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# Shawano County Agricultural Newsletter

UW-Extension

December 2011



## Happy Holidays from UW-Extension!

Whether you are a dairy, livestock, or cash crop farmer, there are a lot of educational opportunities available for you through the UW-Extension office this winter.

As always, feel free to get in touch with any questions or concerns and make sure to check out our website ([shawano.uwex.edu](http://shawano.uwex.edu)) and Facebook page (Shawano County UW-Extension Agriculture) for all of the latest local agricultural updates!

*Katie Behnke*

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## Agricultural Economic Update Forum—Webinar

What's the current status of Wisconsin's agricultural economy? What are commodity prices going to do in 2012? What changes will the new Farm Bill bring about?

UW-Extension, UW-Madison, and UW-River Falls economists and commodity specialists will bring the answers to these questions and more when they provide their annual review of the financial status and market policy/trends connected to the state's \$60 billion agricultural sector.

This free event will be held on Jan. 25, 2012 1:00-4:15 p.m., and be broadcast from the Shawano County Courthouse.

## New Cropland Lease Forms Available

It's the time of year when you may be thinking about updating rental agreements for your farm. The North Central Farm Management Extension Committee has recently updated the many of the cropland rental forms, as well as publications to help you decide what type of rental agreement is best for your farm. The site contains information about fixed and flexible cash rental agreements, crop-share rental arrangements and pasture rental agreements. Forms are available at [www.aglease101.org](http://www.aglease101.org) or the Shawano County UW-Extension website ([shawano.uwex.edu](http://shawano.uwex.edu)) by clicking on the "Agriculture" tab.

### Inside this issue:

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <i>Ag Economic Update</i>                                      | 1 |
| <i>Lease Information</i>                                       | 1 |
| <i>Cow College</i>   | 2 |
| <i>Quickbooks Workshop</i>                                     | 3 |
| <i>Nutrient Management with Volatile Nutrient, Crop Prices</i> | 4 |
| <i>Pesticide Applicator Training</i>                           | 5 |
| <i>OSHA on Dairy Farms</i>                                     | 5 |
| <i>Corn &amp; Soybean Conference</i>                           | 6 |
| <i>Agronomy Update</i>   | 7 |
| <i>Hire the Right People</i>                                   | 7 |

### Based on average national prices, what share of money spent on food goes to the farmer?

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| One Dozen Eggs:        |  |
| Retail: \$3.69         |  |
| Farmer: \$1.02         |  |
| One Pound of Bacon:    |  |
| Retail: \$5.89         |  |
| Farmer: \$0.89         |  |
| One Gallon Skim Milk:  |  |
| Retail: \$4.39         |  |
| Farmer: \$1.71         |  |
| One Pound of Tomatoes: |  |
| Retail: \$3.68         |  |
| Farmer: \$0.44         |  |

Source: National Farmers Union



Your county extension office

University of Wisconsin-Extension

# Cow College 2012

1:00 pm – FVTC Regional Center, Clintonville



## January 10 – Dairy Farm Human Resources

### **Cheryl Skjolaas – UW-Extension Agricultural Safety and Health Specialist**

Keeping employees and family members safe should be the number one priority on the farm. This session will discuss farm safety from a managerial and legal standpoint, including the latest in farm OSHA regulations. Regardless of how many people your farm employs, this presentation will cover what you need to know to keep the agricultural workplace safe.

### **Trisha Wagner - Jackson County UW-Extension Agricultural Agent**

No matter if the help on your farm consists of only family or a large workforce, managing employees can be a challenge. This session will cover how to establish consistent expectations and provide strategies to motivate employees based on their unique personality.

## January 17 – Ventilation and Its Impact on Calf Health

### **Ken Nordlund – DVM, UW-Madison, School of Veterinary Medicine**

The first step to healthy calves is ensuring they are raised in a clean comfortable environment. Dr. Nordlund will discuss tube ventilation, calf housing considerations, and provide tips to help you optimize calf health on your farm.

## January 24 – Farm Tours

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### **Cow College Registration**

Register for the sessions you plan to attend:  Jan 10  Jan 17  Jan 24 (Tour)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Cost is \$5.00/day or \$10.00 total for all three = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make Checks Payable to: Shawano County UWEX

Send Registration to: Shawano County UWEX, 311 N Main St #101, Shawano, WI 54166

# QuickBooks for Farm Financial Recordkeeping Workshop

Thursday January 5, 2012

NWTC –Shawano Regional Center

111 Thomas Avenue

10:00 a.m. — 3:00 p.m

Cost: \$10

Quickbooks is a popular financial recordkeeping program and management tool, which allows you to track and manage income, expenses, bank accounts, receivables, inventory, fixed assets, payables, loans, payroll and equity in your farm business. QuickBooks also provides you with standard and customized detailed reports that are essential to making good decisions.

During this hands-on computer session you will develop a simple set of farm financial records and reports while learning basic accounting skills for use with Quickbooks.

## Sponsors:



## Farm Financial Recordkeeping Registration Form

**Deadline: December 30, 2011 - Space is limited**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ County: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**Registration Cost: \$10 (includes lunch)**

Please indicate dietary and/or accessibility needs:

University of Wisconsin, U.S. Department of Agriculture and Wisconsin counties cooperating. An EEO/AA employer, University of Wisconsin-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and American with Disabilities (ADA) requirements.

Send Registration form and check to:

Shawano County UW-Extension  
Attn: Rhonda  
311 N Main Street Room 101  
Shawano WI 54166

**Make Check payable to:**

**Shawano County UW-Extension**

For more information contact:

Katie Behnke  
(715) 526-6136  
katie.behnke@ces.uwex.edu

## Nutrient Management With Volatile Nutrient, Crop Prices

By Jerry Clark, Chippewa County Crops & Soils Educator

Forages, especially alfalfa and corn silage, are big demanders of nutrients. Whether your forage crop receives its nutrients through legumes, manure, or fertilizer, it needs them. Crop input prices have fluctuated dramatically over the past few years and future prices appear to be just as unstable. Fortunately, crop prices have also increased to help offset some of the production costs due to increased input costs. Getting a handle on nutrient management in a high-cost environment can help reduce some of the angst when it comes to fertilizer costs.

If phosphate and/or potash fertilizer prices increase, or if a farmer does not want to purchase all of the P and K fertilizer that they would like to apply, then it may be necessary to prioritize which fields should have fertilizer applied. A current soil test is crucial for prioritizing fertilizer applications. A current soil test is one that is no more than 3 to 4 years old and is based on samples collected following guidelines developed by a university such as University of Wisconsin-Extension's UWEX A2809. Crops such as alfalfa and corn silage remove large quantities of P and K relative to other crops so keeping tabs on how much nutrient is removed from your forage plan is crucial. One ton of corn silage at 65% moisture removes 3.6 lbs. of  $P_2O_5$  and 8.3 lbs. of  $K_2O$ . Alfalfa removes 13 lbs of  $P_2O_5$  and 60 lbs. of  $K_2O$ /ton of dry matter. With the higher costs of nutrients, the value of good soil tests has increased because soil tests are the primary tools used to assess nutrient need.

After assessing the soil test P and K levels and determining how much fertilizer is suggested, subtract P and K credits from any manure, biosolids, or other waste materials applied to the field since the harvest of the previous crop. Use university nutrient application guidelines to assist in determining nutrient credits. High fertilizer prices have dramatically increased the nutrient value of manure. For example, solid dairy manure was worth \$2.90/ton in 1997 and 5.10/ton in November 2007 based on the first year available nutrient content of the manure and the price of fertilizer. Today solid dairy manure is worth \$7.00/ton in nutrients. Depending on how much a farm is paying for manure hauling/application costs, it may be beneficial to spread manure over more acres and purchase less fertilizer, as long as the manure applications are in compliance with the farm's nutrient management plan.

After subtracting manure P and K credits from the nutrient needs of a field, P and K fertilizer should be

allocated in such a manner as to obtain the greatest return on the fertilizer investment. If soil test P levels are above optimum and the expected yield response to phosphate fertilizer is small, a phosphorous application may not be economical. Thus, when soil test P levels are high or excessively high, consider not applying P fertilizer or consider using lower rates (less than 10 lbs.  $P_2O_5$ /acre) in starter fertilizer. This strategy will permit growers to allocate dollars for other more needed nutrients.

Soil test K levels are much more variable across fields. All fields that test low or very low should have K fertilizer applied. Fields with optimum soil test K levels will also benefit from potash application. There is a smaller probability of a yield response to applied K on soils testing high or above; thus K application rates may be reduced or deferred on these fields. Caution is advised when deferring K applications on fields in corn silage and alfalfa because these crops remove large quantities of K which may result in soil test levels moving into the optimum or low soil test category before the next soil sampling time period.

Annual potash applications are necessary for good yields and maintenance of stand. Splitting higher K application rates will reduce luxury consumption of K and help maintain feed quality. It can be tempting to reduce K applications on alfalfa given possible high potash prices and generally larger K application rates compared to other crops. Don't take this decision lightly. Reducing or eliminating K fertilization will cause soil test levels to decrease and may limit production in future years particularly on low testing soils. Second, K is required to enhance disease resistance and winter hardiness.

Nitrogen credits from alfalfa to future crops are dependent on stand at the time the alfalfa is killed. In other words, better stands produce more N credits. With high N fertilizer prices it may be beneficial to consider the N credit to future crops as part of the overall economic evaluation of a rotation. Finally, if producers are feeding all of the alfalfa produced on their own farm, they may want to produce the highest alfalfa yields to insure an adequate feed supply.

Don't forget about lime. In the current fertilizer price climate, it may be tempting to ignore lime recommendations and focus solely on fertilizer prices and application rates. Farmers should avoid this temptation. Maintaining pH at the target level for the most sensitive crop in a rotation is the cornerstone to a good soil fertility program. If the pH is not suitable for crop production, yields will suffer and applied fertilizers will not be used efficiently.

## Private Pesticide Applicator Training Scheduled

Crop producers who need to re-certify or become certified for private pesticide application can register for one of two sessions to be held this winter. Private Pesticide Applicator Training and Certification sessions have been scheduled for:

**Tuesday, February 7th (register by Jan 31)**  
**Thursday, March 1st (register by Feb 23)**

Training will take place at the Shawano County Courthouse in downstairs meeting rooms A and B. Registration will begin at 9:45 am, and the program will run from 10:00 am until 3:30. Lunch is on your own, but there will be an hour break at noon.

You must pre-register at the UWEX Office by the appropriate date, pay your \$30 training and materials fee, and READ your training manual prior to coming to the training session. The UWEX Office is located in Room 101 of the Courthouse in Shawano, and we are open from 8 am to 4:30 pm Monday through Friday.

Contact us at 715-526-6136 or by email at [katie.behnke@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:katie.behnke@ces.uwex.edu).

We can also send manuals out via regular mail, but have to charge extra for postage and handling.

## OSHA Program to Inspect Wisconsin Dairy Farms

It was announced in early 2011 that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) was working on a local emphasis program (LEP) for inspecting Wisconsin dairy farms. The official Dairy Farm LEP was signed at the end of October and implementation will be beginning soon.

OSHA's jurisdiction is limited to farms with 11 or more employees at any time during the last year or farms that have had an active temporary labor camp during the preceding year. This means farms with 10 or fewer employees will be exempt. Members of the immediate family of the employer are not regarded as employees. Within the document, immediate family members are defined as a parent, spouse, or child. Other relatives, even those living in the same household as the employer, are not considered to be part of the immediate family.

The LEP is set to target some of the most common hazardous activities that take place on the farm.

- Addressing drowning hazards that exist when farm vehicles are working near manure storage facilities without proper gates or safety stops in place.
- Ensuring employees that interact with cows and bulls are properly trained in how to work with animals to avoid getting crushed between animals and structures.

- Addressing electrical shock hazards that may exist where employees interact with faulty electrical systems or have the potential to make contact with overhead or buried power lines when using farm equipment.
- Making sure employees are properly trained in operating and servicing the tractors and skid-steers that they operate.
- Ensuring that all power take-off (PTO) shafts and power transmission components are properly guarded.
- Ensuring employees receive proper information and training about hazardous chemicals on the farm.
- Ensuring control of hazardous energy sources when employees are servicing equipment.
- Addressing the hazards that may exist when employees remove silage from a horizontal silo, as well as the dangers to climbing to the top of the pile to remove plastic or anchoring systems.
- Addressing the hazards that exist in confined spaces such as grain storage bins, vertical silos, milk vessels, and manure storage systems.
- Addressing the dangers of hearing loss when working around running agricultural equipment.

For more details or to obtain a copy of the LEP go to <http://fyi.uwex.edu/agsafety/>.

# 2012 Wisconsin Corn & Soybean Conferences

9:30 am

## Registration

Coffee, milk, rolls in Exhibit Area

10:00 am

## Welcome

Opening remarks by Host Agent

10:10 am

## 2012 Corn Production and Management Keys to High Yields and Profitability

Dr. Joe Lauer - UWEX Corn Agronomist

11:00 am

## What's Ahead For Wisconsin Corn and Soybean Growers - How Our Associations Helps Producers

Mr. Bob Oleson - WCGA/WCPB Executive Director and WCGA/WCPB Directors

Mr. Bob Karls - WSAWSMB Executive Director and WSAWSMB Directors

11:30 am

## What's New in Seeds and Ag Products for 2012

Industry Co-sponsor Representatives

12:00 pm LUNCH

Exhibits open

1:00 pm

## Top Ten Soybean Yield Limiting Factors

Dr. Shawn Conley - UWEX Agronomist

1:50 pm

## Back-to-Back High Yields and Prices: Now Where?

Mr. David Moll - UWEX Ag Economist

2:40 pm

## Tips for Successful Corn Production and Profitability

*Seymour: Is less more? Are twins better than singles?* - Kevin Jarek, Outagamie County Agent

*Menomonee: Timing fungicide applications - Is there a benefit?* - Katie Sternweis and Jerry Clark, Dunn and Chippewa County Agents

*Darlington: Wisconsin Agricultural Transportation Regulations - Ted Bay, Grant County Agent and TBD, Wisconsin State Patrol-Motor Carrier Enforcement Section*

3:30 pm

## Conference Adjourns

## Support for the 2012 Wisconsin Corn and Soybean Conferences provided by:

Dairyland Seed Company

First Capital Ag

Legacy Seeds

AgriGold

Legacy Seeds

Partners in Production

Mycogen Seed

Pioneer Hi-Bred

Syngenta NK Seeds

Monsanto

Wisconsin Corn Promotion Board

Wisconsin Soybean Marketing Board



February 2-3, 2012

Kalahari Resort, Wisconsin Dells

## 2012 Wisconsin Corn and Soybean Conferences REGISTRATION FORM

Conference fee is \$5.00 per person (\$8 late registration after January 10). This includes refreshments for breaks, lunch, and copies of all information.

Pre-registration is advised to assure seating at the noon luncheon. Attendance is limited to the first 100 registrants at each location.

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Number of people \_\_\_\_\_ x \$ 5.00 (\$8, if late) = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Total enclosed = \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make check payable to: UWEX County Extension

Indicate the conference location you will attend and return the form by January 10 to the Extension Office hosting that conference.

January 17 - Seymour  
Outagamie County - UW Extension  
3365 W. Brewster St.  
Appleton, WI 54914  
Phone: 920-832-5121

January 18 - Menomonee  
Dunn County - UW Extension  
Dunn County Government Center  
800 Wilson Avenue, Suite 330  
Menomonee, WI 54751-2265  
Phone: 715-232-1636

January 19 - Darlington  
Grant County - UW Extension  
Youth & Agriculture Center  
916 E Elm Street, Fairgrounds  
PO Box 31, Lancaster, WI 53813-0031  
Phone: 608-723-2125

Member of the Wisconsin Corn Growers Association

Yes  No

Member of the Wisconsin Soybean Association

Yes  No

## 2012 Agronomy Update Meetings

UW-Extension and the UW-Madison Department of Agronomy will offer Crop Production and Management meetings in early 2011. Joe Lauer, Dan Under-sander, and Shawn Conley will present the latest information on hybrid/variety performance, an analysis and discussion of last year's growing season, and updated recommendations for field crop production.

The local meeting locations, dates, and contact details for registration or additional information are:

- **Liberty Hall in Kimberly on Thursday, January 4th at 7:30 am**—contact Outagamie County UWEX at (920) 832-5121
- **Best Western/Midway Motor Lodge in Wausau on Tuesday, January 4th at noon**—contact Marathon County UWEX at (715) 261-1230

## Hiring the Right People for Your Farm

As the modern farm evolves, so does the role of the farmer. The average dairy farm milks around 100 cows, and as farm size continues to increase, more farmers will be looking to non-family labor to help with the daily chores. This means that in addition to being experts about cows, crops, and financial management, today's farmers are also expected to play the role of a human resources manager. Whether you are just looking for part-time help or already have a number of full-time employees, there are some important points to keep in mind in the search to hire the right person for your farm.

Hiring the right person can lead to improved efficiency, production increases, and less stress but hiring the wrong person can mean poor workmanship, lost time, and less profit. In order to find the right person, you need to know what you are looking for. Before you advertise the position, you should determine the labor needs of the farm and use them to establish the experience, education, and skill levels necessary for the job.

Many farmers find it difficult to find quality candidates to apply for positions, but it is all about knowing where to look. If you are looking for a herdsman or feeder, consider contacting someone who works with the agricultural programs at the local technical college to see if they know of any recent graduates looking for work. If you are looking for a teenager for summer or after school help, ask the local FFA advisor. Another great source for labor recommendations can be other farmers. Ask if any of their employees have friends or family looking for work. Additionally, ask consultants like your veterinarian or nutritionist because sometimes they hear things as they travel from farm to farm.

Once you have found candidates for the position, you can begin the interview process. In order to protect against a discrimination complaint, the questions must be related to the specific job for which the interview is conducted and do not ask questions about whether an applicant is a member of a protected class. Keep in mind that high quality farm employees come from diverse backgrounds and it may be necessary to hire a translator to help with the process if there is a language barrier. It is also important to keep the interviews consistent and ensure that any questions broaching sensitive subjects are properly worded, so it is advised to write a list of questions to ask each candidate before the interviews.

During the interview, you want to try to get a sense of the applicant's character and previous work performance. The goal is to find the person with the right skills and the right attitude to do the job. Look for key characteristics like a cooperative attitude and a high level of dependability, which are essential on the farm. If you don't see these characteristics shine through in the interview, they likely will not be present when the employee is on the job.

Working on a farm can be a demanding job, so it is essential to find employees who are the right fit. Don't be discouraged if some employees don't work out and keep an open mind when hiring. Finding the best people for your farm may be a challenge, but once you hire the right person it will pay off for years to come.

## Calendar of Events

**UW-Extension**  
311 N Main Street #101  
Shawano, WI 54166

Phone: 715-526-6136  
Fax: 715-526-4875

<http://shawano.uwex.edu>

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### January

- 4 Agronomy Update Meeting - Kimberly or Wausau
- 5 Quickbooks Training Workshop - NWTC, Shawano
- 10 Cow College - FVTC, Clintonville
- 17 Cow College - FVTC, Clintonville
- 17 Corn & Soybean Conference - Seymour
- 24 Cow College - Farm Tours
- 24-25 Midwest Forage Association Symposium - WI Dells

### February

- 7 Pesticide Applicator Training - Shawano Courthouse
- 21 Dairy Reproduction Meeting - Amicos, Shawano

### March

- 1 Pesticide Applicator Training - Shawano Courthouse
- 7 Heart of the Farm - Kelly Lake

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