

U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

Volume 21 Issue 9

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Extension

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Smart Vegetable Gardening Conference to be held in St. Ignace in October

Michigan State University Extension's <u>Smart Gardening</u> is focused on providing home gardeners earth friendly techniques that help reduce pesticide use, build healthy soils, and make use of organic fertilizer sources. Key messages focus around smart soils, smart plants, smart lawns, smart vegetables, and smart gardening for pollinators. Various resources are available at the <u>Gardening in Michigan</u> website. Extension Master Gardeners trained in Smart Gardening outreach assist in providing these resources at various public venues such

as farmer's markets, county fairs, the UP State Fair, and conferences.

Check out the Gardening in Michigan website at www.migarden.msu.edu to learn how to support monarchs, deter deer, invite pollinators to your garden, and mow high for weed and grub control. You can sign up for a weekly newsletter on home gardening or any other topic of interest. Be sure to use MSU Extension's toll free lawn and garden hotline at 1-888-678-3464 if you have a plant question. You can also upload photos for identification using the Ask an Expert resource.



Whether a seasoned vegetable gardener or just a

beginner, plan now to register for the upcoming <u>Smart Vegetable Gardening Conference</u> to be held in St. Ignace at the Quality Inn on Saturday, Oct. 14^{th} from 8:30 – 4 p.m. EST. Early bird registration is through September 30^{th} .

Four different Michigan State University Educators will provide presentations on the following Smart topics: Smart Gardens Begin with Healthy Soil, Smart Gardening with Season Extension, Smart Gardening Techniques to Grow Vegetables without Losing your Mind, and Smart Gardening with Vegetables for Pollinators & Beneficials. Along with learning 'smart' practices, attendees can win garden themed door prizes, and enjoy a catered lunch. Go to <u>Smart Vegetable Gardening Conference</u> to register now.

Early bird registration of \$50 is due by Sept. 30th. Normal registration of \$60 is from Oct.1st through 6th. Registration includes snacks, lunch, handouts, access to Michigan State University Extension's Smart Gardening tip sheets and door prizes. You must allow ten days for processing if paying by check, so checks are due to MSU ANR Events Services by Oct. 1st.

For more information on a wide variety of Smart Gardening topics, visit the <u>Gardening in</u> <u>Michigan website</u> at <u>www.migarden.msu.edu</u> or contact MSU's toll-free garden hotline at 1-888-678-3464.

Rebecca Krans, MSU Consumer Horticulture Extension Educator

New recorded programs available on MSU Extension beginning farmer website

For those interested in new farm enterprises, these recorded presentations by MSU Extension educators and other experts offer a free, on-line opportunity to learn about the basics

By Jim Isleib, MSU Extension Field Crop Educator

The Michigan State University Extension Beginning Farmer Webinar Series completed its sixth year in May, 2017. Recordings of this year's presentations are now available on-line on the MSU Extension Beginning Farmer Webinars Series website:

msue.anr.msu.edu/program/info/beginning_farmer_webinar_series at no cost.

There are currently 70 recorded presentations, delivered by 53 expert presenters from MSU and elsewhere from 2012 through 2017, posted on the website. They cover a wide variety of topics for beginning farmers. Categories include:

Farm business	Pollinators
Field crops	Poultry
Fruits and nuts	Vegetables
Livestock	Floriculture
Machinery	Woodlot management
Marketing	Soil fertility and health
Organic agriculture	Aquaculture

The new recordings from the 2017 series include:

- Small vegetable farm systems, presenter: Abbey Palmer, MSU North Farm, Chatham, MI
- Hoophouse management, presenter: Collin Thompson, MSU Extension, MSU North Farm, Chatham

- Maple syrup, presenters: Bob and Sue Battel, MSU Extension and Battel's Sugar Bush, Pure Maple Syrup
- Fencing and water systems for livestock, presenters: Jerry Lindquist and Kevin Gould, MSU Extension
- Blueberries, presenter: Mark Longstroth, MSU Extension
- Crop nutrient management, presenter: Jim Isleib, MSU Extension
- Aquaculture, presenter: Elliot Nelson, Michigan Sea Grant Extension
- Planning and operating a mixed fruit orchard, presenter: Bob Tritten, MSU Extension
- Producing and selling eggs, presenter: Dr. Darrin Karcher, Purdue University

A recent survey sent to past participants in the series indicates that these webinars have been helpful to people considering a new farm business enterprise. In some cases, the basic information helped people get started. In other cases, the participants decided that they would be wiser explore something else. Either way, getting a good look at a proposed farm business enterprise gives a person useful insights as they make decisions.

A new series of on-line webinars will be developed for winter, 2018. A small fee is charged to participate in 'live' webinars. Attending 'live' has benefits, including the opportunity to interact by 'chat' with presenters during the program. If you want to be notified directly about upcoming MSU Extension Beginning Farmer Webinars, please contact Jim Isleib at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu.

Please feel free to visit the website and take a look through the recorded webinars.





Farming for All: USDA 101 for Beginning Farmers

This FREE workshop is designed for beginning farmers to provide an introduction for working with the USDA to access Farm Bill programs. Special programs for beginning farmers, Veterans, low income producers, tribal members and farmers of color will be highlighted. It will also inform producers about free resources to help support farm development and access USDA programs including the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP).

Tentative agenda:

- Introductions
- Beginning farmer resources and opportunities in Michigan
- Getting your farm registered with USDA
- Break/networking Introduction to MSU Extension AG services
- NRCS Programs

<u>September 8—4-7 p.m.</u> Bay College (Location TBD) Escanaba, Michigan Register online for the event <u>here</u>, or RSVP to Dylan Thomas at <u>twopinesfarm@gmail.com</u> or (517) 898-2381.

September 9—10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Bayliss Library 541 Library Drive Sault Ste. Marie, MI Register online for the event <u>here</u>, or RSVP to Dylan Thomas at <u>twopinesfarm@gmail.com</u> or (517) 898-2381.

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Wild Parsnip—Another weed to put on your watch list

Jerry Lindquist, MSU Extension Grazing Educator

As if poison ivy, spotted knapweed, Japanese knotweed, autumn olive, palmer amaranth and others were not enough to be watching and keeping off your property, another new weed is starting to spread in the Lower Peninsula of Michigan. Wild parsnip has now been identified by Michigan State University Extension Educa-tors in the Mecosta, Osceola and Wexford Counties in multiple locations.

Wild parsnip is a member of the Umbelliferae family relating it to parsley and carrots. It has genetic lineage to domestic parsnip that is grown by gardeners for its edible root. It lives from two to three years and enters its reproductive stage in the second year of life, growing to a height of 3 - 5 feet. It has a distinctive yellow ap-pearance, being most noticeable in July when it blossoms looking similar to Queen Anne's lace (sometimes called wild carrot) in size and shape, but because of its coloration, reminds people of domestic dill that gardeners raise for pickling.

Wild parsnip populations have been expanding for some time in Minnesota, Wisconsin, Ontario and the Up-per Peninsula of Michigan. It is found commonly in those locations along roadways, recreational trails, fence rows, and in abandoned fields. What makes wild parsnip an un-wanted guest are the juices in the plant. When the plant is cut or broken plant juice or sap that comes in contact with human skin can cause severe skin irritation that can persist for some time. This burn can cause scarring that may last for a year or more. The plant chemical in the sap, furocoumarin, causes phytophotodermatis of the skin. It does this by absorbing into the skin, and then when exposed to sunlight within 8 hours, becomes energized by the ultra violet rays of the sun, destroying skin cells at the location of absorption.

The burning sensation of wild parsnip is no more severe than poison ivy, but the scarring side effect does last much longer. And unlike poison ivy that does not affect all people, wild parsnip burns almost all that are ex-posed to it regardless of their level of skin sensitivity. But the burning is only caused by the sap. If someone just touches the plant and gets no internal juice on their skin, they suffer no irritation. Often it will be the person that is cutting or mowing wild pars-nip and in the process is spraying droplets of the plant's juices into the air, that will become affected.

Animals can also get parsnip burn on their skin if they have juice contact in areas with little hair or if they are eating cut portions of the plant. Fortu-nately most livestock do not like the taste of parsnip plants so they do not readily graze it. And wild parsnip is not a rapid growing plant so agricultural fields for hay or silage that have parsnip creeping in from the field

edge seem to keep controlled by mowing and chopping of the crop. The literature does report that wild parsnip can cause decreased feed consumption which can lead to fertility issues in cattle and other grazing animals if the animal is forced to eat it (in chopped feeds or in drought situ-ations on pasture). But as with most toxic plants in forage crops, the solution to pollution (toxicity) is dilu-tion, meaning if animals eat enough safe forage and other grains it will dilute out any toxic impact from un-safe plants. Thus if you do find wild parsnip on or near crop property, irradiate its population while it is still at a low level so that it cannot spread and become a more serious problem.

Mowing does not kill the plant but if done frequently enough to keep the plant from blossoming; it will pre-vent it from producing seed and spreading. The plant reproduces and spreads only by seed. We suspect that is one reason why it is showing up along recently paved roads and trails – it is being spread into new areas by construction ditch bank re-seeding projects that are using weedy hay or straw and possibly seed contaminated soil.

Many herbicides will provide effective control of wild parsnip. The common 2,4-D herbicide that is used to control lawn weeds will provide control of parsnip while not harming surrounding grasses in abandoned field settings. Best timing for control is to spray the plant any time in the spring or early summer before it blos-soms, or in the fall after new fallen seeds have germinated. Parsnip found in crop fields, most commonly hay, pasture or others with permanent sod cover must be carefully controlled with herbicides or with cultural practices that will be safe for the crop and for the food supply. Consult with an MSU weed specialist or an MSU Extension Educator for control recommendations. Always read and follow all herbicide label direc-tions before applying.

Wild parsnip is a new weed that we must add to our list of weeds to keep a watch out for and handle carefully when controlling. As with many of these invasion weeds early control when populations are low is much easier than letting the plant get a strong foothold. For more information contact an MSU Extension Agricultural Educator in your area.



Raising woods-grazed pigs on new farms By Jim Isleib

Some new farmers in the northern Michigan woodlands are breaking into farming by raising pigs in woods pasture.

Two recent visits to new Upper Peninsula small farms started by people with limited, or no, farming experience brought to light some of the challenges and potential benefits of diving into agriculture. In brief, major challenges fall into a few categories:

• Identifying a farm enterprise with profit potential based on the new farmer's production and marketing skill levels and interest.

• Identifying and understanding the available markets for farm products.

• Developing a sound business plan, including careful consideration of labor needs.

- Acquiring or developing a suitable land base.
- Acquiring livestock from a high-health herd or source.
- Acquiring and utilizing start-up capital efficiently.

• Developing a good relationship with a local slaughter facility.

• Understanding the regulatory side of farming, i.e., health papers to cross state lines, etc.

• Developing relationships with a direct marketing customer base, other marketing options and the local farming community.

For new farmers interested in a small-scale, livestock-based enterprise, raising pigs may work well. Purchasing feeder pigs to raise and direct-market to local customers will limit the need for costly over-wintering facilities. Establishing a swine breeding operation expands the potential market to include selling feeder pigs as well as market hogs through the year. Either way, a new farmer should consider selling animals direct to customers to potentially maximize income.

Grazing areas for pigs can be created in woodlots. The animals will root up much of the vegetation if confined in an area for a long enough time. Providing there is adequate light penetration through the tree canopy, this could provide an opportunity for annual seeding of part or all of the pasture area with annual forage crops such as brassicas, small grains or annual grasses. By rotating the animals through pasture divisions, or paddocks, created by moveable electric fencing, the forage can be managed more productively. Paddocks need a chance to regrow between grazing periods.

Remember, pasturing your pigs in a wooded area or feedlot is a method to help supplement the traditional diet of corn/ soybean and decrease feed costs, however this should not be the sole source of nutrition for your animals, as they will not receive the proper nutrients to efficiently grow to market size. A woods pasture does not have the forage production potential of an open field, but will help with getting the pigs fed.

Fencing and watering systems are important considerations. A **solid, strong perimeter fence** of woven wire is preferred. An electric wire or two should also be included. Pigs are easily trained on an electric fence and this will eliminate the occasional rooting under the woven wire fencing. Further use of electric fence can function as a divider in the grazing area so that the pigs are rotationally grazing the pasture. If feeder pigs are purchased and sold by fall, then this is all you need. A shelter or shade may also be desirable if tree cover isn't adequate. If breeding animals are kept, then the facility picture changes drastically.

You can expect one or two litters of piglets from each sow, spread throughout the year. Consider a well-constructed shed and a supplemental heat source. Year-round feeding will not include any grazing/foraging for about five months in the northern areas of Michigan.

Benefits of raising woodlot pigs

• Provides a low-cost, do-able entry into small scale farming, especially if feeder pigs are purchased annually.

• Locally produced meats are in demand. More people want to know where their food comes from and are willing to pay extra for locally produced food products.

• The satisfaction and enjoyment of a successful new farm enterprise, and its impact on the producer's lifestyle, is a key benefit experienced by many beginning farmers, based on a 2013 survey of eight Upper Peninsula beginning farmers.

The <u>Pork Information Gateway</u> website is an excellent resource if you want to gain knowledge on raising pigs. Take some time looking around this website, especially the <u>Small</u> and <u>Beginning Farmer</u> section.

Once again, personal relationships with customers, based on a great experience and satisfaction with the meat product, are key to establishing a successful, small-scale woodlot (or other system) pig farm. The word will spread that you are honest and dependable, and the pork you raise is great.

Other livestock-based enterprises to consider as a startup for beginning farmers include stocker cattle—buy calves, pasture them for one season and sell in fall—and poultry for meat or eggs. If you are interested in learning about possible new farm enterprises, review the recorded presentations on <u>Michigan State University Extension</u>'s <u>Beginning Farmer</u> <u>Webinar Series website</u>.

Pasture Walk—Winter-feeding on pasture and hay fields

By Frank Wardynski, MSUE Educator

Pasture walks are set for two locations to address the topic of winter-feeding on pasture and hay fields. Beef farmers in the Upper Peninsula have traditionally fed cattle during the winter months in a confined setting near a barn and lot to avoid moving hay through deep snow. Consequently, an accumulation of matted hay and manure need to be pushed into piles, loaded and spread onto fields. This process can be laborious and requires machinery. Some farmers have taken to feeding hay out in the fields for either a portion of or the entire winter to minimize the challenges of dealing with manure. Strategies include feeding in hay feeders, rolling bales out across the ground and setting bales out for the entire winter during the autumn months.

These pasture walks will address the pros and cons of such practices. Current set locations, dates and times:

Wednesday, September 6, at 6:00 pm eastern time, Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center, E3774 University Dr, Chatham, MI. Host Paul Naasz

Wednesday, September 13, 2016 at 6:00 pm eastern time, Dykstra Beef Farm, 13670 Hwy M-38, Ontonagon, MI. Host Duane Kolpack

Wednesday, September 27, at 6:00 pm central time, Peterson Heritage Hill, 358 Peterson Rd, Crystal Falls, MI. Host Randy Peterson



Grazing School 2017

Grazing School provides a hands-on experiences for those interested in starting or improving grazing management. Grazing School attendees can expect to learn a variety of tools and subsequently choose to integrate the methods that are most suitable for their particular grazing system. Additionally, attendees will have the opportunity to work with Michigan State University (MSU) experts to collectively graze a group of MSU livestock during the course of the Grazing School. Grazing school will be held September 21st starting at 8 am and concluding September 22nd at 4 pm.

Early registration due September 18th. For more details:

https://events.anr.msu.edu/GrazingSchool/

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Market Report

Choice Steers Holstein Steers Hogs Lambs Cull cows Calves Goats \$100—\$116 per 100 lbs. \$70—\$100 per 100 lbs. \$56—\$66 per 100 lbs. \$150—\$170 per 100 lbs. \$55—\$70 per 100 lbs. \$80—\$125 per 100 lbs. \$200—\$300 per 100 lbs.

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Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$10.16	\$203.25	\$160-244
Soymeal	\$21.45	\$429.00	\$375-536
Oats	\$10.10	\$202.05	\$190-230
Barley	\$10.09	\$201.75	\$140-262
Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots			

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Calendar of Events

Eating Through the Eastern U.P. Series

On Saturdays from 10 am - 12 Seasonal topic and food at each location September 16-Rudyard October 21-Sault November 18-Brimley

Pasture Walks

September 6	Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center, E3774 University Dr, Chatham,
	MI. Host Paul Naasz. (6 pm ET)
September 13	Dykstra Beef Farm, 13670 Hwy M-38,
	Ontonagon, MI. Host Duane Kolpack.
	(6 pm ET)
September 27	Peterson Heritage Hill, 358 Peterson Rd,
	Crystal Falls, MI. Host Randy Peterson. (6 pm CT)

Farming for All: USDA 101 for Beginning Farmers

Register online for the event <u>here</u>, or RSVP to Dylan Thomas at <u>twopinesfarm@gmail.com</u> or (517) 898-2381.

September 8, 4-7 p.m. Bay College (Location TBD) Escanaba, Michigan

September 9, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Bayliss Library 541 Library Drive Sault Ste. Marie, MI

