

LANGLADE AG-LETTER



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Dairy Outlook: Lots of cows, lots of milk...

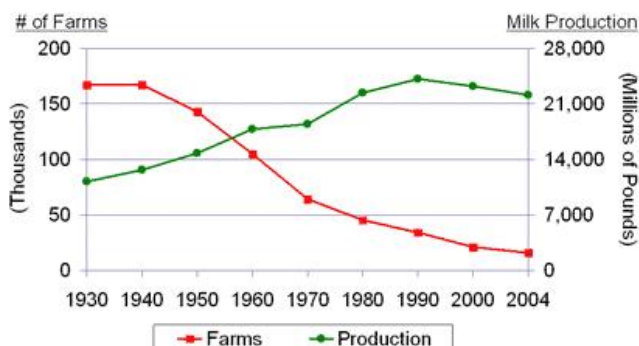
Alex Crockford, Agriculture Agent

Many of us have gotten our milk checks and read the farm papers and “expert” forecasting that the mailbox prices are heading towards 2000 and 2002 levels. How low they’ll go is anyone’s guess.

The MILC payments should soften the impact for producers signing up for this program. Expect monthly milk payments in the \$0.60 - \$0.80 per hundredweight range through the end of the year.

On the positive side of this trend line, is that in 2005, Wisconsin ended the year with 3000 more cows than when the year began. This is the first year of growth since 1994. While it is premature to forecast any significance to this, it might be an early sign of reversal to the 20 year downward trend of the state’s dairy herd.

Wisconsin Dairy Farms and Milk Production 1930-2004*



*Preliminary estimate.

Source: USDA/NASS, Milk Production.

Find this and previous newsletters on-line at:
<http://langlade.uwex.edu/ag/>

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May

4/4 - Dairy Promotion Meeting

The June Dairy Breakfast will continue to be the topic of discussion at this week's meeting at the Langlade County Resource Center. Eau Claire River Room, 10 a.m. - 12 noon.

4/16 – County Board Meeting

The UW Extension staff will be making a short presentation and reporting on 2005 work for each program area.

4/17 -- Managing Lawns the Environmental Way

Dr. John Stier, Associate Professor of Environmental Turfgrass Science, University of Wisconsin-Madison, will discuss environmentally sound ways to manage turf with mowing, fertilization, and irrigation. Discussion will include selecting turfgrasses for a site in order to reduce inputs. The environmental impacts of turf in our society and to the environment, particularly with regard to water quality, will be addressed. 6-7:30 p.m. Marathon County UW Extension Office, 212 River Dr. Wausau.

June

6/3 – Gardenville 2006

“Gardenville” is the name of the 2006 North Central Wisconsin Master Gardener’s Plant Sale. This will be held from 9 am - 12 noon at the Marathon Park Cattle Barn in Wausau. Annuals, perennials, vegetables and herbs will be sold. See a composting demonstration.

Price-Adjusted Corn Nitrogen Fertilizer Guidelines for 2006

The University of Wisconsin's nitrogen (N) fertilizer guidelines for corn are changing! Recently, soil scientists Carrie Laboski and Larry Bundy announced a new approach for determining profitable N rates. This approach allows for flexibility in choosing N rates based on two factors: 1) the cost of N fertilizer, and 2) the price of corn. Over the past few years the cost of N fertilizer has increased substantially while corn prices have been constant or declining. Both these factors influence the economic optimum N rate for corn.

Wisconsin's previous corn N recommendation system had been in place since 1990. At that time, N and corn prices were more favorable than today. Small price fluctuations did not have a major impact on the optimum rate of N to apply when using the former system. However, with N prices more than doubling in recent years due to increases in energy prices, N price impact on profitable N rates is no longer minimal. So while corn yield response to N has not changed, application rates of N that result in the most profitable return at current corn and N prices have. The revised N guidelines for corn account for these changes.

Wisconsin's soil fertility specialists worked in conjunction with their counterparts in Minnesota, Iowa, and Illinois to develop a regional approach for the development of price-adjusted N rate guidelines for corn. This approach requires a grower or fertilizer advisor to know their cost of N and to anticipate a price for corn. The ratio of N to corn price needs to be calculated or pulled from a table. Additional field information needed to determine the optimum N rate is the previous crop, soil yield potential rating, soil texture, and irrigation.

By using the new price-adjusted N guidelines for corn, a grower can determine a N rate that provides the maximum return to N (MRTN) for a given N:corn price ratio, soil, and previous crop. The N guidelines also provide a range of profitable N rates that are within \$1.00/acre of the MRTN rate. Situations when growers should consider using a N rate within the range rather than the MRTN value are described in the card. More detailed information on the new Wisconsin N guidelines for corn can be found at the UW Dept. of Soil Science-Extension website at: <http://www.soils.wisc.edu/extension/hottopics/>.

Springtime means planting seeds for a safe cropping season

Spring is upon us and with the warm weather comes fieldwork. As farmers prepare for planting this spring, they also need to prepare for a safe cropping season.

"Decisions made and actions taken in spring can make a huge difference all year long in the safety and health of farmers, their family members, and their employees," said Cheryl Skjolaas, UW-Extension agricultural safety specialist.

Machines should be inspected to see that all guards and shields are in place. It is much better to spend money now to repair or replace safety components than put it off until later. In the rush of planting or harvest it is less likely to get done, and those stressful times of the year are the peak times for injury.

Lighting and safety markings should be checked, repaired or upgraded prior to moving machinery on public roads, said Skjolaas. "Slow-moving vehicle (SMV) emblems may be faded. Light bulbs in flashers and other lights, which worked last fall, may have died over winter. Wiring may have proven irresistible to those mice with a taste for insulation. What looked good or worked well last

fall may not be the same now."

Other maintenance should be performed to be sure your equipment is in peak operating condition. Not only does this allow you to do a better job, and save downtime in the field, it helps prevent injury. "The safest place for a tractor operator is in the seat", said Skjolaas. "Every time an operator has to get off and fix a problem with a machine, there is increased exposure to machine hazards, more chances of slipping and falling or even getting run over." Breakdowns also cause stress and irritation, increasing the chances of an injury.

Personal protective equipment (PPE) like gloves, goggles, dust or chemical respirators, or whatever else is needed, should be included with purchases of seed, chemicals, or other supplies. Chemical labels and Material Safety Data Sheets (MSDS) provide important information. PPE is important in the shop as well, as you get your machines ready for spring and use various tools and procedures.

Skjolaas added, "By taking a few extra minutes to make sure that equipment is properly working, serious or fatal injuries can be prevented."

UW Irrigation Uniformity Testing Workshop at Hancock

On Tuesday, June 6, 2005 from 9:30 AM to 3:30 PM (lunch included) UW Biological Systems Engineering will be hosting a Irrigation Uniformity Testing Workshop at the UW Hancock Ag Research Station, Hancock, WI

The objectives of this workshop are to 1) Learn the importance and how to perform an irrigation uniformity test. 2) Learn the basics of irrigation scheduling.

The program will benefit growers, irrigation managers, crop consultants with cost and resource wise irrigation principles.

The purpose of uniformity testing of an irrigation system is to determine if water is being applied to the soil surface uniformly. If water is not applied uniformly, it can lead to water stress or disease of crops resulting in lower production. If you expect top yields, then the irrigation system must be maintained for top performance. It needs to be checked at regular service intervals to make sure it's performing properly.

The workshop will focus on how to perform uniformity testing of center pivot, linear-move or traveling gun irrigation systems and cover the following topics:

- Equipment requirements for uniformity testing.
- Determining the proper collection can spacing and layout.
- Data recording needs.
- Calculation of average depths, depth deviation and coefficient of uniformity.
- Analysis of results.
- Importance of pump/well testing.
- Wisconsin Focus on Energy programs and grants for irrigation systems.
- Basics on Irrigation Scheduling
- Soil moisture monitoring equipment



Uniformity can make you thousands....

Attendees will perform a uniformity test on a center pivot system or a linear-move system (boots or water resistant shoes are suggested). This workshop is intended to instruct growers on how to use the Uniformity Test Kit that is available for growers to borrow at no charge or to make their own kit for testing their own irrigation systems.

Cost: \$20 per person Make checks payable to: University of Wisconsin – Biological System Engineering

Call Scott Sanford at 608-262-5062 or e-mail sasanford@wisc.edu with any questions.

Pre-Registration by Wednesday, May 31, 2006 is required. Limited to 20 participants.

Premise Registration Continues

Langlade County has been fairly successful at getting premises registered. Of the 343 potential farm locations with livestock in our county according to publicly listed sources, 280 farms have registered as of a recent April report. It is now mandatory to register a farm with livestock in WI. The information is merely contact info and species at site. For more info call the office or see... <http://www.wiid.org/>



Langlade County

GIS Public Access

The Langlade County Land Records and Regulations Department has the initial workings of a publicly accessible Geographic Information System (GIS).

<http://206.176.217.197/Website/PASystem/PA/viewer.htm>

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Farm Hazard Inspection Checklist

Following is an abbreviated version of the Farm Hazard Inspection Checklist for planting equipment and tractors. If you are interested in learning more about safe equipment handling, check with your local UW-Extension county agricultural agent.

- Are hydraulic components in good repair and free of leaks?
- Are all belts, chains and shafts adequately shielded?
- Are tires inflated to the recommended pressure?
- Are reflectors and Slow-moving vehicle (SMV) emblems clean, unfaded and undamaged?
- Are safety hitch pins available and used?
- Is the PTO master shield in place and in good condition?
- Are the fuel, oil and hydraulic systems free of leaks and maintained at recommended levels?
- Do all lights and flashers work?
- Are the operator's platforms free of grease, mud and tools?
- Is a first-aid kit available?