

U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

April/May 2020 *Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch* Volume 24 Issue 5

In this issue:

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Michigan State University AgBioResearch
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News and Views

I have never seen a time when lives were so drastically changed as in the recent weeks with the Covid-19 challenge. Some of us are still working, some from home. Others relying on unemployment and federal stimulus payments. I know of many still waiting for both payments. Business owners forced to temporarily close business.

Some farmers are being greatly impacted by reduced commodity prices. I can not hardly imagine the emotional stress associated with dumping your commodity or having no other option than to euthanize perfectly healthy, market ready livestock. And feeling the rage of reading on social media from a consumer public with so little understanding of how our food system works, to comment "they should donate to the local food pantry."

Definitely, some farmers have been impacted more than others. I pray that we in agriculture can empathize with neighboring farmers that have been more greatly impacted. I for example have a small beef operation. I sell calves in the fall. I sell most of my cull cows in the summer. While my balance sheet does not look as good as it did on January 1, and current feeder calf and cull cow prices are poor, I have yet to sell animals on depressed prices. On the other hand, my feedlot customers are feeding steers to overly heavy weights or making decisions to euthanize because they do not see opportunities in the near future to sell those animals. Dairy farmers are being asked to limit milk production, dump milk and then continue feeding cows rather than send to market.

It's a tough situation for everybody, and for some even more so. I empathize with those. And to compound the problems, we are isolated from some of our best allies. It is probably the most bothersome aspect of our situation. MSU Extension employees are working from home with directions to not be working in face to face situations. It is difficult to program this way. To not be able to interact. It is an emotional aspect removed. So we try to interact via electronic media, phone, email etc. We have many good articles and links on our website https://www.canr.msu.edu/farm_management/Agribusiness-Resources-for-Novel-Coronavirus/ and we have opportunities to work via ZOOM, an interactive computer program. We have been communicating with Farm Bureau and USDA Agencies in an attempt to communicate and reach out to farmers. Unfortunately, this newsletter is only able to go out via email because we do not have access to our office to print and mail hard copies.

Hopefully, our resources will be useful to farmers getting through these difficult times. Please feel free to reach out via phone or email. We can do lots of one on one programming over the phone. I believe this last quarantine extension could be the last and we will try to get back to some sense of normalcy. Please feel free to reach out for help.

Frank Wardynski wardynsk@msu.edu Mobile 906-281-0918

Alfalfa nurse crop study completed in U.P.

Results from a single-year study show little difference in 1st crop alfalfa yield following establishment with, or without nurse crop

Jim Isleib, Extension Educator

An alfalfa nurse crop study supported by the Michigan State University Extension Project GREEEN Research Proposal fund was begun in May 2018 and completed in July 2019 at the MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center in Chatham, Michigan. The objectives of the project were:

1. Compare the impact of various nurse crop species and seeding rates on alfalfa plant stand establishment
2. Compare the combined forage yield of various nurse crop species and alfalfa during the establishment year and first cutting of alfalfa during the following year

Nineteen nurse crop treatments were included in the study. They consisted of oats, barley or spring triticale, with and without field peas, at three seeding rates each. A 'no-nurse crop' treatment was included. Four replications of nurse crop plots of one planter width (ten feet) by sixty feet long were drilled into tilled ground on May 14 and 15, 2018. Alfalfa at eighteen pounds per acre was immediately seeded over these plots with a Brillion seeder. 150 pounds per acre of urea fertilizer was applied.

Nurse crop	Low seeding rate (lbs/a)	Medium seeding rate (lbs/a)	High seeding rate (lbs/a)
Control – no nurse crop	0	0	0
Goliath oats	16	32	48
Goliath oats + 4010 peas (50% by weight)	50	75	100
Kewaunee barley	24	48	72
Silobuster Plus barley + peas	50	75	100
Spring triticale	25	50	75
Silobuster Plus triticale + peas	50	75	100

Table 1: Alfalfa nurse crop seeding rates

Statistical analysis of the alfalfa yields from the first cutting on July 2, 2019 showed that there were no statistically significant differences among the 19 treatments, and the "no nurse crop" treatment was not different from the average of all the nurse crop treatments. However, there was a difference between the small grain species used as nurse crops. Triticale was best. The oats and barley were not different from each other. The addition of forage peas had no effect on first cutting alfalfa yields in the year following establishment. Statistical analysis of the stem counts from July 26, 2019 show no difference in alfalfa stand between nurse crop treatments. The average stem count from July 26, 2019 was 34.5 stems per square foot, indicating about 60% yield potential. There was high variability in stand within each plot.

In summary:

- The average seeding year nurse crop yields including all seeding rates suggest a forage yield advantage with oats or barley over triticale when seeded without peas. When peas are included, oats plus peas had the best yield, followed by barley plus peas and triticale plus peas.
- The various nurse crop species and seeding rates did not appear to have an impact on alfalfa stand establishment in this trial. Unfavorably dry weather following planting may have resulted in poor alfalfa stand establishment.
- Statistical analysis of alfalfa yields from the first cutting on July 2, 2019 showed that there were no differences among the 19 treatments, and the "no nurse crop" treatment was not different from the average of all the nurse crop treatments.
- There was a difference in alfalfa yield between the small grain species used as nurse crops. Triticale was best. The oats and barley were not different from each other.
- Statistical analysis of the stem counts from July 26, 2019 show no difference in alfalfa stand between nurse crop treatments.
- Based on simple averages, higher nurse crop yields were followed by lower alfalfa yields, and vice versa.
- This is a one-year, single location trial and results should not be considered final or absolute.

Nurse crop	Seeding Rate	DM/Acre 7/10/18 nurse crop	DM/ Acre 7/2/19 Alfalfa 1st cut	DM/Acre Combined Yield	Alfalfa stem count (Avg 9/12/18 & 7/26/19)	Alfalfa yield potential based on stem count
None	-	0.63	1.74	2.37	31.5	57
Kewaunee barley	Low	1.53	1.52	3.05	32	57
Kewaunee barley	Medium	2.00	1.61	3.61	36.5	65
Kewaunee barley	High	2.00	1.55	3.55	37	66
Goliath oat	Low	1.47	1.61	3.08	31	55
Goliath oat	Medium	2.02	1.64	3.66	28.5	51
Goliath oat	High	1.93	1.61	3.54	31.5	56
Triticale	Low	1.26	1.80	3.06	31	55
Triticale	Medium	1.42	1.71	3.13	35.5	63
Triticale	High	1.72	1.66	3.38	33.5	60
Goliath oat plus 4010 peas	Low	2.09	1.59	3.68	29.5	53
Goliath oat plus 4010 peas	Medium	2.20	1.53	3.73	29	52
Goliath oat plus 4010 peas	High	2.36	1.58	3.94	35.5	63
Silobuster barley plus 4010 peas	Low	1.74	1.66	3.40	36	64
Silobuster barley plus 4010 peas	Medium	1.97	1.63	3.60	33.5	60
Silobuster barley plus 4010 peas	High	2.02	1.73	3.75	32.5	59
Silobuster triticale plus 4010 peas	Low	1.49	1.78	3.27	38	68
Silobuster triticale plus 4010 peas	Medium	1.48	1.60	3.08	38	68
Silobuster triticale plus 4010 peas	High	1.73	1.73	3.46	36.5	68
AVERAGE		**1.74**	**1.65**	**3.39**	**33.5**	**60**

Table 2: Average nurse crop yields and stem counts. 25 stems = 44% yield potential (YP), 30 stems = 53% YP, 35 stems = 62% YP, 40 stems = 72% YP, 45 stems = 81% YP, 50 stems = 90% YP, >56 stems = 100% YP (from University of Wisconsin Extension "Alfalfa Stand Assessment: Is this stand good enough to keep?")

Bill Cook, Forester/Biologist from FBIC, shares some informational websites:
Michigan Forests Forever Teachers Guide [https://mff.forest.mtu.edu]
U.P. Tree Identification [http://uptreeid.com]
Michigan Forest Pathways [http://miforestpathways.net]
Michigan Wood Energy [http://msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/wood_energy
"BeLEAF It or Not!" YouTube channel: [https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9Xlg9034e27aWm77vL-6Fg]

The Recipes for Forage Success meeting cancelled at Escanaba and Mass City is now available in recorded segments online.

Jim Isleib, Michigan State University Extension

Forage production is a key component of most farm operations in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The term forage means different things to different farmers: dry hay, pasture, corn silage, haylage, baleage, peas and oats, alfalfa. The list could go on. Michigan State University Extension and MSU researchers continually explore options to improve forages systems on Michigan farms. Kim Cassida, MSU's forage specialist, includes forage trials in the Upper Peninsula in her statewide program. Her website, MSU Forage Connection, contains a wealth of Michigan forage information. In addition, local staff from the MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center and county-based MSU Extension staff conduct trials based on farmer interest and input.

Statewide and locally generated forage information is shared through newsletter articles, the MSU Extension website, ag media and face-to-face educational meetings with farmers. These meetings are usually scheduled in winter months when farmers have more time available to attend.

This year, the Recipes for Forage Success meeting was scheduled for locations in Chippewa, Delta and Ontonagon counties. Unfortunately, the Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" executive order resulted in the cancellation of two of these meetings. To make the meeting content available, presenters have provided video recordings of their segments of the meeting. These recordings are available online at any time and include captions to improve accessibility. The presenters have agreed to respond to any questions you may have about their presentations. Their contact information is included below along with the internet links to their presentations.

Segment #1: **Intro, new MSUE forage bulletins, alfalfa nurse crop study** (25 min, 0 sec) – presented by Jim Isleib, MSU Extension Upper Peninsula crop production educator based in Alger County
Description: An introduction and description of three recent MSU Extension forage-related publications as well as results of a 2018-2019 alfalfa nurse crop study in Chatham, Michigan.
Segment #2: **MSU U.P. Forage Trials and Results** (26 min, 0 sec) presented by James DeDecker, director of the MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Education Center in Chatham.
Description: An overview of several forage research projects conducted at the Center and on various cooperating farms in the region.
Segment #3: **Annual Forages** (20 min, 24 sec) and **Bale Grazing** (13 min, 57 sec) presented Jeremy Sweeten, farmer from Dafter, Michigan, and forage agronomist for CISCO Seeds. Cell phone: 765-427-7966.
Email: jeremysweeten@ciscoseeds.com Description: Annual forage options and bale grazing.
Segment #4: **Fertilize with Hay** (13 min, 50 sec) presented by Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension livestock educator based in Ontonagon County
Description: Improving soil fertility through feeding hay on pastures.

"RECIPES FOR FORAGE SUCCESS" MSU Extension Upper Peninsula 2020 winter forage meeting			
TOPIC	**LINK**	**SPEAKER**	**SPEAKER CONTACT**
Intro, new MSUE forage bulletins, alfalfa nurse crop study (25 min, 0 sec)	https://mediaspace.msu.edu/media/t/1_q6t1a83g	Jim Isleib	Cell: 906-250-9609 Office: 906-387-2530 isleibj@msu.edu
MSU U.P. Forage Trials and Results (26 min, 0 sec)	https://mediaspace.msu.edu/media/t/1_z7j7j957	James DeDecker	Cell: 989-225-3221 Office: 906-439-5176 dedecke5@msu.edu
Annual Forages (20 min, 24 sec)	https://mediaspace.msu.edu/media/t/1_wh12hip1	Jeremy Sweeten	Cell: 765-427-7966 jeremysweeten@ciscoseeds.com
Bale Grazing (13 min, 57 sec)	https://mediaspace.msu.edu/media/t/1_fi2atq33	Jeremy Sweeten	
Fertilize with Hay	https://mediaspace.msu.edu/media/t/1_9scl9g9q	Frank Wardynski	Cell: 906-281-0918 Office: 906-884-4386 wardynsk@msu.edu

Free, weekly 'Virtual Breakfast' program through growing season offered by MSU Extension

Includes valuable ag weather forecast

It is easy to join the highly popular webinar meeting

Spring planting season has already started in parts of Michigan and the Michigan State University (MSU) Extension Field Crops Team has scheduled the 2020 Virtual Breakfast Series.

How can field crops producers get weather, crop management, and pest information?

Beginning April 16th, at 7:00 a.m. on Thursday's during the growing season, you can get the latest information from our MSU Field Crops specialists and educators. The scheduled topics will be fluid, flexible and focused on the most current topics. All field crop producers, agribusiness professionals, government agency personnel, and others interested in field crops production and management are encouraged to participate in our annual webinar based series.

What's Planned?

The webinar series has two segments each week. The first part of the webinar will focus on a specific topic such as early season weed control (a very hot topic this year) or mitigating rutted and rough fields. The second portion of the webinar will be devoted to weather featuring Dr. Jeff Andresen, MSU Climatologist. A question and answer period is available every week.

In 2019, the MSUE Field Crops Team was able to provide up-to-date information on delayed planting due to the excessive wet spring and fall. This segment was neither planned nor anticipated when we started in the spring, but it was important and necessary information last year. In a nutshell, we want to provide what the producers need to be successful. The programs are live at 7:00 a.m. or you can view the recorded version at any time. All recorded versions will be closed-captioned. These will be available at the MSUE Field Crops website and many other media platforms.

How Can I Join?

Participating is easy! You can join the live version using a computer, tablet, mobile device or regular phone line. Follow the Zoom link at **https://msu.zoom.us/j/552324349** to join online, or call in by dialing **669-900-6833**, **Meeting ID: 552-324-349**. Simply download the Zoom app and you will be ready to join every week.

Here are the links for the Zoom app on your cell phones:

Apple - https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/id546505307

Android - https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=us.zoom.videomeetings

If you get busy and would like to receive an email reminder every Wednesday with the topic, time and link for the Virtual Breakfast, sign up at http://eepurl.com/gm-PIv . Participants receiving emails can opt in or out at any time.

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter for breaking news: @MSUEFieldCrops. For more information, contact Phil Kaatz at kaatz@msu.edu or call 810-667-0341.

Classifieds

FOR SALE: Pregnant Black Angus Cows, most due in the month of May, but possibly into the month of June. Contact Jon (906) 265-9333 or email jahlberg@fast-air.net

FOR SALE: Mixed hay, large round bales, 4'x4', $25/bale. Call Al (906)647-6697.

FOR SALE: Hay, large square bales 3x3x7.75 Timothy grass, 4,000 to sell. Former dairy farm doing all big square bales hay. Call Dave Bell in the EUP 906-440-6455 or email Bellsdairy@yahoo.com. Also a realtor in the UP so contact me for real estate here. Dave@smith-company.com

HERD REDUCTION: Red Angus heifers and bulls. Top bloodlines. Gentle and easy to handle. (906) 238-4236.

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FARM FOR SALE: Upper Peninsula Farm with over 1,100 acres, water access, maple syrup production, and much more! **Shady Lane Farms**
http://shadylnfarms.wixsite.com/shadylnfarms
Henry DeGroot (906) 238-4251
hjdegroot@alphacomm.net

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Market Report

Choice Steers	$75-$96 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	$60-$82 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	$48—$52 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	$120-$140 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	$40-$52 per 100 lbs.
Calves	$50—$145 per 100 lbs.
Goats	$200—$300 per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows $1250-$1700/head

Grade Holstein bred heifers $1400-$1800/head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. $/cwt	Avg. $/ton	Price Range
Corn	$11.53	$230.50	$180-342
Soymeal	$19.74	$394.75	$372-450
Oats	$13.49	$269.75	$239-340
Barley	$11.78	$235.50	$180-310

Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots

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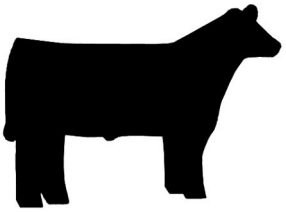

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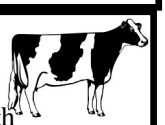

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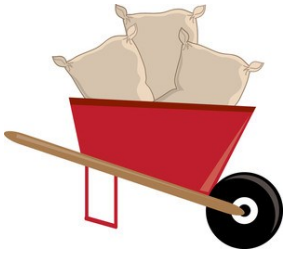

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COVID-19 and Food Safety

By Landen Tetil, Marquette County Conservation District

Currently, there is no evidence that COVID-19 can be transmitted through fresh produce (PMA, verified March 25). While this is reassuring, produce growers should still take precautions against the possibility of transmitting COVID-19 through food or food packaging.

There is plenty of overlap in the hygiene and sanitation practices required by FSMA's Produce Safety Rule and the practices that could help slow the spread of COVID-19. Food safety measures are important for produce farmers to practice all yearlong, including:

- Clean all food contact surfaces (direct and adjacent)
- Sanitize cleaned food contact surfaces with a sanitizer labeled safe for food contact surfaces
- Stay home & away from produce when sick
- Wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds

Additional steps produce growers can take to protect themselves and others against COVID-19 include:

- Practice social distancing by keeping more space between workers
- Minimize the number of times produce is touched by different people
- Avoid sharing tools and equipment
- Plans in place if workers become ill
- Communicate changes with your customers
- Consider alternative or additional delivery routes to minimize person-to-person contact

It is also important to note that at this time, no infections via the fecal-oral route have been clinically verified. However, a recent research study found that fecal samples taken from COVID-19 positive patients contained the virus. Respiratory transmission remains the most significant infection route.