



U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

December 2015

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

Volume 19 Issue 10

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Investing in learning

The modern American economy is a hard thing to understand. The fluctuations in stock values, price of fuel, grain and animal product prices, and other things seem extreme. As a wage earner, I depend on a regular paycheck. For the most part, I know what its going to be from year to year. Farmers, on the other hand, are subject to large changes in income based on the value of the products they produce. This is great if the price received for milk, feeder calves, grain, dry beans, potatoes or whatever you produce increases. A few years back, farmers were pleased with the good prices for grain, milk, and beef calves. It's a different story this year. Poor commodity prices and rising expenses will put extreme financial pressure on many farms in Michigan. My hope is that investments made during the good years provides farmers with a financial buffer against the bad ones.

Time is another high-value part of everyone's life. A wise man once said 'you waste your time....you waste your life'. Nobody knows this better than a farmer, and there's always more work than there is time to do it. Making an effort to use some of that valuable time for family and friends, recreation, personal growth and learning can build a more enjoyable life. Time spent in learning-related activities is an investment for the future. MSU Extension and other agriculture-related organizations are in the business of providing learning opportunities for farmers, so please consider making time to participate in some of these events.

Your U.P. MSU Extension staff is planning several meetings and programs across the region for the winter months. Programs scheduled or in development include:

- Calf care meetings (in collaboration with dairy industry)
- Dairy profitability meetings
- Beef meetings
- Young farmer meetings (Menominee Co)
- Farm energy conservation program meeting
- Farm transition/succession meetings
- Pesticide applicator core manual review sessions
- FSA/NRCS farm program educational meetings (focusing on the new CRP grasslands program)
- Soil health meetings
- Forage/crop meetings
- Dry bean meeting
- Farm food safety/GAP training meeting for small farms
- Agriculture for Tomorrow Conference, March 8, Bay College, Escanaba
- Northern MI Small Farm Conference, January 29-30, Grand Traverse Resort
- Great Lakes Hops and Barley Conference, March 16-17, Grand Traverse Resort

I hope you'll find that one or more programs on this list has value for your operation and that you'll make time to participate. If you have questions or suggestions, please contact your local MSU Extension educator. Dates and details will be available in the UP Ag Connections newsletter and other media sources.

Jim Isleib, U.P. Crop Production Educator, MSU Extension

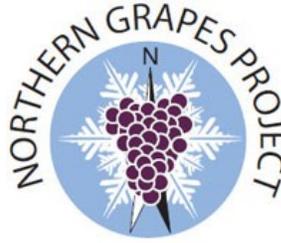
Dr. Temple Grandin to speak in Sault Ste. Marie, ON

Sunday January 24th @ 2:30 p.m.
Quattro Hotel, 229 Great Northern Rd.,
Sault Ste. Marie, ON

Mary Temple Grandin is an American professor of animal science at Colorado State University, best-selling author, autism activist and consultant to the livestock industry on animal behavior. She is the inventor of the "hug box", a device to calm those on the autism spectrum. In the 2010 Time 100 list of the one hundred most influential people in the world, she was named in the "Heroes" category. She was the subject of the award-winning, biographical film, Temple Grandin.

Temple will discuss how good stockmanship improves both productivity and animal welfare. Topics will cover cattle behavior principles during handling and the importance of measuring animal handling.

Presented by Algoma Cattlemen's Association, Rural Agri-Innovation Network, and Algoma Autism Foundation. For more info, contact David Thompson (RAIN) dthompson@ssmic.com 705-942-7927 x3027



The schedule for the 2015-2016 *Northern Grapes Project* Webinar Series has been announced! Contact webinar organizers Chrislyn Particka (cap297@cornell.edu) or Tim Martinson (northerngrapesproject.org) for registration information.

December 8, 2015

"The Big Chill: Cold Acclimation and Recovery from Spring Frost in Grapes in New York"

Jason Londo, USDA-ARS, Grape Genetics Research Unit and Tim Martinson, Cornell University

January 12, 2016

"Terroir and Typicity in Cold-Hardy Grapes"

Anna Katharine Mansfield, Cornell University

February 9, 2016

"Branding and Best Management Practices for Cold Hardy Wines and Wineries"

Bill Gartner, University of Minnesota and Dan McCole, Michigan State University

March 8, 2016

"Cold-Hardy Grape Breeding at the University of Minnesota and North Dakota State University"

Matt Clark, University of Minnesota and Harlene Hatterman-Valenti, North Dakota State University

April 12, 2016

"Northern Grapes Project Research Results: Fungicide Sensitivity and Vine Nutrition of Cold-Hardy Cultivars"

Patricia McManus, University of Wisconsin-Madison and Carl Rosen, University of Minnesota

May 10, 2016

"From Vine to Glass: Understanding the Flavors and Aromas of Cold-Hardy Grapes and Wine"

Anne Fennell, South Dakota State University; Adrian Hege- man University of Minnesota; and Somchai Rice, Iowa State University



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Starting your farm business transition

Getting your farm transition started with communication and a to-do list.

By Katelyn Thompson, MSU Extension

You've just had a conversation with your son or daughter, or your mother or father and you managed to touch on the tractor that needs repaired, how the calves look going into fall and switching a vaccine, those everyday things that have to be done for you to get your product to market. What didn't pop up in the casual conversation were topics pertaining to transitioning business decisions and ownership of the farm to the next generation. So often we get caught up in day-to-day operations and do not put time and effort into longer term planning required for a smooth, successful farm transition. Planning for the next generation to take control of the operation is not a short process, but it is doable. A key component of this process is communication within the family.

As with many situations, communication is key in determining solutions that are well thought out, planned and executed. It is no different in the case of transitioning the farm from one generation to the next. Being able to communicate the needs and desires of both generations is extremely significant to the success of a transition. What is even more important is intentional communication, meaning the family as a team is making a point to sit down and figure out the process.

The right kind of communication can be a struggle even for the closest of families and often times a catalyst is needed to get the process rolling. A mobile app called Inspired Questions for Farmers developed by David Specht, a family-business consultant, and founder of Advising Generations LLC, provides a great platform for getting families communicating in the right direction. It is key that your family's communication voices the thoughts and concerns of those involved and accomplishes the tasks that you define.

With your base of solid communication principles in place it is time to put pen to paper and work through the nuts and bolts of transitioning. To start the transition process a checklist of "to do's" is essential. The Farm Information Resource Management team with Michigan State University Extension has many resources, including a Farm Business Transition Planning Checklist. Some of the topics from that list include:

- 1. Know what you have and understand how you are using it**
- 2. Evaluate past, present and future financial performance**
- 3. Put in place tactical strategies for transfer execution**

Knowing what you have and understanding how it is used includes establishing goals that address a defined mission and vision. Defining goals, a mission and a vision is a step towards everyone being on the same page and understanding what your operation is striving for. It is also important to document the current and expected changes for business management including how labor is divided. Assigning who will be taking over what roles and responsibilities is important for identifying each person's place in the operation. During this portion of planning it is also important that all wills and/or trusts are current for family members. Being prepared for the unthinkable is a type of insurance you may grumble about having to pay for, but the peace of mind is worth the time and effort. These tasks all contribute to how roles on the farm will be changing from one generation to the next.

Evaluating past, present and future financial performance mainly includes that of the business, but personal financial requirements must also be discussed. As the senior generation retires, what will their needs be and what can the younger generation expect as they take on more responsibility? You have to have a solid understanding of where the business has been financially and a good idea of where it is headed. Doing so will allow you to identify the financial performance strengths and weaknesses of the operation. One question to be answered is whether the operation can support the needs of the exiting generation and the entering generation. If the answer is no, how will you grow the operation to accomplish your transition goals?

Putting in place tactical strategies for executing the transfer is having the knowledge at hand and knowing what actions to take. Actionable steps need to be identified for the transfer of management of the operation. These include a gradual or rapid exit for the senior partner, taking on new junior partners and transfer of ownership. This is the time to review and modify the business arrangement such as an LLC or Corporation. This plan for transferring the farm should not be set in stone but as the operation changes the plan should be reviewed and updated to reflect those changes.

Being able to transition the farm to the next generation should come with a certain level of pride and sense of accomplishment, as another generation is able to carry on the family business. For more in-depth information on farm transition and succession you can discuss your situation with your area farm business management educator.

Katelyn is a Farm Business Educator with MSU Extension located in Menominee County. You can reach her at (906) 753-2209 or thomp737@anr.msu.edu.

Meetings planned to explain revised FSA programs

The USDA Farm Service Agency, Natural Resource Conservation Program and MSU Extension are working together to offer meetings for farmers to learn more about the new Farm Bill programs that relate to their farms. These meetings will focus on the new CRP-Grasslands program which took the place of the old grasslands program. Payments per acre for this program have increased. However, there is a limited acreage that can be signed up nation-wide. FSA staff will describe the program changes and take questions. NRCS staff will describe the process of putting together a grazing plan under the program.

Other topics will be touched on, including NAP (noninsured crop disaster assistance program – catastrophe coverage insurance when private insurance is not available), LIP (livestock indemnity program – livestock disaster payments due to weather), and a little bit about agricultural risk coverage (ARC) and price loss coverage (PLC).

The following meetings will be hosted and facilitated by MSU Extension:

Wednesday, December 16, 2015

7-9pm eastern time

Delta County MSU Extension office, 2840 College Avenue, Escanaba, MI 49829

Mitch Towne, FSA

Tom Tauser, NRCS

Thursday, January 14, 2016

1-3pm eastern time

MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center, E3774 University Drive, Chatham, MI 49816

Mitch Towne, FSA

Misa Cady, NRCS

Please let us know you are attending by calling the Alger County MSU Extension office at 906-387-2530 or email at isleibj@anr.msu.edu. Additional meetings are being planned for the eastern and western UP. Look for details in next month's UP Ag Connections newsletter, or contact Jim Isleib, MSU Extension at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu.

*Stay connected with local food news and the U.P. Food Exchange
through the online newsletter, **the Plowshare**.*

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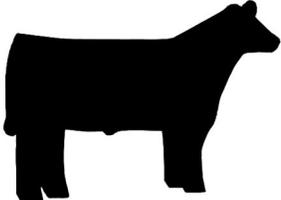
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Michigan Milk Producers Association local meetings scheduled in the U.P.

U.P. West Central Local Meeting—December 9, 2015 @ Noon
Home Base Restaurant, Shafter, MI

Chippewa Local Meeting—December 10, 2015 @ Noon
Rudyard Christian Reformed Church, Rudyard, MI



Market Report

Choice Steers	\$107-\$115 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$100-\$113 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$47-\$52 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$130-\$160 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$50-\$70 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$230-\$380 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$150-\$200 per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows	\$1900 - \$2700/head
Grade Holstein bred heifers	\$2000 - \$2700/head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$10.19	\$203.75	\$160-270
Soymeal	\$21.45	\$429.00	\$360-556
Oats	\$11.14	\$222.75	\$160-300
Barley	\$9.83	\$196.50	\$159-252
Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots			

U.P. Ag Classifieds

Personal ads will be removed monthly. We reserve the right to edit your ad. Free ads must be no more than 110 characters. Please respect the space requirements. You can always purchase an ad if more space is required. Please call or email your ad no later than the 15th of each month. Call or email Michelle at (906) 439-5114 or colema98@msu.edu.

Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center

UPREC to host consignment auction fundraiser to assist with special projects

In order to fund some of the demonstration projects and education initiatives identified by both the UPREC Advisory Council and the Growing U.P. Agriculture Association, a special fund is being established. To establish this fund, a consignment auction will be hosted at the farm in spring 2016.



All farm and gardening items will be accepted, excluding livestock. Those wishing to sell something at the auction will have a percentage of the sale return to this special project fund. Please watch for further details on this event in upcoming newsletters and thanks in advance for your support!

For a recap of the 2014 research season, be sure to check out our ***Center Report***, now posted online at:

http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/uploads/396/36753/UPREC_Center_Report_2015_Final.pdf



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Apprentice Farmer Program

Applications are still being accepted for the Apprentice Farmer Program—a farm incubator program that aims to serve as the launching point for individuals interested in starting their own farming enterprise. This two-year, residential program provides farming entrepreneurs with the necessary tools and assistance needed to ensure a solid start to their farming career.

Applicants are accepted on a rolling basis, but applications are requested by February 1st.

For additional details and the application, visit the North Farm website at:

www.msunorthfarm.org

Reminder—Pesticide applicator training session and exams offered at Chatham

Friday, December 4, 2015

MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center, E3774 University Drive, Chatham, MI

Core manual review: 9am – 1pm eastern time
\$10 payable at the door, conducted by MSU Extension
Checks payable to 'MSU Extension'

State exam, immediately following review session, 1:30 pm
\$50 for the private certification fee
\$75 for the commercial certification fee

1/2 hour lunch break scheduled, but meal not provided

Please register for the core manual review sessions by contacting Jim Isleib, MSU Extension at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu. Please register for the state exams at www.michigan.gov/pestexam. If you have questions about the certification process, contact David White, MDARD Pesticide and Plant Pest Management inspector at 906-250-3554 or whited@michigan.gov.

MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center

<http://agbioresearch.msu.edu/centers/uprc>



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www.facebook.com/MSU.UPREC

Should I use dolomitic or calcitic lime?

Know the facts about the magnesium levels in your soil before deciding if you should, or shouldn't use dolomitic lime.

By Jim Isleib, MSU Extension educator

The question has been raised over and over by Upper Peninsula farmers. But it's not only a U.P. issue. Farmers in all areas where soil pH is naturally low, or where magnesium levels are low (or high) have concerns about getting their soil out of "calcium/magnesium balance". In some areas, the local and most economical source of agricultural lime is from a dolomitic limestone quarry. Calcitic lime may need to be trucked a longer distance. Or vice versa. Either way, one source of lime may be cheaper than the other. In this case, it may have been applied repeatedly over many years. The end result of repeated applications of dolomitic lime can be a build-up of soil magnesium level shown in soil test reports. The basic question is...is magnesium build-up from use of dolomitic lime a problem?

The short answer.....very unlikely.

Calcitic lime is derived from deposits of primarily calcium carbonate. Dolomitic lime is derived from deposits of calcium carbonate combined with magnesium carbonate and contains much higher levels of magnesium. The key facts in deciding which of these types of lime should be applied to your soil is the soil pH and magnesium level. There is little difference between lime types in their respective ability to neutralize soil acidity. Also, as long as the amount of each is adequate, the balance of magnesium and calcium can vary quite a lot and have little or no impact on crop performance. Making the decision based on the calcium to magnesium (Ca:Mg) ratio can be a mistake.

Recommendations from University of Wisconsin Extensions publication "[Soil calcium to magnesium ratios – Should you be concerned](#)" include the following:

- Calcium deficiencies in Wisconsin are rare in soils above pH 6.0. However, if a crop requiring a low pH is being grown and liming is not recommended, gypsum can supply calcium to the crop.
- If liming is required, a dolomitic or calcitic liming material will supply sufficient calcium to maintain crop growth. Dolomitic lime sources have the added benefit of increasing available magnesium.
- Choose the most economical liming material when liming is required. Do not apply gypsum or calcitic limestone to Wisconsin soils simply to increase soil Ca:Mg ratios.
- If you choose a liming material low in magnesium, be careful to avoid magnesium deficiencies. High calcium applications alone can decrease soil and plant magnesium levels. If the soil is acid and originally has a low magnesium content, adding a calcitic (low Mg) liming material or high rates of gypsum could induce a magnesium deficiency.

Wisconsin research also indicates that, as long as soil magnesium levels are adequate, variations in the Ca:Mg ratio are unlikely to affect alfalfa yields.

If you have serious concerns about which type of lime to use based on soil test report information, feel free to contact your local MSU Extension educator for research-based information before you invest in the application.

Additional resources on this topic can be found at:

[Michigan State University Extension "Lime for Michigan Soils"](#)

[A&L Laboratories "Calcitic or Dolomitic Limestone?"](#)

[University of Wisconsin Extension "Choosing between liming materials"](#)

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Calendar of Events

December 4	Pesticide applicator training session and exams at the Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center, Chatham (review 9 am—1 pm, exam at 1:30 pm EST)
December 8-10	Great Lakes Fruit, Vegetable and Farm Market EXPO, Grand Rapids, Michigan
December 9	MMPA U.P. West Central Local Meeting. Home Base Restaurant, Shafter, MI (Noon)
December 10	MMPA Chippewa Local Meeting, Rudyard Christian Reformed Church, Rudyard, MI (Noon)
December 16	FSA Programs meeting, Delta County Extension Office, Escanaba (7—9 pm EST)
January 11	Young Farmer Open House, Menominee County
January 12	Calf Care Meeting, Stephenson
January 13	Calf Care Meeting, Chatham
January 14	FSA Programs meeting, MSU UPREC, Chatham (1—3 pm EST)
January 24	Temple Grandin presentation, Sault Ste Marie, ON (2:30 pm)
January 29-30	North Michigan Small Farm Conference, Acme, Michigan
February 3	Pesticide applicator training session and exams, Stephenson
February 18	Young Farmer Meeting, Menominee County
March 3	Energy Conservation Program, Stephenson
March 8	Ag For Tomorrow Conference, Bay College, Escanaba
March 15	Key Success Factors for Dairy Farm Profitability, Rudyard
March 16-17	Great Lakes Hop and Barley Conference, Grand Traverse Resort, Acme, Michigan
March 22	Pesticide applicator training session and exams, Escanaba
Spring	UPREC consignment auction fundraiser

