

# Agricultural Newsletter

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



October-November-December  
2016  
Volume 22 Issue 4

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### Removable Insert:

*Farm Service Agency Update*

## 2016 – 2017 Wisconsin Farm Succession and Estate Planning

### *UW-Extension State-Wide Webinar Series*

*Adapted from Joy Kirkpatrick  
UW Center for Dairy Profitability*

UW-Extension is offering a series of webinars on farm succession and estate planning to be held at the Spooner Ag Research Station. Another location in the area is Chippewa Falls. The first two sessions will have already occurred by the time this newsletter arrives, but all webinars are recorded and could be re-broadcast later by request.

The sessions are offered on Thursdays from 1:00-3:00 PM. Pre-registration is required. To register, contact Extension Ag Agent Otto Wiegand at 715-635-3506.

**Already Held – Agricultural Leasing Contracts** – Phil Harris, UW-Extension Ag Law Specialist Emeritus

**Already Held – Tax Implications of Transitioning From a Sole Proprietorship to an LLC** – Kari Apel, CPA, CEO of Apel Associates

**October 27, Thurs, 1:00-3:00 – Overview of Succession Planning** – Joy Kirkpatrick, Center for Dairy Profitability

**November 17, Thurs, 1:00-3:00 - How Big is Your House? - How Big Does It Need To Be? Financial Analysis for Succession Planning** – Kevin Bernhardt, UW-Extension Farm Management Specialist

**January 26, Thurs, 1:00-3:00 - Estate Planning** – Bridget Finke, Attorney, Bakke Norman Law Offices

**February 23, Thurs, 1:00-3:00 – Long Term Care: Planning for My Future Needs** – Steve Shapiro, Medigap Insurance Specialist, State of Wisconsin Board on Aging and Long Term Care and the Wisconsin Office of the Commissioner of Insurance

**March 23, Thurs, 1:00-3:00 – Medicaid Eligibility and Recovery** – Anthony Schmoldt, Attorney, Schmoldt Law Office

# Agricultural NEWSLETTER

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and  
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Sciences

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Department of Agriculture and Wisconsin  
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If you have any special needs or require  
special accommodations, please write to  
UWEX Area Agricultural Agent, Spooner Ag  
Research Station, W6646 Highway 70,  
Spooner, WI 54801 or UWEX Area  
Agricultural Agent, Ashland Ag Research  
Station, 68760 State Farm Road, Ashland, WI  
54806.

# Finding Money and Other Financial Support for Your Farm

*Kevin Schoessow*  
Area Agriculture Development Agent  
Burnett, Sawyer & Washburn Counties

If I've heard it once, I've heard it a hundred times over my career. "Can you tell me where to get 'free money' for my farm?" This 'free money' is often associated with hearing or reading how a farm or individual received a grant or cost-share for a feasibility study or practice on their farm. Well the truth is, there is money to help assist farmers, ranchers and community organizations, but these funds are not easily gotten or even necessarily free.

I recently attended a Grant Programs and Financial Options for Farmers and Food Entrepreneurs workshop in Barron. This workshop was full of information and resources related to grants, where to find them, understanding their purpose, who to contact, how to determine which grant makes most sense for your needs, and understanding how to apply and submit a strong proposal.

Three USDA grant programs highlighted were the Specialty Crops Block Grant, the Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Farmer-Rancher Grants, and the Value-Added Producers (VAP) Grant. The SARE and VAP grants are open to individual farms, while the specialty crop grant is intended for organizations.

Finding an appropriate grant is one thing, writing and submitting a strong grant application is another. Submitting grants as an individual farm can be very challenging, especially if you have little or no experience writing grants and have not sought out advice. This is where the Grant Advising Services offered through the Michael Fields Agriculture Institute comes in. This service is free of charge and is open to all farmers and rural entrepreneurs in the Midwest. For more information, contact Michael Fields at 608-219-4279.

For those willing to try, grants can be a wonderful tool to help explore new ideas, or adjust to changing markets or environments. If you are interested in learning more about grants and other financial options and have access to a computer and the internet, here are two resources to search for: *Building Sustainable Farms, Ranches, and Communities: A Guide to Federal Programs*, published by USDA, and *Got Moo-La?: Where to Go for Business Assistance in Wisconsin*, published by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture.

Cost-share is another source farmers might consider. Cost-share and flat-rate payments are contracts with government agencies to help farmers offset the cost associated with eligible practices that are often tied to conservation. The USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture and county Land & Water Conservation Departments all have cost-share programs.

While I am not a 'free money' expert, please contact me for further assistance to learn more about these programs and resources at 1-715-635-3506 or 1-800-528-1914, or by email at [kevin.schoessow@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:kevin.schoessow@ces.uwex.edu).

# Grazing Stockpiled Forage

Dan Undersander  
UW-Madison Forage Agronomist

Many pastures will have accumulated forage this fall due to the generally good late season rainfall and temperature patterns. Accumulated or stockpiled forage can be an excellent source of forage for animals. Fall stockpiled forage is brown but of high quality since it is largely leaves, unlike summer accumulated brown forage which is stemmy and lower quality. Grazing stockpiled forage is an excellent way to extend the grazing season and reduce costs of harvesting or buying forage.

In trials we conducted at Arlington and Lancaster, Wisconsin, fall accumulated forage was about 73.4% digestible in October and declined to 70% digestible in December and 65.5% in March. Digestibility declines are reflected by gradually increasing NDF from 51% in October, 57% in December and 61% in March. This quality would be more than adequate for sheep, dry cows and for growing animals. This can also be excellent forage for pleasure horses.

The tonnage of stockpile forage would be 1-2 tons/acre higher if 40-50 lbs nitrogen/acre had been applied in early August. Grasses use up all the nitrogen available in the early season growth cycles and, while they will turn green in the fall, they will produce little growth without additional nitrogen.

The different grass species maintain yield and quality differently. Timothy, smooth brome grass, and quackgrass are suitable for fall grazing, but they tend to lose quality

after December. If these species have not been grazed or harvested prior to fall, they will have stems and grazing should be limited to what leaves the cattle will consume. Late-maturing orchardgrass is best utilized by December for similar reasons. Tall fescue, early-maturing orchardgrass, and Reed canarygrass are suitable for grazing fall and winter, and, especially, late winter grazing. Their dry matter and forage quality persist longer into the spring. If you want to do more stockpiled grazing in the future, you might consider the above information when selecting pasture species to seed.

The key to maximizing the benefit of the forage accumulated in the pastures is to give only a small amount at a time to grazing animals. If animals are given 2-3 days of feed at a time, they will consume about 70% of the residue. But if simply turned loose on a large pasture, only about 30% of the residue will be consumed and the rest will be trampled down. Also be careful to accurately estimate the available forage. I see many who overestimate the forage available and

then animal intake (and performance) declines. Over grazing will also result in slowed growth of the pasture next spring.

While fence posts may be difficult to get into frozen ground for moving an electric fence, other options are available. One of the simplest is to fill plastic gallon ice cream buckets with sand and water and then stick a fiber glass fence post into the sand. When the water freezes you have a movable post that sets on the soil surface and can be used for supporting polywire fencing.

Don't pull animals off of pasture just because of snow. Cattle can graze through up to 2 feet of snow and sheep up to 1 foot of snow as long as there is no ice or a hard crust on the snow. Water requirement is also much less than over summer but some water should still be made available to animals grazing stockpiled forage. Also analyze a sample of stockpiled forage for minerals and consider providing a mineral mix to animals for any mineral at low levels in the stockpiled forage.

## Spoooner Dairy Sheep Flock Dispersal Sale

The entire dairy sheep research flock at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Spoooner Agricultural Research Station will be sold through an online computer auction on Thursday, October 13, 2016 beginning at 5:00 PM Central Time. The auction will be conducted by Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association of Baraboo, Wisconsin ([www.equitycoop.com](http://www.equitycoop.com)).

All potential buyers need to register for the auction by contacting Dave Johnson at Equity (608-356-8311 ext. 131 or [djohnson@equitycoop.com](mailto:djohnson@equitycoop.com)).

Additional information regarding the sale can be found at Equity Cooperative's website [www.equitycoop.com](http://www.equitycoop.com) or by contacting Phil Holman at 715-635-3735 or Dave Thomas at 608-263-4306.

# Non-Enclosed Manure Storage Safety Tips

*Adapted from Cheryl Skjolass and Others,  
UW Biosystems and Engineering & from  
Penn State University*

Injuries and fatalities occur in confined space manure storages that are enclosed, such as beneath animal quarters; or below-ground reception and pump out pits; and in non-enclosed earthen, synthetic, or concrete lined manure storages. Non-enclosed manure storages are open to the atmosphere but may meet the definition of a confined space in terms of occupational safety and health based on storage design and employee exposure to hazards.

In the case of non-enclosed manure storage, hazards may include:

- A thick liquid and floating crust that make swimming, buoyancy, or even moving around very difficult.
- Steep and slippery slopes that can make getting out of manure storages difficult or impossible.
- An acceleration of hazardous gases (primarily methane, hydrogen sulfide, carbon dioxide, and ammonia) released from manure due to movement, agitation, removal, or addition of manure to storage.
- Localized layers of hazardous gases existing above manure surfaces, especially on hot, humid days with little to no breeze.
- Not having sufficient oxygen to breathe if a person is ‘treading’ in manure because of inability to get out.
- Not being able to see into depths of manure like you can with clear water.
- A slow response time for adequate emergency actions because of site isolation and remoteness.
- Potentially hazardous equipment in and around the manure storage.

Safety guidelines to follow:

- Make sure everyone near manure storage structures understands the hazards that exist, including symptoms and effects that the various manure gases have on their health.
- Explosive gas may settle in pockets near where agitation or pumping is occurring. No smoking, open flames or sparks should be allowed. Non-enclosed manure storage should be assessed to determine employee exposure to safety and health hazards. One potential hazard is someone falling into the storage and being engulfed in the manure slurry. Agitation accelerates the release of hazardous gases. Employees should know the signs and symptoms of these gases. OSHA requires warning signs to be posted in English but a recommended safety practice is to post in an additional language based on your workforce.
- Make sure the non-enclosed manure storage has a fence installed around the perimeter and access gates are locked to keep unauthorized personnel from entering the area.
- Post warning signs including manure drowning hazard signs and “Danger Manure Storage” or “Danger Keep Out” or “Danger Keep Away” on all sides of non-enclosed manure storage. If possible, these signs should be located by gates.
- Keep bystanders and non-essential workers away from non-enclosed manure storage during or other accessible areas during when pump out operations are in progress.
- Wear a safety harness with life-line attached to a solid object or anchor any time you enter the fenced in area of non-enclosed manure storage. If retrieval is needed, this equipment will improve the possibility of a successful rescue.
- Never work alone. The second person’s role is to summon help in an emergency and assist with rescue without entering the manure storage.

- Move slowly around unenclosed manure storages as the ground can sometimes be uneven and may cause a person to trip and fall.
- Understand equipment being used and have emergency shut-down procedures prepared.
- If equipment malfunctions or maintenance is required during agitating or pumping of the manure, shut all equipment off and remove it from the manure storage before servicing or repairing.
- If you feel unsure or uncomfortable with what you are getting ready to do near the manure storage; wait a moment and reconsider the action, contact a supervisor or farm manager, and review the situation before proceeding.
- Be prepared to call 911 in case of an emergency. Being prepared includes providing specific directions to the site of the emergency, accurately describing the incident, and number of victims.

## Online Beginning Farmer Course Offered

*Adapted from Nadia Alber  
UW Center for Integrated Ag Studies*

The Pasture-Based Dairy and Livestock Course sponsored by the Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers (WSBDF) is now available as an online course that you can take on your own time and at your own convenience. It features the same pasture-based approach and business planning emphasis of the in-person course (begins Nov. 10). The registration fee is \$300. If you're interested, you can register using the link below: <https://charge.wisc.edu/wsbdf/>, or <http://wsbdf.wisc.edu/how-to-apply/>. The in-person course will be offered at various locations around the state. Spooner will not offer the in-person course unless there is enough demand. The for-credit course option is not available at Spooner. For more information, contact Nadia Alber at WSBDF, 608-265-6437, [nalber@wisc.edu](mailto:nalber@wisc.edu), or UWEX Ag Agent Otto Wiegand at Spooner, 715-635-3506.

### ***Online Course Outline***

#### **Term I – Business Startup**

1 – Principles and Opportunities for Starting a Dairy or Livestock Business, 2 – Successful Dairy Farm Startup, 3 – Setting Realistic Goals for your Start-up Farm Business, 4 – The GrassWorks Inc. Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program, 5 – Sheep Production and Marketing, 6 – Basics of Goat Business Startups, 7-8 – Feeding the Dairy Cow on Pasture, 9 – Farm Selection and Grazing System Layout, 10 – Stray Voltage and Infrastructure Considerations, 11 – Pasture-Based Beef Production, and 12 – Niche Markets for Beef.

#### **Term II – Developing a Business Plan**

1 – USDA FSA Beginning Farmer Loan Opportunities, 2 – Farm Startup Financial Record Keeping, 3 – Farmer-Driven Marketing Strategies: Local and Grass-Fed, 4 – Locker Plant Logistics, 5 – Shifting Gears: Managing Agriculture's New Realities, and 6 – Farm Business Start-Up Lessons Learned.

#### **Term III – Managing the Business**

1-2 – Low Cost Milking Parlor Design, 3 – Livestock Health and Treating Disease in Organic Systems, 4 – Principles of Organic Dairying and Herd Health from a Farmer's Perspective, 5 – Pasture and Soil Nutrient Management, 6 – Grazing and Natural Resource Management, 7 – Emerging Markets and Value Added Food Products, 8 – Ecological Restoration with Livestock, and 9 – Bringing it All Together.

# Renovating Old Farms

## *Fall Graziers Conference, Siren on Sat, October 22*

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

The Northwest Wisconsin Graziers Network and UW-Extension would like to invite you to attend this year's fall conference in Siren from 9:00-3:30 on Saturday, October 22 that will focus on renovating old farms. The conference will be held at the Tesora Restaurant and Conference Center in Siren, 23985 State Road 35 South, at the corner where Hwy 70 turns west toward Grantsburg. Registration and the trade show will start at 8:30 AM. Topics will include cash flow, soils, facilities, fencing, water systems and bees. This conference should be of interest to new farmers, part-time or full-time operators, low-income startups, graziers or non-graziers.

Paul Dietmann of Badgerland Financial will discuss small farm startups, cash flow and beginning farmer finances. Dr. Mike Travis of UW-Extension will talk about rebuilding old soils. Dr. Dave Kammel, UW Ag Engineer, will discuss renovating old buildings and other livestock handling facilities. Matt Dobberstein of the Burnett Dairy Cooperative will talk about nutrition and minerals on poor soils. Randy Cutler of Cutler Fencing will discuss fencing and watering system options. Dr. Gary Reuter of the University of Minnesota Bee Lab will talk about adding bees to your operation. Burnett Dairy has

generously provided financial support for the conference.

Advance registration for the Conference, due by Monday, Oct 17, is \$20 and includes lunch, snacks and materials. Late registration is \$30. For more information or to register,

contact UW-Extension Ag Agents Otto Wiegand or Kevin Schoessow at Spooner 715-635-3506, or Grazing Specialists Randy Gilbertson 715-520-2112 or Lynn Johnson 715-268-8778 for NW Graziers.

## Silage Preservation: First Things First

*Adapted from Brian J. Holmes  
Ag Engineer Professor Emeritus  
UW-Madison*

**Harvest at Correct Stage of Maturity** - High levels of readily available carbohydrate are needed to ferment into acids. Harvest alfalfa early to mid bloom, corn  $1/3 - 1D_2$  half milk line.

**Harvest at Correct Moisture** - Too dry can result in high porosity (oxygen penetration), reduced acid production, and reduced thermal mass (rapid heating). Too wet causes clostridial fermentation (Butyric acid) and leachate discharge (nutrient losses). Harvest alfalfa at 60-65% moisture, corn at 65-70.

**Chop to Correct Particle Length** - Shorter particles pack better and release more soluble carbohydrates. Set knives to obtain  $3/8$  inch TLC for hay and unprocessed whole plant corn and  $1/2 - 3/4$  inch TLC for processed whole plant corn.

**Size Silo Properly** - Remove silage at a high rate (keeps ahead of spoilage) and to avoid safety problems (avalanche of overhang). Select face cross section to achieve 123 per day removal based on volume removed each day. Stack silage so it is no higher than the unloading equipment can reach (no overhangs). Remove no less than 63 per day.

**Seal Silo Cracks and Holes** - Limits oxygen penetration. Use JetCrete, epoxy, grout, plastic sheets.

**Harvest at High Enough Rate to Fill Silo in Three Days** - While silos are open, forage is exposed to oxygen thus supporting microbial deterioration. Exposed forage is also susceptible to precipitation which can leach soluble carbohydrates. Size silos small and/or provide enough equipment and labor to harvest and transport forage quickly.

**Pack Forage to a High Bulk Density** - High bulk density has low porosity (limits rate of oxygen transmission through silage). Employ proper forage moisture (60-70%), thin filling layers (<6 inches), heavy tractor(s), pack continuously, pack whole surface (keep packing slope shallow), multiple packing tractors.

**Seal Forage Against Oxygen Penetration** - Oxygen supports aerobic microbial decomposition of silage. Slope forage surface to drain runoff water away from silo wall, cover top surface with 6-8 mil plastic within 24 hrs of filling, weight plastic

uniformly to prevent plastic billowing in wind, seal edges with soil or gravel filled bags. Manage vermin which can cause holes. Inspect plastic weekly, patching holes as found.

**Maintain Tight, Smooth Feed Out Face** - Ragged silage has larger surface area exposed to oxygen and fissures and cracks allow oxygen to penetrate deep into silage. Scrape silage at feed out face in a downward motion of the loader bucket or use a facer to remove forage.

**Remove Only the Forage that will be Fed in One Feeding** - Removed silage has low density which allows oxygen to penetrate deeply. Rapid heating can result. Pay attention to how much material needs to be removed.

**Practice Safely** - Injury and death are expensive! It can happen to you. Employ the following practices: four wheel drive packing tractor, roll over protection on tractor and use the seatbelt, experienced pack tractor driver, keep pedestrians (especially children) away from filling areas, keep packing surfaces at 3:1 slope or shallower, don't fill higher than unloader can reach (no overhangs), face wall side of silo when covering and weighting (don't back up to edge), consider guard rails at wall top, use trailer dump while parked only on solid surfaces, avoid approaching the feed out face (avalanches are real), avoid standing/walking on top of silo near the feed out face (avalanches are real), don't place forage on top of plastic cover when adding new feed (pull back the plastic first).

**How much value can be saved by implementing good silage management practices?** - The answer to this question depends on your current management practices. If you need to improve in some practices and can be viewed as doing a moderate job of management, some improvement in savings can be obtained. If on the other hand, large improvements in practices are needed, much greater savings are possible. To help address this issue, a spreadsheet (Determining Value of Improved Silage Management) is available on the Harvest and Storage page of the UW Extension Team Forage website URL: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/forage/files/2014/02/FeedLo-7-8-11.xls>.



## This Quarter's Events

**Contacts:** UW-Extension Ag Agents Otto Wiegand or Kevin Schoessow, Spooner Station, 715-635-3506, Jane Anklam, Douglas Co, 715-395-1363, Jason Fischbach or Matt Cogger, Ashland & Bayfield Counties, 715-373-6104, Tim Jergenson, Barron Co, 715-537-6250 for more information.

**Oct 4-8 – Tues-Sat – World Dairy Expo, Madison** – Alliant Energy Center

**Oct 8, Sat, 8:30-4:30– Kids & Cows Family Day, Rice Lake** – Fairgrounds, N. Wis. Beef Producers, contact Lori Lyons, 715-210-0049

**Oct 8, Sat, 10-Noon – Beef Pasture Walk, Shell Lake** – Bob and Jane Pederson Farm (see article)

**Oct 13, Thurs, 5 PM, Spooner ARS sheep flock auction** (see announcement)

**Oct 22, Sat, 9:00-3:30 – NW Graziers Fall Conference, Siren** – Renovating Old Farms, to register contact Otto Wiegand, UWEX Spooner 715-635-3506 (see article)

**Oct 27, Nov 17, Jan 26, Feb 23, Mar 23, Thurs, 1-3** – Farm Succession Series (see article)

**Nov 3-4, Thurs-Fri – 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Farmer Cooperative Conference, Minneapolis** – Radisson Blu Hotel, contact 608-263-1672

**Nov 10, Thurs – Beginning Farmer In-Person Course Starts** - various locations, Spooner online (see article)

**Feb 2-4, Thurs-Sat – GrassWorks Conference, Wisconsin Dells** – Chula Vista Resort, contact Heather Flashinski 715-289-4896

**Feb 23-25, Thurs-Sat – MOSES Organic Conference, LaCrosse**

# Beef, Small Farm Pasture Walk

*Otto Wiegand*

*Area Agricultural Agent, Burnett, Sawyer & Washburn Counties*

UW-Extension and the NW Graziers Network invite you to a startup, small farm, beef pasture walk at the Bob and Jane Pederson farm on **Saturday, October 8 from 10-Noon**. Small, startup farms are becoming more and more common as people retire from non-farm jobs and return to the land. The Pedersons retired about five years ago, Bob from the postal service and Jane from teaching. Both are originally from farms and both have degrees, Bob in economics and business, Jane a Masters in education.

The Pedersons own an 18-acre grass-fed beef farm just east of Shell Lake. They have a grazing plan from NW Graziers for about 10 acres and six animal units. They bought the farm two years ago and last year purchased three bred Red Angus cows and two calves. Washburn County Land and Water is providing cost-sharing for some of their activities. Part of the grazing is under trees. They also rent another 30 acres for hay.

The Pedersons plan be sustainable and grow most of their own food. They plan to direct market the steers and sell cow-calf pairs. They do not feed grain, but grow high-quality forages including clover and alfalfa. Cows are bred with artificial insemination. Jane raises chickens. They recently installed a solar system and have established an energy bank with Exel Energy. The trees provide shade, dry season grazing, firewood, timber, wildlife habitat and maple syrup. To reach the farm, take Cty B from Shell Lake east to the farm at W6664 on the left. Or take Cty B west from Hwy 53 south of Spooner. Watch for the signs. For more information, contact UW-Extension Ag Agent Otto Wiegand at 715-635-3506, or Randy Gilbertson at NW Graziers 715-520-2112.



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**Beginning farmer program is now  
offered completely online**



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spoonerag](http://www.facebook.com/spoonerag)**

**Kevin Schoessow**  
UWEX Area Agricultural Agent