



Farm & Field

Chippewa Valley Agriculture Newsletter

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Pest Management Update Meetings **2**
- Nutrient Management Follow-up Surveys **2**
- Earn a Living on the Farm **4**
- Crop Decision 2009 **5**

Good Day!!

Six weeks ago many of us talked about the need for a late killing frost. That's exactly what happened across the county with killing frosts occurring between October 1 and 21. I was somewhat surprised to hear of extremely wet corn silage in early October, but we probably should have expected that to occur. Early high moisture corn and soybean harvest information combined with corn silage reports leads me to believe our harvest season should be closer to normal year.

Special congratulations are in order for more than 60 Chippewa and Eau Claire County youth who participated in the county Land Judging Contest in mid-October. Special thanks to Tom and Diane Woodford for hosting the contest this year and to the NRCS and LCD staff and sponsors who made the event possible.

If you are interested in the economics of crop production, try to attend the 2009 Crop Decisions Series starting on November 7. A description of the program appears in the "Something to Chew On" section of this newsletter.

Have a safe harvest season and "Continue to Farm Smarter".

Mahlon Peterson

Mahlon Peterson
UW-Extension Agricultural Agent

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Calendar

November

- 7 How to Manage Expensive P & K Fertilizer
- 10 Meat Animal Project Meeting – FCHS
- 12 UW-Extension Pest Management Update Meeting at Eagle's Club in Lake Hallie
- 19 Nutrient Management session
- 20 Nutrient Management session
- 27 Extension Office Closed—Happy Thanksgiving**

December

- 3 Corn Hybrid Selection Workshop
- 3 Nutrient Management session
- 4 UW-Extension Soil, Water and Nutrient Management Update at Expo Center
- 10 Nutrient Management session
- 11 Nutrient Management session
- 13 2009 County Fair Beef Weigh-in
- 17 Nutrient Management session
- 18 Nutrient Management session
- 19 Selecting Economical Nitrogen Rates
- 25 Extension Office Close—Merry Christmas**

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*

Extension to host Pest Management Update Meetings throughout Wisconsin

UW-Extension specialists in weed science, plant pathology and entomology will present the latest information on pest management and biology for Wisconsin field crops at the annual Pest Management Update Meetings in eight Wisconsin locations in November.

Topics include weed and insect management and disease control for Wisconsin field crops. The specialists will provide updates on herbicide and fungicide labels, weed management options, results of corn and winter wheat fungicide treatments, soybean aphid, Western bean cutworm, and many other topics.

Speakers at the meetings include Chris Boerboom and Mark Renz, UW-Madison/Extension weed scientists; Eileen Cullen or Bryan Jensen, UW-Madison/Extension field crop entomologists; and Paul Esker, UW-Madison/Extension field crop plant pathologist. The meetings count towards four hours of pest management continuing education credits for certified crop advisors.

All sessions start at 10 AM. and conclude at 3 PM. Registration and coffee begins at 9:30 AM. for all sessions. The registration fee is \$30. This fee covers the cost of the information packet and the noon meal. The information packet will contain the 2009 Pest Management in Wisconsin Field Crops bulletin, with weed, insect and disease control recommendations for corn, soybean, small grains and forages, as well as other pest management reference materials. Additional copies of the information packet will be available for purchase at \$15 each.

Organizers request participants to pre-register with the host agent at least one week before the meeting they wish to attend.

The area meeting closest to us is on Wednesday, November 12 at the Eagle's Club in Lake Hallie. Reservations must be made in advance by calling the Chippewa County Extension Office at 715.726.7950.

Nutrient Management Follow-up Surveys – 2008

Follow-up survey work on nutrient management planning was conducted on 13 farms by Mahlon Peterson, Eau Claire UW-Extension Agricultural Agent. The 13 farm families wrote their own nutrient management plans in 2006 prior to the 2007 cropping season in workshop sessions conducted by Gary Osborne, Eau Claire County Land Conservation Division and Peterson.

The 13 farms produced agricultural crops on 2,610 tillable acres. All of the producers grew corn and alfalfa on their land while five grew soybeans and eight grew small grains such as oats, barley or wheat. Nine of the 13 operations classified themselves as dairy farms while 11 farms had one or more beef animals on the farm. Nine of the operators surveyed spread manure on a daily basis and four handled manure as a liquid or left it in buildings for a time before hauling.

All of the producers reported that 100% of the land was covered by their nutrient management plan and none reported having major problems following their plan. One hundred percent of the farmers reported their nutrient management program had a positive effect on surface and groundwater quality in their neighborhood.

Fertilizer savings varied among producers in that four producers reported their plan has saved them an average of 55 pounds of purchased nitrogen yearly while the others saw no significant change in nitrogen, phosphorus or potassium costs. Forty-six percent of the farmers reported average savings of \$17 per acre on purchased fertilizer because of their nutrient management plans.

Overall annual savings for the 190 Eau Claire County producers who have written their own nutrient management plans exceeds \$608,000.



Greenhouse Gossip . . .

Erin LaFaive

Eau Claire County Horticulture Educator



Erin LaFaive, Eau Claire County Horticulture Educator, gave birth to a baby girl, Zoey LaFaive, on September 21, 2008. Since the birth of her daughter Erin has been on maternity leave, and will be returning to our office on November 3.

Erin will have an article in the next issue of Farm & Field.

In the meantime, if you have horticulture questions, or would like information on upcoming horticultural educational trainings, please feel free to contact the Extension Office at 715-839-4712.

Randy's Rumors . . .

Randy Knapp, Chippewa County Agricultural Agent



What Does It Take to Earn a Living on the Farm?''

As input costs increase and commodity prices farmers receive fluctuate, profit margins change over time. As these changes occur, farmers have had to change their businesses. Some farmers have gone out of business. Some are farming part-time and work off the farm to supplement their income. Others have gone to alternative farming methods in order to remain in farming. Yet others still farm full-time and they have increased the size of their farms in order to remain profitable. Whether we agree or disagree with these changes, the changes are a function of the changing agricultural industry.

The following data is presented not to justify or support the changes in agriculture. Rather, it is put forth as one approach to quantifying and explaining what is happening. The numbers presented are real numbers from hundreds of real farm families throughout the southern one-third of Minnesota. These families have kept records on their farm business as well as their household and personal expenses. As you study the data, it becomes clear that agriculture is changing.

The data used in the comparisons originates from the data recorded by farm families who are members of the Adult Farm Business Management Program and the Extension Southwestern Minnesota Farm Business Management Programs. These are real numbers from real farm families as a result of operating their farm

In 2007, a total of 464 farm families from the Southeastern Minnesota Farm Business Management Program kept household and personal expense records. Their average household and personal expense for the year was \$65,867

with an average family size of 3.1 persons. This family living expense includes: food, medical care, charitable donations, supplies, furnishings, clothing, educational costs, recreation expenses, gifts, utilities, child care, house rent and upkeep of the house. Also included are expenses for the purchase of non-farm vehicles, investments, savings, life insurance premiums, income/social security taxes, and non-farm capital purchases.

The chart below illustrates how many acres of crop or number of livestock units needed to earn the 2007 average family living amount of \$65,867. The calculations are based upon five year average net return values for the crop and livestock enterprises listed. The net return values are dollars remaining after all farm expenses are paid, **excluding** a charge for labor and management. The numbers are an average of all farm records included in the Southeastern Farm Business Management Association for the 2003-07 years. Also, there are three assumptions related to the calculations. The first assumption is that all income to earn the family living amount would come from one enterprise. That is, to earn \$65,867 from raising corn only, the farm family would have to have 613 acres of corn. To earn all family living expenses from contract finishing hogs only, the family would have to market 15,462 hogs annually. The second assumption is that all family living income would come from the farm and there is no off-farm income included in the calculation. The third assumption is that the net return values for corn, soybeans, and alfalfa hay are for cash rented land (most producers rent more land than they own) and the values include government payments.

Source: Gary A. Hachfeld, Regional Extension Educator
Extension Regional Center, Mankato, Minnesota

<u>Enterprise</u>	<u>5 Yr. Average Net Return</u>	<u>Units Required to Earn Living</u>
Corn/Ac.(incl. govt. payments)	\$ 107.42	613 acres
Soybeans/Ac. (incl. govt. pmts.)	\$ 68.91	956 acres
<u>Note:</u> If a farmer plants a 50/50 corn & soybean rotation, here is the approximate number of acres required to meet family living expenses. Using the net return numbers and the 2007 family living cost of \$65,867, a farmer would have to have approximately <u>373 acres of corn and 373 acres of soybeans</u> or a total of 746 acres to earn the family living amount.		
Alfalfa Hay/Acre	\$110.78	595 acres
Farrow to Finish Hogs/Head	\$ 8.65	7,615 head
Hogs, Weaning to Finish/Head	\$ 12.68	5,195 head
Contract Finish Hogs/Head	\$ 4.26	15,462 head
Beef Finish Calves/Head	\$ 23.01	2,863 head
Beef Cow-Calf/Cow	\$ 37.30	1,766 cows
Dairy Cows/Cow	\$676.92	97 cows

Jerry Jargon
 Jerry Clark
 Chippewa County Soil & Crops Educator



NEW *CROP DECISIONS 2009* PROGRAM AVAILABLE

The Chippewa County UW-Extension Office will participate in a new statewide series of crop production educational programs delivered via the Internet. ***CROP DECISIONS 2009*** is a series of Internet based “webinar” programs relating to managing crops in the face of high input costs for the 2009 growing season.

CROP DECISIONS 2009 will be held from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. from November 2008 through March 2009. All sessions will be held at the Chippewa County UW-Extension Office in Room 013 of the Courthouse in Chippewa Falls.

Each program will involve an online PowerPoint presentation from a UW-Extension agronomy specialist, followed by local discussion and question and answer periods with the specialists.

Scheduled topics and dates for ***CROP DECISIONS 2009*** include:

November 7, 2008

- ***How to Manage Expensive P and K Fertilizer***
 Carrie Laboski, UW-Extension Soil Science Specialist

December 3, 2008

- ***Selecting Corn Hybrids***
 Joe Lauer, UW-Extension Corn Agronomist

December 19, 2008

- ***Selecting Economical Nitrogen Rates and Other Management Considerations for 2009***
 Carrie Laboski, UW-Extension Soil Science Specialist

January 7, 2009

- ***Glyphosate Performance and Weed Resistance***
 Speaker To Be Determined
- ***Maximizing Weed Management: Risk Management and Economics***
 Chris Boerboom, UW-Extension Weed Scientist

January 16, 2009

- To Be Determined

February 4, 2009

- To Be Determined

February 20, 2009

- To Be Determined

March 4, 2009

- ***Cellulosic Ethanol in Wisconsin***

Updates and detailed information about each session will appear in each issue of the Ag Alert newsletter.

There is no cost to attend ***CROP DECISIONS 2009***. Pre-registration is encouraged to help prepare materials for each program. Two (2) CCA credits in the appropriate subject matter will be available for each program.

If you have any questions or want to pre-register, contact the Chippewa County UW-Extension Office, (715) 726-7950.

CROP DECISIONS 2009 is co-sponsored by the following UW-Extension Teams:

- Team Forage
- Grains Team
- Nutrient Management Team
- Bioenergy Team

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Requests for reasonable accommodations for disabilities or limitations should be made prior to the date of the program or activity for which it is needed. Please do so as early as possible prior to the program or activity so that proper arrangements can be made. Requests will be kept confidential.



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