



# U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

March 2024

*Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch*

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**By Frank Wardynski**

I get quite a bit of road time in my travels and often take the time to debate myself driving down the road. My most recent topic was food safety. I used to take the entire spectrum of food safety personally as if I had to defend all food as safe. I no longer take that same approach. I now only defend agriculture food production.

There is a large array of issues that people can be concerned about in the food that we eat. Examples include microorganisms, pesticides, heavy metals, chemical additives, antibiotics, mycotoxins, PFAS, and allergens. Most reputable food scientists that have my faith indicate the greatest food safety concerns are due to microorganisms. Examples of that would include a meat recall due to E coli or salmonella contamination. Most of those concerns are due to food handling practices by the consumer. So, when Kathy Bauer tells clients to not thaw their meat on the kitchen counter, they should listen to her. Kathy is a Community and Nutrition Instructor with MSUE in Ontonagon and Houghton Counties. She and I have lots of nutrition and food safety discussions. Yes, some of the microbial contamination happens at food processing facilities and a few can be caused by poor management practices on the farm, but usually it is in the home.

Many consumers are more concerned with chemicals used in agriculture such as fertilizers, pesticides, and antibiotics. Does anyone remember the alar scare of 1989. Reports of parents chasing the school buses because they had packed applesauce for their kids that day the report came out. A flawed report indicating that alar was detected apples and in apple products. And that alar has been shown to be a known carcinogen. It sounds really bad and it's all kind of true. They probably did find alar on apples and in applesauce, but it was at very low levels. Quantities found below levels determined to be safe by USDA standards. Anyway, the EPA set a zero-tolerance level on alar after that report. I do not believe the EPA decision was science based but rather based on public hysteria. I am always going to believe these types of decisions should be science based.

We in agriculture have not always been responsible with our management. Back in the late 70's and early 80's, the beef industry had a poor reputation. Over 1% of tested carcasses had violative drug residues and in the 1991 beef quality assurance audit, 22% of carcasses had injection site lesions. Rightly so, demand for beef was drastically falling. And this is why I am such a strong proponent of volunteer programs, but today drug residue is nearly non-existent in the industry and injection site blemishes are around 3%. We still need to do a better job. Both those numbers should be zero.

My main concern comes from the food manufacturing industry where we are adding preservatives, dyes, softeners etc. to make food last longer on the shelf and be more visually attractive. Red dye for example. Some dyes are carcinogenic while others cause allergic reactions. So why are we using those? I understand the preservatives and softeners etc. to make bakery products last on the shelf. My wife and I own a restaurant and she makes homemade bread. Three to four days after its made, you will be finding mold. Most of the bread reaching grocery stores is that old before it gets to the shelf. I understand that. Not everybody can buy homemade product and consume it as fast as needed before it loses quality. Kathy Wardynski says the concern for "what is in our food" and "how it is produced" is the leading driver behind the locally grown, locally produced consumer push.

Over time I hope to pull some of the various topics of food safety and give double sided, science based commentary about the food we eat.



## HIGH TUNNEL GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR U.P. FARMERS

Contact: Sarah Monte, Marquette Food Co-op / U.P. Food Exchange  
smonte@marquettefood.coop, (906) 225-0671 x723

UPPER PENINSULA, MI - The U.P. Food Exchange, in partnership with Upper Peninsula Food as Medicine Team and Upper Peninsula Commission for Area Progress, is excited to announce a grant opportunity to support the purchase of high tunnels, or hoop houses, for area farmers.

The grant program, funded by the Superior Health Foundation, will award up to \$12,000 to one farm from each of the U.P.'s three regional planning districts. Funds can be used for the materials and labor to build high tunnels or other propagation structures. The grant includes access to technical assistance for construction and food safety training. High tunnels extend the growing season, allowing farmers to provide food earlier and later in the year than if they were growing without the structures. Additionally, many crops popular at farmers markets, such as tomatoes and peppers, are best grown in a high tunnel. High tunnels are an important tool to make local food more accessible for more of the year in the U.P. but are one of the bigger expenses for a farm.

"Farm debt is a huge problem across the country. Even small-scale farming requires taking on a high amount of debt that is difficult to pay back, especially with an income that varies seasonally," said Sarah Monte, outreach director at the Marquette Food Co-op and UPFE member. "UPFE is thrilled to be working on a project that helps minimize or remove a financial barrier for our area farms. All of us in the community benefit when local farms succeed."

The high tunnel grants are meant to complement the other component of the Food as Medicine Collaboration, which is a Prescription for Health Program. In Prescription for Health, individuals at risk for or diagnosed with a chronic health condition who also have an economic barrier to purchasing fresh produce are referred by an approved health care practitioner to the program. Qualified participants receive vouchers each month that can be spent on fresh produce at participating farmers markets. The Food as Medicine team recognizes that to ensure there is adequate produce at area farmers markets across the U.P., area farms must also receive support to expand their operations and increase the volume of their produce production.

"Currently, 1 in 7 individuals or approximately 14 percent of U.P. residents are food insecure. With the national average at 10.5 percent, the local numbers are significant," said Tammy Rosa, nutrition program manager at UPCAP. "UPCAP participates in many community initiatives throughout the region and is very excited to be a part of this collaboration of partners working to improve the food security of residents with economic barriers, while building a stronger regional food system."

- **Applications open February 28, 2024**
- **Application Deadline is March 27, 2024 at 5pm**
- **Awards Announced April 3, 2024**

### **Project Completion Deadline is September 20, 2024**

To learn more and to access the grant application, visit <https://upfoodexchange.com/high-tunnel-grant-program/>. Questions can be directed to [info@upfoodexchange.com](mailto:info@upfoodexchange.com) or 906-225-0671 x723.

To learn more about Prescription for Health, visit <http://upcap.org/program/food-as-medicine>

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## Livestock Price Protection and Grazing to Improve Soil Health

By Frank Wardynski

Michigan State University Extension will be conducting educational program focused on beef production, but useful information for other species also. Frank Wardynski MSUE educator will discuss how to use the Livestock Risk Protection Program to lock in high cattle prices. Michelle Sweeten MSUE educator will discuss regenerative agriculture using grazing to improve soil health. Educational sessions will begin at 6:00 EDT, 5:00 CDT. The April 3, session in Rudyard will be in conjunction with Farm Bureau member recruitment which will start at 5:30 EDT.

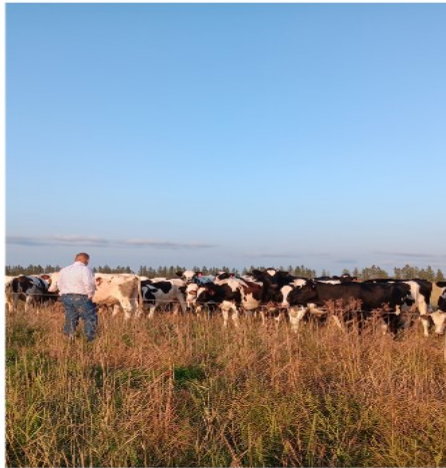
### Schedule

#### Date Location

April 2, 2024 Twilly's in Bruce Crossing

April 3, 2024 Rudyard Twp Hall in Rudyard

April 4, 2024 Bay College, Rm 901 Heirman Center in Escanaba



Save this date!

# BEGINNER GRAZING SCHOOL

10 online sessions

Tuesday & Thursday Evenings

starting April 2, 2024 ~ 7-8:30 pm EST

For more information

Contact Michelle Sweeten [sweeten1@msu.edu](mailto:sweeten1@msu.edu)  
or Kable Thurlow [thurlowk@msu.edu](mailto:thurlowk@msu.edu)

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## PUBLIC EVENT


# 64th Annual Meeting


Featured Speakers | Au Train-Onota Robotics Students

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### Date and Place

 Tuesday, March 19th | 4:30-6:30PM

 Gallery Coffee Company, 120 Elm Ave, Munising, MI 49862



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### Marlette Livestock Auction

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**Sale Date March 9, 2024**

Featuring Dairy Cattle, Cow/Calf Pairs & Bred Brood Cows,  
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**Hay & Straw Auction - Every Monday @ 12:00 PM**

1000+ Small Squares & 150+ Rounds/Large Squares Weekly

**Livestock Auction - Every Monday @ 1:00 PM**

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6381 Euclid St., Marlette, MI 48453

Robert Filhart, Owner (989)330-6005

Haley Filhart, Owner (989)430-2055

### Classifieds

**For Sale:** Red or Black Wagyu Bulls, Call Paul at MSU 906-439-5114  
Ext. 2

**For Sale:** Alfalfa Baleage, Contact Jim Dalgord 906-644-2107

**For Sale:** Red Angus Bull, 1 1/2 year old, Great bloodline, good  
disposition, 1832#. Call Don Nault 906-786-3951 Or Cell 906-398-  
9865

**Wanted: Pasture** for 25-35 cow calf pairs for the summer of 2024  
in the Eastern UP. Will consider a custom grazing arrangement as  
well. Call Ben (989) 370-3570.

**Straw for Sale:** Small squares or 4x5 Large round bales. Call Paul  
at MSU 906-439-5114 Ext. 2

**FOR SALE: Inline Bale Wrapper**, 2015 Anderson NWX-660. Honda  
gas engine, self propelled, remote control. Stored inside last 2  
years. \$24,000. Also, 1000 gallon **pull behind Sprayer** with 60 ft  
boom. \$1,000. Both in Hancock. Call Nate (906)370-1876.

**FOR SALE: Hay**, mixed round bales, 700# stored inside. Also small  
square bales of straw. Call Jim Myers (906)399-1649 or (906) 466-  
2672.

**FOR SALE: small square bales of straw** and small squares of first  
crop hay. Call Marenger's Farm (906)384-6587.

**FOR SALE: Mixed Hay round bales**, 700#, \$20. Call Alan or Karen  
Raynard @ (906) 647-6697, Pickford.

### Market Report

Choice Steers	\$160-\$187 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$115-\$168 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$68-\$76 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$180-\$260 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$80-\$115 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$250-\$500 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$200-\$400 per 100 lbs.

#### Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows top \$2550/head

Grade Holstein bred heifers top \$2550/head

### Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$15.19	\$303.75	\$220-510
Soymeal	\$27.99	\$559.75	\$440-655
Oats	\$18.20	\$364.00	\$319-416
Barley	\$15.08	\$301.50	\$240-386
Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots			

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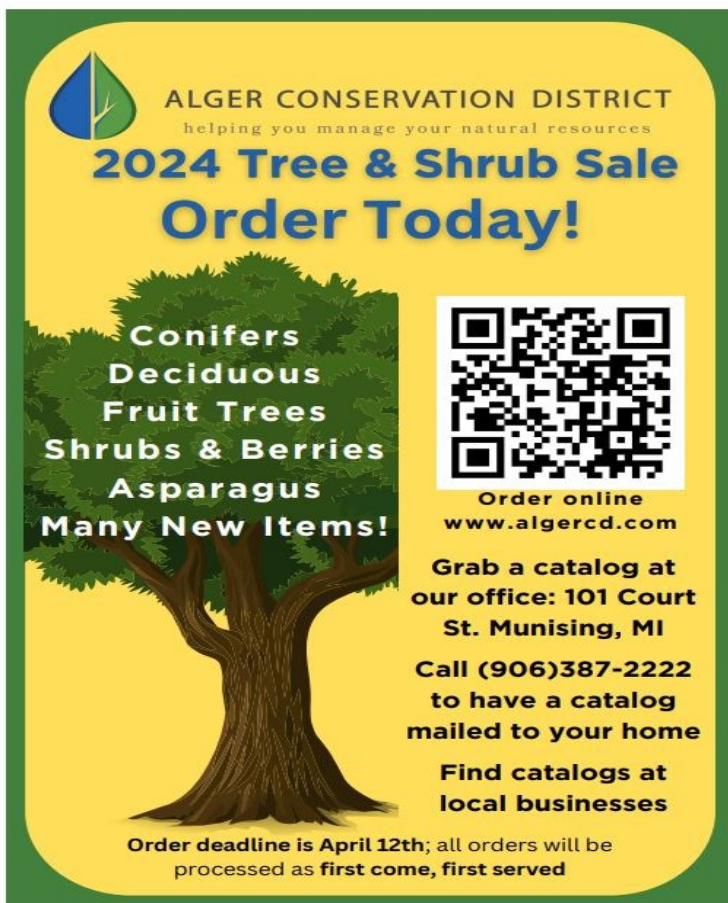
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# UPREC 125<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

**August 10, 2024**

MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center  
E3774 University Drive, Chatham

**QUESTIONS?**  
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