



Farm & Field

Chippewa Valley Agriculture Newsletter

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Good Day!!

We had a good turnout for our early January FSA, NRCS, Land Conservation and UW-Extension traveling show across the county. The Chippewa Valley Forage Council Annual Meeting was a success again this year as it celebrated 20 years of service to farmers and agribusiness professionals in Chippewa and Eau Claire Counties.

I was in Indianapolis, Indiana last week for a conference planning committee meeting. There was no snow on the ground when I arrived and temperatures were in the mid 30's. I had left Eau Claire on Wednesday morning when it was 22 below zero and 40 below with the wind chill so it almost felt like fall again. All day Thursday, the meteorologists were talking about the impending snow storm that was to dump 6-8 inches of snow and ice on the city and surrounding areas overnight. I am now convinced that meteorologists must have a college course on "scare the heck out of them" forecasts. Guess what? Less than an inch of snow, light drizzle and business as usual on Friday in Indianapolis.

If this is your year to renew your Private Pesticide Applicators license, we only have two opportunities left this winter. You can call the office in advance to schedule a test only session, if you are unable to attend one of our classes.

"Continue to Farm Smarter"

Mahlon Peterson

Mahlon Peterson
 UW-Extension Agricultural Agent

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Calendar

February

- 6 Private Pesticide Applicator Training—Cadott
- 7 Holstein Steer Feeders Meeting
- 9 Volunteer Leadership Training—Ladysmith
- 11 Meat Animal Project Meeting - Expo Center
- 14 Valentines Day**
- 21 Cattle Care Clinic—Cadott
- 26 Private Pesticide Applicator Training—Augusta

March

- 1 MAQA Training at Ag & Resource Center
- 4/5 Eau Claire Farm Show
- 5 DHI Annual Meeting—Black Bear Supper Club
- 6 Heart of the Farm Conference—Florian Gardens
- 9 Daylight Savings Day**
- 13 RC&D Grazing Conference—Holiday Inn
- 17 St. Patrick's Day**
- 19 Private Pesticide Applicator Training—Chippewa Falls
- 20 Spring Begins**
- 20 CVFC Winter Seminar—Cadott
- 23 Easter**
- 27 Eau Claire County Dairy Facilities Tour
- 31 Meat Animal Project Meeting -Fall Creek High School

April

- 5 Rural living Day - Beaver Creek
- 11/12 Swine & Sheep Weigh-in for 2008 County Fair

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

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

Something To Chew On . . .



*Mahlon Peterson Ag Agent
Eau Claire County*

Farm Transition and Estate Planning Workshop Scheduled for February

A workshop designed to assist farm families in beginning their farm business transfer and personal estate plan is scheduled for February 20 from 9:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Holiday Manor Inn and Conference Center in Menomonie.

The University of Wisconsin-Extension and Bremer Bank are sponsoring "Farm Transition and Estate Planning: Building Your Exit Strategy" workshop. Participants will be introduced to a host of transition and estate planning concepts, techniques, strategies and procedures.

On hand for the day-long workshop will be Gary Hachfeld, REE, Ag Business Development, University of Minnesota. Gary will guide participants in gaining a greater understanding of farm transfer strategies, tax issues related to the transfer process, treatment of on-farm and off-farm heirs and how to develop a written estate plan. He will also share discuss common estate planning tools such as wills, trusts, life insurance, power-of-attorney, long-term health care issues and much more.

The hands-on workshop will give participants time to complete several worksheets that get them underway for building their farm transition and estate plan. A companion workbook that includes all workshop discussions, worksheets, ten detailed farm transition fact sheets, ten detailed estate planning fact sheets, and a set of five financial management information sheets will go home with each farm family.

According to UW-Extension Dunn County Agriculture Agent Jim Faust, "Many farmers are struggling with how to transfer the farm and how to formulate a workable estate plan. They also find it difficult to begin a dialog with family members."

"Talking about death is just hard to do," Faust notes. "This workshop will help farm families 'break this ice' in order to begin this very important process."

Program topics include:

-- Preparing to Transfer the Farm Business: a good plan takes into consideration the goals of the individual, the family and farm business. They serve as the primary guiding principles for the farm transition and estate plan. Begin the process of discovering your family's goals.

-- Major Tax Considerations When Transferring Assets: Learn about the major tax issues to consider - basis, stepped up basis, loss of stepped up basis, capital gains

tax, state and federal taxes, gift tax, and special use valuations.

-- Overview of Farm Transfer Strategies: Gain an understanding of transfer strategies such as partnerships, corporations, LLP and LLC as well as transfer techniques like gifting and installment sales.

-- Financial Consideration in Transferring the Farm: Success of the plan hinges on financial stability and whether the business can generate enough income for both the retiring generation and the succession generation.

-- Treatment of Heirs and Available Financial Assistance: Gain an understanding of fair and equitable treatment of both on-farm and off-farm heirs as well as strategies such as buy-out provisions to protect the on-farm heir.

-- Estate Planning and the Transfer Process: Learn about all the tools of estate planning such as wills, trusts, life estate, power-of-attorney, health care directives, life insurance and a number of other strategies.

-- Developing a Written Transfer Plan Outline: Putting it down on paper is where the "rubber meets the road." Begin outlining and assembling your plan.

Pre-registration by February, 15 is required. To register, contact the UW-Extension Dunn County office at 715-232-1636. Cost of the program is \$35 per person or \$60 per couple from the same farm. Late registrations and registrations at the door will be \$45.

Directions to the Holiday Manor Inn and Conference Center: Take WI-25 (Exit 41) South off I-94 toward Menomonie and turn right off North Broadway (Hwy 25) to the Holiday Manor Inn and Conference Center.

Grain Marketing Workshop Scheduled for February 27 in Menomonie

Growers can learn how to do a better job at marketing grain by attending a workshop scheduled for February 27 from 10:30 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Dunn County Judicial Center in Menomonie.

"Grain Marketing is Simple (it's just not easy)" is sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Extension and Bremer Bank. Participants will be introduced to a common sense approach to grain marketing featuring celebrity producers like Barney Binless, Hank Holder and Darla Discipline.

Something To Chew On . . .



*Mahlon Peterson Ag Agent
Eau Claire County*

Special guest speaker for the day-long workshop will be Ed Usset, Grain Marketing Specialist, University of Minnesota. Ed has developed a series of award winning grain marketing workshops titled, "Winning the Game." His latest workshop, "Grain Marketing is Simple (it's just not easy)" is based on his new book with the same title. In addition to Ed, Greg Andrews, UW-Extension Pierce County agriculture agent will be contributing to the workshop as well as Randy Fortenbery, UW-Extension marketing specialist via DVD.

According to UW-Extension Dunn County Agriculture Agent Jim Faust, "Grain marketing is still important even though prices have strengthened this past year. We have seen nitrogen fertilizer double in cost, potash prices have sky-rocketed as well and, of course, diesel fuel is outrageous. All of these factors have increased production costs and must be covered in the market place if growers are to raise another crop the next year."

Program topics include:

- Marketing to find the dime (or more)
- Five common marketing mistakes
- Developing and executing a pre-harvest marketing plan
- Price patterns before and after harvest
- Executing your plan with the RIGHT pricing tool
- Incorporating options into your marketing plan
- Price and time driven exit strategies
- Incorporating technical trading tools into your market plan
- How to size up the market and write a post-harvest market plan
- Carrying charges and selling the carry
- Red, white and blue grain pricing
- And you want WHAT for rent?
- Fortenbery Grain Outlook for 2008 via DVD

Pre-registration is required. To register, contact the UW-Extension Dunn County office at 715-232-1636. Cost of the program is \$25 per person on or before Feb. 22. Late registrations and registrations at the door will be \$35.

The Judicial Center is located off U.S. Hwy. 12/29 on Stokke Parkway just east of the city of Menomonie midway between the Dunn County Highway Department and the Dunn County Health Care Center.

Find Solutions to Rising Energy Costs

Are you looking for ways to tackle the rising energy prices that affect every aspect of your farm business from fertilizer to heating costs? If so, plan to attend the Myths of Energy Summit II on March 27 at Lakeshore Technical College.

This summit will help you to learn how to harvest energy and improve your energy efficiency. You will find out the latest about anaerobic digesters and real life digester experiences. You will also discover if using a wind turbine is right for you or if solar thermal water heating is the answer.

Speakers are Dr. Imad Mahawili, executive director of the Michigan Alternative and Renewable Energy Center; Jenny Eigenberger, instructor at Lakeshore Technical College; Dr. Kenn Buelow, general



Great Apple Varieties for the Chippewa Valley

It's wonderful to have an apple tree in the backyard. The blooms are beautiful in spring and it's fun to eat a homegrown apple.

My family used to have an apple tree near what we called the baseball outfield of our neighborhood. I remember playing baseball with my friends there on many days of summer. Between pitches I would stop by the old apple tree to munch on a fruit (the only problem was that the apples were green in the summer). I'd take a bite into the juicy apple, realize how tart it was, spit it out (like a baseball player spits out tobacco juice), and look to see if there was a worm in the fruit. Yeah, I know that biting into a green apple was a stupid thing to do, but all the kids did it. It was "cool"!

I learned quickly that there's only one thing worse than biting into an apple and finding a worm in it—finding HALF of a worm in it.

So much for nostalgia. Apple varieties vary in color, flavor, cooking quality, storage quality and tree hardiness. Consider all these factors when selecting varieties.

Apples are self-sterile, so two different varieties (not just two different trees) need to be planted within 100 feet of one another for good fruit set. A nearby crabapple tree will also work for pollination. Also, keep in mind that we are in Hardiness Zone 4. Popular varieties such as *Gala*, *Braeburn*, *Rome Beauty*, *Fuji*, and *Granny Smith* are not suited for our area.

The following are some of the best varieties for Eau Claire:

Red Varieties. *Honeycrisp* has become the #1 apple in our region. This apple from Minnesota is famous for its "explosively crisp" texture and mild, juicy taste. *Honeycrisp* ripens in late September. If you are looking for an earlier apple, consider *Zestar!* (another variety from Minnesota), particularly for fresh eating.

McIntosh and *Cortland* are very popular all-purpose varieties (good for both cooking and fresh eating). *McIntosh* produces large round fruits with distinctive, slightly tart flavor. *McIntosh* was the most popular apple in Wisconsin until the *Honeycrisp* revolution began 15 years ago. An interesting feature of *Cortland* is that its fruit is very slow to brown when sliced.

A leading apple variety, *Red Delicious*, is declining in popularity. If you wonder why, buy some different varieties of apples at your grocery store next time. Have a friend help you to take a blind taste test. Compare the flavor of a *Red Delicious* with a *Honeycrisp*, for example. You'll realize that although *Red Delicious* apples look good, they have a mealy texture and not much flavor.

Other recommended red apple varieties include *Empire*, which is a shiny apple with juicy flesh and *Sweet Sixteen*, which produces mammoth-sized fruits.

Yellow Varieties. In recent years, *Honeygold* has been regarded as the best choice for our region. Its flesh is crisp, juicy, and good for either cooking or fresh use. *Lodi* and *Earligold* are recommended yellow apples that ripen in summer.

Disease-Free Varieties. To avoid the need for spraying with fungicides, start with one of these varieties. They are genetically resistant to common apple diseases. These trees still need to be protected from insects, but traps can do a decent job on controlling insect pests.

Redfree (very early), *William's Pride* (early), *Enterprise* (large fruit), and *Liberty* (good quality) are among the best disease-free apples. If you are looking for a yellow type, go with *Pristine*, which is early maturing and delicious.

Other Varieties. Antique varieties such as *Wealthy*, *Fameuse*, *Wolf River*, and *Duchess* are available from specialty nurseries. Antique varieties are an important part of our heritage and rewarding to grow.

No matter what variety you choose, make sure that it has been grafted onto a dwarfing rootstock. Dwarf trees are easier to prune, spray, and harvest than standard trees. They also bear fruit earlier (typically three years after planting).

Randy's Rumors . . .

Randy Knapp, Chippewa County Agricultural Agent



The following article is taken from the 2008 Status of Wisconsin Agriculture report.

To say that Wisconsin farmers had a good year in 2007 is a lot like saying the Green Packers had a decent season. High commodity prices—record prices in many cases—lifted farm cash receipts by more than \$2 billion to nearly \$9 billion. Net farm income—farmers' bottom line—did not increase as much as cash receipts due to a significant increase in production costs, especially for animal feeds and energy. But despite higher costs, Wisconsin farmers' net farm income more than doubled, going from \$1.1 billion in 2006 to \$2.6 billion last year. This was \$800 million above the previous record set in 2004.

Milk averaged \$6 per hundredweight higher than 2006, contributing \$1.4 billion to the overall gain in state farm income. Cattle and poultry producers also saw higher average prices for the year, but the price gain was small compared to milk, and hog producers saw no price increase. Much higher prices for grain and soybeans boosted crop producers' incomes by about \$450 million from 2006.

Review of 2007

In our 2005 *Status of Wisconsin Agriculture* report, we noted that for dairy farmers, 2004 was a year, "...that will likely serve for many years as the yardstick in coffee shop debates about the good times." The bar was raised much sooner and much higher than we expected. Wisconsin milk prices in 2007 averaged more than \$2 per hundredweight higher than 2004. The state All Milk price rose steadily from \$15.10 per hundredweight in January to a record \$21.60 in July. Unlike previous years when price spikes were quickly followed by freefalls of \$3-4 per hundredweight, milk prices stayed at record high monthly levels through year-end.

The boost in milk prices came from a combination of supply and demand. On the supply side, depressed milk prices in 2006 and high feed costs motivated farmers to moderate milk production early in 2007. On the demand side, domestic consumption remained fairly robust despite much higher retail prices, and very tight international markets for milk proteins lifted world market prices and encouraged U.S. dairy exports. The United States is expected to be a net exporter of dairy products—the value of dairy exports will exceed that of dairy imports in 2007. That hasn't happened since 1993.

Prospects for 2008

While it would be hard to top 2007, Wisconsin farmers should do quite well in 2008.

Milk prices will fall from their stratospheric levels of 2007. The only questions are *when* and *how far*? Dairy farmers are responding to high prices by pumping out more milk, but expansion incentives could diminish quickly if feed prices rise and milk prices fall. We anticipate a soft landing for milk prices, with the 2008 Wisconsin All Milk price averaging about \$17 per hundredweight. That would be down \$2 from 2007, but would still be \$3 above the average annual All Milk price for the ten years ending in 2006. But at the same time, higher feed and energy prices in 2008 will make it considerably more expensive to produce milk than it has been during the past ten years.

Most livestock producers are expected to see prices in 2008 close to what were observed in 2007. Choice steer prices near \$90 per hundredweight are expected. Hog prices could slip a bit to \$45. Broiler and egg prices will likely average below 2007 prices, but turkey prices should remain firm.

Corn and soybean growers will have another good year in 2008. Larger ethanol demand and good export opportunities due to the weak dollar combined with a smaller expected corn crop will hold prices over \$3 per bushel. Some corn acreage will shift back into soybeans in 2008. But soybean supplies are expected to remain tight, keeping prices near 2007 levels.

With crop farmers scrambling to plant more acres, expect fertilizer and seed prices to stay high in 2008. Likewise, livestock producers will face higher costs from strong feed prices. Energy costs are a major wild card.

Expect the U.S. economy to slow considerably in 2008, with GDP growth in the 2 percent range compared to more than 3 percent in recent years. This could dampen consumer spending on food slightly, but any reduction will likely be more than offset by expanded agricultural exports.

Jerry Jargon
 Jerry Clark
 Chippewa County Soil & Crops Educator



USING FOLIAR FUNGICIDES ON CORN: DOES IT PAY?

In 2007, many acres of corn in Wisconsin were sprayed mid-season with fungicides, strobilurin, or a strobilurin/triazole combination (in Iowa and Illinois, an estimated six million acres of corn were sprayed). Most acres applied had little or no disease at the time of application. Reasons for spraying vary and include the high price of corn, potential to control diseases, and a possibility of improved yield from “plant health” benefits. Until this year, fungicide applications to production cornfields were rarely practiced because they were not profitable. Many of the hybrids grown today have good overall tolerance to foliar diseases.

Results of fungicide trials have been mixed in Wisconsin (Table 1). In 2 of 11 trials, a significant yield response occurred that covered the fungicide cost.

Some plant damage has been reported when using fungicide, some of it severe. There is NO confirmed correlation between damage and fungicide. There is no real evidence that continuous corn (no- and strip-till) routinely needs fungicide more often, but Anthracnose and Gray Leaf Spot inoculant potential is higher. Fungicide damage was related to weather and crop conditions in 2007, but it could happen again, so you may not want to apply pre-tassel.

The 2008 growing season is a few months away, but decisions are already being made regarding purchase of fungicides. Fungicides should be used as a “tool” (along with other IPM practices) to control diseases that are present and/or almost certain to be a problem. Consider the following factors before spraying:

- . Hybrid susceptibility
- . Disease pressure at VT
- . Weather conditions at VT and during grain fill
- . Previous crop
- . The amount of crop residue present in the field
- . Fungicide and application cost
- . Grain price, and read directions and restrictions on product label. In general, a fungicide application is not recommended on resistant hybrids. On susceptible hybrids, a fungicide application may be warranted if disease is present on the third leaf below the ear leaf or higher on 50 percent of the plants at tasseling. With intermediate hybrids, a fungicide need only be applied if conditions are favorable for disease development.

Spray if disease is present on the third leaf below the ear leaf or higher on 50 percent of the plants at tasseling, the weather is warm and humid, the field has a history of Gray Leaf Spot and/or Anthracnose, and >35 percent corn residue is present.

Table 1. Corn and Headline™ fungicide response in Wisconsin. All applications were applied at labeled rates at VT. As asterisk indicates significance at P < 0.10. Fungicide cost is ~\$22 an acre (cost of product and application), the breakeven yield response was minimum of 6 bu/acre, assuming a corn price of \$3.75.

Year	Previous Crop	Tillage	No Fungicide	With Fungicide	Fungicide Increase	Did it Pay?
- - - - - bushels per acre - - - - -						
2007	Corn	No-till	216	222	6	?
	Soybean	No-till	203	230	27*	Yes
	Wheat	No-till	205	210	5	No
	Soybean		206	208	2	No
2006	Soybean	Chisel	226	229	3	No
	Corn	Chisel	214	217	3	No
	Corn	Chisel	227	227	0	No
2005	Corn	Chisel	181	186	5	No
	Soybean	Chisel	199	211	12	?
	Soybean	Chisel	212	213	1	No
2004	Soybean	Chisel	200	211	11*	Yes

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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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