



U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

March 2017

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

Volume 21 Issue 3

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Upper Peninsula Agriculture in Backyards through Smart Gardening: Making positive environmental impacts

If you haven't heard of Michigan State University Extension's [Smart Gardening](#) initiative, its goal is to promote earth friendly and sustainable practices that will save gardeners time, effort, and money. While IPM and sustainability have been the hallmark of MSU Extension education programs for years, whittling information down into easy to use tips based on genuine research is centric to the Smart Gardening initiative. Educational messages include smart soils, smart lawns, smart plants, smart vegetables, and smart gardening for pollinators. Anyone with a lawn, garden or is interested in growing plants on a small farm will find this information insightful and wise. When people adopt these "Smart" practices, the impacts for the UP and across all of Michigan continue to produce positive results for the environment.

Do you know the health of your soil? Do you understand the current levels of N, P, and K in your soil and specific needs of your plant? Have you thought about using crop rotation, diverse plantings, and pollinator friendly flower blooms throughout the growing season? Addressing these questions coupled with careful planning has had remarkable results for UP residents. Over ninety percent improved their gardening skills and noted that they were planning to adopt one or more of the "smart" practices they learned. Reducing pesticides, correct and thoughtful application of nutrients and many other techniques are examples of what participants reported. The Smart Gardening campaign relies upon one gardener telling another gardener what they have learned and surveys show that 62% of the time they have done just that! Think of the impacts for our environment.

How can you learn more about it? Visit the Gardening in Michigan website at www.migarden.msu.edu. [A Smart Gardening with Vegetables 101 Webinar Series](#) is offered twice annually and open to anyone who would like to learn more about vegetable gardening. A convenience of the webinar is that you can participate from the comfort of your home. The [March - April series](#) is open for registration now. A participant's comment from last year's class 'the yield my garden put out this year was phenomenal...thank you for offering this, it was very helpful to me'.

The [Smart Gardening Series at the Escanaba Kiwanis Noon Home & Garden Show/ Pancake Feed](#) is another annual event. It's held on April 7, 8, and 9th at the Ruth Butler Building on the UP State Fairgrounds. MSU Extension's Consumer Horticulture Staff will again offer free smart gardening educational presentations from a number of staff and professionals on a variety of topics including pollinators, backyard beekeeping, healthy soils, and creative container and square foot gardening. Every presentation offers free garden-themed door prizes from a number of sponsors. At the bottom of every hour there will also be mason bee hotel construction with education on how to install and maintain the hotel. Each family will be able to take home a free bee hotel compliment of local donors.

[Extension Master Gardener](#) Smart Gardening Volunteers (EMGSGV) are also trained to provide public outreach. In 2016, twelve EMGSGVs volunteered at twenty-one different UP venues from the downtown Marquette Farmer's Market, UP State Fair, Iron County Fair, and more to provide smart gardening information to the public. Look for these opportunities to learn more about how you can implement smart gardening practices anywhere you are growing. For more information, feel free to contact Rebecca Krans, Consumer Horticulture Educator, MSU Extension, at kransr@anr.msu.edu or 906-875-0606.

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Oat-pea forage U.P. trial funded by MSU Extension

By Jim Isleib, MSU Extension Field Crop Educator

Oat and pea forage is planted widely across the Upper Peninsula region as a nurse crop for perennial forage seedings and as a stand-alone annual forage crop. However, no recent research has been conducted to evaluate oat variety performance in combination with current, improved forage peas. Research conducted by North Dakota State University and other institutions addresses some relevant aspects of oat/pea forage production, but in a different growing environment. The most recent local evaluation of oat and pea forage was conducted by the MSU agricultural experiment station in Chatham in 1988 using unspecified (probably Trapper variety) forage peas and unspecified oat and triticale varieties. In 2014, oat and field pea trials for grain production (not forage) were conducted at Chatham. Regional, research-based information provides farmers with a valuable tool to choose the best performing oat and pea forage variety combinations and time their harvest operations to produce the desired forage quality. An on-farm set of forage oat comparison plots, planted by an interested U.P. farmer in 2016, revealed striking differences in oat maturity. This demonstration project was featured in an August 18, 2016 MSUE website article "Oat and pea forage combinations", http://msue.anr.msu.edu/news/oat_and_pea_forage_combinations.

U.P. extension educators Jim Isleib and Monica Jean received Project GREEN funding through MSU Extension to conduct on-farm trials of four oat/pea forage combinations at three

locations in Menominee, Alger and Schoolcraft counties, including one no-till site. Oat varieties will include Ogle (older public variety from Illinois commonly grown in U.P. region), Goliath (newer public variety from South Dakota developed for forage), Forage Plus (late maturing Pro Seed Genetics variety from Wisconsin developed for forage), Everleaf 126 (delayed heading forage oat from ProGene Research LLC, developed in New Zealand). One superior forage pea variety, 4010, will be included in all seed combinations. Seed combinations will consist of 50% oats, 50% peas by seed count. Plots will be harvested twice, possibly three times, based on 1) prime forage pea maturity and 2) prime oat maturity. Yield and forage quality information will be taken.

The project will be featured at the MSU U.P. Research and Extension Center field day and tentatively at another field day in Menominee County. Watch the Ag Connections newsletter for details. Results will be shared with the U.P. farming community in a future edition of this newsletter and at next year's winter extension meetings.

Northern Michigan Livestock

Gaylord, MI—I-75 (Exit 282), 2 miles west on M-32 to N Townline Road, go 2 miles North to Sale Yard

2017 Spring Feeder Cattle Sales

All Sales are on Fridays @ 12 pm
April 7th April 21st May 12th

Preconditioned cattle will be sold first on April 21st, proof required

- Pre-conditioning program strongly recommended
- All feeders must meet proper TB & ID requirements
- Request cattle be brought in the day before sale
- Bred cattle & breeding bulls may be sold at sales
- Steers in question will be sold as bulls

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Updates regarding the annual Bull Soundness Exams!

It is time to start thinking about scheduling your bull for a breeding soundness exam to ensure he is READY for the upcoming breeding season.

During the last 5 years of testing by Michigan State University's College of Veterinary Medicine, 19.4% of bulls tested have not passed their BSE. Open cows mean lost income. Feeding bulls that are not performing is a waste of money. Some producers have been lucky and have not had issues with infertile bulls. But those with non-performing bulls have learned the hard way that they lose profit.

Dr. Renee Coyer of Thompson Veterinary Clinic will be taking over the breeding soundness examination program from MSU-CVM. She will be available to test all bulls previously tested by MSU-CVM across the U.P. She is willing to continue doing testing (\$60/bull) at group gatherings where the farm call can be shared or privately at an individual's farm with appropriate handling facilities. Please call early to reserve a farm call date.

Thompson Vet Clinic 906.341.2813

Forestry Calendar

The Michigan Society of American Foresters (MSAF) maintains a calendar on the MSAF website that may serve as a useful resource to some foresters or those interested in forestry – one of the primary economic drivers in the U.P. The calendar currently has a fairly long collection of upcoming events. However, if you know about forestry events that are not on the calendar, or if there are errors, please contact Bill Cook (cookwi@msu.edu).


Ag For Tomorrow Conference

March 7, 2017

Bay College Escanaba

Registrations will be received the day of the event. Check out the website for details:

[http://msue.anr.msu.edu/
events/2017_agriculture_for_tomorrow_conference](http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events/2017_agriculture_for_tomorrow_conference)

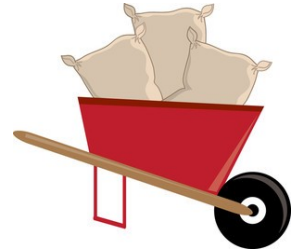


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Beginning Farmer Webinar Series

By Jim Isleib, Extension educator

The following evening "Getting started with..." webinars will provide valuable start-up information on nine general and more specific farming topics, including:

- ◆ [Feb. 27](#), Maple syrup
- ◆ [March 13](#), Fencing and watering systems for livestock
- ◆ [March 27](#), Blueberries
- ◆ [April 3](#), Crop nutrient management
- ◆ [April 10](#), Aquaculture (fish farming)
- ◆ [April 24](#), Planning and operating a mixed fruit orchard
- ◆ [May 8](#), Producing and selling eggs

A fee of \$10 per webinar is required, or you can register for the entire series at half price for \$45. Webinar recordings will be provided to all registered participants. Participate from the comfort and convenience of your own home or office.

Registration, a brochure containing details on each individual program and online or mailed payment options can be found at [Beginning Farmer Webinar Series 2017](#). You may register for all or some of the courses at any time, even if the session has already taken place. In that case, you will get a link to the recorded program.



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Review sessions and exams for state certified pesticide applicators

MSU Extension is offering pre-exam study sessions for those seeking state pesticide applicator certification.

State Office Building

305 Ludington St, 2nd Floor Conference Room
Escanaba, MI 49829

Tuesday, March 21, 2017, 9am-1pm eastern time
State exams offered at 1:15 pm eastern

For more information, contact Jim Isleib, MSU Extension, at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu.



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The Agriculture for Tomorrow Conference is offering free registration to three U.P. veterans

The breadth and depth of Michigan State University Extension resources make it a unique and exceptional organization. Offering resources to Veterans and their families are included, but what about veterans interested in agriculture? MSUE and the Veterans in Agriculture Network are cooperating to offer support and job opportunities to veterans interested in agriculture as a career. The Vets in Ag Network offers farmer veterans access to resources, education, mentorship, and advocacy throughout Michigan and the nation. Their vet to vet approach provides a community for Michigan’s farmer veterans who work together to ensure the long-term success of one another.

The Agriculture for Tomorrow Conference, March 7th at Bay College in Escanaba, will be offering free registration to three U.P. veterans interested in farming as a career. A simple letter detailing interests, location and contact information can be sent to Monica Jean, MSUE Field Crops educator, at atkinmon@anr.msu.edu. Dylan Thomas, Owner of Two Pines Farm and Co-Director of the Veterans in Agriculture Network, will be presenting about how he uses his personal story to make connections between veterans and farming. Registration for the event is below.

<https://events.anr.msu.edu/2017AgforTomorrow/>

Further questions and inquires, please contact me Monica Jean- Field Crop Educator atkinmon@anr.msu.edu. (906) 786-3032

Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training

April 6th Marquette, MI

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL ONLINE:

<https://events.anr.msu.edu/2017Springgrowerproducesafety/>
PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED

The PSA Grower Training Course is one way to satisfy the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule requirement outlined in § 112.22(c) that requires, ‘At least one supervisor or responsible party for your farm must have successfully completed food safety training at least equivalent to that received under standardized curriculum recognized as adequate by the Food and Drug Administration.

The course will provide a foundation of Good Agricultural Practices (GAPs) and FSMA Produce Safety Rule requirements, and details on how to develop a farm food safety plan. After attending the entire course, participants will be eligible to receive a certificate from the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) that verifies they have completed the training course. To receive an AFDO certificate, a participant must be present for the entire training and submit the appropriate paperwork to their trainer at the end of the course. Additional Grower Produce Safety Training sessions will be scheduled in the fall, as well as, in future years. Consult the MSU Extension website, www.msue.msu.edu, or subscribe to the MSU Extension Newsletter for event announcements.

***U.P. Crop Nutrient Management program—
Registration still open!***

MSU Extension is offering a 2-session crop nutrient management educational program in 5 Upper Peninsula locations. All farmers and interested people are welcome to attend these free programs.

Register by phoning or emailing your name, address, phone number and email information to Jim Isleib at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu or to Monica Jean at 906-786-3032 or atkinmon@anr.msu.edu. On-line registration is also available through the MSU Extension website at <http://msue.anr.msu.edu/> under ‘events’.

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County	Location	Session 1 Date	Session 2 Date
Mackinac	Garfield Twp Hall N6760 M-117, Engadine	Wed, Feb 22, 2017	Wed, March 1, 2017
Chippewa	Rudyard Twp Hall 18725 S. Mackinac Trail, Rudyard	Wed, March 15, 2017	Wed, March 22, 2017

**All meetings
6:30-8:00 pm
local time**

GUPAA Annual Meeting

The Growing UP Ag Association (GUPAA) will be conducting their Annual Meeting on Friday, April 7th, Heirman University Center at Bay College in Escanaba with registration beginning at 10:30 am ET. GUPAA will begin their annual business meeting at 11:00 am and discuss previous activities and future agricultural concerns relating to the U.P. After lunch, a presentation will be made on the recently completed U.P. multi-species meat processing feasibility study.

The feasibility study was commissioned by Marquette County and the U.P. Food Exchange to determine whether or not the U.P. livestock industry could support additional USDA slaughtering facilities. Results from that study, including recommendations made by the consultants will be shared.

The GUPAA Annual Meeting is open to everyone wishing to learn about and support UP agriculture. A box lunch for \$10.00 will be provided for those in attendance. For more information and to RSVP, please call 906-439-5114, ext. 1.

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Upper Peninsula Agriculture Education Survey

What's going on with Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources at your school?

Get on the map! We are seeking Upper Peninsula teachers who do or would like to include Agriculture, Food, and Natural Resources content in their curriculum for information gathering, training, and project funding opportunities. The first step in this project is to create a map of what's already going on—and we need your help to gather information.

Please take this survey if you are a teacher or are involved in educating students anywhere in the Upper Peninsula: <http://www.msunorthfarm.org/teacher-training-institutes.html>

Check out a summary of our project, and stay tuned for dates and program details!

http://www.msunorthfarm.org/uploads/3/8/2/8/38288527/speca_nifa_1_page_summary_rev_1.pdf

Plan Your Vegetable Garden with Smart Gardening

Register now for the Second Series of [Smart Gardening with Vegetables 101 webinar](#)

Do you want to learn more about growing your own vegetables? Designed specifically for introductory and beginning vegetable gardeners, the [Smart Gardening with Vegetables 101 webinar](#) focuses on important factors to consider before starting this venture, what is required for success, and other smart gardening topics such as cover crops and composting. Registration is now open for the March through April series. It will be held on Tuesdays from 6-7 pm EST starting March 21st through April 25th. All you need is a computer and high speed internet. Attend the live sessions or view recordings. Previous registrants have commented “really enjoy the convenience of the recordings”.

Early registration fee of \$30 is available if you register by March 7th or \$40 after. A group rate of \$70 is available if

registered by March 7th or \$80 after. Group coordinators are required to complete additional group information and email this to course instructors. A supplemental CD may also be purchased for \$37. Contact Rebecca Krans, MSU Extension Consumer Horticulture Educator, at 906-875-0606 or kransr@anr.msu.edu for more information or go to: http://msue.anr.msu.edu/events/smart_gardening_with_vegetables_101_webinar_series_2.



Market Report

Choice Steers	\$95—\$118 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$73—\$102 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$68—\$75 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$130—\$155 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$48—\$61 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$75—\$150 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$125—\$150 per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows	\$1600—\$1950/head
Grade Holstein bred heifers	\$1600—\$2000/head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$9.49	\$189.75	\$145-244
Soymeal	\$22.65	\$453.00	\$390-552
Oats	\$8.84	\$176.80	\$160-200
Barley	\$9.25	\$185.00	\$140-240
Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots			

Registration now open for The North Farm Short Course Series

The North Farm is hosting a series of short courses starting in May on topics designed for market gardeners, small farms, and skill-seekers interested in gardening and farming. These workshops are an in-depth exploration of farming fundamentals and best practices taught by multiple instructors.

Come to MSU North Farm for four afternoon-long learning sessions with an emphasis on hands-on activities so you can practice what you learn in class with other farmers and gardeners.

COST: \$30 for each course/\$100 for all 4 courses

Farm rate for multiple attendees from one farm - \$45 for each course/\$150 for all 4 courses

Refreshments and snacks are provided.

REGISTER AT WWW.MSUNORTHFARM.ORG

Questions?

Contact Abbey Palmer at palmerab@msu.edu or 906-439-5058

SOIL HEALTH

Sunday, May 21 · 1-6pm

Everything you do as a farmer or a gardener is linked to soil. Learn about the physical, biological, and chemical aspects of soil as well as practical soil-building techniques in this get-your-hands-dirty survey of soil health with experts from MAEAP and MSU.

PERENNIAL FRUIT CROPS

Sunday, June 4 · 1-6pm

From familiar raspberries to “novel” types like goji berries, perennial fruits are gaining popularity with market gardeners and farmers alike. Find out about variety selection, establishment, and cultural practices – including growing in high tunnels – for growing berries in a northern climate with MSU educators on perennial fruit crops.

ORGANIC SMALL GRAINS

Sunday, July 9 · 1-6pm

The North Farm is conducting research trials in organic small grain production to identify challenges and opportunities in the Upper Peninsula. Come see the research plots, talk with researchers and growers, and discuss some of the realities of growing organic grains in northern climates. Topics will include plot establishment, weed management, pest and disease challenges, and variety selection.

INSECTS ON THE FARM

Sunday, August 13 · 1-6pm

Insects are important players on the farm – though often thought of as pests and parasites, insects are active in soil health, as pollinators, and even as pest control. Understanding insects in the context of your whole farm ecosystem will help you make informed decisions. Learn best practices from MSU educators on integrated pest management (IPM), native pollinators, and bees.

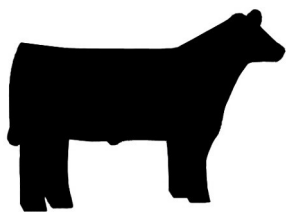
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If you do not wish to receive this publication, please contact Michelle at colema98@msu.edu or (906) 439-5114

Calendar of Events

U.P. Crop Nutrient Management Programs—each meeting runs from 6:30-8 pm (local time)

February 22 & March 1	Garfield Twp Hall, Engadine, MI
March 15 & March 22	Rudyard Twp Hall, 18725 S. Mackinac Trail, Rudyard

Pesticide Applicator Core Manual Review sessions/MDARD exam—each meeting runs 9 am—1 pm (local time)

March 21	State Office Building, 305 Ludington St, Escanaba
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March 7	<i>Ag For Tomorrow Conference—Bay College, Escanaba (9:15 am—3:30 pm)</i>
March 15	<i>Midwest Cover Crop Council Conference—Crowne Plaza, Grand Rapids, Michigan</i>
March 17	<i>St. Patrick's Day</i>
March 18	<i>MCA/MSU Bull Evaluation Program Sale, 12:30 p.m. ET (Open House March 4)</i>
April 6	<i>Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training—Marquette</i>
April 7	<i>Growing UP Ag Association Annual Meeting—Bay College Escanaba</i>
April 7	<i>Northern Michigan Livestock Spring Feeder Cattle Sales—Gaylord</i>
April 21	<i>Northern Michigan Livestock Spring Feeder Cattle Sales—Gaylord</i>

