

Extension Connection

Agricultural Newsletter

September 2009

Volume 7, Issue 4



UW-Extension extends the resources of the University of Wisconsin System to the people of Barron County. We are located in the Barron County Government Center, 330 E. LaSalle Ave., Room 2206, Barron, Wisconsin 54812 Phone 715-537-6250.

This newsletter is written and edited by

**Tim Jergenson,
Agricultural/Natural
Resources/Horticultural
Agent.**

tim.jergenson@ces.uwex.edu

What's Inside:

Silo gas Safety	p.2
Corn Silage Dry Down	p.3
New Conservation Prog	p. 3
GDD & Precip. Data	p.4
Considering Organic?	p.5
Pasture Walk	p.6

Has history taught us anything about the relationship between the farm economy and the general United States (U.S.) economy? Kansas State Economist Allen Featherstone believes there are some lessons that we can learn from the past that may shed some light on the future. Featherstone says the farm economy and the general economy are inversely related.

Featherstone has observed that when farm income is low, the U.S. GDP is higher. He points to the relationship between the US stock market and the Illinois corn price and says the correlation has been nearly neutral since 1960, "Therefore, while the general U.S. economy may be slow there appears to be little long term evidence that there will be major spillovers into the U.S. farm economy.

The Kansas State economist says the overall strength of the farm economy is as strong today as it has been in nearly 20 years, with the average probability of default of 1.84%, compared to more than 3% in the early 1980's. But he says decreases in land values or farm income are factors that are most likely to increase the chance for default. If farm income falls, so will land values.

Farmland values in Barron County remained relatively steady from 2007 to 2008, but declined in

many areas of Wisconsin. Because milk prices make such an important part of the Barron County farm economy, it is reasonable to expect that farm income in the County will decline significantly from 2008 to 2009.

Featherstone says interest rates are another uncertainty that could influence the health of the farm economy. Within the credit market statistics, Featherstone says average loan repayment was lower in the second quarter of 2009 than in the comparable period of 2008, which tells him there is an indication that underwriting standards have tightened over the past year. While he says credit is available for those with good risk, borrowers will need more collateral, those with marginal credit will have difficulty getting renewed, and there will be a wider spread of interest rates charged.

Featherstone goes on to say that U.S. agriculture has been reliant on trade, but the trade surplus agriculture enjoys will decline more than 50% this year due to reduced overseas demand. That will impact different commodities and will impact farmers who produce those commodities, "A reduction in agricultural exports may lead to a building of commodity surpluses (stocks) and a reduction in crop prices and ultimately net farm income." Featherstone believes that the two prior "busts" in the U.S. land market were caused in part by a

Lower farm income leads to lower farm-land prices.

Watch for a tightening of farm credit.



softer global demand for US farm products.

On the other hand Featherstone says a potential mitigating factor is the ethanol industry, which has the potential to buffer lower commodity prices. He says ethanol profitability is currently low, but federal policies can assist that industry, which can assist the farm economy.

Another issue is the cost of inputs, but Featherstone says credit conditions will not prevent the application of crop inputs. While there were input cutbacks in the Depression, he does not expect a

repeat. However, he says credit availability may impact the farm equipment industry, because of the needs for financing equipment purchases.

Summary:

Agriculture was not hurt as bad as the rest of economy in the recessionary downtrend of 2008, but there is little economic linkage between the two. Farmers will need to watch for changes in farm income, which could push land prices in the same direction. Credit availability is another key indicator, and while it will not affect crop production, it may reduce the purchase of farm equipment.

Protect Yourself from Silo Gas

Dry growing conditions may cause an increase in the nitrates in the plant material thus leading to increased levels of silo gas. Weeds and corn are naturally high in nitrates. Nitrate levels in corn are extremely high after a rain following a dry period. Harvesting the plant high will help to decrease the nitrate level. Here are some steps to take that will reduce the risk of injury from silo gas.

1. Stay out of the silo for at least three weeks after filling.
2. Watch for bleach-like odors and/or yellowish brown gases in or near the silo.
3. If you must enter the silo, e.g., to set up a silo unloader, do so immediately after the last load is in. Do not wait several hours or overnight.
4. Run the blower 15-20 minutes before entering and keep it running while inside.
5. Keep a door open down to the silage surface, and have someone keep in contact with you from the outside.
6. Ventilate the silo room adequately for three weeks after filling, keeping windows and doors open.
7. Keep the door between the silo room and the barn closed to prevent silo gas from killing livestock.
8. If you experience throat irritation or coughing in the silo, get fresh air immediately.

See your doctor immediately after exposure to silo gas.

Corn Silage Dry Down Days

Corn must be ensiled at the proper moisture to get fermentation for preservation. But, determining when to harvest corn at the right whole plant moisture is difficult. Each storage structure properly ensiles at slightly different moisture optimums. Harvesting corn too wet for the storage structure will result in reduced yield, souring and seepage of the ensilage, and low intake by dairy cows. Harvesting too dry reduces yield, can cause mold to develop, and lowers digestibility, protein and vitamins A and E.

Farmers have many opportunities to have your corn tested for moisture content a variety of **Corn Silage Dry Down Days** several places around Barron County. Check out the following dates and locations.

United Ag Services—Almena

- Any Monday through Friday during regular business hours.

Lakeland Cooperative Feed Mill—Rice Lake

- September 10th—10 a.m. to 3 p.m. (refreshments served)

Corn & Soybean Field Day hosted by Andy Bensend & Pioneer – Arden Litwiller farm, south of Barron at the corner of 9th Avenue and 16th Street.

- September 10th—3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

Barron County UW-Extension Office

- Monday through Friday during regular business hours—**Please call ahead to set up a time.**

Corn Silage Dry Down Days

Bring 3 to 5 corn stalks that are representative of the entire field.

New Conservation Stewardship Program

The Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) encourages agricultural and forestry producers to maintain existing conservation activities and adopt additional ones on their operations. CSP is a new voluntary conservation program that provides financial and technical assistance to conserve and enhance soil, water, air, and related natural resources on their land. CSP provides opportunities to both recognize excellent stewards and deliver valuable new conservation.

Eligibility

CSP is available on Tribal and private agricultural lands, as well as nonindustrial private forest lands.

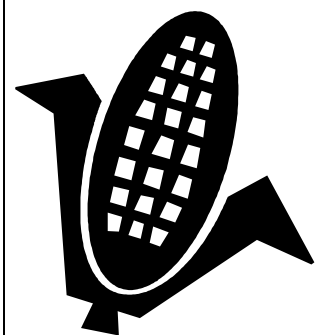
Individual producers, legal

entities, corporations, and Indian Tribes may be eligible for the program. Eligible lands include cropland, grassland, prairie land, improved pastureland, and nonindustrial private forest land.

CSP provides participants with two possible types of payments. An annual payment is available for installing new conservation activities and maintaining existing activities. A supplemental payment may be earned by participants receiving an annual payment who also adopt a resource-conserving crop rotation.

Through 5-year contracts, payments will be made as soon as

(Continued on Page 5)



Check here
for the latest
Growing
Degree Days
and
precipitation
information.

Precipitation Totals 2006—2009, National Weather Service—Rice Lake Airport

	2009	2008	2007	2006	30-year ave.
April	1.54	2.59	2.03	2.51	2.61
May	1.86	1.29	3.15	2.61	3.12
June	2.44	5.02	4.47	0.84	4.31
July	2.53	2.35	3.57	2.83	3.88
August	4.90	0.92	2.31	7.18	4.64
September		2.91	3.46	2.21	4.17
October		1.25	5.07	1.45	2.50

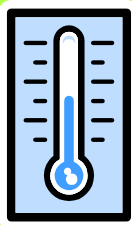
Growing Degree Day Accumulation—Official Weathers Stations Rice Lake and Cumberland

Month	Rice Lake 2009 Actual	Rice Lake 30-yr. Ave.	Cumberland 2009 Actual	Cumberland 30-yr. Ave.
May	264	247	not available	271
June	466	457	409	494
July	436	609	431	652
August	492	534	481	576
September		268		285
Total	1166	2115	not available	2278

Burgers May Increase Cheese Sales

Dairy Profit Weekly recently noted that McDonald's has introduced three new Angus Burgers – using two slices of cheese- at the chain's 14,000 restaurants nationwide. **Dairy**

Management Inc. will partner on the promotion, estimates the burgers may use nearly 6 million pounds of cheese this year.



Considering Organic...?

Organic farmers and processors have until Oct. 15 to apply for partial reimbursement of their current year certification costs.

The current Federal Farm Bill provides funding for this program that helps organic farmers and processors with the cost of their organic certification, an annual expense. Funds are distributed by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection through a cooperative agreement with the USDA National Organic Program.

Wisconsin's organic farmers and processors are certified by private certification companies that are accredited by the USDA. The cost-share program provides for reimbursement of 75 percent of their

certification costs with a maximum payment of \$750 per farm or processor per year. All certified organic farms and handlers are eligible for cost sharing on a first-come, first-served basis. Applications for certification costs incurred Oct. 1, 2008 through Sept. 30, 2009 are being accepted through Oct. 15.

Application materials are available on-line at <http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/> (search for "organic cost-share") or may be requested from Paine at 608-224-5120 or via email at laura.paine@wi.gov.

(from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.)



Conservation Stewardship Program—continued from page 3

practical after October of each year for contract activities installed and maintained in the previous year. For all contracts, CSP payments to a person or legal entity may not exceed \$40,000 in any year, and \$200,000 during any 5-year period. Each CSP contract will be limited to \$200,000 over the term of the initial contract period.

Producers interested in CSP are encouraged to begin the application process by completing a producer self-screening checklist. The self-screening checklist helps potential applicants decide for themselves whether CSP is the right program for them. The level of environmental benefit to be achieved will be estimated to determine eligibility, rank

applications, and establish payments.

For a pre-approved applicant, NRCS will request the applicant's conservation activity records and conduct on-site field verification to ensure that information provided by the applicant was accurate prior to contract approval. Once information is verified, NRCS and the applicant proceed to develop the contract.

More Information

For more information on CSP, visit www.nrcs.usda.gov/new_csp or contact Pat Richter at the NRCS Office at the Barron County Government Center in Barron.

Conservation Stewardship Program

Find a self-screening checklist at the NRCS website

Call the Barron County NRCS Office at 537-5645

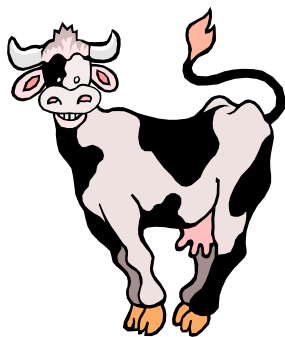
Dairy Pasture Walk

**September
23rd**

**Bob & Darlene
Winter farm**

Chetek

10 am to noon



Dairy Pasture Walk—September 23

The Northwest Wisconsin Graziers Network is hosting a dairy pasture walk at the **Last Chance Jersey** farm, owned by Bob & Darlene Winter, located at 878 18th Street or County Road O, Chetek. The event will take place on Wednesday, September 23, 2009 from 10 AM to Noon.

Topics will include: managing pastures under drought conditions, dairy grazing strategies including matching grain-mix feeding in the barn with pasture forage production, new seeding with meadow fescue at different fertility levels and planting dates, use of baleage and sexed semen and transitioning to a smaller herd with higher production.

Bob and Darlene have been building a high producing Jersey herd since relocating from the state of Washington 4 years ago. They have a herd of 50 purebred dairy cows plus an additional 40 head of young stock. Cows are producing over 60 pounds of 4.7% BF milk per day from about 30 acres of rotated pastures and have a yearly herd average of 18,000 lbs. milk and 828

lbs. fat. The Winter's have implemented management-intensive rotational grazing (MIRG) since they began dairying in Barron County and have also been merchandising registered Jersey cattle from their 95 acre operation. They are currently transitioning to predominantly grass seeding as new pastures are established.

To reach the farm from Barron, take Highway 8 east 2 miles, turn right onto County Road O, go south 4 miles to the farm, located on the right side. You can also take Hwy 8 or Hwy W from Cameron west about 2 miles until you reach County O going south. From Chetek, go about 6 miles west on Hwy D until you come to County O, turn right and then go north about 2 miles to the farm on the left or west side of road.

Due to construction along U.S. Hwy 8 near the Red Cedar River, there is a detour in this area. Watch for pasture walk signs.

For more information contact Tim Jergenson at UWEX-Barron, 715-537-6250 or Lynn Johnson at NW Graziers Network, 715-268-8778.

Soup Stock Festival—September 19

Soupstock III—Local Food, Local Art, and Local Music.

Date: September 19, 2009

Time: 8:00 A.M.-10:00 P.M.

E Mail:

www.soupstockfestival.com.

Presented by: The NW WI Regional Food Network

Speakers:

Ken Meter & Dana Jackson

Place:

Little Footprint Farm, Turtle Lake

New from UW-Extension Publishing

“Recycling Silo Bags and Other Agricultural Plastic Films” (A3875)

by Brian J. Holmes and Roger Springman

Plastic films are used extensively for silo bags, bunker covers, bale wraps, and horticultural mulch. Until recently, farmers' only legal disposal option was land filling. These plastic films, once largely unusable resources, can now be recycled into other plastic products. This fact sheet offers information and tips on efficiently managing plastic films from farm to collection center.

“Futures and Options Trading in Milk and Dairy Products” (A3732)

by Edward V. Jesse and Robert A. Cropp

Dairy farmers, milk buyers, and others have an excellent opportunity to manage price risk through the use of futures, options, and futures-based forward pricing contracts. This booklet addresses basic questions concerning futures and options markets and the mechanics of trading from the perspective of the dairy farmer.

“Fungicide resistance management in corn, soybean, and wheat in Wisconsin” (A3878)

Offers basic guidelines for fungicide resistance management in corn, soybean, and wheat. Describes Fungicide Resistance Management (FRAC) codes, their group names, chemical family, active ingredients, pathogen resistance, manufacturers, product example, and registered crops.

“Guide to Raising Healthy Beef Cattle” (A3858-04)

by Rhonda Gildersleeve

If you are thinking about raising beef cattle on a small scale, this publication will help you consider key aspects of the operation. Covers production system and breed selection, facilities, feeding, livestock purchasing, regulations, and more.

For more information and to order copies, visit the Learning Store at: <http://learningstore.uwex.edu> or contact Tim Jergenson at the Barron County UW-Extension Office.

**New Publications
are now available
covering-**

**Recycling Silo
Bags**

**Trading futures &
options in Milk**

**Fungicide
Resistance
Management**

**Raising Healthy
Beef**

Farming Lingo has a New Meaning

‘STAYING ON THE TRACTOR’...

...Is new slang found in the most recent issue of *Esquire* magazine. It appeared in an NFL prediction story that said Brett Favre ought to “stay on the tractor.” The editors liked it so much that they deemed it their ‘euphemism of the month.’ They defined it as “When a man, on the advice of friends, loved

ones, and colleagues, stays put (retired, for instance), even though he has an inclination to get back in there and see how he can mix it up one more time.” For those folks who do not follow professional football,... Favre chose not to ‘stay on the tractor.’ (from the WI Farm Bureau Federation ‘Ag NewsWire.’



Corn & Soybean Field Day – September 10th

Everyone is invited to a Corn & Soybean Field Day on Thursday, September 10th from 3 to 7 p.m. hosted by Andy Bensend and Pioneer Seed. The feed day will feature presentations by Shawn Conley, UW-Extension soybean specialist, Paul Esker, UW-Extension plant disease specialist, and Jim Smith, Pioneer livestock information manager. The Field Day will be located on the Arden Litwiller farm, south of Barron at the corner of 9th Avenue and 16th Street.

Paul Esker will discuss “fungicides for corn/soybean (does it pay), white mold and soybean, and the impact of late season diseases of soybean such as Brown stem rot, Sudden death syndrome, Phytophthora, and Stem Canker.” Jim Smith will cover “Ways to manage the nutritional value of corn silage,” and Shawn Conley will explore “The use of inoculants in soybeans, high-yield soybeans, cyst nematode, soybean aphids, and ‘the year of the yellow bean.’”

Other activities at the Field Day will include corn silage dry down information and a review of the corn plots. All participants are encouraged to bring 3 to 5 stalks of corn to have them dried down and checked for moisture content. Refreshments will also be provided during the Field Day.

UW-EXTENSION

**Barron County Government Center
330 E. LaSalle Avenue, Room 2206
Barron, WI 54812**

NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION

**U.S. POSTAGE PAID
BARRON, WI 54812
BULK PERMIT #74**

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

