



UP Ag Connections

725 Greenland Road, Ontonagon, MI 49953

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NEWS & VIEWS

By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

Over the past couple weeks I have had the opportunity to travel across the U.P. twice as the spring weather has sprung. The weather has been just about beautiful as temperatures have warmed and most areas have received some much needed rains. With the exception of some rained out plantings, I've heard very few weather complaints.

The warm weather coupled with the adequate precipitation has farming operations rolling in full force across the U.P. It appears everyone is rolling. Rapid progress of small grain plantings, grazing and cool crop vegetables are starting fast. Some corn has gone in but it appears most planting progress has been slower here. I have not heard anyone talking about alfalfa winter kill yet here in the U.P. I have heard farmer conversations about winter kill in Wisconsin, but have not yet confirmed those rumors. Farmers growing alfalfa should evaluate alfalfa stands now to determine if winter kill was a problem. I have included an excellent article written by Phil Kaatz, MSUE forage educator from Lower Michigan regarding the evaluation of winter kill.

On another topic, did you have the opportunity to meet my summer helper from last year? Ben is a student from Wyandotte, MI. He has very limited experience in commercial agriculture, but has a dream of owning and operating his own cattle ranch. Last summer Ben stayed with me and helped out daily on my small farming operation. I think he had a great experience last year and learned a lot. This year he would like to gain a new experience working with someone else in the U.P. that has a beef cattle operation.

Ben likes riding horses and four wheelers. He doesn't require constant supervision but does need to be shown how to do most every task. He is a bit of a greenhorn looking to gain experience and knowledge. Things like fixing fence require some time to show him how to do it and then he really enjoys hands on learning and likes to do it himself once he has the hang of it.

Ben is extremely well mannered and loves to talk. He'll ask lots of questions and is pretty humorous. I know last year was very fulfilling and rewarding for me personally. Ben doesn't need to be paid but does need room and board. I believe that it requires more time than you will get back. He can perform tasks such as mowing grass, weed whacking, stacking wood, etc. by himself, but as I indicated, needs to be shown how to do most tasks. Once he has it mastered he's pretty good with it. If anyone is gracious enough to host Ben for the summer please feel free to call me to further discuss. If you enjoy helping others fulfill their passion, you'll find this experience very rewarding. ~Frank

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MARKET REPORT (4/24/15)

By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

Market Ready Prices

Choice Steers	\$140-\$168	per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$135-\$152	per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$53-\$59	per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$150-\$190	per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$80-\$115	per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$200-\$500	per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$150-\$190	per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows	\$1700 - \$2700	per head
Grade Holstein bred heifers	\$2000 - \$2800	per head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$11.00	\$220.00	\$180-260
Soymeal	\$26.05	\$521.00	\$420-622
Oats	\$16.58	\$331.50	\$255-408
Barley	\$12.90	\$258.00	\$180-336

Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots

Wanted & For Sale Listings

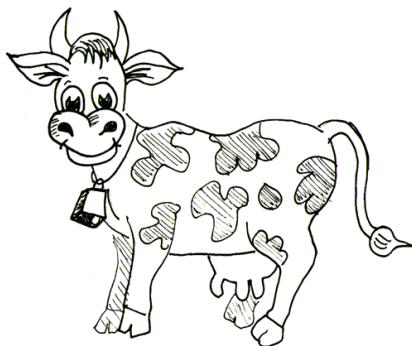
Personal ads will be removed monthly. We reserve the right to edit your ad. Free ads must be no more than 110 spaces. Please respect the space requirements. You can always purchase an ad if more space is required. Please call or email your ad no later than the 15th of each month. Call the Ontonagon County MSU Extension office at 906-884-4386 or email msue66@msu.edu.

For Sale: Dairy cattle from the 2013 & 2014 MMPA Quality Award Winner. Bred Heifers, Pregnant Cows, Baby Heifer, Bull Calves. 27,000 scc. Phone Elaine or Jake (906) 353-7768

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For Sale: CVM Flock. 4 year brown ram, 1 year white ram, 4 year moorit ewe, 1 moorit yearling. Adults are registered. \$200 each or \$700 for flock. Phone (906) 322-8214



Menominee County Farm Bureau's Breakfast on the Farm

Saturday, June 13, 2015

9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Shepeck Farms

Menominee, MI

General Admission-Free

Breakfast-\$5



A Renewed Interest in Root Pruning

Fruit growers are showing a renewed interest in pruning roots to make canopies more compact.

Posted on May 7, 2015 by Ron Perry, Michigan State University Extension, Department of Horticulture

Root pruner used at the Northwest Michigan Horticulture Research Center in 2014.

Recent weather conditions are promoting bud break and bloom in stone and pome fruit. The bloom is concentrated and pressing everyone's schedules with multiple activities simultaneously. Michigan State University Extension has a project in tart cherries where one of our treatments is to prune roots to see if the practice on this crop can stymie tree vigor so that we can more easily harvest with a berry harvester. This is one of different approaches to canopy management to make canopies more compact. This will be the second year we have tried this practice and look forward to the results.

In spring 2014, we pruned roots using an implement we borrowed from a couple different fruit growers. In discussing this practice with Phil Brown of Phil Brown Welding, he indicated there is a renewed interest, especially in apples, in using a root pruner, and he is building new machines. Some orchardists are even asking for one that can do two rows simultaneously (one pass). The practice became popular when apple growers were using semi-dwarfing rootstocks and finding that trees were shading neighboring trees due to tight spacing. Studies have demonstrated that restricting root extension and volume by pruning with a sub-soiling knife can reduce canopy volume and vigor of fruit trees by nearly 30 percent.

Continued on Page 6

It is Illegal to sell “Year From Certified” Seed of a Protected Variety

Randy Judd, Manager
Michigan Crop Improvement Association

Recently, I have seen ads offering to sell “Year from Certified” seed of Ida Oats and Kewaunee Barley. These are Protected Varieties (PVP) and are illegal to sell, trade, or clean seed for sale without the expressed permission or authorization of the Protected Variety owner. Without, you are liable to be penalized. The PVP act allows for the recovery of all legal costs plus triple damages from those found guilty of violating the PVP act. Enforcement of PVP rights take many different approaches including both lawsuits and out of court settlements. Those who sell Protected Varieties without legal authorization are violating the patent and PVP rights. This may carry a heavy cost. Recently, a grain elevator in Kansas was found selling seed of protected wheat varieties without authorization from the owner. This cost the elevator \$50,000 in claim settlements.

The following commonly produced varieties of Oats and Barley are Plant Variety Protected. (This is not a complete list; however the most commonly produced varieties in Michigan).

Oats – Badger, Colt, Drumlin, Esker, Gem, Goliath, Horsepower, Ida, Moraine, Morton, Rockford, Ron and Streaker.
Barley – Kewaunee, Rasmusson, Thoroughbred, Lacey, Conlon and Pinnacle.

The term “Year from Certified Seed” is an incorrect statement. There is no such class of seed. As such, the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) considers it an illegal term. Using such statement implies common seed has some type of Certified Seed classification, which it does not. The MDA, as the regulatory agency, will inform any person advertising in this way to STOP, or further penalties could apply.

Good quality Certified Seed equates to good results for the farmer. Certified Seed has been tested for germination and confirmed to be clean of contaminants. When compared to all the input costs for producing a crop, the additional cost of planting Certified Seed is pretty minor. The value of Certified Seed goes far beyond the purchase price. Many producers do not recognize the hidden costs associated with saved seed. They may be damaging their seed through improper handling and storage. There are also costs for cleaning, treating and storing saved seed. By planting Certified Seed and Supporting the PVP law you ensure higher yields, better disease resistance and other trait improvements incorporated into future crops.

The Michigan Crop Improvement Association (MCIA) is a non-profit association whose members sell Certified Seed to the

farmers of Michigan, neighboring states and other countries. More information on MCIA can be found at www.michcrop.com

Alfalfa That Appeared to Have Winter Injury is Now Being Confirmed as Winterkill

As temperatures improve and green up continues, alfalfa plants can be evaluated for winterkill.

Posted on May 16, 2014 by Phil Kaatz, and Fred Springborn, Michigan State University Extension

The long, cold, snowy winter of 2013–14 continues to have ripple effects on the perennial alfalfa crop in many parts of Michigan. Early reports of alfalfa fields that were slow coming out of dormancy are turning into reports of winterkill throughout Michigan and especially in the Thumb. Plants that showed winter injury and had only small stem growth in late April are now showing growth, but will continue to lag behind throughout the spring until first cutting occurs.

The anticipated reduction in alfalfa yields for 2014 plus the below average growing seasons in 2012 and 2013, along with increased feeding rates during the past winter, raise concerns about having enough forage to last through next year’s winter feeding season. Producers should carefully assess their forage needs and consider the use of alternative forages to offset alfalfa losses if they anticipate a shortage of feed.

As Michigan producers assess the amount of total winterkill in their fields, estimates range from 35-40 percent in areas of the Thumb to 20-25 percent in other parts of Michigan, while some areas escaped significant injury. Potential causes for the variation in winter survival vary from field to field and region to region (see photos). Article continued on Page 6.



Areas of winterkill in an alfalfa field, 11-day interval.

May 2015 - FSA News

Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Compliance

Landowners and operators are reminded that in order to receive payments from USDA, compliance with Highly Erodible Land (HEL) and Wetland Conservation (WC) provisions are required. Farmers with HEL determined soils are reminded of tillage, crop residue, and rotation requirements as specified per their conservation plan. Producers are to notify the USDA Farm Service Agency prior to conducting land clearing or drainage projects in insure compliance. Failure to obtain advance approval for any of these situations can result in the loss of eligibility and all Federal payments.

NAP – Notice of Loss – Has Weather Effected Your Crops?

Policy holders are reminded that they must submit a “*Notice of Loss*” (FSA-576) within 15 days of when the loss becomes apparent. If you have noticed that your crop might be light due to frosts, cold weather, or excessive moisture contact your FSA office so that they have the opportunity to take a look at the crop. For those of you that have filed a notice of loss, you need to keep the office informed of your harvest conditions. If you are not going to harvest all or part of a block/field, an appraisal will need to be completed on that acreage. This appraisal will be used in calculating your loss claim.

Prevented Planting

Prevented planting is the inability to plant the intended crop acreage with proper equipment by the final planting date for the crop type because of a natural disaster. If you plant an alternative crop on those acres, those acres are not considered prevented planting. For example, if you intended to plant oats but subsequently planted corn on the acres, FSA does not consider those acres as prevented planting. If you were unable to plant all the acres you intended, action is necessary. You may want to report those acres as prevented planted when you file your acreage report. If you have crop insurance, talk to your agent immediately to find out if prevented planted acres are covered under your policy and if restrictions apply. For more specific information on Prevented Planting, contact your local FSA Office.

Changing Bank Accounts

All FSA payments should be electronically transferred into your bank account. In order to make timely payments, you need to notify the office if you close your account or if your bank is purchased by another financial institution. Payments can be delayed if we are not aware of changes to account and routing numbers.

Power of Attorney

For those who find it difficult to visit the county office personally because of work schedules, distance, health, etc. FSA has a power of attorney form available that enables you to designate another person to conduct your business at the office. If you are interested, please contact your local FSA office.

Changes in Farming Operations

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have picked up or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to your FSA office within 30 days of the change. You need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes now will save you time in the spring and ensure that no late certification fees are incurred. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate.

Youth Loans

The Farm Service Agency makes loans to youth to establish and operate agricultural income-producing projects in connection with 4-H clubs, FFA and other agricultural groups. Projects must be planned and operated with the help of the organization advisor, produce sufficient income to repay the loan and provide the youth with practical business and educational experience. The maximum loan amount is \$5000.

Youth Loan Eligibility Requirements:

- Be a citizen of the United States (which includes Puerto Rico, the Virgin Islands, Guam, American Samoa, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands) or a legal resident alien
 - Be 10 years to 20 years of age
 - Comply with FSA’s general eligibility requirements
 - Be unable to get a loan from other sources
 - Conduct a modest income-producing project in a supervised program of work as outlined above
- Demonstrate capability of planning, managing and operating the project under guidance and assistance from a project advisor. The project supervisor must recommend the youth loan applicant, along with providing adequate supervision.

Stop by the county office for help preparing and processing the application forms.

GREAT INTEREST RATES : Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

Remember: these loans are now available for Hay/Forage Storage as well as traditional grain storage!

March Interest Rates:

- 1.875 percent for 7 years with a loan of \$100,000 or less
- 2.125 percent for 10 years with a loan of \$100,000 - \$250,000
- 2.225 percent for 12 years with a loan of \$250,000 - \$500,000

Contact your local FSA county office for April’s interest rates.

Feeding High Corn Silage Diets (part 1 of 2)

Feeding high corn silage diets presents opportunities and challenges for dairy producers.

By Stan Moore

MSU Extension Senior Dairy Educator

Feeding higher levels of corn silage in the diets of dairy cows presents some great opportunities, but also some challenges. Opportunities include the potential to reduce purchased feed cost (especially corn grain), more stability in ration cost throughout the year, increased forage production on limited acres, and the opportunity to make bigger improvements in ration cost and milk production through improved Neutral Detergent Fiber (NDF) digestibility.

Challenges with inclusion of higher amounts of corn silage in the ration include: “more of your eggs are in one basket” so if NDF digestibility is lower in a given year, you will have a more difficult time managing the feed for high milk production; and the importance of knowing your cost of production is magnified as this one forage now has a big impact on your farms profitability.

Five keys to success in high corn silage diets include: Timely Harvest, Hybrid Selection for fiber and starch digestibility, Grouping and Feed Allocation, Processing Considerations, and Allowing for Breakdown of Corn Grain in Storage.

Timely Harvest

Timeliness of corn silage harvest affects fiber digestibility and starch digestibility. As the corn plant matures NDF digestibility decreases significantly. Dr. Mike Allen of Michigan State University Extension showed a 3 – 6 percentage points difference in NDF digestibility as corn silage matured from 1/8 milk line (~30% whole plant dry matter) to black layer (~42% whole plant dry matter) depending on hybrid. Starch digestibility also decreases as kernel moisture decreases (L.F. Farraretto, J. Dairy Sci. 81, pp. 2178-2184). This change in starch digestibility occurs as the kernel matures and the kernel endosperm becomes more vitreous. The current recommendation is to harvest corn silage at 35% whole plant dry matter or ½ kernel milk line. Farmers filling bunkers or piles will often start harvest around 30% dry matter to maintain an average of 35%.

Hybrid Selection

Corn hybrids vary significantly in total NDF, NDF digestibility, and starch digestibility. Sample analysis information obtained from Dairy One lab in New York shows that %NDF in corn silage samples ran from 2000 – 2014 ranged from 37.6 % to 49.6% (one standard deviation, 68% of the samples surrounding the mean). Producers may ask, “What is the right NDF level that I should look for in a hybrid?”. The answer is, It Depends! If land is limiting and/or corn grain price is projected to be low, a producer may be better off to choose a high NDF hybrid even if corn grain content is sacrificed. If a producer has an adequate land base and/or corn grain price is projected to be high, a producer may be better off to choose a low NDF hybrid with

higher grain content. Ultimately the producer needs to understand his/her cost of production in order to make this decision wisely.

In part 2 of this article, which you can find by visiting <http://www.msue.msu.edu>, we will continue to discuss Hybrid Selection and the final three Keys to Success in feeding high corn silage rations.

Dairy, Field Crops, Farm Management

Beef Industry Looks at Safety From All Directions

Beef Industry Safety Summit brings industry leaders together to advance food safety.

Posted on April 28, 2015 by Jeannine Schwehofer, Michigan State University Extension

Food safety is of utmost importance. Consumers count on a safe and wholesome product when they purchase beef and all food. Proper cooking and handling of beef is an important component of food safety. Michigan State University Extension has a variety of resources available to educate consumers about food safety, including that hamburgers need to be cooked to 160 degrees Fahrenheit. But consumers expect a safe and wholesome product. Proactive steps at the farm and processing levels are critical to providing consumers with a product they can trust.

The Beef Industry Safety Summit, held annually since 2003, brings experts from all aspects of the industry together to advance food safety. Food safety is not looked at as a competitive advantage in the beef industry. The Safety Summit is the venue where leaders of food safety teams come together with beef producers, academics, and more to hear updates on food safety research and to share ideas for improving product safety.

At the 2015 Beef Industry Safety Summit, there were sessions on regulatory and research updates, including both pre- and post-harvest aspects. Information was even shared across industries as a general session focused on lessons learned about *Salmonella* by the poultry industry. *Salmonella* is a challenge for the beef industry because *Salmonella* has been found in the lymph nodes of cattle. Since the lymph system is internal, interventions that are currently applied to meat surfaces to reduce *E. coli* are not effective against *Salmonella*.

Antibiotic use and antibiotic resistance were also major topics on the program. The U.S. Department of Agriculture and U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) have several initiatives to address each of these topics. Guidelines 209 and 213 are two such steps in the FDA’s initiative to address antimicrobial resistance. These guidelines will update product labels to exclude growth promotion as the labeled use of feed antimicrobials and will limit the use of antibiotics that are important to human health. Research is also being done to better understand antibiotic resistance issues related to animal agriculture.

This article was published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>. To have a digest of information delivered straight to your email inbox, visit <http://bit.ly/MSUENews>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).

Alfalfa That Appeared to Have Winter Injury is Now Being Confirmed as Winterkill. Cont'd

The timing of last cutting taken in the previous fall matters! In the Thumb region, damage ranged from a low of 5-10 percent stand in fields that did not receive a fourth cutting, to a 75-80 percent stand loss where a late cutting was taken after Sept. 1 in several locations. Inadequate surface drainage may also have played a role in the injury of many fields. These patterns were also evident in several fields in Central Michigan. Areas that were slightly lower than the rest of the field showed more extensive injury compared to the higher areas of the field, possibly the result of super saturation of the soils that occurred near the time of alfalfa breaking dormancy.

Soil fertility levels are an important factor in winter survival of alfalfa. There is no substitute for a sound fertilizer program based on current soil test results. Many producers reduced amounts of fertilizer applied, especially potash, due to higher fertilizer prices over the last several years. Alfalfa is a big user of potassium (K) and requires 50 pounds of K₂O per ton of dry matter forage removed. While many producers start out with adequate levels of K in new seedings, if they fail to continue monitoring fertility levels, K deficiencies will develop. Producers that are considering the use of foliar fertilizers during the summer in hopes to help alfalfa plants overcome winter injury should keep in mind that these products often have very low levels of nutrients and usually do not increase plant survival rates.

Using the right alfalfa variety can also play a key role in determining winter survival. While no variety holds all the desirable traits a producer may want, there has been great progress even in the past few years in developing varieties that are higher yielding, have increased disease resistance, and have increased winter hardiness. See "2013 Michigan Forage Variety Test Report" for more information.

Recommendations for managing damaged alfalfa fields will vary from field to field depending on the level of damage and circumstances. Producers may be able to salvage some production even from heavily damaged fields. Cool season grass such as Italian ryegrass can be spot-seeded with a no-till drill into the damaged areas of the field. This should be done as soon as possible to increase yields.

Attempting to re-seed alfalfa into an existing alfalfa field is risky and is not recommended by Michigan State University Extension due to alfalfa autotoxicity. Established alfalfa plants produce a toxin that prevents new seedlings from becoming established and so re-seeding barren areas or interseeding thin stands with alfalfa are typically unsuccessful.

Producers will soon be faced with the decision of when to cut their injured alfalfa fields. Recommendations are to wait for the late growing plants to get to the mid-bud stage before harvesting, and then allow the field to reach over 10 percent blossom before harvesting for either second or third cutting. This will allow the stressed plants a chance to replenish already depleted carbohy-

drate root reserves. The dilemma is that producers may need the feed and decide to cut early. If they cut according to the earliest maturing plants, they will sacrifice yield for the rest of the year and the life of the stand because more plants will be lost. It's always a balancing act between having enough fiber for good rumen digestion, cutting for quality, and getting the highest yield by waiting for more growth.

In summary, remember that injured alfalfa will need time to recover if it has not been winterkilled and needs to be given extra care for increased winter survival during the coming months.

For more information, contact Phil Kaatz at kaatz@msu.edu or 810-667-0341, or Fred Springborn at springb2@anr.msu.edu or 989-831-7500.

A Renewed Interest in Root Pruning Cont'd

The studies conducted on apples and sweet cherries in Hungary (Bruner, 1986) and apples in Ohio (Ferree, 1992) demonstrated that bloom was the optimum time to prune roots, and both studies also indicated fruit size was diminished by 20-25 percent. The practice calls for pulling a sub-soiling knife alongside tree-rows to a depth of 14-18 inches and 12-18 inches out from tree trunks on both sides of trees parallel to tree rows. The only problem with this practice is that the pruning is done without knowing for sure exactly how much of the root volume is affected (removed) since it is done below ground. The theory indicates that likely one is removing about 30 percent of the rooting volume. The practice soon became less interesting to apple growers with reports of significant reduction in fruit size. Secondly, many growers began transitioning to dwarf rootstocks, eliminating the need to prune roots.

Why is the interest returning? According to Brown, growers are using the machine to reduce fruit size for large fruited varieties, which is helping meet marketing preferences for smaller fruit size. Secondly, some of the new Tall Spindle plantings are becoming more vigorous than intended on sites with fertile soils.

Our study, which was just deployed for the first time in spring 2014, demonstrated a canopy volume reduction of close to 30 percent on Montmorency/Mahaleb rootstock, conducted at the Northwest Horticulture Research Center. Roots will be pruned once again at bloom in the plot (next week). In a separate study, we compared root pruning at bloom and at pit hardening (three weeks later) to determine the difference. We will be trying the comparison again this year. There is little to no reports of previous studies conducted on tart cherries.

Dr. Perry's work is funded in part by MSU's AgBioResearch.

This article was published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>. To have a digest of information delivered straight to your email inbox, visit <http://bit.ly/MSUENews>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).

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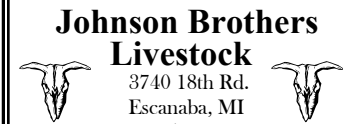
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May

May 25 Memorial Day

June

June 13 Menominee County Farm Bureau's Breakfast on the Farm. See page 2 for more.

June 21 First Day of Summer & Father's Day

July

July 4 Independence Day

**U.P. Agriculture
 Connection**

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 Educator
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