Grove Country Club. To register, contact La Crosse County UW-Extension office at 608-785-9593.
- * Jan. 21, Waupaca, Best Western Grand Seasons. To register, contact Waupaca County UW-Extension office at 715-258-6230.
- * Jan. 22, Kiel, Millhome Supper Club. To register, contact Manitowoc UW-Extension office at 920-683-4168.

Registration is \$5 per person. The fee includes a packet of meeting materials, refreshments for breaks and lunch. The registration is Jan. 13. To register, please contact the UW-Extension office hosting that conference.

For more information, please contact Joe Lauer, 608-263-7438, jglauer@facstaff.wisc.edu

Buy Local Workshops Offered For Farmers And Local Foods Supporters

Farmers, restaurant owners, food retailers, educators and others interested in supporting the growth of local foods are invited to attend one of four Buy Local workshops being held around the state. Workshops will be held February 4 in Eau Claire; February 5 in Price County; February 6 in Oconomowoc; and February 7 in Platteville.

All four workshops will cover the same topics. The workshops are divided into morning and afternoon sessions. The morning session is for farmers and local producers who want to learn more

about setting and understanding pricing. The afternoon session is for everyone interested in working together to support the growth and expansion of a healthy local food system. The afternoon program is suitable for those with interests in Buy Local programs, including but not limited to Farm to School efforts, Healthier Hospitals, Farm to Chef, and Local Food Retailing.

In the morning session, Craig Chase, Iowa State Extension Specialist, will present "Pricing for Profit" and then lead participants through hands-on exercises to help them better understand how to price their own products. Theresa Cuperus, Economic Development Specialist with DATCP, will provide an overview pricing strategies for different markets, followed by small group discussions.

A locally-sourced lunch will be provided at noon. Morning and afternoon participants are invited to attend the lunch. Anyone may attend the morning session, the afternoon session, or both. However, the morning session is geared toward farmers.

The afternoon program will focus on how community members from all walks of life can work together to achieve a vision for a more sustainable, local food system. Through a combination of presentations and small group discussion, participants will have a chance to hear what's happening in their region, network and discuss opportunities for strengthening existing Buy Local efforts or creating new one.

Afternoon presenters include Rachel Armstrong, program coordinator for REAP. She will tell the story of how a group in Madison chose the Buy Fresh, Buy Local campaign and then went about implementing it in Southern Wisconsin. Theresa Cuperus, DATCP, will share copies of and discuss the Wisconsin Local Food Marketing Guide, a new resource for those promoting local foods across the state.

This program is being organized by University of Wisconsin-Extension, Cooperative Extension's Emerging Ag Markets Team; the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and

Consumer Protection; REAP Food Group; the Wisconsin Local Food Summit and UW-Platteville Continuing Education. Additional funding support for the project is provided by a USDA Agriculture and Entrepreneurship Grant.

- 715-339-2555
- Oconomowoc: Rose Skora at 262-857-1945
- Platteville: Rink DaVee, 888-281-9472

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To register for any of the four workshops, contact the UW-Extension Chippewa County office at btrine@co.chippewa.wi.us or 715-726-7950. For more information about the workshops contact the local coordinators:

- Eau Claire: Andrew Dane at 715-226-1347
- Price County: Jane Hansen at 715-339-2555
- Oconomowoc: Rose Skora at 262-857-1945
- Platteville: Rink DaVee, 888-281-9472

UW-Extension Cattle Feeders Workshops to Be Held Jan. 19 – 22 Around The State

The University of Wisconsin-Extension Livestock team will host the Annual Cattle Feeders workshops in seven locations around the state the week of Jan. 19, 2009. The workshops will provide valuable information to both Holstein and beef breed cattle feeders. The program builds on the information provided in the 2008 workshop of Producing Quality Holstein Steers.

Current economic conditions have increased the need for producers to carefully manage risk and production. Topics focus on managing production and price risk.

Topics and speakers include:

- ◆ Managing Feeder Calf Health from 450 pounds through Finish; Dr. Charlie Stoltenow, North Dakota State Extension Beef Veterinarian. Dr. Stoltenow will address receiving programs for feeder cattle and managing common health problems from receiving through finish.
- ◆ Low Cost and Effective Cattle Handling Facilities and Housing; Dr. David Kammel, UW-Extension Bio-Systems Engineer. "You can't manage what you can't catch!" Dr. Kammel will share information on using and remodeling existing facilities and putting in place low cost, safe and efficient cattle handling facilities. He will also present information on utilizing existing facilities for housing finishing steers.
- ◆ Risk Management Tools for Cattle Feeders; Dr. Brenda Boetel, UW Extension Livestock Economist. Dr. Boetel will present information on risk management tools available for cattle feeder to manage price risk on their cattle. She will also share information on input price risk tools as well.

This program is partially supported by a grant from the USDA Risk Management Agency. A nominal fee for each location to cover meals and local expenses for the program will be

collected. Please pre-register by contacting the host agent for the location you plan to attend.

Dates and locations:

- ◆ Monday, Jan. 19, registration and meal at 5:15 PM, program starts at 6:15 PM, Club 16, Sparta. Contact the Monroe County Extension Office at 608-269-8722
- ◆ Tuesday, Jan. 20, program starts at 10 AM, 4-H Building, Fairgrounds, Janesville. Contact the Rock County Extension Office at 608-757-5696
- ◆ Tuesday, Jan. 20, registration and meal at 5:15 PM, program starts at 6:15 PM, Chissy's Pub and Grill, Waldo. Contact the Sheboygan County Extension Office at 920-459-5900
- ◆ Wednesday Jan. 21, program starts at 10 AM, The Belvedere, M 329 State Hwy 97, Marshfield. Contact the Clark County Extension Office at 715-743-5121
- ◆ Wednesday, Jan. 21, registration and meal at 5:15 PM, program starts at 6:15 PM, Ramada Plaza, Green Bay. Contact the Kewaunee County Extension Office at 920-388-7138
- ◆ Thursday Jan. 22, program starts at 10 AM, Ruby's Roadhouse, near the Hwy 53 and Hwy 40 intersection, Bloomer. Contact the Chippewa County Extension Office at 715-726-7950
- ◆ Thursday, Jan. 22, registration and meal at 5:15 PM, program starts at 6:15 PM, Spring Valley Banquet Hall, Spring Valley. Contact the St. Croix County Extension Office at 715-684-3301.



Greenhouse Gossip . . .

Erin LaFaive

Eau Claire County Horticulture Educator



Pruning Trees

Trees are the most valuable of our landscape plants. Care for them properly, and your trees will live a long and healthy life. Start tree maintenance the day you plant the tree and continue throughout its life.

"Proper pruning does help trees live longer," said Mike Maddox, University of Wisconsin-Extension Dane County commercial horticulture educator. "It keeps your trees attractive, healthy and less susceptible to injury from natural forces such as severe storms. On the other hand, poor pruning practices, such as topping, make trees less attractive, more prone to pest and weather problems and can actually shorten their life span."

For pruning medium and large trees, you may want to hire an arborist -- a trained tree service professional, according to Maddox. These trees deserve professional maintenance because of their landscape value. By having a professional prune your larger trees, you can also avoid injuring yourself or damaging the tree, nearby buildings, utility wires or other landscape plants. Contact your UW-Extension county horticulture agent for more information on hiring an arborist.

If you plan to prune smaller trees, Maddox offers a few helpful tips:

First, use the right tools. You can prune most shrubs and small trees with a hand pruning shears, a lopping shears and a hand pruning saw. Pruning tools are available at garden and hardware stores and through garden supply catalogs.

Most deciduous trees should be pruned in late fall to winter. Late fall or winter pruning is especially important for oak trees to help prevent the spread of the fungus that causes oak wilt. Avoid pruning in late spring and summer when disease pathogens are active and wounds close more slowly.

Some trees, like maple and birch, will bleed when you prune them in early spring. This heavy sap flow does not hurt the tree. Pruning wounds are best left unpainted. Tree wound treatments are not recommended for most pruning cuts. One exception is that oaks pruned during the growing season must have wounds treated to keep insects out that transmit the oak wilt fungus.

Newly planted trees should not be pruned unless a branch is broken, diseased or dead. Young trees can be pruned to encourage a well-branched canopy. Older, established trees, if properly pruned when young, will require little pruning. Never "top" a tree, as this leads to poor branch structure and makes limbs vulnerable to breaking.

When pruning trees, there are several types of branches to remove. Prune out dead branches whenever you see them. Remove broken or diseased branches and remove the weaker of two branches that are rubbing together. Finally, prune out watersprouts and suckers. Suckers are long straight shoots that grow out of the ground from the tree's roots, usually occurring at the base of the trunk.

Watersprouts are long straight shoots that grow off the trunk and main branches.

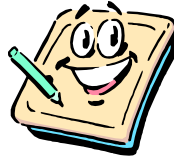
Certain trees have multiple leaders, including maples, ash and lindens. Trees grow best, and develop a better branch structure, when you train them to a single leader. It's important to remove all but the strongest leader early in the life of trees that are prone to developing multiple leaders.

Occasionally, you may need to remove lower branches on mature trees. Because these branches are often large, it's best to use the three-cut pruning method for removal. To do this, make an undercut halfway through the branch, a foot out from the trunk. Make a second cut on the top side of the branch, a few inches beyond the undercut. You'll remove the branch with this second cut. Finally, remove the stub with your third cut. The three-cut method prevents the falling branch from tearing a large section of bark from the trunk.

No matter what kind of branch you're pruning, the cardinal rules of pruning are to never leave a stub and never make a flush cut. Stubs are unattractive, do not heal over and can result in decay moving into the tree. Cuts made flush to the trunk result in large wounds, which take a long time to close. Make pruning cuts just beyond the branch collar. Collars are natural swellings that occur where the branch attaches to a larger limb or to the trunk of the tree.

*Richard M. Maddox—Horticulture Educator
UW-Extension*

Randy's Rumors . . .



Randy Knapp
Chippewa County Agricultural Agent

Choosing a Milk Replacer

The technology of feeding calves milk replacer has been around for decades and product formulations have advanced through the years. Differentiating between products can be difficult. Most differences are in protein sources and levels, and energy sources and levels. All milk replacers should be thoroughly mixed in warm water, typically between 110°F and 120°F, according to manufacturer's directions.

Protein Sources

Protein sources are typically the most expensive milk replacer ingredients. The search for less expensive ingredients has produced many options for protein sources. These sources vary in amino acid composition, bioavailability or digestibility, and the presence of antinutritional factors. Milk proteins are typically more digestible and contain a more favorable profile of amino acids than nonmilk proteins. In a very young calf, milk proteins are highly digestible, at 92 to 98 percent, and plant proteins are somewhat less digestible, at 85 to 94 percent. Plant proteins with antinutritional factors may cause allergic reactions, poor digestion, or diarrhea. Milk replacers in the United States are typically based on whey and whey protein concentrate.

Compared to milk proteins, vegetable proteins often contain more crude protein. However, their protein quality or amino acid content, is slightly inferior. Some soy-based milk replacers contain added lysine and methionine to improve their amino acid profile. Most soy isolates or concentrates used today are highly digestible to the young calf. Animal proteins often contain high levels of protein, and some have very high amino acid concentrations, similar to milk proteins.

Recommendations for acceptability of protein sources are presented in Table I. Sources listed under "recommended" are either milk-based or manufactured and processed specifically for use in calf milk replacers. Their use in calf milk replacers is well researched. Sources listed as "acceptable" are sometimes used in calf milk replacers and may vary in quality. These should be used with caution since some research with these sources shows unsatisfactory results. Sources listed under "not recommended" should not be fed to calves.

unsatisfactory results. Sources listed under "not recommended" should not be fed to calves.

Table 1. Protein sources used in calf milk replacer, and recommendations concerning their acceptability.

Recommended	Acceptable	Not recommended
Dried whey protein concentrate Dried skim milk	Soy flour Egg protein	Meat solubles Fish protein concentrate
Casein		Wheat flour
Dried whey protein isolate	Dried whey product Soy protein isolate	
Protein modified soy flour		
Soy protein concentrate-		
Modified wheat protein Animal plasma		

Source: Adapted from BAMN, 1998

Energy Sources

The main sources of energy used in milk replacers are lactose (milk sugar) and fat. Lactose is the best source of carbohydrates and milk replacers generally contain 40 percent to 50 percent lactose. Fat sources in milk replacers include lard, tallow, stabilized greases and hydrogenated vegetable oil. Liquid vegetable oils should not be used. Higher fat levels in milk replacers may decrease prevalence of scours. Fat levels vary from 10 percent to 22 percent in milk replacers. In general, select a milk replacer with 20 percent fat. Research shows that Jersey calves may benefit from milk replacers containing 25 percent fat. The higher fat levels will decrease the occurrence of scours and provide needed energy in cold weather and when dry feed is not available.

Milk replacer fortification products that contain 70 percent fat are also available. In cold weather, calf raisers can add this to milk replacers to boost the energy content. While these products can be successful, calf managers should compare the economics of using supplements versus feeding a larger quantity of milk replacer.

The general recommendation for milk replacer crude protein is 20 to 28 percent. The most common levels used by producers are 20 to 22 percent crude protein. Crude fat levels can range from 10 to 22 percent, with 15 to 20 percent being most common. It is important that major minerals (including calcium, phosphorus, and magnesium), trace elements, and vitamins A, D, and E are balanced as well.

Jerry Jargon
 Jerry Clark
 Chippewa County Soil & Crops Educator



Top 10 Tips for Fertilizing Your 2009 Crop

#1 Soil Test

Nothing you do will have the potential to save money during high fertilizer price periods than to soil test. It is impossible to make an informed decision about eliminating or reducing phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) fertilizer inputs without a good set of field soil tests. The cost is minimal compared to the potential returns. Fields testing Very High for a particular nutrient have less than a 5 percent probability of having a yield increase from additional applied fertilizer.

#2 Have a Plan!

If you treat every cornfield the same in terms of the amount of fertilizer or manure applied, you don't have a plan (at least not one that's maximizing resources and returns). Plans can be simple or detailed, but you need a plan AND you need to follow it. The guiding element of a cropping/ nutrient management plan is a good set of soil tests.

#3 Take Credit Where Credit is Due

Taking appropriate nutrient credits for forage legumes and manure has more than passed the point of being repetitive. There are still a number of producers who aren't even close to making the most of nutrients supplied by manure and legumes. First-year corn after alfalfa is a no-brainer—additional purchased N is simply not needed. Second-year corn after alfalfa—figure a 50 lb. N credit per acre. Manure is like liquid gold these days, but similar to soil, it must be tested and applied uniformly on fields. When manure comes up short of nutrient supplying expectations it's often because little or no attempt was made to verify the nutrient content and applied rate.

#4 Remember the Golden Rule

The first increment of nutrients applied has the greatest efficiency and potential for economic return. In other words, it's better to spread resources over many field units than take an all or nothing approach.

#5 Think Maximum Returns, Not Maximum Yields

Most producers who win yield contests don't manage the bulk of their acres in the same way that the contest field was managed. Why? Because they would lose money. Yield is important to profitability, but so is the cost side of the ledger.

#6 Compare Nutrient Sources

The relative nutrient availability to crops is the same between different fertilizer sources; the price may not be. Think creativity...it may be to your advantage to apply nutrients in a different way than you have in the past simply based on the cost of different fertilizer forms.

#7 Consider the Starter Effect vs. Nutrient Effect

Why do we use starter fertilizer for corn? In the case of P and K, starter fertilizer often has a two-fold purpose. First, it offers the "starter" effect by being close to the seed and potentially improving early season emergence and plant vigor. Second, there is often enough P and K applied to supply crop needs for the growing season and maintain current soil fertility. Far less P and K is needed in starter fertilizer to accomplish the "starter" effect. Further, this effect does not always translate into more profit at the end of the growing season, especially when both fertilizer prices and soil fertility levels are high. In this situation, spending \$2 per pound of P applied (the cost of some liquid forms) to accomplish a starter effect doesn't make economic sense. If soil test levels are optimum or below, supplying nutrients for crop growth and to maintain soil fertility levels is needed. This can be done at planting or as a pre-plant broadcast application.

#8 Timing is Everything

Nitrogen (N) is subject to several types of losses early in the growing season. Too much rain and nitrate-N denitrifies and is lost as N₂ gas. Place urea forms of N on the soil surface and up to 20 percent of the N can volatilize into the atmosphere if conditions stay dry for several days. The problem of course, is that corn takes up most of its N after mid-June. Nitrogen applied early in the growing season is subject to loss throughout May and early-June. This isn't a big deal if the weather cooperates, but it becomes a real problem if it doesn't. Often N has to be reapplied where soil conditions remain saturated for extended periods. To lower this risk, side dressing N in early- to mid-June is a management alternative.

#9 Stabilize Nitrogen

If N is applied early in the growing season, nitrification inhibitors (e.g. N-Serve) and urease inhibitors (e.g. Agrotain) are products designed to stabilize N and reduce risk for loss over a longer period of time following application. As the price of N increases, N stabilizers become more cost effective. The cost of the stabilizer is cheaper than over applying N to account for losses or reapplying N after losses occur. Where the risk of N loss is high, consider using N stabilizers.

#10 Don't be a Sucker

There are conventional fertilizer products and there are non-conventional fertilizer products. Before buying the latest "can't miss" fertilizer product or additive, verify that marketing claims are backed by solid research. Ideally, obtain information from a non-biased source to insure research date isn't "cherry picked."

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*A newsletter designed to meet the needs of farmers and agribusiness professionals
in Eau Claire and Chippewa Counties.*

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