NEWS & VIEWS

By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

I need to start with an apology for falling behind with the newsletter schedule last month; some people didn’t receive the March newsletter until April. My plan is to move the newsletter release about one week earlier for the next few months to get back on schedule. Another issue that I haven’t been able to find an economical solution for is that if you’re a producer in the Eastern end of the U.P. your delivery of the newsletter goes South through Wisconsin, around Lake Michigan and then back up over the bridge. Unfortunately, this process takes about two weeks and when I’m late getting copy to the printer, the problem really gets compounded for those of you in the East. I’ve been looking for the economical solution, but have yet to find it. I’m sorry for that.

The calendar tells me it’s spring. The weather is back and forth and I can feel the anticipation for farming activities. Spring is always a mixed feelings time of year with great joy in anticipation of warmer weather, sun tans, and jobs that are more productive and fun than plowing snow. However, in the Western U.P. it’s also the mud season, and I hate mud. It seems the best way to deal with mud is to either stay out of it or get bigger wheeled tractors which make bigger ruts. We’re only two to three weeks away from grass and a new set of challenges.

Field activities will be here soon enough and the hours are going to get long. Please stay safe. There is probably nothing that turns the stomach of a farmer more than hearing the misfortunes of our neighbors, especially when it relates to tragedy on the farm. Try to take the time to stay rested and stay safe.

Inside I want to point special attention to some special points of interest. One is a significant change in the breeding soundness exam program for bulls. The date is set for two weeks later than normal and there will be no testing in Escanaba on the Friday of that week. See details inside. Also there is a great article regarding Dr. Hilding “Bud” Linderoth, Jr. Bud was the recipient of the Service to Agriculture Award presented by the Growing UP Ag Association. I had a previous speaking engagement at the Dairy Calf and Heifer Association conference in Madison and wasn’t able to attend the GUPAA annual meeting. I have talked with others and State Representative Ed McBroom was the featured speaker and did an excellent job of addressing some key issues we are facing in the state to include transportation and energy infrastructure.

~Frank

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MARKET REPORT (4/2/15)
By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

Market Ready Prices
Choice Steers $142-$166 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers $135-$160 per 100 lbs.
Hogs $43-$45 per 100 lbs.
Lambs $130-$190 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows $85-$110 per 100 lbs.
Calves $220-$490 per 100 lbs.
Goats $150-$200 per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals
Grade Holstein cows $2000 - $2700 per head
Grade Holstein bred heifers $2000 - $3000 per head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Avg. S/cwt</th>
<th>Avg. $/ton</th>
<th>Price Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Corn</td>
<td>$11.25</td>
<td>$225.00</td>
<td>$190-260</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soymeal</td>
<td>$26.30</td>
<td>$526.00</td>
<td>$43-622</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oats</td>
<td>$16.20</td>
<td>$324.00</td>
<td>$240-408</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Barley</td>
<td>$12.76</td>
<td>$255.50</td>
<td>$175-336</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots

Wanted & For Sale Listings

Looking for fenced pasture in U.P. 60-70 beef cows with calves. Phone Greg at 231-357-1368.

For Sale: 4’ x 5’ round bales of Timothy, Brome, and Alfalfa. Equivalent to 20 small squares. $35-$45 Phone (906) 446-3398

Wanted to Buy: Grass fed yearling cattle. No grain fed. Phone (906) 379-9135

Menominee County Farm Bureau’s Breakfast on the Farm
Saturday, June 13, 2015
9:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m.
Shepeck Farms
Menominee, MI
General Admission-Free
Breakfast-$5

REMINDER!
Plan now for the FFA Alumni Consignment auction! Get that equipment out from behind the barn now
Ad registration deadline is April 11, 2015
Plenty of time to do a little fix-up/tune-up!
AUCTION: Sunday, May 3rd starting at NOON
Havelka’s Construction
On Hwy 41
Just south of Wallace, MI.
For more information call:
906-753-4192
BUY OR SELL!

Super Duper Yooper Pig Sale
Johnson Brothers Sale Barn
3740 18th Road
Escanaba, MI
April 18, 2015
Barn opens at Noon
Sale starts at 2 p.m. E.S.T.
Offering 60+ elite
late January and early
February barrows and gilts.
For more information call:
Todd Boicken - 815-592-9291
Check Us Out On Facebook!
Super Duper Yooper Pig Sale
He practiced “production medicine” before there was a definition for it, focusing on the interaction between health, nutrition and disease prevention long before it was fashionable. He was dedicated to his animal clients and had uncanny diagnostic abilities - which was in demand from specialists at Michigan State.

He worked through broken bones, illness, heat, cold and whatever conditions a farm threw at him. He was one of the original tough guys and was known to suture his own lacerations. When asked if there was anything he would have done differently, he just smiled and said, “No, this is what I chose."

Thank you Dr. Linderoth for choosing to provide exemplary and dedicated service to U.P. agriculture. It is an honor for the GUPAA membership to present you with this award.

(For more information regarding GUPAA and membership, please call the MSU, UPREC at 906-439-5114)

What Would Your Employees Say They Like/Dislike About Your Farm?

For a farm to meet their goals their employees must be performing their job to the best of their abilities and enjoying their job.

Posted on April 7, 2015 by Stan Moore, and Phil Durst, Michigan State University Extension

Over the past two years, my colleague at Michigan State University Extension, Phil Durst and I have received answers to questions regarding satisfaction and engagement from 174 employees on 14 dairy farms. The project was designed to obtain anonymous feedback from employees and then develop a report for owners and managers that would help them improve their employee management.

On today’s dairy farms, we rely on employees to handle the daily care of animals, equipment, etc. If farms are going to be successful in meeting their quality, production, and profitability goals, it will be because employees are performing their job to the best of their abilities.

Our interviewer asked employees “What do you like most about working at this dairy?” and “What do you like least?” These are open-ended questions that enable people to share whatever they are thinking. Some of what we learned can be used by farm owners in recruiting new employees, and other responses can help managers and owners improve their management and thereby retain the good employees they already have.

The Positive:
Frequently, we heard what we call “generic” responses, such as “I like working with animals (or equipment)”, “I like working outdoors” as things that employees like most. That is good; we certainly want employees who enjoy the general job they are doing. These responses can help employers develop job ads and descriptions that will attract those who share these preferences.

Continued on Page 5
Grass Finished Beef Marketing Update

The grass fed beef industry is a growing industry and many producers are searching for information on current market prices. This article will shed some light on sources of information for the grass-fed beef producer.

Posted on March 20, 2015 by Kable Thurlow, Michigan State University Extension

Due to less information availability in the grass fed beef market, producers have a difficult time gaining access to the going rate for their cattle. Unlike traditional commodity crops, and livestock markets, the grass fed industry is relatively new, and gaining access to the markets is not as easy as checking the Chicago Board of Trade, or your local grain elevator.

According to Allen Williams, a nationally recognized expert in the grass-fed beef industry, most grass-fed beef pioneers started out on a small scale, marketing directly to the consumers, very similar to the way that the all-natural grain fed program started. As more producers enter the grass-fed beef sector, the increased competition will force some that have been fairly comfortable with their current methods of marketing, to become more creative. In order to remain competitive, grass fed beef producers will need to ensure that they are producing a high-quality desirable end product. This competition needs to be viewed as an opportunity to strengthen the industry, rather than a thorn in the side of those already considered veterans of the industry.

According to Williams, like most industries, the early adapting pioneers in the grass fed beef industry were on the cutting edge, and not afraid to take risks. Most were smaller producers marketing their beef direct to consumers. Then, as media attention helped to grow consumer interest in grass fed, there became larger entities, and existing branded programs that started adding grass fed beef to their portfolios. Williams states that the all-natural grain-fed programs started out as small producers, then moved to larger producers, then branded programs were developed, then existing programs entered the scene, and finally large packers entered the arena. He also believes that the grass fed industry is mimicking the all-natural beef programs and he reasons that this is a telltale sign of maturity in the grass fed sector. This is mainly due to the larger existing programs that are entering the grass-fed beef industry.

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Industry experts maintain that growth in grass-fed beef is very stable and has been between 25-30 percent annually over the past decade. Many experts also predict that this growth will continue as interest from larger companies increases. Where can a producer go to find out current market trends and prices? Truth is, there are limited resources available in terms of market places that are publicly sharing prices received for their grass fed beef products. It really helps to have an expert in the field who you can tap for information, and producers need to make networking within grass fed circles a priority. The USDA Agricultural Market Service has a market reporting site, however, it is in its infancy stages and should improve as more information enters the market.

According to the latest USDA AMS National Grass Fed Beef Report, the price on a dressed weight basis is averaging $312.50/cwt. There are several wholesale buyers currently paying in the $3.10- $3.30 per pound range on a hot carcass weight basis. A survey of Michigan producers participating in a North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education grant with Michigan State University Extension has indicated a price range of $2.80 - $5.50 on a hot carcass weight basis for small volume, direct marketed sales.

As growth in this industry continues and as larger meat packing companies enter the grass-fed sector, information on grass-fed beef prices will continue to improve. As with growth in any industry, opportunities to participate also follow and the same is true with the grass fed beef industry. As major packers enter the industry, there will be an increased demand for genetics and for finishing capacity. Both of these are major needs and can present an opportunity for those interested in grass fed beef production. These opportunities do not come without risk and those interested in participating need to make sure that they do their homework before entering the business. Finishing cattle on grass takes a great amount of skill and is not something for the novice to tackle in great quantities. A good grass finisher must be a great forage manager, knowing how to match livestock nutritional needs with ever changing pasture based forages is extremely challenging, but it can be done.

In the meantime, it is important that you link up with other producers, as well as University and Industry representatives that are working in the grass fed sector. These individuals can help you gain access to valuable information that may not currently be at your fingertips.

For more information about grass finishing, contact me at thurlowk@anr.msu.edu, MSU Extension grazing educator Jerry Lindquist at lindquis@anr.msu.edu, or MSU Extension beef specialist Jason Rowntree at rowntre1@anr.msu.edu. Also you may consider attending the National Grassfed Exchange Conference to be held in Mt. Pleasant, Mich., Sept. 16-18, 2015. This conference is a key information exchange of the industry experts.

This article was published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information, visit http://www.msue.msu.edu. To have a digest of information delivered straight to your email inbox, visit http://bit.ly/MSUENews. To contact an expert in your area, visit http://expert.msue.msu.edu, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).
The Simple Economics of Breeding Soundness Exams for Bulls

Conducting breeding soundness exams on bulls is cost effective every year. It will be critical to check fertility before the 2015 breeding season after the severe winter.

Frank Wardynski
Ruminant Extension Educator

After the severe weather of last year, I thought that bulls failing breeding soundness exams was going to increase drastically. Fortunately the increase was moderate increasing from 20% to 25%. For whatever reason, the early testing fail rate is at 44%. The high cattle prices that are predicted to continue over the next few years mean that getting cows pregnant is critical. Some anticipate that softer milk prices is going to result in more dairy cows going to slaughter and soften cull cow prices by this fall. Given cows will produce calves selling at tremendously high prices while open cows will sell next fall for lower prices. Knowing bulls are infertile just makes sense. Michigan State University Extension recommends fertility testing bulls every year before breeding season. The test is $55 per bull when examined at one of the scheduled clinics.

NOTE: THE SCHEULE HAS CHANGED FROM PUBLISHED IN THE LAST NEWSLETTER AND FROM PREVIOUS YEARS!!! On May 7, there will be no testing in Ontonagon and on May 8 there will be no testing in Escanaba. May 6, is going to be a really big day in Bark River.

The following schedule has been set for the Upper Peninsula:

- May 4, Cooks
- May 5, Garden and Chatham
- May 6, Bark River
- May 7, Pelkie and Iron River

To schedule an appointment, contact Frank Wardynski, Ruminant Extension Educator with Michigan State University at wardynsk@anr.msu.edu or 906-884-4386.

What Would Your Employees Say Cont’d

But as we shared with farm owners and managers, positive responses specific to their operation showed us that employees had a loyalty to this farm, rather than just liking farm work. Farm specific responses fell in the following categories;

- Teamwork on the farm
- Owner/Manager and their treatment of employees
- The job itself
- Learning on the job

Imagine your next job posting promoting being able to work on a farm where there is great teamwork, employees are treated as part of the family, the job is challenging and fast-paced, and there is opportunity to grow in the business!
Sanitation is critical to prevent plant Diseases

Part 2: Field sanitation

Good sanitation in the field will reduce pathogen inoculum in vegetable plants.

Posted on March 6, 2015 by Lina Rodriguez Salamanca
Michigan State University Extension

Sanitation is one of many tactics needed for an effective disease management strategy in the greenhouse and field. Sanitation includes any practice that aims to prevent the spread of pathogens by removing diseased and asymptomatic infected tissue, as well as decontaminating tools, equipment and washing hands. This article will help you and your employees use good sanitation and reduce pathogen inoculum, also known as “seeds” of the pathogen. Consistent and effective sanitation greatly increases the chances of raising healthy plants.

Sanitation in the field

Sanitation in the field needs to take place before, during and after the growing season. Prior to planting, fine-tune your weed management plan. Many weeds are known reservoirs for plant pathogens and insects. By controlling weed populations in your fields, you can reduce pathogens and their vector populations.

Wash soil off of farm equipment, including brushing off soil particles from shoes. These practices are especially important to prevent movement of soilborne pathogens such as Sclerotinia sclerotiorum (causal agent of White mold), Phytophthora capsici, Verticillium dahliae and different species of Fusarium. A power washer is an important piece of equipment in the battle against these diseases. Plows, discs, cultivators and other pieces of equipment should be power washed between fields.

Avoid working fields when plants are wet. This practice minimizes bacterial spread from diseased plants to healthy ones. For example, this tactic is important for tomato bacterial diseases such as spotted wilt, speck and canker that can prove challenging to control once in the field.

Remove infected plants or plant parts. As soon as symptoms appear, collect, bag and destroy or pile diseased material away from fields. Removing infected fruit and plant debris from the field can reduce the amount of pathogen inoculum that could move into healthy plant parts. Cull piles should be placed away from production fields and waterways and, if possible, covered with a plastic tarp to speed up microbial decomposition and minimize pathogen spores from escaping. Burn, chop and spread, or deep plow debris at the end of the season. The choice of practice depends on the specific disease that was present in the field the previous season.

At harvest, carefully pick only healthy produce and avoid any mechanical damage on the fruit or other plant parts harvested.

Damage such as small wounds or bruises can be the point of entrance for microorganisms that can compromise fruit quality while in transit or storage (short or long term).

Clean tools during use, disinfecting knives, shears and other harvesting tools often. To accomplish this, wash tools with soapy water and dip or wipe in 70 percent ethanol or other products. It is important to refresh sanitizing solutions as specified on the product label. Tool sanitation and hand-washing can help minimize plant-to-plant spread of diseases caused by several bacteria and viruses. Provide hand-washing stations equipped with clean water and soap. During harvest, careful hand-washing is critical to minimize pathogen spread. For example, tobacco mosaic virus (TMV) can be transmitted to tomatoes and peppers if hand-washing is poor after smoking cigarettes. This tobacco virus is very stable and can be present on dry tobacco in cigarettes.

Sanitation requires detail-oriented employees. Always inspect plant material prior to planting in the field. Plant material can carry diseases and insect pests, introducing them to clean and new fields. Instruct employees on how to recognize common disease symptoms and pests. Scouting often and thoroughly is needed to identify problems as early as possible. The more eyes available to look at your vegetables plants in the greenhouse and the field, the more chances issues can be identified earlier.

Field sanitation practices summary

- Remove plant debris and infected plants as soon as symptoms appear by collecting, bagging and removing.
- Burn deep plow debris in the fall or chop and spread early in winter.
- Disinfect knives, shears and other harvesting tools often.
- Frequent hand-washing with clean water and soap.
- Wash soil off farm equipment (power wash preferred) between fields.

Brush soil particles off from shoes when moving in between fields (brushes or boot covers are handy).

This article was published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information, visit http://www.msue.msu.edu. To have a digest of information delivered straight to your email inbox, visit http://bit.ly/MSUENews. To contact an expert in your area, visit http://expert.msue.msu.edu, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).
Please say “THANK YOU” to our sponsors.
### Meetings & Events Calendar

#### April

**April 18**  Super Duper Yooper Pig Sale, Johnson Brothers Sale Barn opens at noon, Sale starts at 2:00 pm EST. Call Todd Boicken 815-592-9219 for more information.

#### May

- **May 3**  FFA Alumni auction Hwy 41 south of Wallace, MI  Buy and Sell!
- **May 4**  Breeding Bull Soundness Exam Cook, MI. See page 5 for more information
- **May 5**  Breeding Bull Soundness Exam Garden and Chatham. See page 5 for more information
- **May 6**  Breeding Bull Soundness Exam Bark River. See page 5 for more information
- **May 7**  Breeding Bull Soundness Exam Pelkie, and Iron River. See page 5 for more information
- **May 10**  Mother’s Day
- **May 25**  Memorial Day

#### June

- **June 13**  Menominee County Farm Bureau’s Breakfast on the Farm. See page 2 for more.
- **June 21**  First Day of Summer & Father’s Day

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- Cell 989-329-6141

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- Cell 989-329-4668
- Gladwin, MI

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