



# Updates from the Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center

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Mark your calendars for Saturday, July 25th for the UPREC Field Day highlighting research at both the North and South Farm sites!



Please follow us on Facebook to receive daily updates of Farm activity – [www.facebook.com/MSU.UPREC](http://www.facebook.com/MSU.UPREC)



## Coordinator Comments

It is definitely feeling and looking like spring out there! Hopefully that means planting will soon begin as well. As tractors and other equipment come out from winter storage, make sure to keep farm safety in mind—in the field, farm yard or on the road! On average, 100 youth die each year in the U.S. in farm-related accidents, so please keep a special eye on our future farmers!

The 2015 research season is yet again promising to be a busy one, between continuance of variety trials, the soil health research that is already underway, and inclusion of a few more crops in trials. We appreciate your ongoing support and input you've provided on these projects to ensure our work is relevant to you in the U.P. You'll find descriptions of each of these projects on the next page.

If you want to check out the various research and outreach efforts ongoing throughout the farm, make sure to attend the UPREC Field Day, which will be held Saturday, July 25th. More details can be found in this newsletter.

Finally, I wish you a happy, healthy and prosperous growing season!

Happy Planting,

*Ashley McFarland*

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*Calving started early on the farm this year! Although our target due date was May 5th for most of the 95 cows set to calve at the farm this year, over 30 calves have hit the ground before the end of April! Even though a few had to endure a few inches of new snow, everyone is happy and healthy!*

# 2015 Agronomy Research Plan

## ***U.P. Soil Health Trial***

Work will continue in 2015 on the 64 acre U.P. Systems trial that was established last year on the farm. This work seeks to understand the impacts of integrated crop and livestock rotations on soil health. Inputs and outputs to each farm system are measured to determine ecosystem benefits and on-farm productivity. We also plan to integrate potato production into the trial this year as a high-valued crop on U.P. farms.



## ***On-farm Cover Crop Trial***

As interest in cover crops and their abilities to support soil health grows in the Upper Peninsula, we're teaming up with the Steve Brock Dairy Farm to determine the yield response of corn silage to various cover crop treatments planted after this fall's harvest. We'll look at a wide range of cover crop options and mixes, including oil seed radish, rye, and others. Stay tuned for a field day at the test site this fall!



## ***Malting barley***

For the first time in recent history, a measurable amount of barley is being grown in the U.P. to produce high quality malt for the craft brewing industry. Malt barley pro-

duction faces many challenges in the U.P. and throughout Michigan, namely our moist climate. Ongoing variety trials will continue at UPREC and at other on-farm locations, along with research that will hopefully fine-tune our management practice recommendations. Primarily we will be looking at harvesting methods to address pre-harvest sprout. In addition, we'll test some theories on seeding rate for both yield and disease management.



## ***Hopyard demonstration site***

With tremendous growth in Michigan's craft beer sector and interest in sourcing locally grown raw materials, Michigan's hop industry has steadily developed over the past few years. Michigan is now the 4th leading producer of hops after Washington, Oregon, and Idaho with nearly 400 acres in production in 2014. In order to promote growth of this industry in the Upper Peninsula, a hopyard demonstration site will be established at the UPREC to support future research and outreach opportunities.



## ***Variety trials***

This year we'll be wrapping up some trials started in 2014, namely winter wheat, winter rye, and forage grasses. We'll also be continuing the alfalfa and corn variety trials

# The North Farm

## Welcome, Bean Pole Farm!

MSU would like to welcome Bean Pole Farm as our first enterprise to be working under our farm incubator model at the North Farm.

Landen and Dakota are the newest farmers in Chatham, operating under the name Bean Pole Farm. The farm was made possible through the farm incubator program at the North Farm and Michigan State University. They chose to enter into this apprenticeship program because of the location, the timing, and the desire to really dive into a career in sustainable agriculture. While Dakota's past farming experience is mainly limited to helping out in his father's summer vegetable garden, Landen has lived around agriculture her whole life. Growing up, she spent countless summer days on her grandparent's farm; as a teenager, she worked on a hybrid corn and soybean farm and during the summer while in college she worked on an organic vegetable farm. These experiences, along with a never-ending thirst for dirt under their fingernails, all contributed to the advent of Bean Pole Farm.

Landen and Dakota are both 2013 Northern Michigan University graduates, Dakota earning an Electrical Line Technician Certificate and Landen earning her B.S. in Environmental Studies and Sustainability. After graduation, the couple moved near Dakota's hometown in northcentral Wisconsin, where Dakota went on to earn two more certificates in welding. During that time, Landen began to study the art of permaculture and received her Permaculture Design Certificate last September. These teachings of sustainable life systems and closed-loop functions spurred a shift in the both of them, and a determined search to begin a career in sustainable agriculture commenced. When word got out of a new farm incubator opening in the Upper Peninsula, they knew it was time to bade Wisconsin farewell and begin their journey as small-scale organic vegetable farmers.

Bean Pole Farm, while now in its fledgling stages, has big plans for its future. Following the permaculture principles, the farm's main goals include becoming a fully self-sustaining closed-loop system, thriving off the natural inputs a working farm provides, while absorbing the outputs in a cyclic pattern. Beyond that, Landen and Dakota's dream is to provide a whole-diet food share, based on a CSA model and including every part of the human diet. Components will include grains, protein, vegetables, fruit, nuts, herbs and a form of sweetness. In addition to these goals, Landen and Dakota hope that one day Bean Pole Farm will be an educational farm, where the community can gather and learn about food, sustainable life systems and farming.

Landen, Dakota and Bean Pole Farm can be reached at [beanpolefarm@gmail.com](mailto:beanpolefarm@gmail.com) or on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/beanpolefarm](http://www.facebook.com/beanpolefarm).



## Extension Workshop Series

All workshops are held on-site at the North Farm and start at 2 pm EST. Contact Collin Thompson at 906-439-5059 or [thom1264@anr.msu.edu](mailto:thom1264@anr.msu.edu) with questions.

Registration can be accessed at:

[www.events.anr.msu.edu/NorthFarmWorkshops15/](http://www.events.anr.msu.edu/NorthFarmWorkshops15/)

### Low-Cost Season Extension Technologies and Techniques — May 16, 2.5 hours

Extending the season does not have to be cost prohibitive. Come learn about low-cost ways of gaining weeks in the spring and fall. We will discuss low tunnel and high tunnel technologies, row covers, and crop selection to make sure you can keep producing into the back side of the calendar.

### Scheduling and Production Planning — June 6, 3 hours

One of the most exciting and challenging parts of farming is production planning. This workshop will focus on planning your crop schedule to provide consistent supply to meet your market or family's demands. We will discuss variety selection, succession planting, crop rotations, and cover cropping.

### Additional Workshop dates July—October:

- ◆ Tools for the Small Farm — July 18th
- ◆ Post-harvest Handling — August 8th
- ◆ Cold Storage—September 26th
- ◆ Soil Health and Cover Crop Rotations—October 17th

[www.msunorthfarm.org](http://www.msunorthfarm.org)

*Please join us!*

## MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center Field Day

Saturday, July 25th

Tentative agenda:

- 8:30 am Check-in/registration at South Farm
- 9:00 am Load buses for North Farm
- 9:15 am North Farm Program  
Potential topics:
- Farm Incubator featuring Bean Pole Farm
  - Lessons learned from year one
  - Structural performance of hoophouses
  - Season extension technologies
- 11:15 am Load buses for South Farm
- 11:30 am Lunch—presentation featuring UPREC cattle update
- 12:30 pm Load wagons for South Farm Program
- 12:45 pm Systems Project Presentation
- Fencing and watering system
  - Methods to measure pasture productivity
  - Methods to measure soil productivity
- 1:45 pm Rainfall Simulator Presentation
- 2:30 pm Research Plot Presentation
- Malting barley variety trials
  - Forage variety trials
- 3:30 pm Field Day concludes



**MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center**

Main office located at E3774 University Drive, Chatham, MI 49816 – just off Highway 94 south of Chatham  
North Farm located on the Rock River Road north of Chatham since 1899  
906-439-5114 – <http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/centers/uprc>