

Central Wisconsin Agricultural Extension Report



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Newsletter Design and Layout by: Tim Connell

Healthy Grown Brand Debut

By: Tim Connell

Inside this issue:

| | |
|---|---|
| Calculating Rental Rates | 2 |
| Good Housing Means Healthier Calves | 3 |
| Farm Computer Use Continues to Increase | 3 |
| Nutrient Management—The Final Round | 4 |
| Soybean Profitability Workshops | 4 |
| Corn Mold in Many Fields | 5 |
| Green Lake Hires New Ag Agent | 5 |
| What to Do With This Year's Calves | 6 |
| Upcoming Events | 7 |

The success of the collaboration between the Wisconsin Potato and Vegetable Growers Association, the World Wildlife Fund and the University of Wisconsin in adopting Bio-IPM practices has resulted in the development of a new brand name to use in marketing potatoes. The “Healthy Grown” brand focuses on marketing certified potatoes grown under stringent environmental standards. To maintain the credibility and integrity of this eco-label, a separate nonprofit corporation called “Protected Harvest” was formed. Protected Harvest is responsible for maintaining high standards and insuring the integrity of the certification process.

from other eco-label groups because of the transparency of the processes by which standards are developed, enforced and modified. Producers, scientists and environmentalists developed the standards cooperatively over a five-year period. To become certified, growers must undergo a rigorous audit by an independent third party on a field-by-field basis. Once audited, Protected Harvest will certify or deny fields to be sold under the Healthy Grown Label.

The World Wildlife panda bear logo is included on bags of Protected Harvest certified Wisconsin potatoes to testify to their stringent environmental and production standards.

Protected Harvest is different

The Central Wisconsin Agricultural Specialization Team

Tim Connell
Vegetable Production

Donald Genrich
Agronomy Specialist

Keith VanderVelde
Animal Production

Dennis Dornfeld
Farm Business
Management Specialist

Tod Planer
Horticulture Crops, Farm
Transfers and Agreements

Craig Saxe
Forage and Dairy
Management

Dan Schreiner (Jan. 15, 2002)
Large Dairy Production

Calculating Rental Rates

By: Tod Planer

Every year about this time, we begin to look ahead to the cold and snow that is not all that far away. Often we find need for extra housing for livestock or machinery and wonder just what should I pay for such building rents? Many times there are nearby buildings or structures that might be used to house equipment, grain or livestock. Knowing what is a fair rental value from the owner and the tenant standpoint goes a long ways to maintain good relationships with your neighbors. In most cases, these available facilities are going un-used and actually have little value to the owner unless someone finds a need to use them. With some buildings, it often is better for the life of the barn to house livestock in them over winter to maintain the building's integrity. Many structures deteriorate rapidly once livestock are removed from them. Also, in many instances, these structures are fully depreciated and have little value other than the costs of removal or the higher replacement costs as an alternative.

While we can calculate a new building's cost, it is often more difficult to determine what an obsolete building should be worth. Many times the owner feels the structure is worth far more than a prospective tenant is willing to pay.

Many times existing buildings with many years of good life left in them can be priced on their original building costs. Take a machine shed for instance that cost \$5.00 a square foot to build 15-20 years ago. While it is at the point of full depreciation, that \$5.00 cost over 20 years amounts to something like 25 cents per square foot, a value that is quite acceptable from a rental point today. If the structure were a 40X60 or 2400 square feet, it would have a potential rental value of \$600 per year or roughly \$50 per month. Other buildings of similar age and value can have their rental values determined in the same manner. Take the original value per square foot, divide by 20 (years of life of the building) for an annual value, or divide again by 12 for a monthly value.

Older structures such as the many unused dairy barns that dot the countryside might be somewhat more difficult to have a value determined on them. You might want to charge by the head of livestock housed in them, and also consider any labor and electrical energy that you supply. Heifer housing can

run as cheap as \$1.00 per head per month, to as much as \$4-5.00 per head per month, depending on your labor, feed and management inputs provided to the tenant. Often times however, the rent will not begin to approach the taxes or insurance values on some of these older structures, and likely should not be looked upon to do that? While the rent may help toward those costs, the tenant likely can't pay the amount you would need to cover them, and still consider it a profitable venture for him. Remember, if you exceed the cost of new construction with your rent request, the tenant might be further ahead to build rather than rent.

Grain storage is another area that rental values are requested on. Most cases you need to consider somewhere around 1.5 to 3 cents per bushel per month for storage use and likely will be required to rent for a minimum of 6 months or more.

Silo storage is in demand again this fall with all the unripe corn that we were left with. Typically, a silo based on new costs is worth around \$1.50 to \$2.00 per ton of storage capacity. If there is an unloader in the silo, add \$1.00 per ton as well. I would suggest that silo rental be for a period of 6 months or so to insure that the corn silage is out in time for next spring's hay crops. Use a silo capacity chart covering the feedstuff contained, to determine the total storage capacity.

Your local extension agent can share with you the potential rental rates that are being charged in your area. I further encourage you to use a written agreement on buildings and structures when ever possible, to limit disagreements that may arise in the future. If you have need for determining a rental rate on a building or similar structure, contact your UWEX agent for assistance and a copy of a suitable rental agreement form.

Good Housing Means Healthier Calves

By: Craig Saxe

You can put replacement calves in drafty, cramped and dirty facilities, but you probably won't raise healthy, productive replacement stock. Although many old buildings can be renovated for suitable calf housing some dairymen make the mistake of sticking calves in any available space. While calves are "sheltered," death losses can reach a staggering level.

Housing can substantially cut calf losses and disease problems. Dairymen have several options when renovating old buildings or planning for new facilities. Allow plenty of time to study options, visit other operations and plan. Don't make spur-of-the-moment decisions, a change in the way you raise young calves may make necessary changes in the way older calves and replacement heifers are raised.

All housing should be clean, dry, draft-free and conveniently located and arranged. Calves can be raised in cold or warm environments. Warm housing requires insulation, heat and a fan-powered ventilation system. Cold housing can be naturally ventilated, which can cut construction costs and energy

consumption. A cold environment also inhibits the growth of disease organisms, although some dairymen prefer working in a warm environment.

Group replacement livestock according to age and size. House unweaned calves, less than two months old, in individual pens, stalls or hutches so they can't contact each other. The natural instinct of young calves is to continue sucking for about 30 minutes after feeding. This can transmit diseases, including mastitis, which appear when heifers freshen.

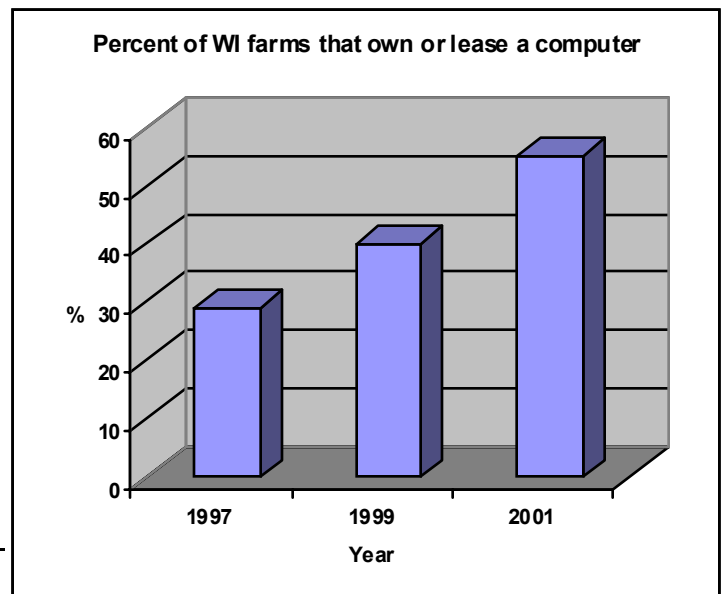
Raise calves three or four months old in groups containing no more than 5-7 calves. Calves should be about the same age and size to reduce competition for food. Calves older than four months can be housed in larger groups as long as they are about the same size. Animals in these groups should not differ in age by more than three or four months.

The investment in good replacement animal housing does pay off, even though the return on the investment may not be as obvious as money spent on the milking herd.

Farm Computer Use Continues to Increase

Fifty-five percent of Wisconsin farmers now own or lease a computer according to a recent report from the National Agriculture Statistics Service. This is slightly higher than the National average of 50 percent and up from only 29 percent when the same survey was taken in 1997. States with the highest number of farms with computers leased or owned include Idaho (74%), Oregon (73%), and Montana (67%).

Thirty-one percent of Wisconsin farmers now say they use their computer for the farm business and 46 percent have internet access. The number of farm computers with internet access in 1997 was only 9 percent.



Nutrient Management—The Final Round

By: Donald Genrich

The manner and procedure in which the Federal and State government are going to regulate agricultural nutrient use are close to completion. At the state level this process started in 1997 and the agricultural community has referred to the new regulations as the non-point source pollution rules. At the federal level, what we know as the 590 Nutrient Management rules have been rewritten into what is now called Comprehensive Nutrient Management.

Both the State of Wisconsin and the Federal NRCS plan on having the new rules adopted in early 2002 with implementation to start in the 2003 crop year.

I suspect that many farmers have been kind of hoping that this whole issue would go away. The reality is that is not going to happen. The final rules and implementation dates are not yet law, but we are very close to the end of this process, within months.

There are just too many water quality concerns and issues for this topic to fade away. All of agriculture, not just the livestock farmer will soon be dealing with nutrient management. Here's why.

- Approximately 10 percent of Wisconsin wells exceed the nitrate drinking water standard of 10 parts per million. In some areas, it

is 65 percent of the wells. Computer models suggest the nitrate levels in the groundwater of the Central Sands area may reach 35 parts per million.

- Excessive phosphorus in surface waters degrades water quality. Algal blooms and excessive weed growth in lakes and rivers result. Nutrients from the Mississippi River have created a "hypoxic" or oxygen poor zone in the Gulf of Mexico. Many people think excessive applications of agricultural nutrients are the problem.
- The state average phosphorus soil test value has increased consistently over time and is now at 52 parts per million. This value is considered excessively high.

You need to understand this issue and the impact the changing regulations will have on your farm. Over the next year, the UW Extension Service will be offering education and training on Nutrient Management. You can even learn how to write your own plan if you want. Be proactive; participate in this training when it is offered in your area. It makes economic sense for your farm and environmental sense for our whole country.

Soybean Profitability Workshops

In December, UW-Extension and the Wisconsin Soybean Association will be sponsoring Soybean Profitability Workshops throughout the State. These workshops will provide an efficient method to calculate your cost of production and set market target prices. Using the Farm Schedule F in combination with a method of adjustment from established enterprise budgets, producers will calculate their basic costs of producing soybeans and other crops in their rotation. In addition, the workshops will also feature:

- 2001 WI Soybean Variety Results
- Soybean Management Update
- Soybean Sponsor Exhibits
- WI Soybean Association Member Benefits

Location and Dates:

Monday December 10 – Wisconsin Dells –
Adams County—608-339-4237
Wednesday December 12 – Janesville –
Rock County—608-757-5696
Friday December 14 – Clintonville –
Shawano County—715-526-6136
Monday December 17 – Ripon –
Fond Du Lac County—920-929-3170
Wednesday December 19 – Eau Claire –
Eau Claire County—715-839-4712

To Register for the workshops contact the host County Extension Office

Corn Mold Showing in Many Fields

By: Dennis Dornfeld

Central Wisconsin farmers are finding various colored molds in their cornfields this fall. As the harvest is progressing, more molds are being found. Moldy corn in the field is always a reason for concern as it can pose a threat to livestock resulting in problems such as gastroenteritis, abortion, reduced feed consumption, diarrhea, and overall poor performance. Death, when it does occur, often presents no clear-cut clues as to cause.

Mold color on the ears is important to note. The black molds are seldom a serious problem to livestock but may result in substantial spoilage and losses when stored in the crib. *Cladosporium* is usually responsible for the black molds

Blue and green molds can cause problems when fed to livestock. These are either *Penicillium* or *Aspergillus* molds that produce mycotoxins. Corn with these molds should not be fed to livestock or should at least be diluted substantially with good corn in the feed ration. Corn infected with these molds should definitely not be fed to horses, sheep and hogs, as these livestock appear most sensitive to the mycotoxins produced.

Pink to white molds are also a threat to livestock. And generally represent the presence of *Gibberella* molds. These molds usually begin at the ear tip and the kernels appear shrunken. The ear itself gives the appearance of corn that did not reach physiological maturity and will often yield lower bushel weights. Here again, horses, sheep and hogs seem most susceptible to mycotoxin injury.

Molds invade corn when there's been a challenging growing season in some fashion that could result resulting in late planted crops, excessive moisture or growth interference by drought or early frost. Many times corn affected in these ways fails to reach physiological maturity also resulting in low bushel weights and chaffy kernels. This year has presented more than one of the conditions suggested above. So it doesn't come as a huge surprise to be finding molding ears.

Horses, hogs and sheep seem most susceptible to mold injury. That's not to say cattle are totally unaffected. Many of the molds could result in feed refusal, bleeding difficulty and poor production. Care is strongly recommended when corn is infected with

Gibberella, *Fusarium*, *Penicillium*, and *Aspergillus*.

Leaving corn stand longer only increases the mycotoxin content and intensifies the problems. Drying, ensiling and acid treatment are the only ways to halt mold activity. But even after mold growth has stopped, the mycotoxins are still present so feeding cautions must still be implemented. The recommended method is to mix about 20% molded corn with 80% good grain. Feed this preparation to a few selected animals for two to three weeks to determine if any symptoms or reactions occur. If there are no problems with the feeding trial, it should be safe to feed. However, keep in mind that moldy corn may not have the nutrient value good corn has. It's probably wise to supplement the ration to allow for the lower quality molded corn.

For more detailed information regarding molding corn, contact Dennis Dornfeld, Waushara UWEX Ag Agent, at (920) 787-0416

New Agriculture Agent in Green Lake County

After nearly a year without an Agriculture Agent, Green Lake has hired Dan Schreiner to fill that position. Dan will graduate in December from UW-Madison with a M.S. in Dairy Science and will start in Green Lake on January 15. Dan will also bring the Central Wisconsin Agricultural Specialization Team up to full strength with his expertise in Dairy Science. More on Dan in the next CWAS newsletter.

What to Do With This Years Calves

By: Keith VanderVelde

Writing this article in August would have been an easy project with 500 lb steers being contracted for \$110/cwt. At that time it looked like the best thing to do was to sell the calves as feeders. However, since the price decline in September we have seen \$15-20 come off the price of calves. Most of this decline is the result of the buildup of feedlot cattle due to heavy April placements and the September 11 terrorist events in New York and Washington, which disrupted the restaurant trade.

Since we have seen the downward trend in the fed market the last few week's cow-calf producers are also being impacted due to lower bids on calves. The lower markets have forced the cow-calf man to evaluate all of his marketing options. One viable option might be to retain ownership and take the calves directly into the feed yard. I have attached a summary sheet that analyzes this option. These options are conservative and you as a cow-calf producer are encouraged to insert prices based on your local situation. Certainly keeping feed cost down and reducing death loss will increase returns.

If you feel that retaining of ownership is the best option and want to share the risk several feedlots are willing to share in part of the ownership. This would give you some upfront cash and spread the risk between both the cow-calf producers and the feedlot. Your banker will probably find this option easy to approve. If you are retaining ownership of your calves it may be good to lock in prices of feed for the calves during the feeding period.

Retained ownership does point out the need for good calves that will perform well and stay alive during the feeding period. Certainly that bull or semen you used in 2000 will play a big role in determining the rate of gain for calves placed on feed. Do not forget the importance of color since we see black hided fed cattle selling for \$2-3 more per cwt. Certainly the ability of the calves to grade choice has to be a major influencing factor for marketing. This past year we saw the spread between Select and Choice range

from \$10-18 per cwt. These are huge differences. On a 1200-pound steer with a 720-pound carcass the impact could range from \$72-130 per head. Make sure your calves are being sold in a manor that best represents the type of cattle you have on feed. There are markets for lean heavily muscled cattle as well as markets for high marbling breeds.

| | |
|------------------------|--------------|
| Cost per cwt delivered | \$100.00 |
| Pay Weight In | 550 |
| Equity | 20% |
| Interest Rate | 7.5% |
| Date In | Oct 15, 2001 |
| Selling Weight | 1200 |
| Selling Date | May 15, 2002 |

Performance:

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Ration Cost per ton | \$136.00 |
| Vet and Med(\$/head) | \$10.00 |
| Yardage per head per day | \$ 0.06 |
| Death Loss | 3% |
| Average Daily Gain | 3.0 |
| Feed Conversion | 6.2 |
| Total Gain | 650 pounds |
| Days on feed | 217 |

Per Head Charges:

| | |
|---------------------|----------|
| Calf purchase price | \$550.00 |
| Yardage | \$ 13.00 |
| Feed Cost | \$270.00 |
| Vet and Med | \$ 10.00 |
| Death Loss | \$ 25.30 |
| Interest | \$ 27.54 |

Total Cost per Head \$895.66

| | |
|--------------------------------|----------------|
| Breakeven | \$74.64 |
| Cost of Gain with interest | \$53.18 |
| June Live Cattle Futures | \$70.50 |
| Average Basis | \$ 2.00 |
| Profit or Loss per Head | \$25.68 |

Visit the Central Wisconsin Agricultural Specialization Team on the Web

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cwas/>

Upcoming Events

October 2001

The annual DNR Tree & Shrub Order form is now available. Contact your local DNR office for more information. In Juneau County call 608-847-9394. In Adams County call 608-339-3386.

November 2001

1 Fresh Market Vegetable Grower Field Day at the Wisconsin Territories Farm Market, Hwy 66 Rosholt, 9:00 a.m. to 2:15 p.m. Presented by Wisconsin Fresh Market Vegetable Growers Association and UW-Extension.

1-3 7th Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium, Eau Claire Holiday Inn Convention Center. For more information call 715-635-3735.

2 Wisconsin Farm Health Summit, Howard Johnson Plaza Hotel, Madison 8:30 a.m. to 4:15 p.m. For more information contact Jane Thomas at 608-267-3837.

7 Area Pest Management Update Meeting, Riveredge Golf Course, Marshfield WI. 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. For more information contact Tod Planer at 715-421-8440.

9-10 Annual Small Acreage Options Conference, Baraboo. Conference runs from 1:30 p.m. on Friday through 4:00 p.m. on Saturday. For more information contact Paul Dietmann at 608-355-3250.

13-14 Midwest Dairy Herd Health Conference, Ramada Inn Conference Center, Eau Claire WI.

30 Fertilizer Dealer and Soil & Water Management Meeting, Marshfield Agricultural Research Station, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. For more information contact Tod Planer at 715-421-8440.

December 2001

10 Soybean Profitability Workshop, Wisconsin Dells, Kalahari Convention Center, 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. For more information contact Adams County Extension at 608-339-4237.

January 2002

9 Dairy Price Risk Management Workshop in Berlin. This is the first of a three part series running January 9, 16 and 23. For more information contact Dennis Dornfeld at 920-787-0425.

11 Dairy Price Risk Management Workshop in Westfield. This is the first of a three part series running January 11, 18 and 25. For more information contact Dennis Dornfeld at 920-787-0425.

15-17 2002 Wisconsin Fertilizer, Aglime and Pest Management Conference, Alliant Energy Center, Madison.

21-22 Wisconsin Forage Council Symposium at the Paper Valley Hotel in Appleton.

February 2002

3-5 Wisconsin Grazing Conference at the Holiday Inn in Stevens Point.

5 Dairy Price Risk Management Workshop in Marshfield. This is the first of a three part series running February 5, 12 and 19. For more information contact Dennis Dornfeld at 920-787-0425.

5-6 Wisconsin Corn/Soy Expo, Alliant Energy Center, Madison, For more information contact the Wisconsin Soybean Association, 608-274-7522.

8 Dairy Price Risk Management Workshop in Mauston. This is the first of a three part series running February 8, 15 and 22. For more information contact Dennis Dornfeld at 920-787-0425.

12-14 Wisconsin Potato Growers Annual Meeting in Stevens Point. For more information contact the Portage County UW-Extension Office at 715-346-1316.

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How to Contact Team Members

Tod Planer**Wood County**

Courthouse, 400 Market St.
PO Box 8095
Wisconsin Rapids, WI 54495-8095
(715)421-8440
Fax: (715)421-8476

Dan Schreiner**Starting Jan. 15, 2002****Green Lake County**

492 Hill St., Courthouse
Box 3188
Green Lake, WI 54941
(920)294-4032
Fax: (920)294-4176

Donald Genrich**Adams County**

Box 489, 149 N Main St
Adams, WI 53910
608-339-4237
Fax (608)339-4266

Tim Connell**Portage County**

Courthouse Annex Bldg.
1462 Strongs Ave.
Stevens Point, WI 54481
(715)346-1316
Fax: (715)343-6226

Dennis Dornfeld**Waushara County**

Courthouse, 209 S. St. Marie
Wautoma, WI 54982-2087
(920)787-0416
Fax: (920)787-0425

Keith VanderVelde**Marquette County**

480 Underwood Avenue
PO Box 338
Montello, WI 53936
(608)297-9153

Craig Saxe**Juneau County**

211 Hickory St.
Mauston, WI 53948-1386
(608) 847-9329
Fax: (608)847-9332



Portage County UW-Extension
Courthouse Annex Building
1462 Strongs Ave
Stevens Point, WI 54481

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