



U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

June 2018

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

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Farewell

For the last five years, I have provided leadership for the Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center in Chatham. I have had the fortune to meet many of the readers of this newsletter and have had the great honor to even work directly with some of you and your farm operations. I want to express my sincere appreciation and gratitude for the warm welcome I received to the region and allowing this Iowa farm girl moving in from Idaho to experiment with some new things, to do things a little differently, and to even push folks out of their comfort zone from time to time.

At the end of June, I will be resigning my position at the station and moving with my family to Duluth, Minnesota where my husband recently started a new job with the Superior National Forest. It saddens me to leave the place I have been calling home for nearly six years and the job I am very passionate about, but this is an excellent opportunity and a new adventure for me and my family.

I would like to thank the staff at UPREC who have experienced many changes through my tenure. They have embraced both our successes and failures along the way, and I am proud of the team we have assembled and look forward to keeping track of their progress into the future.

Also, a big thank you to the Advisory Council that has served me well over the last few years. Each meeting you come to the table with new ideas and fresh perspectives that challenge me and this farm to better serve your needs.

I have also greatly appreciated the wonderful partnerships with local, county, state and federal agencies I have had the great pleasure to work with. I am proud of the robust working relationships that have developed over time and I hope that they continue to collaboratively serve the needs in the region. A special thank you to the local Farm Bureau chapters and the Growing U.P. Agricultural Association.

Finally, I want to thank the farmers. They are the foundation of our existence and fuel my passion for more sustainable agricultural operations in the region. Thank you for providing me the opportunity to serve you.

Best of luck in the season ahead and I hope to see many of you at the various events we have planned at the farm in June!

Ashley McFarland, Director, Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center

Dr. Dean Baas, MSU Cover Crop Specialist and Dr. Kim Cassida, MSU Forage Specialist, will be in the U.P. touring farms June 11th, 12th and 14th. Please call Monica Jean if you would like them to stop by and provide on-farm consultation! Call (616) 443-8782 or (906) 786-3032, ext. 106



U.P. FORAGE TWILIGHT PROGRAM

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 13TH · 5:30 - 9 PM ET · MSU UPREC

Maximizing Forage Potential

Join us at the MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center to explore the research underway focused on forage-based systems. The program will highlight trials focused on forage performance, annual clovers, reduced-lignin alfalfa, peas and oats, and cover crops, and there will be an opportunity to engage with the researchers from each project. The evening will conclude with our featured presenter, Mike Buis, a cattle rancher and farmer from Chatham, Ontario. He has developed a practical and sustainable system of growing and grazing cover crops and will share his successes and failures over the last ten years.

The Buis operation is a third generation family farm south of Chatham, Ontario. They have a mixed farming operation with vegetable and field crops as well as a herd of 350 beef cows. They are an innovative farm and not afraid to try new operational techniques. They raise, finish and sell their beef in their own retail store. Learn more here: www.buisbeef.ca

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Featured Presenter:
Mike Buis Chatham,
ON farmer and
forage expert

Presentation topic:
**Extending the
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FOREST\$ & FARM\$

Utilizing your Natural Resources to Maximize On-Farm Profitability

TUESDAY, JUNE 26TH · 5 - 9 PM ET · MSU UPREC

Farmers are continually looking at ways to diversify and bolster risk management strategies on-farm. This event will share strategies on how to maximize your natural resources for greater farm sustainability.

Highlighted topics include:

- Conservation District Forester Matt Watkeys and NRCS District Conservationist Misa Cady, will share what programs and resources are available to better utilize timber ground for profit and how to manage those resources to accomplish your on-farm goals.
- MSU researcher, James DeDecker, will share his ongoing research with wildlife depredation challenges in field crops and what opportunities may exist to combat the issue. Experts from Michigan DNR will also be on-hand to answer any questions you may have about the existing programs that can be used to mitigate wildlife damage.

Registration strongly encouraged:

<https://events.anr.msu.edu/UPForestsandFarms/>



Featured
Presenter:
James DeDecker
MSU Educator,
Deer Crop
Damage
researcher

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with questions

UPREC Beef Resource Herd

By Paul Naasz, UPREC Farm Manager

This article is the first in a series providing information about the beef herd at the MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center.

The beef cow herd at the Michigan State University Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center, UPREC, Chatham, MI was developed to conduct applied beef cattle research and provide opportunity for outreach education. The 2013-14 production years marked the first entire cycle of production for the new grass finished beef program at UPREC. In the spring of 2013, 80 Red Angus females were transported from the Lake City Research Center to the Upper Peninsula. The purpose of the transfer was to not only provide consistency and mutual use across both research centers, but to also begin more in-depth investigation of pasture-based production systems.

In May of 2013, the 80 Red Angus cows calved for the first time with an average birth weight of 79 lbs. and weaned in November with an actual average weaning weight of 513 lbs. For the first winter, calves were backgrounded on alfalfa-centric baleage put up around 45% dry matter. The calves were placed back onto pasture with a mean weight of 703 lbs., grazed without supplementation and removed from pasture on with an average weight of 1067 lbs. Cattle were continually offered baleage free choice until they were finished. The mean finish day of the cattle was January 2015 with an average weight of 1171 pounds.

Moving forward, there is certainly room for improvement in the production model. First, due to the winters of the UP and the moisture in the baleage (vs dry hay), it is more challenging to get weight on the steers through the backgrounding period. Secondly, increase in the overall backfat and marbling of the cattle is desirable. Ultimately, the challenge is carrying the cattle into the second winter. In order to address these issues, a fall calving program was initiated at UPREC. The hope is that cattle can be adequately finished at 22-24 months of age on lush standing forage resulting in less overall high quality hay needing to be fed.

The fall of 2016 marked the beginning of this new fall calving era at UPREC. The herd calved between mid-August and September with an average birth weight of 78 pounds. The calves were weaned on May 31, 2017 with an unadjusted average weaning weight of 624 pounds. These calves were rotationally grazed through the summer, wintered on baleage and dry hay, will return to grass this spring and harvested this fall to complete the first cycle of the fall calving herd. Carcass data will be collected to monitor the results of this change in management.

In keeping with the goal of increasing overall backfat and marbling of grass finished cattle, one half of the herd was artificially inseminated to Wagyu bulls in November of 2016. **Wagyu** ("Japanese cow") is any of four Japanese breeds of beef cattle which are genetically predisposed to intense marbling and to producing a high percentage of oleaginous unsaturated fat. Akaushi (Japanese Brown breed of Wagyu cattle) semen was purchased from HeartBrand Beef of Flatonia, TX (www.heartbrandbeef.com). The first of 38 Akaushi/Red Angus crossed calves, arrived on August 13, 2017. The crossbred calves had an average birth weight of 81.7 pounds compared to 79.5 pounds for their straightbred Red Angus contemporaries. These calves will be harvested and carcass data collected the fall of 2019. Stay tuned for more on this exciting new project happening at Chatham.



Figure 1. First Akaushi sired calf born at UPREC



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The North Farm Skill-Seeker Workshop Series

The Michigan State University North Farm will be offering its annual Skill Seeker Workshop series for the 2018 season. These workshops, focused on topics relevant to small-scale farmers, homesteaders and home gardeners, will provide participants the opportunity to learn from university staff, local professionals and seasoned farmers.

[Registration is strongly encouraged](#)

Livestock on the Small Farm · June 10 · 1-5 p.m.

This workshop will focus on the basics of pig and sheep management for the small-scale producer with presentations by Ben and Denise Bartlett, Log Cabin Livestock and Dale Rozeboom, MSU Animal Science.

Plasticulture: Season Extension 201 · July 15 · 1-5 p.m.

See season extension using hoopouses, greenhouses, plastic mulch and weed control tarps with Collin Thompson, MSU North Farm.

Flower Production · August 19 · 1-5 p.m.

Learn about variety selection, production management, bouquet arrangement and marketing with Shailah Bunce, Rock River Farm and Jeff Heidtman, Color Blind Gardens.

Forest Resource Management · September 30 · 1-5 p.m.

Find out about forest resource management, developing a forest management plan and identifying the value of what may lie just outside your back door with Dan and Mary Rabine, Reh-Morr Farm, Holly Wendrick, MAEAP, and Matt Watkeys, District Forester.



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Market Report

Choice Steers	\$100—\$119 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$80—\$105 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$59—\$65 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$180—\$200 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$45—\$60 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$50—\$125 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$200—\$290 per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows \$1100—\$1800/head
Grade Holstein bred heifers \$1100—\$2000/head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$10.24	\$204.75	\$160-270
Soymeal	\$21.21	\$424.25	\$380-447
Oats	\$11.81	\$236.25	\$200-300
Barley	\$9.75	\$195.00	\$160-240
Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots			

Common diseases in organic hoophouse greens

In much of northern Michigan, growers experienced a cold and wet spring. While hoophouses help mitigate some of these problems, foliar and root diseases in high-value, organic hoophouse crop can prove to be challenging to growers across the state

By Collin Thompson, MSU Extension Small Farms Educator

Lettuce, spinach and leafy brassica greens are some of the leading spring crops for Michigan hoophouse growers. While these crops can be profitable, they can be excellent hosts for fungal and bacterial pathogens, especially in the high humidity environment of the hoophouse. Organic growers have limited tools in their toolbox to address outbreaks, but understanding proper management and cultural practices can reduce the likelihood of infection. Below are some common diseases that Michigan growers may face.

To read the entire article and view color photos of these diseases in the field, follow this link: http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/common_diseases_in_organic_hoophouse_greens.



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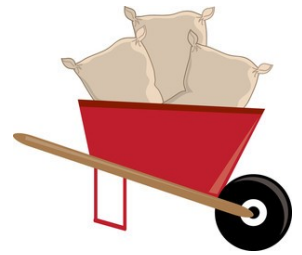
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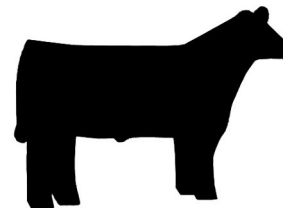
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EDUCATION ON THE FARM

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Saturday, June 9, 2018

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Calendar of Events

Forage Twilight Walk @ UPREC

June 13th—5:30-9 pm

Forests and Farms Farm Bureau Education Program @ UPREC

June 26th—5-9 pm

Field Crop Field Days

Corn Field Day—August 28th—Meintz Dairy Farm, Stephenson

Potato Field Day—August 29th—Roger VanDamme's, Cornell

Soybean Field day—September 5th—Forest Biomass Information Center, Escanaba

Remember to connect to virtual learning breakfasts every Thursday 6:30—7 am!

http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/new_msu_extension_field_crops_virtual_breakfast_meetings_start_april_26

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