



U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

March 2016

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

Volume 20 Issue 3

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What goes up, must come down.... If you don't like the weather now, just wait five minutes....

Change, it's such an interesting, dynamic and challenging part of managing an agricultural enterprise. It has been nearly a year since I've written one of these news and views for the UP Ag Connections Newsletter. Looking back one year from now, on farm milk prices were on a six month slide, but only after a historically high profit year of 2014 on dairy farms in Michigan. The greatest challenge for dairy farmers was finding ways to reduce income tax liability. Feeder calf prices were just under the historic highs found in late 2014 with profits to match. Baby calves, cull cows and bulls were selling at incredible prices as well.

Now a year later, prices are a fraction of those highs. And these prices are causing some red ink in the dairy industry. Many farmers went from giving too much income tax to no income tax. I have attended many ag econ classes in my college classes, ag econ 101, ag commodity marketing 102, ag business management 204. But I never saw any classes in the register entitled managing the ag business during negative cash flow or farming off your depreciation schedule. Managing farms in econ classes is simple, start with enough equity, stay in positive cash flow, ensure moderate to high commodity prices. Build all this into a farm business management plan and get an "A" in the class. How many business plans build in a commodity price drop of 25-50% in one calendar year? Not many!

Michigan saw as much growth in the dairy industry recently as any other state. I would like to look at those business plans to see how the farms will manage milk price drop like we've seen for 18 months. I'm guessing we'll see some contraction in the dairy industry in coming years. Regarding the commodity market challenges, we do have some good news coming into play. Obviously for the short term fuel prices

are as low as they have been in several years. Fertilizer prices are going to follow fertilizer prices. Many grain prices are relatively cheap. Of course that's more of the bad news for grain farmers as opposed to livestock farmers that purchase their concentrate feeds.

I painted this grim picture not to be discouraging by rather to empathize with your situation. And maybe to point out, "you have a tough job, keep up the good work." My real point is that managing a farm is hard and not everyone can do it. You need to be an expert in production, marketing and finance. I see many larger farm operations that specialize in one of those areas and hire the expertise in the other two areas. I believe that's one of the disadvantages of smaller farming operations. Most smaller operators aren't big enough to hire the other expertise areas. In theory I've suggested cooperative efforts to combine those areas of strength. Many times our independence gets in the way.

So to my real point, managing the ag business is hard. I have worked with many people in beginning farmer programs over the years. I've received a reputation as being a naysayer. I challenge those looking to start an ag business. Do they have enough equity? Are they prepared for market drops and negative cash flows? The list of questions is long and difficult to answer. But a perspective producer can't answer my questions, what are they going to do when the business or the market or the banker asks those tough questions. I would much rather they be upset with me rather than face the tough situations putting many out of business.

My parting thoughts to perspective beginning farmers: Make sure you find people to ask the tough questions before you get started. Make sure the business plan is sound and takes in to account the hard times. And finally, be prepared for both the good times, and the hard times.

Frank Wardynski
U.P. Livestock Educator, MSU Extension

Michigan State University

AgBioResearch

MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY | Extension

Emerald Ash Borer Quarantine Area Expands

Submitted by Bill Cook, MSU Extension Forester

LANSING – As the emerald ash borer continues its march through Michigan’s ash trees, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has revised the state’s Emerald Ash Borer Quarantine to better reflect where Michigan is in its battle against the beetle. The quarantine revision now includes four additional counties in the Upper Peninsula – Baraga, Dickinson, Marquette and Menominee.

MDARD is revising its quarantine based on EAB detections made during United States Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services (USDA-APHIS)-led summer trapping and surveillance efforts. EAB was detected on USDA-APHIS panel traps in Dickinson and Marquette counties. The two positive traps in Marquette County were in the city of Marquette and northwest of the city of Marquette. The one positive trap in Dickinson County was near Norway.

Although there were no positive trap catches in Baraga and Menominee counties, they are close enough to infested counties that there is a low level of confidence that EAB is not already there.

Gogebic, Iron and Ontonagon counties will remain un-quarantined. The movement of regulated articles from the quarantined counties in the Upper Peninsula into Gogebic, Iron and Ontonagon counties is prohibited unless done under a compliance agreement issued by MDARD’s

Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division.

Firewood that has been certified for the Federal Emerald Ash Borer Quarantine by USDA-APHIS is exempt if it is packaged, bears a USDA compliance stamp and is clearly marked with the producer’s name and address.

“The quarantine revision continues to protect the ash resource in Gogebic, Iron and Ontonagon counties, while recognizing the changing landscape due to EAB infestations,” said Gina Alessandri, Pesticide and Plant Pest Management Division Director. “Additionally, the new quarantine will ease the regulatory burden placed on Michigan’s forest-based businesses and individuals moving forest products within the state.”

The Lower Peninsula continues to be quarantined in its entirety and is designated as the Quarantine Level I area. Movement of articles regulated by the EAB Quarantine can only move from the Quarantine Level I area in the Lower Peninsula into the Upper Peninsula if done under a valid MDARD Compliance Agreement.

For more information, go to the EAB website at www.michigan.gov/emeraldashborer.

Forage meeting planned for eastern U.P. farmers

All farmers interested in quality forage production are invited to an educational program sponsored by CISCO Seeds and MSU Extension. The meeting will start with dinner provided by CISCO Seeds.

Thursday, March 17, 6:00 – 8:00pm
Rudyard Township Hall, 18725 S. Mackinac Trail, Rudyard, MI

Dinner compliments of CISCO Seeds – 6:00 – 6:45pm

Topics and speakers include:

- Low input hay improvement & triticale/pea mixtures: Results of 2015 Rudyard demonstrations – Jim Isleib, MSU Extension
- Using cover crops for livestock feed – Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension
- Planting improved forage varieties – Jeremy Sweeten, CISCO Seeds

The meeting is free, but registration is required to allow for good meal planning. Please register by contacting the Alger County MSU Extension office at 906-387-2530 or Jim Isleib at isleibj@anr.msu.edu



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GUPAA Annual Meeting

The Growing UP Ag Association (GUPAA) will be conducting their Annual Meeting on Wednesday, March 30th, Room 952, 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 UP. Collin Thompson, Farm Manager at Michigan State University's Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center North Farm, will deliver a presentation at approximately 1:30 pm providing information regarding the establishment and current activities at the North Farm.

The MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center was originally founded in 1899 just north of Chatham, Michigan. The North Farm was established in 2014 at the original location and is an incubator farm

specializing in diversified organic vegetable production, research, education, and outreach for northern latitude climates. The farm offers tours and activities, on-site workshops, and opportunities for beginning farmers to live and work with the staff to learn about sustainable farming in the challenging northern climate of the UP. The focus is building healthy soils, food, people, and communities. Using organic and sustainable practices coupled with season extension technologies, they are growing a wide variety of vegetables. The farm functions as both a production and teaching facility, and aims to provide healthy, fresh, nutrient-dense produce to the local markets.

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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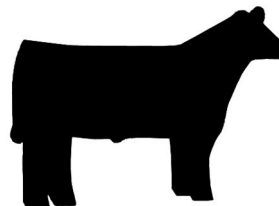
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Energy Conservation: Impact on the Bottom Line

Helping Michigan farmers reduce their energy expenses is the focus of one-day workshops being held around the state.

Farming operations use an extraordinary amount of energy. According to a 2013 USDA report entitled "Agriculture's Supply and Demand for Energy and Energy Products", energy requirements can be as much as 34 percent of a farm's total costs. Helping Michigan farmers reduce their energy expenses is the focus of a series of one-day workshops being held around the state. Farmers who have attended past meetings have:

- ◆ Reduced overall farm energy expenses.
- ◆ Leveraged utility company rebates and Federal grants and low interest loans to implement energy conservation practices recommended by an audit.
- ◆ Applied for and received renewable energy project funding.

Michigan farmers have enjoyed great success in getting USDA grant dollars. The spike in approved renewable energy and energy efficiency projects began in 2009 when USDA Rural Development required Tier II energy audits to be completed by auditors who were certified by the MSU energy auditor training program. MSU

studies have shown that, on average, agricultural operations realize a 40 percent reduction in energy expenses over a 3.8 year payback period when recommended energy conservation practices are implemented.

At each workshop, attendees will hear from energy specialists from Michigan State University Extension on how to develop an energy use strategy. Utility and electric cooperative representatives will discuss rebate options and opportunities. A panel discussion will feature farmers talking about their experience in implementing energy conservation practices. Attendees will also receive practical instruction from USDA Natural Resources Conservation Services and Rural Development personnel on applying for grant dollars for energy conservation practices.

Date: Thursday, March 3, 2016

Time: 10 am to 3:00 pm CST

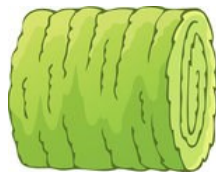
Location: Menominee County Extension Office, S. 904 Highway 41, Stephenson, MI 49887

There is no registration fee for the workshop. However, registration is required to make sure there are sufficient handouts for all attendees and to facilitate an accurate lunch count. The registration deadline is Monday, February 29. Please call the Menominee County Extension Office at 906-753-2209. If you have questions about any of the workshops, contact your local Extension educator or Charles Gould, Michigan State University Extension Educator, at 616/994-4547 or gouldm@msu.edu.

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Beginning farmer webinar series continues

Come check out the following two-hour evening programs that provide valuable start-up information on farming topics. For program details and registration, visit <http://events.anr.msu.edu/BegFrmrWeb2016/>.

March webinar topics include:

Mar 2 Growing cider apples

Mar 9 Biosecurity: Protecting farm animal health

Mar 16 Christmas trees

Mar 23 Getting your land ready to grow organically—
certified or not

Mar 30 Meat goats



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Clare County Livestock Auctions 2016 Feeder Cattle Sales

All cattle weighed at sale time. Accepting cattle on Wednesday all day. Wednesday cattle will be fed and watered!

Colored and Holstein steers, heifers, calves
 (some pre-conditioned)

Sales on Thursday and start at 1:00 pm
March 17th
April 14th • May 5th

Clare County Livestock Auction, LLC
 David Clark, Owner/Auctioneer
 Contact (810) 441-6191
 Sale Barn (989) 386-9256

Sale every Monday at 3 pm
 Go to www.davidclarkauktion.com

Market Report

Choice Steers	\$115—\$129 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$100—\$119 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$58—\$64 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$120—\$160 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$60—\$75 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$150—\$290 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$110—\$150 per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows \$1600—\$2200/head
 Grade Holstein bred heifers \$1600—\$2500/head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$9.78	\$195.50	\$160-270
Soymeal	\$20.64	\$412.75	\$338-556
Oats	\$9.45	\$189.00	\$160-236
Barley	\$9.84	\$196.75	\$160-242
Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots			



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Lunch provided

Maintaining a relationship with your veterinarian

Just a quick call to the local Vet about a steer that's feeling under the weather...But wait, they can't give you any advice over the phone. Why is that?!

Likely, it is because your Veterinary Client Patient Relationship (VCPR) has lapsed. The Veterinarian is unable give advice without coming to the farm, examining the animals in question and discussing what your concerns are and how you've been managing them.

The American Association of Bovine Practitioners has put together an excellent summary of VCPR: http://www.aabp.org/resources/AABP_Guidelines/VCPRGuidelineFinal11-2013.pdf

Maintaining a relationship with your Veterinarian is essential to being a respected and profitable cattle farmer!

Submitted by Renee Coyer, D.V.M.,
 Thompson Veterinary Clinic

V.O.I.C.E.:

Veterinarians Organizing Information for

Beef Cattle Selection Meeting

by Frank Wardynski

Extension educators Frank Wardynski and Katelyn Thompson will cover topics related to determining selection traits, synchronizing breeding females for artificial insemination, using expected progeny difference, and genomics testing.

Sessions will start at 6:00 pm EST and last until about 8:30 pm EST.

March 14—Rudyard Township Hall

March 21—Feedmill Café, 35009 Tapiola Rd, Chassell, Michigan

March 22—Bay College in Escanaba Bay College Heirman Center

Join us for MSU Extension Field Crop Webinars

March 7, 2016

Forage Improvement on a Budget
 Dr. Kim Cassida, MSU

March 14, 2016

Nutrient Management Research in Field Crops
 Dr. Kurt Steinke, MSU

March 21, 2016

Evaluating Insecticide Seed Treatments
 Dr. Chris DiFonzo, MSU

March 28, 2016

Cover Crop Termination Strategies
 Mike Plumer, Conservation Ag Consultant

For more details visit:

events.anr.msu.edu/FieldCropsWebinarSeries2016/
 to register and access connection information.

Contact James DeDecker at (989) 734-2168 or dedecke5@msu.edu for more information, or by February 15th, 2016 to request accommodations for persons with disabilities. Requests received after this date will be fulfilled when possible.



SAVE THE DATE:
UPREC Consignment Auction
Saturday, May 21st
Stay tuned for details!

2ND ANNUAL GREAT LAKES
HOP AND BARLEY CONFERENCE
MARCH 16-17, 2016
GRAND TRAVERSE RESORT,
ACME, MI

www.events.anr.msu.edu/hopandbarley16

REMINDER:

Tuesday, March 1st
FSA Programs meeting
Menominee County Extension Office,
Stephenson
1-3:00 pm CST

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Beekeeping Workshops to be held in western UP

Beginning Backyard Beekeeping Workshop
Saturday, March 12th

Advanced Backyard Beekeeping Workshop
Saturday, March 26th

Both sessions at the Ewen-Trout Creek School, from 10 am to 4:30 pm EST. Contact the Ontonagon County MSU Extension at 906-884-4386 or email msue66@msu.edu.

Review session and exams for state certified pesticide applicators in Escanaba

Date: March 22, 2016

Location: State Office Building, 305 Ludington St., Escanaba, MI

Review session: 9:00am – 1:00pm Eastern Time

State exams: 1:30 pm Eastern Time

Review session is \$10, payable at the door to Michigan State University Extension. Lunch is not provided, but a 1/2 hour break will be offered between the review and exam. 4 re-certification credits toward renewal of current State of Michigan Pesticide Applicator Certification is available for private applicators and commercial applicator 'core' category.

A State of Michigan official will offer exam opportunity after the review is completed. If you plan to take an exam, register at www.michigan.gov/pestexam and be prepared to pay \$50 for the private exam and \$75 for the commercial exam. For more information, contact Jim Isleib, MSU Extension, at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu.

Additional information regarding registration for State of Michigan pesticide applicator exams and additional training programs for pesticide applicators is available on the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development website at <http://www.michigan.gov/mdard/>

Breeding Soundness Exams for Bulls

Michigan State University Extension recommends fertility testing bulls every year before breeding season. The cost is \$55 per bull when examined at one of the scheduled clinics. The dates for testing across the Upper Peninsula are April 25-28. To schedule an appointment, contact Frank Wardynski, Ruminant Extension Educator with Michigan State University at wardynsk@anr.msu.edu or 906-884-4386.

Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center

The North Farm to Host On-Farm Short Courses

by Abbey Palmer, The North Farm Education Coordinator

The North Farm is hosting a series of MSU Extension short courses starting in April on topics designed for market gardeners, small farms, and skill-seekers interested in diversified vegetable production. These short courses are an in-depth exploration of farming fundamentals and best practices for diversified vegetable growers. "This year's short courses will allow participants to get not only depth, but also breadth of knowledge on season extension, small farm systems, whole farm health, and seed saving," said Collin Thompson, North Farm Manager.

Each five-hour learning session has an emphasis on hands-on activities so participants can practice what they learn, and includes the cost of materials for a project. "We want everyone to leave with something in their hands that they can use on their own farm when they get home," said Abbey Palmer, Education Coordinator.

All workshops will be held on-site starting at 1 pm EST and will include a combination of experiential and classroom-based learning. Short courses qualify for education hours through the [MSU Extension Master Gardener program](https://www.msunorthfarm.org).

Registration is required for these events and can be accessed at www.msunorthfarm.org. Questions? Contact Abbey Palmer at palmerab@msu.edu or 906-439-5114.

Season Extension – Sunday, April 17 • 1-6 pm

Growing food throughout the year increases food security and can bolster your farm's earnings. This course will be valuable for individuals in the planning stages of hoop house construction.

Hands-on: Bend hoops for a 4'X12' bed

Topics:

Which hoop house is right for your operation?
Siting considerations
Hoop house planting schedules
Crops for year-round production

Small Farm Systems – Sunday, June 26 • 1-6 pm

A farm is greater than the sum of its parts. This course looks at several farm systems and how they intersect. Get tips and tricks for building a lean, efficient farm.

Hands-on: Build a strap hoe

Topics:

Transplant care and schedules
Irrigation
Fencing
Low-cost and farm built tools
Time management
Recordkeeping

Whole Farm Health – Sunday, August 28 • 1-6 pm

Viewing the farm as an organism makes us consider all the living beings that affect everyday life on the farm. From creating a nourishing environment for soil microbes to ways to control pests organically, this short course examines best practices for soil, water, and pest management.

Hands-on: Take a soil sample (or bring one from home) and test soil respiration

Topics:

Cover cropping
Soil testing
Integrated pest management
Environmental verifications
Pollinators

Seed Saving – Sunday, October 9 • 1-6 pm

Saving seeds gives individuals the ability to select UP-hardy plant varieties and carry them on for future generations. Consider the percentage of your budget that goes to open pollinated seeds each year – replacing even a portion of that with seed saved from the farm saves money and creates a story you can tell your buyers.

Hands-on: Save seeds from open-pollinated plants using wet and dry process

Topics:

Basic plant genetics
Planning a seed-saving garden
Harvesting and storing seeds
Wet process/dry process
Seed saving as a commercial enterprise



Input sought for meat processing feasibility study

Marquette County was recently awarded a grant from the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development to address the lack of USDA multi-species livestock processing in the Upper Peninsula. A substantial portion of these funds was used to fund a study to assess the feasibility of USDA inspected multi-species processing facilities in the Upper Peninsula.

This Upper Peninsula Multi-species Processing Feasibility Study Project, is a cooperative venture between several stakeholders including Marquette County, Upper Peninsula Food Exchange, Farm Bureau, and regional planning organizations, and has hired Karen Karp & Partners along with John-Mark Hack of Marksbury Farm and BJH Advisors to conduct the feasibility study.

The research team will be conducting a listening session following the Agriculture for Tomorrow Conference from 4:30 -5:30 pm at Bay College to understand producer challenges to local meat processing and interest in additional USDA slaughterhouse and processing capacity.

This is just the first of several opportunities for producers to provide input into the project. For additional information contact Michelle Walk at walkmich@msu.edu or 906-635-6368.

Hope to see you there! Ag For Tomorrow Conference Tuesday, March 8th Bay College Escanaba

events.anr.msu.edu/2016agfortomorrow

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

2016 Spring Feeder Cattle Sales

Note: All Sales are on Fridays @ 1 pm
March 18 • April 8 • April 22 • May 6

Pre-conditioned cattle will be sold first on April 22, 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 and breeding bulls may be sold at sales
 - ◆ Steers in question will be sold as bulls

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Frank or Jan Leist (231) 439-5679

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www.northernmichiganlivestock.com

2015 RESEARCH REPORTS RELEASED

Forage Variety Trial Results

Now available online:

<http://forage.msu.edu/publications/>

Trial data available from four locations throughout Michigan, including Chatham
Includes alfalfa, grass, clovers, and birdsfoot trefoil

Potato Research Report

Now available online:

<http://potatospecialist.psm.msu.edu/>

Trial data available from on-farm trial in Delta County, Michigan
Includes variety and management trial results

MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center

<http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/centers/uprc>

Please follow us on Facebook to receive daily updates of Farm activity – www.facebook.com/MSU.UPREC

Bay De Noc Beef Producers Association

will be shipping cattle on

Monday, March 21st.

If interested call or email John

(906) 399-5510 or

john.rappette@yahoo.com

Michigan State University

Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center

P.O. Box 168, E3774 University Drive

Chatham, MI 49816

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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

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| March 1 | FSA Programs meeting, Menominee County Extension Office (1-3:00 pm CST) |
| March 3 | Energy Conservation Program, Menominee County Extension Office (10 am-3 pm CST) |
| March 8 | Ag For Tomorrow Conference, Bay College, Escanaba |
| March 12 | Beginning Backyard Beekeeping Workshop, Ewen-Trout School (10 am to 4:30 pm EST) |
| March 14 | Beef Cattle Selection meeting, Rudyard Township Hall (6-8:30 pm) |
| March 15 | Key Success Factors for Dairy Farm Profitability, Rudyard |
| March 16-17 | Great Lakes Hop and Barley Conference, Grand Traverse Resort, Acme, Michigan |
| March 17 | Forage Production Meeting, Rudyard Township Hall (6-8 pm) |
| March 21 | Beef Cattle Selection meeting, Feedmill Café, Chassell (6-8:30 pm) |
| March 22 | Beef Cattle Selection meeting, Bay College, Escanaba (6-8:30 pm) |
| March 22 | Pesticide applicator training session and exams, Escanaba (9 am review, 1:30 pm exam) |
| March 30 | Growing U.P. Agriculture Association Annual Meeting, Bay College (11 am) |
| April 2 | Vegetable Growing Workshop, Brimley |
| April 12 | Pesticide applicator training session & exams, Kewadin Casino, SSM (9 am review, 1:30 pm exam) |
| April 17 | Season Extension Short Course, The North Farm @ UPREC (1-6 pm) |
| April 25-28 | Bull soundness exams (throughout U.P.) |
| May 21 | UPREC consignment auction fundraiser |
| June 26 | Small Farm Systems Short Course, The North Farm @ UPREC (1-6 pm) |
| August 28 | Whole Farm Health Short Course, The North Farm @ UPREC (1-6 pm) |
| October 9 | Seed Saving, Short Course, The North Farm @ UPREC (1-6 pm) |

