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UW Extension
Cooperative Extension
Shawano County

Shawano County Agricultural Newsletter

UW-Extension

April 2012

Greetings!

We're off to an early start this spring, but it's still uncertain what the next few months may bring. Soon it will be time for planting corn and cutting hay and if there is anything UW-Extension can assist you with this spring just let me know.

Happy Spring! - Katie Behnke

Inside this issue:

Cost-Share Funding for Soil & Water Conservation Practices Available Through Shawano County

It is the ultimate goal of the Land Conservation Department to reduce the levels of phosphorus and sediment being delivered to waters of Shawano County. To do so, they have been awarded grant funds from WI DATCP for 2012 in two categories: 1) Nutrient Management ($30,000), 2) Construction ($20,000). Interested landowners are asked to check with our office for eligibility requirements and cost-share rates.

The priority areas are: 1) Lands in the Shawano Lake Watershed, 2) Livestock operations countywide in close proximity to surface water, 3) Other priority sites. Some of the best management practices eligible for cost-sharing include: Nutrient Management Plans, Barnyard Runoff Control, Clean-water Diversions, Well Decommissioning, Wetland Restoration, Grassed Waterways, Animal Waste Storage, Animal Waste Storage Closure, Prescribed Grazing and Livestock Fencing (near sensitive areas).

Interested landowners need to fill out a Shawano County Cost-Share Grant Application request form and return it to the Land Conservation staff in the Planning and Development office at the Courthouse. The form is available on the county website or can be obtained from the office. For more information, contact Brian Hanson, Scott Frank or Blake Schuebel at (715) 526-6766.

To obtain the form online go to www.co.shawano.wi.us, click on "Departments" on the left side of the page, click on "Planning and Development", then click on "Land Conservation", and then click on "Forms and Documents" on the right side of the page. From here you will be able to download the Conservation Practice Cost-Share Application.

Forage Council Scholarship Available

The Shawano County Forage Council will be offering scholarships for students from Shawano County pursuing a degree in agriculture. There are three scholarships available – $500 for a continuing student at a four-year university, $250 for a first year student at a four-year university, and $250 for a first or second year student attending a technical college or short course program. **The application is due May 15, 2012**.

More information and the application available at:
http://shawano.uwex.edu/agriculture/

WI Farm Fun Facts

- There are 350 squirts in a gallon of milk.
- One pound of wool can make 10 miles of yarn.
- Soybeans are an important ingredient for the production of crayons. In fact, one acre of soybeans can produce 82,368 crayons.

Facts obtained from http://www.farmersfeedus.org/fun-farm-facts/.

When will we be able to make first crop? Find out with a PEAQ stick!

The Shawano County Forage Council will be sponsoring the PEAQ (**P**redictive **E**quations for **A**lfalfa **Q**uality) measurements again this year. The measurements will start the first or second week of May and go until the first week of June. Measurements will be taken on Mondays and Thursdays.

The results of the measurements will be posted on the PEAQ Hotline at **715-526-4878**. The results will also be posted on the UW-Extension website: **http://shawano.uwex.edu**

How to use a PEAQ stick:

Step 1: Choose a representative 2-square-foot area in the field.
Step 2: Determine the most mature stem in the 2-square foot sampling area using the criteria shown in the table at the right.
Step 3: Measure the length of the tallest stem in the 2-square-foot area. Measure it from the soil surface (next to plant crown) to the tip of the stem (NOT to the tip of the highest leaf blade). Straighten the stem for an accurate measure of its length. The tallest stem may not be the most mature stem.
Step 4: Based on the most mature stem and length of the tallest stem, use the chart at the right to determine estimated RFV content of the standing alfalfa forage.
Step 5: Repeat steps 1 to 4 in four or five representative areas across the field. Sample more times for fields larger than 30 acres.

Height of Tallest Stem (from soil surface to stem tip)	Stage of Most Mature Stem: LATE VEGETATIVE — Vegetative (>12") No buds visible	BUD STAGE — 1 or more nodes with visible buds. No flowers visible	FLOWER STAGE — 1 or more nodes with open flower(s)
-inches-	----------Relative Feed Value----------		
16	237	225	210
17	230	218	204
18	224	212	198
19	217	207	193
20	211	201	188
21	205	196	183
22	200	190	178
23	195	185	174
24	190	181	170
25	185	176	166
26	180	172	162
27	175	168	158
28	171	164	154
29	167	160	151
30	163	156	147
31	159	152	144
32	155	149	140
33	152	145	137
34	148	142	134
35	145	139	131
36	142	136	128
37	138	133	126
38	135	130	123
39	132	127	121
40	129	124	118
41	127	122	115
42	124	119	113

Note: This procedure estimates alfalfa RFV of the standing crop. It does not account for changes in quality due to wilting, harvesting, and storage. These factors may further lower RFV by 15 to 25 points, assuming good wilting and harvesting conditions. This procedure is most accurate for good stands of pure alfalfa with healthy growth.

Farm Management Update for Ag Professionals
Friday, May 4, 2012—Liberty Hall, Kimberly

9:15 am	Registration, coffee, juice, and rolls
9:45 am	**"Land Values – What Does a Trend Analysis Tell Us?"** Update on the most recent land sale statistics and rental rate correlations. - *Arlin Brannstrom, Farm Management Specialist, UW-Center for Dairy Profitability*
10:30 am	**"Farm Rental Agreements – The Legal Side"** A discussion on the legal aspects of oral and written farmland lease agreements. - *George Twohig, Attorney, Twohig Rietbrock Schneider & Halbach, S.C.*
11:15 am	**"The New World of Crop Land Rental Leases"** Considerations and alternatives to traditional cash leases. - *Mike Rankin, Fond du Lac County UW-Extension Crops & Soils Agent*
12:00 noon	Lunch
1:00 pm	**"How the Global Investment Industry Views Agriculture"** A look at agriculture from an entirely different perspective. - *Rick Tiedemann, VP Financial Advisor, Morgan Stanley Smith Barney*
1:45 pm	**"Improving Profitability through Genome Enhanced Control of Dairy Replacement Costs"** The nuts and bolts of applying fast breaking technology to the commercial dairy industry. - *Cheryl Marti, Dairy Production Specialist, Pfizer Animal Health* - *Tim Swenson, Business Consultant, Lookout Ridge Consulting*
2:30 pm	Adjourn

Farm Management Update for Ag Professionals

Registration Form

Name(s):_____

_____

Business:_____

Address: _____

_____

City:_____

Zip Code:_____

Phone Number::_____

Registration Fee: $30 per person

Make check payable to: **UW-Extension**

Mail this registration form and check to:

UW-Extension
Attention: Connie
206 Court Street
Chilton, WI 53014-1127

Registration Deadline: April 27, 2012

Protect Your Hearing...From Rhonda Strebel, Rural Health Initiative

Some people may think a farm is a quiet place to live or work, but as you know that is not always the case. Combines, tractors, and even farm animals can create a noisy environment that puts our hearing at risk. Too much noise gradually damages tiny sensory cells in your inner ear, causing noise-induced hearing loss or NIHL. The damage may not be noticeable at first, but once it occurs, the hearing loss is permanent. The louder the sound, the more likely that damage will occur. The distance between you and that sound and the amount of time your ears are exposed to the sound also matter.

Sound is measured in units called decibels. The softest sound that healthy ears can hear is 0 decibels -near total silence. By comparison a whisper measures 30 decibels, and normal conversation measures at 60 decibels. Hearing protection, such as earplugs or earmuffs, is recommended to be worn when a person's ears are exposed to noises at or above 85 decibels for a prolonged period of time.

- Closed cab tractor is about 85 decibels; prolonged exposure to any noise at or above 85 decibels can cause gradual hearing loss.
- Tractor without a cab, a wood shop, or pig squeals can reach 100 decibels or higher. No more than 15 minutes of unprotected exposure at or above 100 decibels is recommended.
- Grain dryers and chain saws can reach 110 decibels or higher. Regular unprotected exposure of more than 1 minute at 110 decibels or higher can cause permanent hearing damage.
- If running a piece of farm equipment and you have to shout to be hard over the noise, or you find yourself talking louder in the milk house or barn, then you should be wearing hearing protection.

Help protect your family and workers from excessive farm noise by:

- Maintain equipment, lubricate and replace worn parts to reduce noise from friction or vibrations.
- Install noise-reducing mufflers on engines
- Plan your work, and limit your time near noise.
- Turn machinery off when it is not needed
- Use idle or lower speeds whenever possible
- Wear earplugs and earmuffs.

As with anything, starting a new habit, such as wearing hearing protection- needs some getting use to. Contrary to excuse, you can still hear with hearing protection, it is meant to muffle the noise from above normal levels down to normal safe levels so that you can work safely around noise for longer period of times. Wearing protection does not mean that you won't be able to hear sounds. Learning to insert ear plugs for the proper fit is important also, to insert an earplug, you must first reach over heard with the opposite hand/arm and pull up on the top of your ear. This opens the hearing canal so that the ear plug fits properly. Don't try pushing or screwing an earplug into an ear without pulling up on the ear first otherwise the plug will continue to fall out. To purchase earplugs or earmuffs, you may contact the Rural Health Initiative at 715-524-1488. It's cheaper now to prevent hearing loss, than buying hearing aids later.

Lambing Tour/Field Day

A lamb barn tour/field day will be held Thursday, April 19 from 5-6:30 p.m. at Dr. Bob and Penny Leder's Bear Creek Sheep Station (www.bearcreeksheep.com) six miles south of Clintonville on County Highway T. The Leder's will discuss how, since 1987, they have developed a pasture-based prolific-lambing system that has grown to include ninety ewes rotationally grazed on less than eighty acres while lambing during the pasture season. The field day will feature a tour of their lambing facilities, including an informal discussion about how they graft lambs and manage large litters. With many years of practical experience and technical training, new and experienced shepherds and youth livestock project members will find something new and interesting to learn from this event.

Dr. Bob Leder is a practicing large animal veterinarian. There is no cost for the field day. The farm is located at N8714 County Road T Bear Creek, WI.

For more information, contact either Claire Sandrock at clairemikolay@gmail.com or Greg Blonde, Waupaca County UW-Extension Agent at 715-258-6231 or greg.blonde@ces.uwex.edu.

Corn Shredlage for Dairy Cows by Luiz Ferraretto and Randy Shaver

Garnering much recent interest by dairy producers and their nutritionists has been a new method of harvesting whole-plant corn for silage. The resultant product has been called corn shredlage by the developer of the process. Although a recent development with limited information available, in this article we will provide responses to the most frequently asked questions concerning this topic.

What is different about the corn shredlage method of harvest?

Corn shredlage is silage produced from whole-plant corn that has been harvested with a commercially-available self-propelled forage harvester (SPFH) fitted with aftermarket cross-grooved crop processing rolls and the SPFH set for a longer theoretical length of cut (TLOC) than commonly used. At the time of writing this article, these rolls have only been adapted on Claas SPFH, although the manufacturer has indicated that kits are being developed for John Deere SPFH too.

What is different about corn shredlage compared to normal processed corn silage?

Compared to normal processed corn silage harvested with the chopper set at 19 mm TLOC, the most obvious difference for corn shredlage harvested with the SPFH set at 30 mm TLOC is a greater proportion of coarse stover particles in the shredlage. When fed in rations for lactating dairy cows, this can increase the physically-effective neutral detergent fiber (peNDF) content of the ration which is important for proper rumen function, cow health and milk fat content. The cross-grooved rolls used for producing corn shredlage may cause greater damage to the coarse stover particles and allow for greater digestibility of the NDF, but this has yet to be evaluated. With proper roll gap settings for both types of crop processing rolls differences in kernel and cob breakage would not be expected, but this has not been compared in detail to our knowledge.

How were the corn shredlage and corn silage harvested for the UW feeding trial and what were the harvest and storage results?

A 20 acre field at UW AARS planted with a dual-purpose hybrid was used for the study. One day apart in early September, 2011 half the field was harvested as corn shredlage (SHRD) and the other half harvested as normal processed corn silage (KPCS). The SHRD and KPCS were stored in separate side by side 10' diameter by 200' long silo bags and allowed to ferment for one month before commencing the dairy feeding trial.

For harvest of the SHRD, a SPFH equipped with the new shredlage processing rolls was set for a 30 mm TLOC by removing half of the knives and the processor roll gap set at 2.5 mm. Some forage harvester manufacturers recommend not removing knives when harvesting whole-plant corn silage. The very long particle-size that results from removing knives can put added stress on SPFH components like the cutter-head and blower. Careful consideration concerning SPFH wear and longevity should be made by the SPFH operator before knives are removed when harvesting whole-plant corn silage no matter what type of processor is used. Harvest of the KPCS was done using the UW AARS SPFH set for a 19 mm TLOC and equipped with conventional processing rolls. The processor roll gap was not altered from that normally used by UW AARS for harvest of corn silage for the UW Dairy. The exact roll gap was undetermined, but appeared to be greater than 3 mm based on kernel processing results. For samples collected at harvest, the corn silage processing score (CSPS; % of starch passing through a 4.75 mm screen) was 50 for KPCS and 65 for SHRD.

The SHRD and KPCS were similar in dry matter (DM; 35.0% versus 34.7%) and starch (37.6% versus 38.7%) concentrations, pH (3.59versus 3.61), and silo bag packing density. The proportion of coarse particles was greater for SHRD than KPCS for samples collected during feed-out from the silo bags throughout the feeding trial (31.5% versus 5.6% retained on the 19 mm screen of the Penn State Separator Box). For the total mixed rations

Image: Shredlage sample with coarser stover particles than normally seen with typical processed corn silage.

(TMR) fed throughout the trial, the proportion of coarse particles was greater for TMR prepared with SHRD than KPCS (15.6% versus 3.5% retained on the 19 mm screen of the Penn State Separator Box). Our measurements of weigh-backs during the trial did not reveal feed sorting for either treatment.

What were the results of the feeding trial?

Fourteen 8-cow pens, balanced by breed, parity and days in milk, were randomly assigned to either SHRD or KPCS treatment TMR. At the start of the feeding, SHRD and KPCS cows were 114 ± 35 and 117 ± 36 DIM. All pens were fed a 50:50 mixture (DM basis) in the TMR for a 2-week covariate adjustment, followed by an 8-week treatment period pens received their respective treatment TMR containing 50% (DM basis) from either SHRD or KPCS. Both TMR treatments contained 10% alfalfa silage and 40% (DM basis) of the same concentrate mix comprised of dry ground shelled corn, corn gluten feed, solvent and expeller soybean meal, rumen-inert fat, minerals, vitamins and Rumensin®. Statistical analysis of the data was done using pen rather than cow as the experimental unit.

Dry matter intake (DMI) tended to be 1.4 lb/day per cow greater for SHRD than KPCS, while milk yield (96.0 vs. 94.2 lb/day per cow for SHRD vs. KPCS) and feed efficiency (1.72 vs. 1.73 lb Milk/lb DMI for SHRD vs. KPCS) were similar.

Yield of 3.5% fat-corrected milk (FCM) tended to be greater for SHRD than KPCS (100.1 vs. 97.8 lb/day per cow for SHRD vs. KPCS). A week by treatment interaction was detected; there was no difference between the treatments at week 2, FCM yield tended to be greater for SHRD compared to KPCS at weeks 4 and 6, and FCM yield was 4.4 lb/day per cow greater for SHRD than KPCS at week 8.

Milk fat, protein and urea-nitrogen contents were unaffected by treatment and averaged 3.72%, 3.20% and 13.8 mg/dL, respectively. Body weight and condition score and body-weight change were similar for the two treatments.

Are there different guidelines for using shredlage in dairy diets compared to corn silage?

To the extent that the stover particle length can be increased while maintaining adequate kernel processing, the use of corn shredlage may allow for the feeding of higher forage diets. Assess particle size of corn shredlage as an indicator of peNDF and CSPS of corn shredlage as an indicator of starch digestibility to determine what ration adjustments may be warranted. More data is needed regarding NDF digestibility for corn shredlage and the relative peNDF for corn shredlage compared to hay-crop silage, whole cottonseed, and chopped hay or straw, to allow for better decisions on how best to utilize corn shredlage in dairy cattle diets.

USDA Reports a Jumble of Surprises

By Scott Irwin...March 30, 2012

For the crops included in the report of planting intentions, total planted acreage is expected to increase by 8.6 million acres from that of 2011. The overall increase in total planted acreage is consistent with strong market incentives for most crops this year. The increase was led by grains, up 6.9 million acres, hay (harvested), up 1.7 million acres, and dry beans, peas and lentils, up 1.4 million acres. Cotton and tobacco were exceptions to the across-the-board increases, with total planted acreage for these two crops down 1.6 million acres.

Even with expectations for a substantial jump in corn planted acres, the size of the reported corn planting intentions, 95.864 million acres, surprised even the most optimistic. The average trade guess before the report was near 94.5 million and the highest was around 95.7 million. If realized, the prospective corn plantings will be the largest since 1937. The largest increases are expected in North Dakota (+1.7 million), Minnesota (+600,000), Iowa (+500,000), and Nebraska (+450,000). Texas (-100,000) was the only significant producing state with fewer acres than last year.

The implication of the planted acreage estimate for the size of the 2012 crop hinges on yield expectations. Three factors are keys with regard to corn yield expectations. First, trend-yield estimates hinge on the use of long-term versus short-term data samples. Short-term samples are justified based on the view that transgenic traits have recently increased the rate of growth in corn trend yields. While there is some emerging evidence this may be the case, our view is that the effect, if true, was relatively modest and that a long-term trend yield of about 159-160 bushels for the U.S. is still the best estimate. Second, the recent record warmth makes it likely that corn will be planted much faster than normal in 2012. The yield advantage of early planting is largely the avoidance of late planting. Our recent estimate is that early planting may add up to 2 bushels per acre to the U.S. average corn yield. Third, it has turned dry over much of the Corn Belt during the last 90 days. This has a relatively modest yield impact but the unusual recent weather conditions (85

degrees in March!) only increase the uncertainty about summer growing conditions. On balance, a yield expectation of 160 bushels for 2012 seems reasonable at the present time.

Planting intentions for soybeans surprised in the opposite direction. Soybean prospective plantings were reported at 73.9 million, down over a million acres from the area planted in 2011. The average trade guess before the report was near 75.5 million acres, with the lowest around 74.5 million. So, just the reverse of corn, soybean planting intentions were even smaller than the most pessimistic prediction. The largest declines were in Iowa (-550,000), Missouri (-250,000), Nebraska (-200,000), Minnesota (-200,000), and Kansas (-100,000).

The other big surprise in today's report was the estimate of March 1 stocks of corn. At 6.01 billion bushels, March 1 inventories of corn were 514 million bushels smaller than last year's stocks and 150 million less than the average trade guess before the report. This March 1 inventory estimate implies that corn consumption during the more recent winter quarter was very large or that earlier stock estimates for the current marketing year were too high. Our view is that the latter explanation is more likely to be true given livestock inventories, the depressing effect of warm winter temperatures on feed use, ethanol production to date, and strong basis levels. In either case, the corn market must now seek a price that rations usage so that stocks at the end of the current marketing year at least exceed minimum pipeline levels by some reasonable amount. The market apparently had assumed that prices up to this point were sufficient to do the job.

March 1 stocks of soybeans were reported at 1.37 billion bushels, 78 million bushels larger than stocks of a year ago, but 9 million bushels smaller than the average trade guess. In view of the soybean production declines in South America this winter, the estimate of soybean stocks implies that more rationing of the 2011 crop may be required.

The overall picture that one gets from the reports is a further tightening of the old crop supply/demand situation, and even with the sizable increase in overall planted acres in 2012, a glaring need for good U.S. yields in 2012 in order to rebuild stocks back to more adequate levels. Growing season weather will once again be crucial in 2012.

Dairy 30x20 Grants Available for Farmers to Become More Profitable

The Grow Wisconsin Dairy Team at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has been working for dairy farmers for years, and now there are new grants available to do more. The Grow Wisconsin Dairy Producer Grants offer technical assistance to dairy farmers to help them meet the state's goal of the Dairy 30x20 Initiative.

DATCP Secretary Ben Brancel said "The Grow Wisconsin Dairy Producer Grants are a new tool available for producers to retain farms, facilitate operational changes and improve profitability. By helping each farm become profitable, Wisconsin will produce 30 billion pounds of milk annually by 2020."

Cost share payments by the farmer are required at 20% of the grant amount. A grant request for proposals for the Grow Wisconsin Dairy Producer Grants includes a one-page pre-application that covers contact information, farm information, business goals and project area(s) of focus. Two types of grants are available:

- **Planning & Preparation Teams:** Up to a $5,000 grant to be applied towards business development and expansion needs. Examples include business planning, financial analysis, transition planning and farm transfers. The grant money can also provide assistance with professional services costs related to dairy farm modernization and expansion efforts such as siting, engineering, design, layout of new barns, parlors or farm structures.
- **Dairy Profit Teams:** Up to a $5,000 grant to develop an on-farm management team to assist dairy producers in improving management of existing operational systems and identify opportunities to improve profit. Topics include new or appropriate technology implementation, farm growth, financial success, long-term sustainability, and production enhancing measures.

To access the grant application materials, visit GrowWisconsinDairy.wi.gov. To contact the Grow Wisconsin Dairy Team, call toll-free 1-855-WIDAIRY (943-2479) or email GrowWisconsinDairy@wi.gov.

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Upcoming Events

Outstanding Young Farmer and Friend of Agriculture Award Banquet—Friday, April 13
Shawano County Park
Cocktails at 6:45, meal at 7:30. Cost $16 per person.

Shawano County Brunch on the Farm—June 24
Schmidt's Ponderosa, W3847 Old Dump Rd. Bondue

Outagamie County Farm Technology Days—July 17-19
Sugar Creek Farm LLC and Heideman Farms
To learn more about the show and for volunteer information go to http://www.outagamiefarmtech.com/