

NEWS RELEASE

**SCOTT GUNDERSON
MANITOWOC COUNTY UW-EXTENSION DAIRY AGENT
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EXTENSION**

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Drought Conditions Impacting Field Crops Throughout Manitowoc County

Conditions for those in agriculture are at a critical stage. Lack of rain has many farmers and their consultants worried about how to feed the County's 95,000 dairy and beef cattle.

First and second cutting of alfalfa were well below normal for most of Manitowoc County farmers. And, with about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total alfalfa yield coming from these two cuttings, alfalfa supplies will be in short supply.

The County's approximated 64,000 acres of corn are also under extreme drought stress. Discussion with farmers and crop consultants as well as personal observations, indicate that the yield for corn silage and corn grain will be reduced if significant rain is not received by around July 20th. Pollination is a critical time for corn and soil moisture is needed in order to ensure proper pollination occurs.

Without adequate rain, areas corn fields will have "cobless" corn plants, which reduces the quantity and quality of corn silage. Even now, the bottom leaves of some corn plants are turning yellow due to drought stress.

As in the case of the drought of 1988, Manitowoc County farmers are being forced to investigate forage alternatives, including the use of high-fiber byproduct feeds. Whole cottonseed is an excellent forage extender and can be fed at 5-8 pounds per cow daily. Other forage extenders include distillers grains, brewers grains, soy hulls, corn gluten feed, wheat

Prior to purchasing these feedstuffs, it is recommended that a complete feed inventory be conducted. Be sure to include the total number of milking and dry cows and heifers. Farmers are also reminded to plan for "shrink" when conducting a feed inventory. Five to 10 percent feed loss is common depending upon how the byproduct and forages are stored.

All farmers and consultants are encouraged to attend the Manitowoc County Forage Council Summer Twilight Meeting on Tuesday, August 16th at 7 p.m. Blue Royal Farm, Inc. will host this event.

The following topics will be discussed:

- 7:00 Early Bird Demon on Bunker Silo Densities...Michelle Klemme, CP Feeds
- 7:30 How We Plan to Manage Our Forage Inventory...Bob Staudinger, Blue Royal Farms, Inc.
- 7:50 Our Experiences with Annual Rye Grass and High Population Corn (50,000 plants/acre)...Tom Braun
- 8:10 Just How (and What) are We Going to Feed Our Cows?...Dr. Randy Shaver, UW-Extension Dairy Nutritionist

Protecting the Lake Michigan Shoreline Program Scheduled (A five-part educational series)

All interested individuals are reminded of the 5-part educational series entitled, "Protecting the Lake Michigan Shoreline."

Following is a listing of the dates and topics for each of the sessions.

- July 21 – What types of farming systems exist in Northeast Wisconsin?
- July 28 – Understanding agricultural non-point pollution
- August 11 – Discovery Farms: goals and operation
- August 18 – How is the water quality data collected (on-farm)?
- August 30 – What are we learning from the data in Northeastern Wisconsin?

Each session will run from 4-6 p.m. and will be held at the Manitowoc County Office Complex at 4319 Expo Drive, Manitowoc.

All five sessions are free of charge and open to the first 60 registrants. Pre-registration can be made by calling the Manitowoc County UW-Extension office at 683-4168, or by sending an email message to the following address: dawnfruzen@co.manitowoc.wi.us.

The agenda for the first session scheduled for Thursday, July 21st from 4-6 p.m. follows:

July 21 - What types of farming systems exist in Northeast Wisconsin?

- 4:00 Welcome and Introductions: What are we going to accomplish over the next 5 sessions?
- 4:10 What are the differing types of farming systems in Wisconsin? (Dennis Frame, Discovery Farms Co-Director and Scott Gunderson, Manitowoc County UW-Extension Dairy Agent)
- 4:30 What are the differing soils and physiographic settings around the state of Wisconsin? (Fred Madison, Discovery Farms Co-Director)
- 5:00 What are we learning about farming systems? (Fred Madison and Dennis Frame)
 - 1. What is "systems research?"
 - 2. Regional differences
- 5:30 How do regulations fit into these challenges? (Dennis Frame and Jerry Halverson, Manitowoc County Soil and Water Department Conservation Engineer)
 - 1. What regulations are available locally?
 - 2. What educational programs are in place?
- 6:00 Adjourn

The seminar series is sponsored by Manitowoc County UW-Extension, U.S. Geological Survey, Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, Manitowoc County Government, UW-Discovery Farms Project, and Manitowoc County Discovery Farms Advisory Workgroup.

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