

Agricultural Newsletter

UW-Madison College of Ag & Life Science
University of Wisconsin-Extension



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Be prepared for higher fertilizer prices

Carrie Laboski
UW-Madison
Department of Soil Science

Fertilizer prices have increased significantly over the past six months and are at record levels. The Fertilizer Institute (www.tfi.org) has attributed high prices to many factors, including increases in global demand, especially from countries like China, India and Brazil, increases in U.S. corn acres resulting in more demand for fertilizer, increased transportation costs, a weak U.S. dollar, and high natural gas prices.

Reported fertilizer prices from numerous Wisconsin locations during the period of March 1 - 15, 2008 show the average price for ammonium sulfate at \$352/ton, anhydrous ammonia at \$777/ton, urea at \$523/ton, UAN 28% at \$374/ton, DAP 18-46-0 at \$820/ton, and potash 0-0-60 at \$566/ton. When contacted, most retailers said that current March prices were valid now, but subject to change, perhaps on a weekly basis. They also said that it is difficult to estimate May/June or fall pricing. Compared to 1998, these March 2008 prices represent nearly a 200% increase in nitrogen costs and nearly a 250% increase in potash. Compared to 2006, prices on nitrogen have increase nearly 50% and over 100% for potash.

Several but not all retailers said that current supplies of 10-34-0, anhydrous ammonia, ammonium sulfate, DAP, and/or potash may be tight this spring. Availability in May/June will likely be a concern for these same fertilizer materials along with 28% UAN.

While fertilizer prices are at record high levels, we need to keep in mind that corn, soybean, and wheat prices are also at record levels. Decisions regarding how much fertilizer to apply to maximize return may not be all that different than in years past, but availability of fertilizer might influence decisions more.

Thus, it is important for farmers to communicate with their suppliers regarding changes in prices and current/future fertilizer needs.

If supplies do become limited and farmers are forced to cut back on purchased nutrients, a sound nutrient management plan with updated soil tests will be essential in prioritizing which fields and crops should have fertilizer applications.

For more information about nutrient management planning and soil testing contact your local county agriculture agent or visit www.soils.wisc.edu/extension/hottopics/.

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and
UW-Madison College of Ag & Life Sciences

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UWEX Area Agricultural Agent, Spoooner Ag
Research Station, W6646 Highway 70,
Spoooner, WI 54801 or UWEX Area
Agricultural Agent, Ashland Ag Research
Station, 68760 State Farm Road, Ashland, WI
54806.

Cost share funding available for 2008 & 2009

Kevin Schoessow
Area Ag Development Agent
Burnett, Washburn, and Sawyer Counties

Cost share assistance will be available in 2008 and 2009 for a variety of land and water conservation, protection and restoration practices. The funds for this program are provided through county Land & Water Conservation Department (LWCD) via a grant from the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection.

This program provides funds for practices associated with management of intensive grazing, conventional agriculture, and shoreland protection and restoration. This is a countywide program with anticipated installation dates to occur prior to November 1 each year. The cost share rate in most cases is 70% (County pays 70%; Landowner pays 30%).

Funds will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis determined by the date the actual cost share agreement is signed. Applications, a full list of eligible practices, and additional information are available from your local County LWCD.

Technical assistance for the installation of these practices is also available. For more information contact your county Land and Water Conservation Department.

Burnett County 349-2186
Washburn County 468-4653
Sawyer County 634-6463
Douglas 395-1266
Bayfield 373-6167
Ashland 682-7187

Youth tractor & machinery training dates set

Kevin Schoessow
Area Ag Development Agent
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties

Wisconsin Law requires that any youth less than 16 years of age be certified to operate a tractor or machinery on public roads—even if working for a parent or guardian. In addition, Federal Child Labor regulations make it unlawful to hire or even permit without pay any youth under age 16 to participate in any work activities listed as hazardous unless the youth is working on a farm owned and operated by the youth's parents or legal guardian, or the youth has a training certificate which provides an exemption from certain hazardous work activities. Operating a tractor over 20 PTO horsepower is included in the list of hazardous work activities.

Wisconsin training guidelines require that youth participate in 24 hours of classroom training and complete a driving course. A course satisfying these requirements will be conducted in Spoooner at the Spoooner Ag Research Station on June 23, 24, and 26 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Students must be at least 12 years old to enroll in the program and attend all the training sessions to receive their certification. Pre-registration is required.

To preregister for the training, contact Lorraine Toman at the Spoooner Area Ag Agents UW-Extension office at 715-635-3506 or 800-528-1914. Please provide the name, address, telephone number, date of birth, and social security number of the youth to be certified.

Things to know before you plant spring wheat

Shawn Conley
Soybean & Small Grains Specialist
UW-Madison

Oats have been the largest small grain acreage crop in Wisconsin because it is robust and seldom needs any management between seeding and harvest. This year many farmers are considering planting spring wheat instead of oats due to high grain prices. They will plant spring wheat as a nurse crop for alfalfa. University of Wisconsin-Extension specialists advise farmers to be aware of a few differences when changing to wheat.

Spring wheat yields increase with seeding rate up to about 45 seeds per square foot (about 2.5 bushels per acre). This allows for 10 to 15 percent of the seed not germinating; resulting in a final stand of about 40 wheat plants per square foot.

The recommended seeding rate for spring wheat on top of alfalfa is 18 plants per square foot (one bushel wheat per acre) – higher rates will stress the alfalfa more. This will result in poor stands in some cases and may cause reduced alfalfa yields from the field in future years.

One option for farmers to consider is planting the wheat at a full seeding rate this spring and then planting alfalfa in early August after the wheat has been harvested. Fall seedings of alfalfa work well if adequate moisture is available for stand establishment. Volunteer wheat plants will need to be controlled with herbicide.

Farmers planting wheat on top of alfalfa should consider planting a

potato leaf hopper resistant variety of alfalfa. This insect can come into fields under a cover crop and attack the alfalfa. Infestations of this insect in the seeding year can reduce alfalfa stand and yields in future years.

Nitrogen fertilization or credits for the wheat seeded with alfalfa should not exceed 40 pounds per acre as higher rates will produce more top growth to compete more severely with the alfalfa seedlings.

Farmers should make sure that wheat seed is treated with fungicide to reduce the risk of loose smut. If left untreated, this disease can severely reduce final yields. Further information regarding seed fungicides is available in the Pest Management of Wisconsin Field Crops-2008 (UW-Extension, A3646).

Additionally, farmers planting spring wheat should be prepared to watch for plant diseases and spray with fungicide if necessary. Spring wheat is much more susceptible than winter wheat to a number of diseases that if not treated, can severely limit yield.

Expect spring wheat to yield two-thirds of what an average winter wheat crop may yield. In addition to yield return farmers will depend on protein content and market availability. Few local elevators in Wisconsin accept spring wheat therefore transportation costs must be factored into your decision. Also, due to our environment, protein content may prove limiting therefore select and grow only those varieties that have excellent protein scores.

If managed correctly spring wheat can provide excellent additional income this year provided farmers are aware of the differences in management between wheat and oats

and respond with the additional inputs required for good yield. More information is available at http://soybean.uwex.edu/documents/Spring_wheat.pdf.

New tuberculosis requirements for imported cattle from Minnesota

Robert Ehlenfeldt, DVM
Wisconsin State Veterinarian

Due to recent discoveries of tuberculosis in four newly-infected herds in MN, it is expected that the USDA will drop Minnesota's TB status from modified-accredited-advanced to modified-accredited. This is the same as Michigan's status.

When this occurs, the WI Department of Ag will impose the same restrictions on Minnesota cattle, bison and goat imports as those imposed on Michigan animals. If you are planning to import cattle, bison or goats from Minnesota to Wisconsin in the next few weeks, it is strongly recommended that you check whether the status has changed and whether there are added new requirements. Call the Division of Animal Health at 608-224-4872 or go to our website at http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/ah/agriculture/animals/movement/cattle_bison.jsp and http://www.datcp.state.wi.us/ah/agriculture/animals/movement/sheep_goats.jsp.

In addition to a certificate of veterinary inspection (CVI) and official individual identification, the WI Dept. of Ag will add these new requirements:

1. Import permit *before animals enter Wisconsin* – call 608-224-4872 between 7:45 a.m. - 4:30

- p.m. weekdays to request a permit.
- 2. Animals must come from herds that have negative TB test results from a whole-herd test in the past 12 months. The date of the test needs to be on the CVI.
- 3. If the whole-herd test was longer than 60 days before the animals enter Wisconsin, the individual animals must be retested, with the date of the test included on the CVI.
- 4. If the individual animals were not part of the herd at the time of the whole-herd test, they need to be tested and the date of the test included on the CVI.
- 5. The veterinarian signing the CVI must *fax a copy immediately* to the Division of Animal Health at 608-224-4871.
- 6. Animals will be quarantined to the premises where they are first received after import, and retested 60-90 days after import.
- 7. Young animals *are not exempt* from the requirements.
- 8. Animals coming to Wisconsin from Minnesota for shows will not be quarantined. However, they are not eligible for sale, they must return to their farm of origin, and the CVI must state this.
- 9. Animals going *directly* to slaughter (not through a market) are exempt.
- 10. Cattle going to an *approved* import feedlot under DATCP 10.22(9) are exempt from the quarantine-and-retest requirement; however, they do

need individual TB tests within 60 days before import.

- 11. Breed sales in Minnesota – If all Minnesota cattle at these sales comes from whole-herd test herds, and individual animals have been retested when appropriate (see #3 and #4 above), cattle originating in Wisconsin can be brought back to Wisconsin; they will need to meet the quarantine-retest requirement (see #6 above). If the Minnesota cattle do not meet this standard, no cattle from the sale will be allowed into Wisconsin.

Computerize your farm records using AAIMS

*Otto Wiegand
Area Ag Agent
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties*

Farmers interested in computerizing their financial records are invited to attend a beginners workshop on Wednesday, April 16, from 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at the Northern District UW-Extension Office on 702 Front Street (next to the Post Office) in Spooner. The training and materials are free of charge. Lunch is on your own. Pre-registration by Monday, April 14 is required.

Jenny Vanderlin from the University of Wisconsin Center for Dairy Profitability will demonstrate a computerized farm record keeping system for farmers not currently using electronic farm records. While this is designed as a beginner’s workshop, current users

of AAIMS will also find they can learn new tips, shortcuts and other ideas on how to use the computer more efficiently.

The Agricultural Accounting and Information Management System (AAIMS) was first introduced in the 1990s by farm management specialists at the University of Wisconsin in an effort to help farmers improve their management skills. The AAIMS program includes tracking income and expenses, depreciation records and tax management features. The AAIMS program also has payroll management and the ability to write checks. AAIMS is primarily designed for dairy producers; however, farms involved in other livestock enterprises find this software to be useful as well.

This will be a hands-on workshop with each participant working on a computer and following along with the instructor. Come and see how to use the AAIMS program more effectively, learning short cuts for entering data, and troubleshooting any problems with the program.

Contact Otto or Kevin from UW-Extension Spooner Ag Research at 715-635-3506 / 800-528-1914 to register or for more information.

New money for grass and no-till farmers

*Lynn Johnson
NW Wisconsin Graziers Network*

Six-year carbon credit contracts could provide up to \$25/acre or even more for qualifying grasslands and about \$10/acre for qualifying no-till acres under new programs being introduced around Wisconsin by Iowa

Farm Bureau and National Farmers Union. In early March, carbon credits (CC) were being traded on the Chicago Climate Exchange for \$5 per metric ton of carbon dioxide (equivalent to one CC for sequestering carbon in top soil annually).

These programs represent a potential new revenue source for Wisconsin agricultural producers. Grass hay growers and especially graziers are being rewarded for sequestering carbon in their topsoil at the rate of one CC per year, while no-till crop producers can earn 0.4 CC per year for their tillage practices which also conserve soil organic matter.

Abe Collins, co-founder of Carbon Farmers of America, stated last month at a grazing conference in northwest Wisconsin that “Graziers can rapidly increase soil organic matter and need to position themselves to get paid for it in the emerging carbon market.”

Sequestering carbon in the soil is one of the most effective ways of countering the effects of global warming resulting from the extra carbon dioxide being released into the atmosphere from burning fossil fuels like coal and petroleum.

Greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide and methane trap additional energy from the sun in the atmosphere causing the average temperature to rise and contribute to the problems associated with global warming.

Plants like grasses and trees capture carbon dioxide during photosynthesis and are reversing the effects of carbon emissions. Organic matter in the topsoil stores or

sequesters this carbon and keeps it from contributing to global warming.

There are also carbon credit programs available for tree farming (managed forestry contracts) and for manure bio-digesters and manure storage covers (methane destruction contracts), but these are more complex than the soil sequestering contracts.

Steps to enroll in one of the CC programs include:

- 1) obtain an enrollment packet from one of the aggregators listed below;
- 2) gather your documents (FSA maps and FSA form 578),
- 3) fill out forms and sign contracts,
- 4) re-read guidelines and rules,
- 5) get any questions answered and mail completed application by September 2008.

If your application is accepted, you can look forward to having another source of income for your farming operation and also have a good feeling about being a part of the solution to global warming.

For additional information, contact your local UW-Extension agent, or Otto or Kevin at 715-635-3506 / 800-528-1914, or one of the following web sites: The Iowa Farm Bureau AgraGate CC Corp. at www.AgraGate.com or 1-866-633-6758, the North Dakota Farmers Union at www.ndfu.org or 1-800-366-8331 ext. 116, Carbon Farmers of America c/o Abe Collins at www.carbonfarmersofamerica.com or 1-802-524-0707, and the Chicago Climate Exchange at www.chicagoclimatex.com or 1-312-554-3350.

Carbon credit meeting schedule for NW Wisconsin

*Otto Wiegand
Area Ag Agent
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties*

Deb Raemisch of the Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation will be giving five presentations in late May on carbon credit contract details and opportunities in NW Wisconsin. The meetings last two hours and are free of charge. The meeting schedule is as follows:

May 28, Wednesday, 6-8 p.m., Polk County Government Center, Balsam Lake – located north of town on the corner of Hwy. 46 and Cty I.

May 29, Thursday, 1-3 p.m., Crex Meadows Visitors Center Auditorium, Grantsburg – located at 102 E. Crex Ave. on the north side of town, follow the flying geese painted on the streets.

May 29, Thursday, 6-8 p.m., Ag Research Station, Spooner – located at W6646 Hwy. 70, just ½ mile west of Hwy 53 or ½ mile east of Hwy. 63.

May 30, Friday 9-11 a.m., Veterans Community Center, Hayward – located at 10534 S. Main St, one block north of Cty. B on Hwy. 63, near the Visitors Center.

May 30, Friday 1-3 p.m., Ashland Research Station – located at 68760 State Farm Rd. on the south side of Hwy. 2, east of the junction of Hwy. 63, about ½ west of the Great Lakes Visitors Center or about two miles west of the City of Ashland.

Cow-calf seminar to be held April 22

Otto Wiegand
Area Ag Agent
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties

A regional cow-calf beef seminar will be held at the Elm Creek Ranch just south of Radisson on Tuesday evening, April 22, from 5:00 to 9:00 p.m.. Take Hwy. 40 two miles south from Radisson to Elm Creek Lane and turn right, or from Bruce go 22 miles north on Hwy. 40. Watch for the signs.

The Ranch is owned by Jim and Jessica Spinner. The Spinners run 235 acres of which 175 acres is grass. Management-intensive or rotational grazing is employed. The grazing area is divided into 14 permanent paddocks that can be subdivided as needed. There are 25 registered Devon cows and 25 registered Black Angus cows. The farm also features an environmental straw-bale house and an on-farm store. Besides farming, Jim works for the Rusk Co. Sheriff's Department and Jessica teaches part-time for the Winter School District and works at a local restaurant.

The evening's events will include a tour of the farm, a home-grown, grass-fed beef supper catered by the Spinners, and introductions and presentations by UW-Extension agents. The subjects to be discussed will include:

- Cow-Calf Industry Outlook
- Dealing with Increasing Production Costs, Including \$5 Corn

- Badger Vac 45 Pre-Conditioning Program
 - Cattle Handling Techniques.
- There is a \$10 per person registration fee for this event. Pre-

registration is required by Friday, April 18. To register or to obtain more information, contact Otto or Kevin at Spooner, 715-635-3506 / 800-528-1914, or Aliesha at Ladysmith, 715-532-2151.

BadgerCare Plus: Affordable health insurance for families and all kids

Wisconsin families, regardless of income, now have access to affordable, comprehensive health care coverage for their kids through BadgerCare Plus. This new program also provides access to health insurance to farmers, self-employed parents, pregnant women and youth aging out of foster care.

BadgerCare Plus is designed for people who do not currently have access to health care coverage. The program has two benefit plans which are based upon a family's income. Most families with incomes below 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level (annual income of \$35,199 for a family of three) will be in the Standard Plan. Families with incomes above 200 percent of the Federal Poverty Level will be in the Benchmark Plan.

Depending on which plan you are enrolled in, BadgerCare Plus may pay for:

- Preventive services such as doctor visits, prenatal care, check ups and immunizations (shots)
- Vision care
- Prescription drugs
- Family planning services and supplies
- Speech, physical and occupational therapy
- Mental health services
- Medical equipment
- Hospital care
- Hearing services (including hearing aids)
- Lab and x-ray services

Families can apply for BadgerCare Plus by completing an online application at access.wi.gov. For additional information about BadgerCare Plus go to badgercareplus.org or call 1-800-362-3002.

Bioenergy forum April 8 in Ashland

Recent spikes in energy prices, uncertainty over future supply, and concern about the environment have brought energy issues to the forefront of policy debates around the country. Interest in alternative energy sources including biofuels from organic substances is at an all time high.

In an effort to increase understanding of the economic development opportunities for communities and businesses from biofuels in our region, UW-Extension and its project partners have planned an upcoming educational program. The one-day *Ashland-Bayfield County Bioenergy Forum – Energy Solutions in Our Backyard* will be held on Tuesday, April 8, 2008 at the AmericInn Conference Center in Ashland. The forum will begin at 9:00 a.m., include a buffet lunch at 12 noon and conclude at 3:00 p.m.

Many topics relevant to the Bioenergy industry will be presented by University specialists.

The registration fee for the forum is \$10.00 which includes snacks and lunch. To register to attend the bioenergy forum or for more information contact the Bayfield County UW-Extension Office at (715) 373-6104 ext 254 or via email at timothy.kane@ces.uwex.edu.

Sponsors for the Ashland-Bayfield County Bioenergy Forum – Energy Solutions in Our Backyard include: Focus on Energy, Xcel Energy, Dairyland Power, Bayfield Electric, SEH, Ashland and Bayfield County UW-Extension Offices, and University of Wisconsin Colleges.

This Quarter's Events

Contacts: Ag Agents Otto Wiegand or Kevin Schoessow, UW-Extension, Spooner Ag. Station, 715-635-3506, Tom Syverud, UW-Extension, Douglas, 715-395-1363 or Jason Fischbach, UW-Extension, Ashland/Bayfield, 715-682-8393 for more information, brochures, or how to register.

April 8, Tuesday, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. – Bio-Energy Forum, Energy Solutions in Our Backyards, Ashland – AmericInn Conference Center, \$10 includes lunch and snacks. To register or for more information contact Bayfield Co. UW-Extension at 715-373-6104 x254 (See article for details).

April 16, Wednesday, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. – AAIMS Beginner Computerized Farm Records Training for Farmers, Spooner - Northern District Extension Office, 702 Front Street, free of charge, pre-register by Monday, Mar. 14, contact Otto or Kevin at 715-635-3506 / 800-528-1914 (See article for details).

April 17, Thursday, 7:00 p.m. - 8:30 p.m. - Program Requirements for Preconditioned Feeder Cattle Sales, distance learning seminars at four locations: Hayward, Spooner, Siren & Balsam Lake – free of charge, pre-registration requested, but not required, locations are: Hayward Court House, Spooner Ag Research Station, Siren Government Center and Balsam Lake Government Center, contact Otto or Kevin for Hayward, Spooner or Siren, 715-635-3506 / 800-528-1914, or Ryan for Balsam Lake, 715-485-8600.

April 22, Tuesday, 5:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. – Regional Cow-Calf Seminar, Radisson, Sawyer Co, Elm Creek Ranch – \$10, includes meal, pre-register by Friday, April 18, contact Otto or Kevin at Spooner, 715-635-3506 / 800-528-1914, or Aliesha at Ladysmith, 715-532-2151 (See article for details).

May 28-30, Thursday - Friday, - Carbon Credit Information Seminars, to be held at Balsam Lake, Grantsburg, Spooner, Hayward and Ashland – free of charge, sessions last two hours, contact Otto or Kevin at Spooner, 715-635-3506 / 800-528-1914, Ryan at Balsam Lake 715-485-8600, or Jason at Ashland/Bayfield, 715-682-8393 (See articles for details).

June 14, Saturday morning – Washburn County Dairy Breakfast – Spooner, Washburn County Fairgrounds.

June 14, Saturday morning – Siren Ag Committee Dairy Breakfast – Siren, Howard & Phyllis Kopecky Farm.

June 18, Wednesday, 1p.m. - 3 p.m., Dairy Sheep Pasture Walk, Grantsburg – Love Tree Farm, Mary & David Falk, 12413 County Z, features 200 milking ewes, on-farm cheesemaking, a cheese cave, guard dogs and rotational grazing. Sponsored by Northwest WI Graziers Network. Contact Otto or Kevin at Spooner, 715-635-3506 or 800-528-1914.

June 23, 24, 26, Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m. – Tractor Safety Training, Spooner Ag Research Station – for youth 12-16, pre-registration required by Fri. June 20, contact Otto or Kevin at Spooner, 715-635-3506 / 800-528-1914.

June 28, Saturday morning – Sawyer County Dairy Breakfast – Hayward, Sawyer County Fairgrounds.



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software program**

**Attend one of the many other
agricultural trainings scheduled
this spring**

Kevin Schoessow
UWEX Area Agricultural Agent