

# Agriculture Newsletter

**April 2016**



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If you will need accommodation or assistance as you attend any UW-Extension sponsored event, please contact the host county office at least two days prior to the event. All requests will be confidential.

As I write this, we are on the verge of another winter snow storm. Albeit I would rather see green grass than mounds of white snow, the snow affords an opportunity for us to gather additional moisture. If the weather patterns hold as predicted, we may be faced with less than normal precipitation throughout our growing season. So, the added moisture in the form of snow may to our benefit for the productivity of our crops this year.

This past few months have been very busy in the Extension 'meeting' world, and I hope you took the opportunity to attend some of the meetings offered by UW-Extension. As you will note on the calendar of events, we have fewer meetings slated for this month as we know you are in the final preparation stages for spring planting. If you are currently assessing your winter wheat stands, please take a moment to read the two short articles included in this newsletter about nitrogen written by UW-Extension state specialists.

The UW-Extension Mid & Early Career Dairy Producer and Agribusiness Professionals Group will be meeting on April 26<sup>th</sup> at S&S Hometown in Oconto Falls. We will have a light lunch with information about pain mitigation techniques for animal wellbeing. If you are National Farmers Assuring Responsible Management (FARM) certified or ship your milk to a fluid milk or cheese processor who is National FARM certified, this topic will be highly important as animal husbandry practices are changing for this program as it relates to tail docking. Please consider joining us for this discussion and bring your questions on this topic.

An excellent UW-Extension Farm Succession meeting was held this past month in Gillett. If you were unable to attend and would like more information about Farm Succession, please let either Scott Reuss or me know as we would be happy to provide information to you about this important topic. Or if you would like to meet with us one-on-one about this topic, please feel free to contact us.

*Sarah Mills-Lloyd*

Agriculture Agent—Specializing in Dairy and Livestock  
Oconto County UW-Extension Office

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## Events, Deadlines and Notes

### New app allows dairy farmers to forecast farm-specific mailbox milk prices

Mailbox milk prices are determined by many variables. Using general mailbox milk price indicators can be helpful, but now farmers can predict farm-specific mailbox milk prices with a new app developed by agricultural economists at University of Wisconsin-Madison and UW-Extension.

"The Mailbox Milk Predictor forecasts individualized mailbox milk prices using information provided by the producer and the latest Class III and Class IV futures settlement prices," said Brian W. Gould, UW-Madison/Extension agricultural economist and one of the developers of the software.

Having access to farm-specific mailbox milk prices allows farmers to better estimate their cash flow when they are considering obtaining an operating loan. Farmers can also use the app to predict what their mailbox milk price might be if they change the composition of components.

"This tool allows farmers to analyze the effect of their management practices and to obtain a more accurate picture of how changing management practices and/or milk composition will impact their mailbox milk price," said Gould.

Producers input their historical monthly mailbox milk prices and average monthly milk component profile - if desired; as the more information provided, the more farm-specific the forecast will be. The program is designed to automatically retrieve the previous day's Class III and IV futures settlement prices and then generate a 12-month forecast of the producer's monthly mailbox milk price based on the statistical model estimated from the historical data.

Gould noted that data input is easy and once entered it can be stored for future use. He said that in a

volatile market, farmers will need to update their data for a more accurate forecast going into the future. Currently, the Mailbox Milk Predictor program is an Excel-based spreadsheet. Producers will need Excel to run the program; they will also need an Internet connection to obtain the latest Class III and IV settlement prices. Contact Brian Gould at [bwgould@wisc.edu](mailto:bwgould@wisc.edu) to get a request the Mailbox Milk Predictor program.

Gould said a web-based version should be available this summer, but that should not detract farmers from using the current program because information entered now can be easily migrated to the web-based program.

### Poultry Production Workshops

#### Laying Flock Management

Monday, April 4<sup>th</sup> 6:30-8:30pm; Marinette County Courthouse—Jury Assembly Room

#### Pasturing Poultry Successfully

Thursday, April 7<sup>th</sup> 6:30-8:30 pm; Florence Natural Resources Center

### North Stars Garden Conference

The annual North Stars Garden Conference will be held in Florence on Saturday, April 16. Contact Kathy in the Florence County UW-Extension office, 715-528-4480 to get a copy of the brochure.

### Marinette Garden Series

The following program will be held in the jury assembly room of the Marinette County Courthouse. Contact Scott or Gina for more information.

#### Beginner Vegetables—April 21<sup>st</sup> at 6:30pm

Getting started with vegetable gardening is not difficult, but there are many things to consider.

## Calendar of Events

Remember you can find all this information and more detailed information on our websites <http://oconto.uwex.edu> or <http://marinette.uwex.edu>.

April	4	Marinette	Laying Flock Management
	7	Florence	Pasturing Poultry Successfully
	21	Marinette	Beginner Vegetables
	26	Oconto Falls	Mid and Early Career Dairy Producer and Agribusiness Professionals Group
	30	Oconto Falls	Meat Animal Quality Assurance Training



## Weekly Hay Price Report as of March 21, 2016

Current hay demand and price reports can be found at <http://fyi.uwex.edu/forage/h-m-r/>

Hay Grade	Bale type	Price (\$/ton)		
		Average	Minimum	Maximum
Prime (> 151 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	\$257.00	\$135.00	\$445.00
	Large Square	\$173.00	\$145.00	\$200.00
	Large Round	No reported sales		
Grade 1 (125 to 150 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	\$134.00	\$105.00	\$165.00
	Large Square	\$125.00	\$100.00	\$160.00
	Large Round	\$92.00	\$55.00	\$125.00
Grade 2 (103 to 124 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	\$171.00	\$92.00	\$250.00
	Large Square	\$91.00	\$60.00	\$150.00
	Large Round	\$74.00	\$40.00	\$130.00
Grade 3 (87 to 102 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	No reported sales		
	Large Square	\$50.00	\$25.00	\$115.00
	Large Round	\$57.00	\$25.00	\$85.00

### Beginning Vegetable Gardening Thursday, April 14<sup>th</sup>

Oconto Falls Community Library Meeting Room:  
Starting at 6:30pm

Are you new or relatively new to vegetable gardening? If so, join this discussion of the principles you can use to successfully grow your own home-grown vegetables. We will focus on how to prepare the site; what to plant that is easier to manage and more likely to have success in a new garden; and then relay the pests your plants may experience. Bring your questions and concerns for this open discussion.

Although the session is free to all who attend, pre-registration is appreciated (but not required) for handout management, as attendees will receive a packet of UW-Extension information regarding the evening's focus. Pre-register by contacting library staff at the library main desk or by calling 920-846-2673.

You can contact Scott Reuss to register, or for any other horticultural questions you may have, by calling the Marinette County UW-Extension office at 715-732-7510 or email [scott.reuss@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:scott.reuss@ces.uwex.edu).

The University of Wisconsin-extension provides affirmative action and equal opportunity in education, programming and employment. If you need any accommodations to assist in your participation of this program, please contact Scott or Gina at 715-732-7510 at least 24 hours prior to the event. All requests will be kept confidential.

### UW-Extension Mid & Early Career Dairy Producer and Agribusiness Professionals Group

Mid and early-career dairy producers and agribusiness professionals in Shawano, Oconto and Marinette counties are invited to attend a meeting on **Tuesday, April 26<sup>th</sup>** at S&S Hometown, 211 S. Maple St., Oconto Falls, WI. The meeting will begin at 12:30 pm.

The benefits of participating in a mid and early-career dairy producer group are:

*Deal with complex issues* –face-to-face groups enable farmers and professionals to discuss complex issues and gain a collective understanding of challenges and potential solutions

*Capacity building of individuals, groups and communities* – face-to-face groups are an effective means for developing skills and knowledge in an environment where individual participation is encouraged

*Enabling innovation* – face-to-face groups encourage innovation and new ideas to common and complex problems

*Networking* – face-to-face groups can enhance networking and enable a pooling of skills and knowledge from individuals

In short, the purpose of mid and early-career farmer group is to provide an environment for collective learning, sharing, networking, and problem-solving and have fun while doing it!

If you have questions about this event or to R.S.V.P. please contact Sarah Mills-Lloyd at 920-834-6845 or [sarah.millslyoyd@uwex.edu](mailto:sarah.millslyoyd@uwex.edu) or Jamie Patton at 715-526-6136 or [jamie.patton@uwex.edu](mailto:jamie.patton@uwex.edu).



## MAQA Training

Please note... all youth exhibiting market **beef, sheep, swine, poultry, meat goats, dairy, dairy goats and rabbits** at the fair must attend a MAQA (Meat Animal Quality Assurance) training every year. If you are not MAQA certified, you will not be eligible to sell in the Sale of Champions at the 2016 Oconto County Fair.

### MAQA Training Dates

Saturday, April 30 – Washington Middle School,  
Oconto Falls, 2:30-4:00 pm

*Registration for this training is required by April 15. You can register by calling the Oconto County UW-Extension Office (920) 834-6845.*

Tuesday, June 21 – Pulaski High School  
Ag Room 6:00 pm

*This training is offered by Pulaski FFA. Registration is required by June 8. Please register via email at [kmsanty@pulaskischools.org](mailto:kmsanty@pulaskischools.org), or by phone at (920) 737-6893.*

Exhibitors must attend the entire training to be certified. Please choose the date and location that works best for you! Please call Sarah Mills-Lloyd with any questions, 920-834-6845.

## Badger Dairy Camp

Badger Dairy Camp is an annual camp held in June and is open to youth between the ages of 12 and 18. This camp, held on the beautiful University of Wisconsin Madison campus, provides an excellent opportunity for youth to get hands on experience learning how to fit and show animals. Youth also learn about the purebred cattle industry and attend workshops including "Roaming Through the Rumen". Instructors for the camp include dairy industry leaders, graduate students, and UW professors.

Each year the camp is open to one hundred youth. This three day event is open to all dairy youth, come near or far, between the ages 12 and 18. Although the majority of our campers come from Wisconsin, we welcome out of state campers and in the past have had campers come from as far as Texas, Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Washington State!

The next Badger Dairy Camp will be held June 9-11. Applications for the 2016 Badger Dairy Camp will be available online at the beginning of 2016 (<http://fyi.uwex.edu/dairyyouth/badger-dairy-camp/>). For more information regarding Badger Dairy Camp, please contact UW-Extension Dairy Youth Specialist Beth Heinze at [heinze2@wisc.edu](mailto:heinze2@wisc.edu).

## **Choose the Best Reproductive Program for Your Dairy Herd**

Milk sales, number of culled cows, number of replacement heifers, the cost of reproductive programs, feed cost, labor cost, dry period length, and number of services to conceive that depend on reproductive performance have direct and important economic connotations.

However, assessing the economic impact of different reproductive management strategies under the commercial conditions imposed on a farm represents a major challenge because of the complex interplay of all the factors involved.

Therefore, decision support systems are valuable tools to select reproductive programs that better enhance profitability according to particular dairy farm characteristics.

The study developed a robust yet user-friendly decision making support system to estimate profitability changes when applying different reproductive management strategies on a specific farm.

The decision support system was used to study a large Wisconsin commercial dairy farm under different reproductive management strategies.

- 1) The UW-DairyRepro\$ is available at: [DairyMGT.info](http://DairyMGT.info) → Tools → Reproduction
- 2) The use of timed programs were economically superior to programs relying only on heat detection.
- 3) Combination of heat detection and synchronization could be positive depending on the expected heat detection and conception rates.

Excerpt from: Giordano, J. O., P. M. Fricke, M. C. Wiltbank, and V. E. Cabrera. 2011. An economic decision-making decision support system for selection of reproductive management programs on dairy farms. *Journal of Dairy Science* 94:6216-6232.



## Factors to Consider While Assessing Your 2016 Winter Wheat Crop Stand and Spring Nitrogen Timing

*Shawn P. Conley, Soybean and Wheat Extension Specialist*

As the snow begins to melt and we finally put the 2015/16 winter behind us, many growers and consultants alike are beginning to venture out to their winter wheat fields to assess winter injury and nitrogen timings. Though it is a bit premature to make any rash decisions regarding crop destruction here are a few considerations for assessing your spring 2016 winter wheat stands.

1. As you look across your wheat landscape vibrant green patches will be interspersed with drab brown areas the brown areas do not necessarily indicate those plants are dead.



2016 Arlington Winter Wheat Variety Trail-  
Roadside assessment



2016 In Field Stand Assessment



2016 Planting Depth and  
Tiller Assessment

Growers and consultants can either reassess in a week or pull plants from the field and place in warm environments. Milk houses and kitchens work perfect. Root regrowth will appear from the crown and will appear as vibrant white roots as shown to the right here.



Spring Root Regrowth in Winter Wheat

If plants do not recover our critical threshold for turning over a field is 12 to 15 live plants per square foot. Below this threshold is an automatic replant.

2. Hot off the press (word press that is)...the N timing decision just got easier. New research from Dr. Carrie Laboski's program indicates that the optimal time to apply nitrogen to wheat in WI is green-up regardless of tiller count.

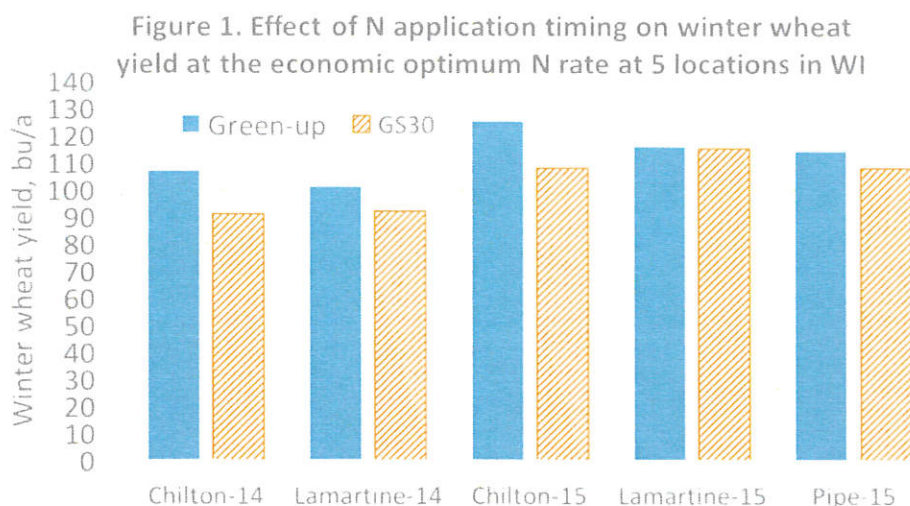
3. Lastly remember that wheat grain in itself is only part of the revenue you capture with winter wheat. The price of winter wheat straw remains strong, so please consider that revenue stream before any replant decisions are made.

To view the full report, please follow the link: <http://thesoyreport.blogspot.com>

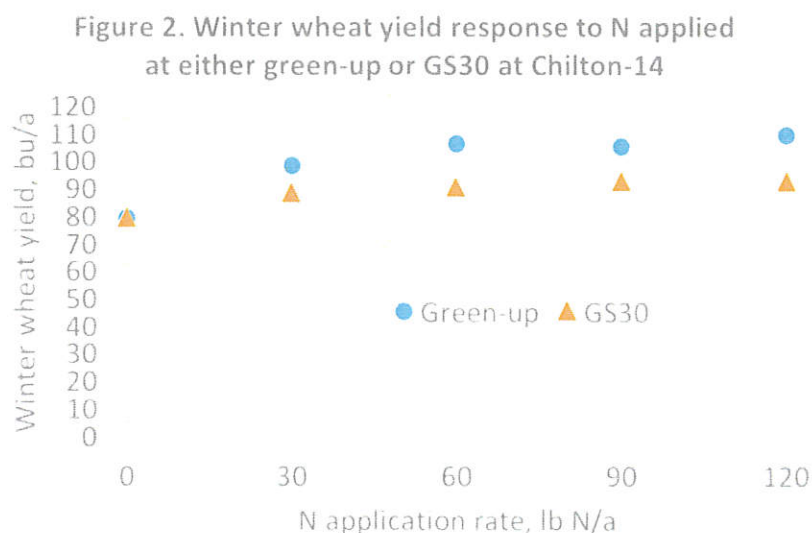
## Time your spring nitrogen applications to maximize winter wheat yield

*Carrie A.M. Laboski, Professor and Soil Fertility/Nutrient Management Specialist*

Proper timing of spring N application can significantly increase winter wheat yield. Figure 1 shows the yield obtained at the economic optimum N rate (EONR, N rate where profitability was maximized) when N was applied in spring at green-up or at growth stage 30 (GS30, hollow stem – just prior to first node). At all sites except Lamartine-15, yield was greater when N was applied at green-up compared to GS30. Averaged over all sites, there was a 10 bu/a advantage to applying N at green-up. Applying additional N cannot compensate for the yield loss caused by applying N at the later timing as demonstrated by the data in Figure 2.



To maximize yields, growers should try to apply N as soon as possible in the spring, taking into consideration soil physical conditions. Applying N when the ground is barely trafficable will likely result in rutting, compaction, and possibly yield loss if plants are damaged. One tactic to accomplish early N application might be to apply N in the morning before the top few inches of soil have re-thawed. Care should be taken to insure that N does not runoff the field before it has a chance to move into the soil.



To see a brief overview of the research pertaining to wheat fertility, please follow the link:  
<http://www.npketc.info/?p=325>



## Dairy Situation and Outlook March 18, 2016

*By Bob Cropp, Professor Emeritus, University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension  
University of Wisconsin-Madison*

In March milk prices will not change much from February and remain well below a year ago. Dairy product prices may average just a little lower than February. CME butter averaged \$2.08 per pound in February and ranged from \$1.925 to \$2.04 in March with the current price \$1.95. The 40-pound cheddar cheese price averaged \$1.474 per pound in February and ranged from \$1.46 to \$1.52 in March with the current price \$1.49. Cheddar barrels averaged \$1.4573 per pound in February and ranged \$1.42 to \$1.50 in March with the current price \$1.50. And dry whey averaged \$0.2393 per pound in February and around \$0.25 in March. At these prices the March Class III price will be near \$13.80, the same as February and about \$1.75 lower than the \$15.56 a year ago. Nonfat dry milk averaged \$0.741 in February and ranged \$0.74 to \$0.78 in March. As a result, the March Class IV price will be near \$13.00 compared to \$13.49 in February and \$13.80 a year ago.

Domestic sales of butter and cheese are forecasted to remain good. But, depending upon the level of milk production and exports milk prices may increase only modestly April, May and June and then show more strength from July through December. As we approach spring and early summer milk production normally increases seasonally. A year ago, milk production during the first half of the year was running well above year ago levels as milk cow numbers were increasing and milk per cow was good. For the first half of the year milk production was 1.7% higher than the year before. So milk production may increase less than 1% for the first half of the year. But, milk production slowed for the last half of the year with production just 1.0% higher in the third quarter and 0.7% in the fourth quarter. So for the last half of the milk production could increase by more than 1%. USDA forecasts milk production for the year to increase by 1.4%, down from their 1.6% increase earlier. This forecast is based on milk cow numbers averaging about 0.2% lower than last year and milk per cow up 1.8%. But, with the low milk prices forecasted for the first half of the year and averaging below a year ago for the entire year this 1.4% increase in milk production may still be on the high side. However, lower feed costs is helping to keep margins at a level for a continued increase in milk production.

Milk production started off slow with January milk production up just 0.2%, the result of 2,000 more cows and a 0.16% increase in milk per cow. But, February's production, adjusted for leap year, improved to an increase of 1.0% from 4,000 more cows and 0.9% more milk per cow. Changes in milk production continue to show regional differences with lower or small increases in the West and relatively strong increases in the Northeast and Midwest. Last year California experienced lower milk production than the year before every month and ended the year with production down 3.4%. This trend continues. February's production adjusted for leap year, showed California's production down 2.9% from 0.28% fewer cows and 2.7% less milk per cow.

New Mexico's production was down 6.0% from fewer cows and less milk per cow. Texas's production was down 2.0% all due to fewer cows. Idaho's production was up 2.0% from more cows and higher production per cow. Production was up 4.6% in New York and 7.8% in Michigan. Both states had more cows and higher production per cow. Production was up 1.4% in Minnesota, 5.1% in Wisconsin and 1.2% in Iowa. Production per cow was higher in each state, and while Wisconsin had more cows Minnesota had no change in cow numbers and cows were 0.5% lower in Iowa.

Dairy exports are not likely to push milk prices up until late in the year or into 2017. The level of world stocks and world milk production along with the lower imports by China and Russia have depressed world prices. The higher U.S. dollar and dairy product prices higher than world prices are keeping exports below a year ago while attracting more imports. The exception is nonfat dry milk/skim milk powder where U.S. prices are competitive on the world market. January nonfat dry milk/skim milk powder exports were up 23% from the prior year and most ever for the month. But, cheese exports after being 14% lower last year, were down another 8% and butter exports after being down 70% last year were even with a year ago. On a total solids basis, U.S. exports were equivalent to 12.5% of U.S. milk production in January, down from 14.0% in 2015. Imports however, were equivalent to 4.4% of milk production, the highest since February 2009.

With lower exports the stocks of butter and cheese are increasing and putting downward pressure on milk prices. January 31<sup>st</sup> butter stocks were 31.7% higher than a year ago and 24.3% higher than the five year average for this date. Total cheese stocks were 12.4% higher and 14.0% higher than the five year average for this date. Nonfat dry milk stocks were 5.7% lower than a year ago, but the second highest for January and still 30.3% higher than the five year average for this date.

With anticipated milk production and dairy exports not expected to show much improvement until late in the year, USDA and other price forecasters have revised downward milk prices for the year. USDA forecasts the Class III price to only average \$13.60 to \$14.20 compared to \$15.80 last year. The forecast for the average ALL Milk Price is \$14.95 to \$15.55 compared to \$17.08 last year. Current Class III futures are not any more optimistic with Class III in the \$13's until August and then in the \$14's for the remainder of the year and the first half of 2017. But, I think milk prices still have a good chance of turning out somewhat better than this. Milk production may not increase as much and exports could improve more than now anticipated during the second half of the year. We could see the Class III in the \$14's by May, the \$15's by July and the \$16's by September or October and average near \$15 for the year with the All Milk Price averaging near \$16.30. Even if these higher prices materialize, it will be a tough year for dairy.





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## Oconto County

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