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UW—EXTENSION—TAYLOR COUNTY

Agriculture Newsletter

Hurricane Katrina Causes Feed Storage Issues What can you do?

Due to very low grain prices many crop producers are choosing to store their crop rather than sell it. This presents a problem because there was quite a bit of last years crop still being stored and facilities for grain storage are filling up fast. There are some temporary storage techniques that you can use although they have their advantages and disadvantages.

One common option is an unused Tower Silo. This can work well when the right precautions are taken. First the silo walls must be able to take the weight of dry grain and it must be water tight at the top. Another consideration is how to get the grain in just using the blower tube as it will

cause grain damage and it should be replaced with a portable auger. Always aerate the grain to reduce heating and mold. Make sure



that the grain is dry. It should be no more than 13 % moisture for long term storage. Soybeans should be even lower at 11 %. When you unload the grain, unload from the center to avoid grain piled higher on one side than the other. Some producers have been able to use the aeration tube by installing an

auger at the time the grain is needed.

You can also create storage bins in existing sheds by using plywood and making them no more than four feet deep. Make sure that you wrap these bins with cable to reinforce them.

Farmers have also used big square bales to make temporary storage for grains. Make sure that it is done on a good floor surface and that it will not get wet. Also good rodent control will be an issue. For more information on dimensions of these facilities and how many bushel they will hold, please contact the Taylor County UW-Extension Office.

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Dates to Remember

- November 1st — Premise ID for all animal owners must be done
- October 4th — deadline for Nutrient Management class
- October 6th, November 3rd, 10th, 17th, and December 1st — Nutrient Management Classes
- February 16th — Heart of the Farm Conference

Heart of the Farm

Farm women who are interested in improving their farm business skills can attend a Conference in Ladysmith, WI on February 16th.

The conference will cover:

- Farm Transfers
- Nutrient Management
- Financial Software
- Retirement
- Farm Safety

- Marketing
- Production Issues

It is a great chance for women to get together and learn how to help run their farms more effectively. Women who have attended before have said that they enjoyed the chance to network and create a support group.

The sponsors of the conference

are the Center for Dairy Profitability, The North Central Risk Management Education Center, and UW Extension.

If you are interested in attending please contact Maria Bendixen at the UW Extension office in Taylor County.

Nutrient Management Classes held in Taylor and Price County

Farmers who are interested in writing a nutrient management plan for their farm can learn how by attending a series of classes this fall in Price or Taylor County.

Farmers who have participated in classes to write nutrient management plans for their own farms have learned how their plan is put together, why it's written the way it is, and the importance of nutrient management planning from both economic as well as environmental perspectives. The cost of nitrogen is projected to be very high this spring and proper nutrient management is essential to reducing this cost. Being in compliance with the NRCS 590 standard will help to protect the environment and improve the image of agriculture in the community.

The series of five classes will be offered during the afternoon at the Chelsea

Conservation Club (1 to 3 p.m.) and in the evening at the Prentice High School (8 to 10 p.m.). The first class will be on Thursday, October 6th, with the following classes on November 3rd, 10th, 17th, and December 1st. The classes will cover soil sampling and testing for nutrient management planning, updating farm conservation plans and farm maps, estimating annual livestock manure quantities, documenting and planning crop rotations, identifying fields with manure spreading restrictions,



analyzing soil test reports, and calculating nutrient credits for livestock manure and legumes. The information we cover will enable class participants to write a nutrient management plan according to NRCS Standard 590.

These classes are sponsored by the Price and Taylor County UW-Extension Offices and the Taylor County Land Conservation Department. Registration for these classes is due no later than Tuesday, October 4th, and the fee is \$40 per farm (couples are invited to register together and share materials).

Instructors for the classes will be Steve Oberle, Taylor County Land Conservation Department, Mark Kopecky, Price County UW-Extension, and Maria Bendixen, Taylor County UW-Extension. Enrollment is limited and will be on a first-come, first-served basis. Registration forms for the classes are available from the Price County UW-Extension Office (339-2555), the Taylor County Land Conservation Department (748-1469), or the Taylor County UW-Extension Office (748-3327).

Is Fall Tillage Necessary?

With fuel prices soaring it may be time to think about how much fall tillage adds to profit margins. Will the cost of running the equipment be more than the benefit? The answer is, as most things in farming, not cut and dried. A big factor to consider is the crop you are following and what you are following it with.

If you choose not to till a field this fall, in the spring you can expect to have increased residue from the previous crop. This residue has some great benefits

including reduced erosion, improved water infiltration, and less water evaporation in dry



In a dry harvest season there should be less compaction from the harvest process.

years. The more passes you make on a field will reduce the effectiveness of this

residue. However, you can also expect increased soil compaction, and weed pressure with no fall tillage.

Soybean residue is more apt to breakdown well without fall

tillage than corn. So if you are interested in reducing fall tillage,

beans would be a good place to start.

Soil type should be a factor in your decision about fall tillage. If you have a poorly drained soil type it will warm slower in the spring.

More tillage will help this soil warm faster.

In a dry harvest season there should be less compaction from the harvest process, making spring tillage, with no fall work, much easier. In short there are a number of factors to consider, but in many cases fall tillage is not profitable with high equipment operation costs.

Calf Care in Cooler Temperatures

As we move into winter calves may need extra care. The key is to keep them warm and dry. Keeping them dry is absolutely essential. This includes having dry air, as moist air can carry respiratory diseases. Deep dry bedding is important for calves kept outside in the winter so they can insulate themselves.

Getting water to calves in the winter is a challenge but one that

is worth the effort. Increased water consumption will aid in rumen development and increase starter consumption.

Calves in cold weather have increased energy needs, so evaluate your milk replacers energy level. You may want to use a

milk replacer with a higher fat level. Also calves that are weaned during cold weather



should be eating 1.5 to 2 pounds of calf starter daily for at least 2 or 3 days before being weaned.

If calves are kept inside buildings make sure the building is properly ventilated. There should not be excessive moisture build up on the walls of the calf or heifer area.

Remember that any time you change calf care or feeding, the calves need to be closely monitored for any health problems.

Care for your Perennials

Gardeners are frequently disappointed when certain perennial flowers die over winter. Plants such as chrysanthemums, iris, and primrose will survive severe Wisconsin winters if you protect them properly.

Be sure to select winter hardy perennials. In Taylor County we are in zone 4, so most zone 5 plants will not survive. Avoid planting perennials in poorly drained locations where they are subject to root rot.

You can give most perennials good winter protection by placing a four to six inch layer of loose mulch materials like straw, marsh hay, compost, or pine needles over the plants late in the fall, after there is some frost in the ground. This mulch protects the "crowns" or growing points of the plants, and helps keep the soil frozen all winter. This mulch will break down over winter and will reduce the amount of mulching required in the spring.

Without mulch, the soil may thaw during warm winter weather. When it refreezes, the soil heaves. This alternate thawing and freezing damages many perennials, especially very shallow-rooted perennials. Some perennials, like chrysanthemums, can use even more protection. After mums flower and most of the leaves have browned from frost, mound soil to about eight inches around the base of the plants. Cut branches back to 10 inches above the soil line. Then, once the soil mound begins to freeze, cover it with a loose four to six inch layer of straw, marsh hay, compost, pine needles, or evergreen boughs. Do not use leaves, especially maple leaves. They mat down tightly, causing excess moisture problems.

Evergreen shrubs are susceptible to winter burn when summer and fall are too dry. Because they stay green all winter they need to store a good amount of moisture to combat the dry cold air. To prevent this, water evergreen shrubs and ground covers heavily before the first killing frost.

Following these precautions can help give you a beautiful spring landscape and help prevent plant losses from winter damage.



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