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September - October 2007

A newsletter of:
UW
Extension

THE
CHAMBER
WAUSAU REGION
Partnership for Progressive Agriculture

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SEPTEMBER

September 5 - Manure Spill Response Demonstration

Lanlade County, Wednesday, September 5 from 12:30 to 2:30 pm at Maly Farms, Inc., W7892 County Road O, Bryant. The event is open to the public and there is no registration fee. If you have questions or need more information please contact Marie Graupner at (715) 627-6292.

September 17 - The Marathon 2007 Holstein Sale

Athens Fairgrounds, sponsored by the Marathon County Holstein Breeders Association. Sale starts at 11:30 a.m.

September 18 - 20 - Wisconsin Farm Technology Days

this year's host site in Green County is Plain View Stock Farm in Albany, Wisconsin. Visit www.wifarmtechnologydays.com.

OCTOBER

October 2-6 - 2007 World Dairy Expo, Madison

World Dairy Expo takes place at the Alliant Energy Center of Dane County in Madison, Wisconsin. Daily entrance fee is \$7 per person which includes parking. www.worlddairyexpo.com

October 23 - 7:30 p.m. Nutrient Management Roundtable

See article for details. Stratford, 7:30 - 9:30 a.m.

October 24 - Nutrient Management Roundtable

See article for details. Wausau 1:00 - 3:00 p.m.

Rural Youth Loans Are Available

The Farm Service Agency's Rural Youth Loan Program is available for students between the ages of 10 and 20. The Rural Youth Loan Program funds many kinds of income-producing projects such as livestock and crop production, lawn and garden services, repair shops, and roadside produce stands. Individuals may be eligible for a Rural Youth Loan for up to \$5,000 to establish and operate their own income-producing project in connection with participation in FFA, 4-H or similar organizations. Youth Loans may be used to buy livestock, equipment, and supplies; buy, rent, or repair needed tools and equipment; or pay operating expenses. You can learn more about Rural Youth Loans by visiting the USDA/Farm Service Agency Office at 326 River Drive in Wausau, or by calling Farm Loan Officer Denise Severt at (715) 848-2330 ext 115.

A Closer Look at Nutrient Management and Qualified Nutrient Management Plans

The idea of soil and crop fertility management is not new to farmers. Most farm operations have some type of fertilizer program in place. However, what may be new is the name given to these fertilizer programs (Nutrient Management), and the documents that support and back up these fertilizer programs (qualified Nutrient Management Plans). This article will provide a closer look at the "new" idea of Nutrient Management and qualified Nutrient Management Plans.

At the basic level, nutrient management is an accounting of nutrient needs of a crop and balancing of various sources of nutrients (soil, manure, legumes, commercial fertilizer, etc) used to meet these needs. A qualified Nutrient Management Plan is the document in which the accounting and balancing is detailed and tracked for farm operations. Like balancing a checkbook, this accounting ensures that nutrients aren't over or under applied. This maximizes production and profits, and reduces the risk of nutrients negatively impacting the environment.

How is this different from existing fertilizer programs? The biggest difference is that proven, standardized methods are required and used to do the accounting and balancing, and the product that results meets an established and accepted standard for quality...a qualified Nutrient Management Plan. As a result, the fertilizer programs of different farm operations will be on a "level playing field". Because many variables in farm operations, such as weather, cropping systems, soil fertility levels and livestock numbers change over time, qualified Nutrient Management Plans require annual updating.

So, what is the importance of having and implementing a qualified Nutrient Management Plan? The reasons are many. Most importantly, it is a tool that can help a farm operation make sound management decisions. These decisions can help maximize production and profit. But they also can help reduce the risk of nutrients negatively impacting the environment, and may provide some protection should a pollution event occur. The recommendations in a qualified nutrient management plan are considered accepted best-management practices. As such, if it can be documented that the plan is being followed, farm operations will be able to better justify their management decisions.

Another important reason for implementing NMP is that Wisconsin law requires all farms applying nutrients have and implement a qualified Nutrient Management Plan by January 1, 2008. County ordinance also requires qualified Nutrient Management Plans for construction and management of manure storage facilities; and many government farm programs require a qualified Nutrient Management plan to be eligible for participation.

That leaves the question of who can develop a qualified Nutrient Management Plan (qNMP). A qNMP may be developed by a certified professional; or, farm operations may develop their own qNMP if they complete a DATCP-approved training course and the qNMP they develop meets the standard for quality (NRCS Standard 590). Which is better, developing one's own qNMP or working with a certified professional? That's up to the farm operation, but the best plan is one that can be easily understood and can be implemented.

Nutrient Management Roundtables Kick Off 2007 Producer Training

Two public roundtable sessions on current nutrient management regulations, related environmental issues, and producer compliance are set for late October. The first location will be at the Country Aire Restaurant, Stratford from 7:30-9:30 p.m., Tuesday, October 23. The second location is at Northcentral Technical College in Wausau from 1:00-3:00 p.m. on Wednesday, October 24. Program administrators from state and county offices will be on hand to give an overview of the regulations and their perspective on compliance. There will also be an overview of nutrient management training for Marathon County producers. Producers interested in going through the Nutrient Management training must attend one of

the informational sessions and register for a class but you do not have to be taking the class to attend this informational session. Classes will be held in Athens, Spencer, and Wausau. The cost of the program is \$125 and includes plan development using either SNAP-Plus computer software or a manual option. Participants receive...

- 1) a qualified plan that meets state requirements, and
- 2) information on cost-share opportunities that are available

For a registration brochure and other details, call Scott Mickelsen, Northcentral Technical College at (715) 675-3331 x-4373 or Mike Wildeck, Marathon County UW-Extension at (715) 261-1239.



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Dairyland State Academy Report

The Dairyland State Academy (DSA) project has made great strides towards becoming a reality. The first major step in creating an accredited dairy science program occurred when Northcentral Technical College received state approval to develop a 2-year associate degree program. NTC is working with University of Wisconsin-Marathon County and UW-River Falls to design the curriculum. Generous contributions have allowed the DSA board to reach the goal of raising \$260,000 to support the phase II portion of DSA. This money covers the costs of design work, project management and marketing and strategic planning.

The DSA Board hired The Samuels Group to do initial design work for the Dairyland State Academy facility, provide a detailed cost estimate, and create an artist rendering of the facility. The challenge to The Samuels Group was to design an industry realistic dairy farm that will serve in an educational capacity. Members of the DSA board and The Samuels Group continue to work at finding the best balance between cost-effectiveness and functionality.

The farm is being designed to model both a grazing production system and a freestall confinement production system. It will be used daily in the educational program. A 2005 survey of local students interested in agriculture revealed that students learned in best hands-on situations and preferred to learn in a hands-on situation. The dairy education program at Northeast Iowa Community College grew to 80 students with the addition of a modern teaching herd similar to the one proposed here. Technical college programs in Wisconsin for dairy technicians that rely primarily on quality classroom instruction supplemented with trips to farms and internships had fewer graduates last year. Meanwhile, a two-year college in Iowa attracted almost 800 agriculture students using well-developed hands-on facilities and quality educational programs.

The Dairyland State Academy will be unique in Wisconsin providing tremendous educational opportunities for young people and existing producers alike. This fall, the Dairyland State Academy will begin a fundraising campaign for the dairy teaching herd and farm. DSA will be community learning facility that will keep the dairy industry in Central Wisconsin vibrant and growing. For more information on how to become involved in the Dairyland State Academy project contact Scott Mickelson, at (715) 675-3331 ext. 4373.

Wisconsin Ginseng and Shade Tax

The Dept of Ag Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) recently sought public input on the Wisconsin Ginseng and Shade tax. Hearings were held because of the Ginseng Board of Wisconsin (GBW) requesting a change to their market order (ATCP 140) or Ginseng Law. GBW is requesting that the current practice of collecting market order assessments based on root and seed sales be eliminated and be replaced with an assessment approach based on acreage of cultivated ginseng under artificial shade.

Market order assessments collected are used to do positive things for the ginseng industry. GBW uses the income to open new market channels, promote the purchase and use of Wisconsin grown American Ginseng, support plant pathological research and participates in medical research projects aimed at identifying the benefits of consuming our ginseng.

The practice of basing assessments on sales of product was a good idea in the 1980s, but loopholes have allowed some to avoid paying assessments. More than 30% (estimated) of assessments are going uncollected. This adversely affects the positive things GBW does for the industry. It is unfair to those who are complying with the law. It is the GBW's opinion that changing the process to base assessments on acreage covered by artificial shade (i.e. fabric or wood) will restore equality to the program.

The initial per acre rate would be \$75 annually. As an example, a garden harvested at 3 years of age would cost the grower \$225 in assessment. Now, if the grower generated an average yield of 1500 #'s per acre, the assessment at \$.20/# of harvested root, would be \$300.

The current practice is broken and needs to be fixed. Later this year, DATCP will send out ballots to ginseng growers on the decision to grant the change in market order assessments. For more information on the Wisconsin Ginseng and Shade Tax, contact Butch Weege, (715) 693-6474 or bweege@ginseng-board.com.

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Marathon County UW-Extension office
(715) 261-1230 • marathon.uwex.edu

The Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce, PPA
(715) 845-6231 • www.wausauchamber.com

UW-Extension sponsored programs insure equal access. Please make requests for reasonable accommodations as soon as possible prior to the scheduled program. If you need instructional materials in another format please contact the program coordinator. UW-Extension provides equal opportunity in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA requirements.



Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers Available in Wausau This November

The Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers is a great place to start the process of owning and operating a grass-based dairy or livestock farm. The school is part of the UW-Madison - Farm and Industry Short Course since 1995, one third of its approximately 200 graduates have gone on to start their own farms. Follow-up surveys indicate that those students who haven't started their own businesses have gone on to successful careers in dairying, managed grazing, and other farm related industries.

In November of 2006 the Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers expanded to the University of Wisconsin-Marathon County campus in Wausau. The courses were taught by local grazing specialists, local graduates of the school and a virtual classroom that connected the students in Wausau with the classroom in Madison. Students had access to the same high quality experience as those attending the course in Madison. Each student developed an outline of their first business plan. One student even enrolled in the Farm and Industry Short Course to earn credits toward a Short Course degree; credits that can be transferred towards a degree at the UW-Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences.

Trends in Farm and Forest Land Values

Media attention has been directed towards the sliding housing market and the increasing pressure felt by mortgage companies. Little attention, however, has been given to our working lands in Central Wisconsin.

The 2006 Agricultural Land Sales Report, released by the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service found "rapid growth of land values calmed somewhat in 2006" indicated by the combination of fewer acres being sold and the rate of increase declining slightly.

While that may have been the case when looking at statewide average it wasn't the case locally. Open farmland prices in the state rose about 3% between 2005 and 2006, from \$3283 to \$3366 per acre. However, Lincoln, Langlade and Marathon Counties experienced an increase from \$1458 to \$1782 per acre; a 22% rise in the prices paid for farmland continuing on in agriculture. This increase is associated with very little difference in the sales volume. Local forest land sales also ran slightly counter to the State of Wisconsin. While the state saw a 7% increase in the prices paid for forest land, from \$2254 to \$2415

Chamber comes to defense of dairy operation

For those who have not heard, the Van Der Geest's have installed a manure drier at their facility. The project was done with the full knowledge of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR). "The DNR were the first people we talked to after making the decision to build the manure drier," said Mary Kay Van Der Geest, President of Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle, Inc. "Our aim has been, and remains, to protect the environment and do things that are environmentally friendly. The manure drier accomplishes this by reducing truck traffic and lessens our dependency on fossil fuels, makes a wonderful bedding product for the cows and eliminates the need to purchase bedding material." At the time of installation, the DNR believed that no air permit was required. However, the DNR reversed this belief after further investigation and a better understanding of air permit needs as applied to dairy farm technology.

The Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce acted on this issue to support the efforts of Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle, Inc. In a statement issued on behalf of the chamber, the Business Advocacy Committee stated, "Agribusiness is important to the economy of the region. We applaud their efforts to address this issue and work towards a resolution that is fair and equitable. It is important that we support our members, especially when they have done the right thing (working with the DNR) from the beginning."

NEW from UW-Extension Publications

Direct Marketing in Wisconsin--

- ♦ Are Farmers' Markets a Good Fit for Your Business? (A3811-20)
- ♦ Meeting the Challenges of Direct Marketing (A3811-21)
- ♦ Employing Farm Workers (A3811-22)

Direct marketing is a good business option for many producers, but there are important things to consider before deciding whether it's right for you. Get answers to your questions from these and other publications in the Emerging Agricultural Market Team's excellent series on Direct Marketing in Wisconsin: <http://learningstore.uwex.edu/Direct-Marketing-C12.aspx>. To order and to view more UW-Extension publications, visit <http://learningstore.uwex.edu>. Or, if you don't currently have internet access, call or visit Marathon County UW-Extension (715) 261-1239 for a copy.

Students of the program agree that the most beneficial aspect to the courses is the opportunity to meet others who possess a passion for agriculture and farming.

The Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers will begin the 2007-08 school year on Thursday, November 15. The 16 week course will meet each Thursday from 11:00 AM until 1:15 PM (except for holiday breaks and field trips) and finish on March 27, 2008. The curriculum covers a variety of topics from farm selection, design and remodeling to animal and grass management to business planning and arrangements. Tuition and fees for the course range from a \$240 base fee to \$700 depending on how many credits a student earns.

The deadline for applications is November 1, 2007. Space is limited, so prompt applications are encouraged. For more information about the course, potential scholarships or to get an application contact Tom Cadwallader at (715) 536-0304 or (715) 261-1240. You can also learn more about the School and its history by checking out their website at <http://www.cias.wisc.edu/dairysch.html>.

per acre, the tri-county area actually saw a 2.6% decline, from \$2028 to \$1976; the first decline since 1989. The state and local data did agree in the number of forest land transactions; with both dropping by 15% between 2005 and 2006.

These are averages and like anything in real estate its location, location, location! For instance, the price per acre in the Town of Johnson is considerably different than the Town of Stettin.

If you would like a copy of the report that summarizes the annual farm and forest land sales data for Lincoln, Langlade and Marathon Counties since 1989 you can either download it from the Marathon County website at <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/cty/marathon/ag/documents/2006AgLandSalesRPT.pdf> or contact Tom Cadwallader at (715) 536-0304 or (715) 261-1240. The annual statewide Agricultural Land Sales Report can be found at the Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service website at http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/Wisconsin/Publications/Land_Sales/index.asp.

In its support of Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle, Inc., the following items are emphasized:

- The Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce supports granting an air permit for the Van Der Geest Dairy
- The manure drier has saved significant cost, enabling the agribusiness to remain competitive in a very competitive market
- The manure drier has benefited the surrounding area by
 - reducing the amount of truck traffic on local roads
 - creating a product that will enable the dairy to become more self-sufficient in its operations
 - further reduce dependency on fossil fuels to generate heat for the drier's furnace
- The Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce applauds Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle, Inc., and all businesses that use modern technology to improve business while being proactive in the areas of protecting the environment.

Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle, Inc. has performed the emission tests under the supervision of the DNR which met acceptable levels. The agribusiness will continue to monitor emission levels in order to ensure that the manure drying process remains environmentally friendly. As a result, The Wausau Region Chamber of Commerce, along with Van Der Geest Dairy Cattle, Inc. encourages approval of the air permit request by the DNR. Ms. Van Der Geest will learn of the DNR's decision in 30-60 days.

Extension Newsletter Focused On Dairy Farm Workforce

Extension staff in Eastern Wisconsin have partnered with dairy businesses to create a bi-monthly newsletter tailored to the needs of today's diverse workforce. Dairy Partner/El Companero is published in both English and Spanish. The 4-page, color newsletter features lots of pictures and illustrations to cross language barriers and help communicate key points. Topics in the July/August issue include milking parlor procedure, passive transfer of antibodies for young animals, and bunker safety. Copies are distributed to selected dairies throughout Wisconsin and are available to anyone that's interested via the internet. You'll find the latest issues at <http://fondulac.uwex.edu/ag/dairy.html>.