



# U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

February 2020

*Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch*

Volume 24 Issue 2

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## News and views

*By Frank Wardynski*

Is it global warming or climate change or something else?

We here in the Upper Peninsula and across the United States have seen so many significant weather events. Those 25- and 100-year weather events seem like they happen every year. I'm thinking about the Houghton Father's Day Flood in 2018. They were getting rain an inch per hour for seven hours. The streets turned into rivers.

Earlier this winter residents in the eastern UP were out of power for three days in some locations. I don't have rain gauges out this time of year but here in the western UP we probably had over an inch of rain on top of snow that had been coming at record pace in December. Over by the Sault it was freezing rain. You can see the broken trees in the forest.

And it's not just the storms, it's the weather patterns. Last summer, I was driving down to the MCA Summer Round-up on June 20. I talked with a farmer from the Eastern UP and they were still wet and behind on getting started with hay. By the end of the summer they were applying for drought disaster relief. Across the US we saw record acres in delayed planting while experiencing drought in those same areas later in the summer.

I'm one of the farmers probably in denial about global warming. Now we call it climate change. I was at a conference this fall and listened to a report that kind of opened my eyes. He said that he wasn't trying to blame global warming or whatever, but the bottom line is that severe storm events and severe weather patterns have increased significantly. And that may change, but the trend indicates that it won't. We are likely going to continue to see an increase in adverse weather events.

So now what? Best Advice, Scout Motto: Be prepared.

At home, always have a supply of drinking water and canned goods on hand. Canned goods may not sound like the most appetizing meals, but they are ready to eat. Can opener. Battery powered radio. Flashlight. Extra batteries. Want to splurge and be ready for some better meals, charcoal and propane for grilling. A friend of mine went to the extreme of buying a new well pump to 110 volts and wired the control panel to plug into a generator and bought a new generator and can power the entire house in a power outage

On the farm, it's good to have an emergency plan. Regardless of a weather event, fallen barn, fire, etc. having an emergency plan that everyone, including family and employees, is familiar with is important. The plan will have some pre-thought ideas of what will be done in certain events. A long list of phone numbers of veterinarian, police, fire department, big equipment contractor, road commissioner, etc. Having a high-power generator able to run 220 volts is critical for dairy farms and becoming more popular on other types of farms also.

I have been very slow to come around to this line of thinking, but our farming practices can help minimize weather impact on growing crops. Finding ways to increase soil organic matter can help. Increasing soil organic matter improves soil water holding capacity, beneficial if it is too wet and too dry. Find ways to minimize tillage, increase soil cover of organic material, utilizing cover crops and anything we can do to increase soil organic matter and improve soil health can help alleviate severe weather impact.

## UP Swine Health meetings returning to the UP

The MSU Extension pork team has visited the Upper Peninsula over the past two years, holding late spring 'Swine Health Champion' meetings in Escanaba and St. Ignace. These quality education programs focus on maintaining pig health, identifying disease symptoms and maximizing performance. Presenters have included an MSU Veterinary college swine specialist, MSU Extension swine educators, MSU graduate students, state officials and others. New swine diseases emerging in other counties pose very serious threats to US producers, as well as diseases already present in our region. These issues provide a great reason for producers of all sizes to educate themselves on prevention and control. Although the swine industry in Michigan is tiny in comparison with operations downstate, the possibility of infected animals entering the state through our region is very real. These free meetings include a dinner, presentations geared to small and hobby operations from experts, a great chance to interact with other small scale pig raisers and local vets. More detail will be included in the March edition of UP Ag Connections. Contact Jim Isleib, [isleibj@msu.edu](mailto:isleibj@msu.edu) or 906-387-2530 for more information.

For now, save these dates (all times Eastern):

### Swine Health Champions meetings:

Delta Co MSU Extension Office, Escanaba, May 18, 2020 6-9pm

St. Ignace Public Library, St. Ignace, May 19, 2020 6-9pm

## Save the date for UP forage meetings

A series of evening meetings focusing on forage seed selection and production practices will be held in March and April. Speakers will include Jim Isleib, MSU Extension educator, James DeDecker, director of the UP Research and Extension Center in Chatham, and Jeremy Sweeten, CISCO Seed forage agronomist and Dafter farmer. More details will be included in the next issue of UP Ag Connections.

For now, save these dates (all times Eastern):

### U.P. Forage meetings:

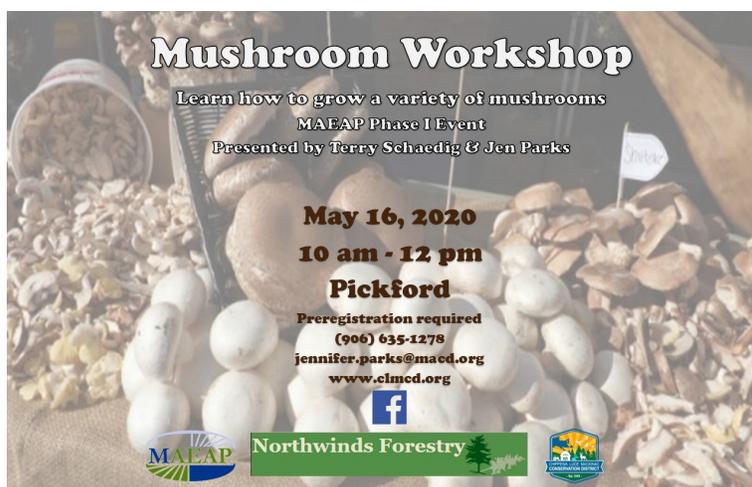
Rudyard Township Hall, Rudyard, March 9, 2020, 6:30 – 8:30pm

Delta Co MSU Extension Office, Escanaba, March 26, 6:30-8:30pm

Mass City Community Center, Mass City, April 6, 6:30-8:30pm (date is tentative)

## Dry bean producer meeting

MSU Extension is offering an educational program for UP dry bean producers. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, February 26, 1-4pm eastern time at the USDA Service Center, 2003 Minneapolis Ave, Gladstone, MI 49837-2057. Topics will include updates on varieties, fungicides and fertilizers, market update, and results of local pest monitoring and other trials. Most speakers will join by internet connection from other meeting locations. All dry bean producers, interested farmers, industry people and public are invited and welcome to attend. No registration or fee. Contact Jim Isleib at 906-387-2530 or [isleibj@msu.edu](mailto:isleibj@msu.edu) for more information.



**Mushroom Workshop**  
Learn how to grow a variety of mushrooms  
MAEAP Phase I Event  
Presented by Terry Schaedig & Jen Parks

**May 16, 2020**  
**10 am - 12 pm**  
**Pickford**

Preregistration required  
(906) 635-1278  
[jennifer.parks@macd.org](mailto:jennifer.parks@macd.org)  
[www.clmcd.org](http://www.clmcd.org)



CHIPPEWA LUCE MACKINAC CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
**You're Invited: 2020 Winter/Spring Programs**  
**Forestry Series**

**Timber Harvest Tour: January 18th, 10:00 AM - Superior Town Hall, Brimley**  
\*Please Bring Your Own Lunch\*

**Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop: February 15th, 1:00 PM - Ojibwe Charter School Orchard**

**Invasive Species in Our Forests: February 22nd, 2:00 PM - Pickford Township Hall**

**Timber Tax Workshop: February 29th, 1:00 PM - St. Ignace Public Library**

**Maple Syrup Workshop: March 14th, 10:00 AM - Bay Mills Culture Center**

For information:  
(906) 635-1278  
[dylan.parker@macd.org](mailto:dylan.parker@macd.org)  
[jennifer.parks@macd.org](mailto:jennifer.parks@macd.org)  
[www.clmcd.org](http://www.clmcd.org)

## **Don't make the wrong PLC/ARC decision for your farm – 2018 Farm Bill ramifications vary greatly from the past**

Many Michigan farmers have chosen to forego 2018 Farm Bill meetings across the state, erroneously thinking that what has worked for them in the 2014 Farm Bill, will work again this time, but MSU Extension educators warn choosing the same program as last farm bill could result in a vastly different outcome.

Farmers signing up for 2018 Farm Bill programs are probably missing out if they are signing up for the same programs they did in 2014. While the programs may have the same titles, they are handled slightly different than in previous years, which can have a big impact on a farm's bottom line.

When the 2014 farm bill was signed, farms had profited from years of high prices and many felt confident that PLC wouldn't pay for the first few years. In 2014, the price situation indicated that only one program option in Michigan was going to provide the highest payment revenue and that program was ARC County. That's what most of the farmers went with and was the best choice in nearly all Michigan counties.

Today, circumstances are very different. For the 2018 Farm Bill, commodity prices the last 6 years have been much lower as compared to 2014. Some commodities are expected to fall below the reference price level for the 2019 and 2020 crop production years, a situation that wasn't expected to happen at sign up time for the 2014 Farm Bill. Prices have greatly changed, which opens up the possibility of PLC being not only an option, but probably the best choice for wheat and maybe for corn depending on a farm's specific FSA base acres and PLC yields. For soybeans, ARC County appears to be a good option in most counties and is possibly a good choice for corn. The 2019 actual county yields in relationship to previous 6-year yields are critical in making the ARC County vs. PLC decision.

Producers have the advantage of knowing their yields for the 2019 production year. Normally, the decisions are made going into the crop year with a greater amount of uncertainty. Because the 2018 Farm Bill programs took so long to be announced, producers have a lot of useful knowledge on both county and farm yields and what prices will be for the 2019 production year. This makes the decision for 2019 much more certain. Farmers didn't have this kind of information when they made the 2014 Farm Bill decision. In the 2014 the one decision as to which program was chosen lasted for 5 years. With the 2018 Farm Bill, the first decision is for 2019 and 2020 combined but then 2021, 2022 and 2023 each stand alone. And the ARC County/ARC Individual/PLC choice can be changed each year after 2020.

Prevent Plant is another game changer for these decisions. Producers with FSA Farms who have 100% Prevent Plant will max out the ARC-IC program. This is a program that was not popular in 2014, but now in 2019 it's a big deal, because a zero yield and maximum payment will be assigned for the 2019 ARC Individual payment calculation. There's also the potential that FSA farms with low yields should also consider ARC Individual, as that program choice could provide higher total farm payments.

Several business-savvy farmers have reported they did not realize all the significant differences between the 2014 and 2018 Farm Bill programs and were planning to just go with what they chose last time until they had attended a 2018 Farm Bill Meeting or talked with MSU Extension educator. To avoid this, MSU Extension encourages that all farmers, regardless of farm size, attend one of the remaining 2018 Farm Bill meetings. Farms that have Prevent Plant acreage are highly encouraged to attend these meetings so that they fully understand how the 2018 Farm Bill programs will affect their farms.

MSU Extension has partnered with local FSA offices to offer multiple [Farm Bill Meetings](#) across Michigan during January 2020.

At these meetings producers will:

- Hear highlights of the 2018 Farm Bill and assessments of today's market compared to five years ago.
- Learn about the process of updating their yields with FSA.
- Work through case examples using the MSU Extension 2018 Farm Bill Calculator to help make better decisions on ARC versus PLC (Each crop and FSA farm number may result in a different choice.).
- Discuss specific program details with local FSA staff.

Speakers include both MSU specialists/educators as well as your local FSA staff.

### **Farm Bill PLC/ARC Meeting**

Michigan State University Extension and USDA Farm Service Agency are hosting an informative meeting regarding PLC/ARC signup. The meeting will be conducted on February 21, 9:00 CST/10:00 EST via webinar at four locations across the UP.

Locations include Delta County FSA office in Gladstone, Menominee County MSUE office in Stephenson, Chippewa County FSA office in Sault Ste Marie, and Baraga County FSA office in Baraga. The program is scheduled to last for two hours. Roger Betz, Farm Management Educator with Michigan State University will discuss the program and demonstrate how to use an excel spreadsheet to best identify which program works best for you.

## You Still Have to Eat Your Vegetables: navigating around recalls

By Landen Tetil, Marquette Conservation District

Listeria, toxigenic E. coli, Hepatitis A, Salmonella – these foodborne illness-causing organisms have become increasingly household names as recalls become a part of our new normal in the way we think about food. It may seem counter-intuitive, but this is actually a really good thing.

Outbreaks and recalls aren't new – but the way we receive information about them is. The phenomenon of an entire nation being alerted in real-time to a foodborne illness outbreak that happened in a small corner of the country is truly remarkable. Much of what we know about recalls can be credited to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). When a foodborne illness becomes an outbreak, the CDC is charged with three main roles during the investigation of the outbreak (cdc.gov):

1. **Quickly detect outbreaks** by monitoring nationwide surveillance systems that track diseases.
2. **Gather the evidence** linking the outbreak to a likely food or animal source.
3. **Communicate** to consumers and retailers about the source of the outbreak to prevent additional illnesses.

Advanced surveillance, reporting, and data tracking have allowed the whole country to be more involved in the safety of the food we eat. The immense amount of data collected from tracking and reporting foodborne illnesses, with the help of the lightning fast way news tends to travel in the media, has resulted in us knowing more than ever before about the relationships between food and the germs that cause us to get sick. And when we know more, we can do more.

Through decades' worth of recall data and scientific research, we have the best tools currently available to prevent foodborne illnesses, outbreaks, and recalls. One thing we know for sure, is that we are players in this game. From the farmer to the retailer to the chef, there are clear and identified ways we can all contribute to the safety of food. While it may seem overwhelming to process all the information that recalls offer us, it is important to maintain the perspective that this information is simply adding to our food safety toolkits. We are the most capable we have ever been of handling, reporting, and reducing the likelihood of foodborne illnesses, so there's no excuse to stop eating greens after learning about a lettuce outbreak – just don't buy the recalled product!

To learn more about assessing produce safety risks on your farm and to earn a produce safety certificate from the state of Michigan, contact your local Produce Safety Technician at [Landen.mqtcondist@gmail.com](mailto:Landen.mqtcondist@gmail.com) or (906) 251-3061

## Beginning Grass-Fed Beef Production Workshop

February 8, 2020 10:00AM - 3:00PM

Waishkey Bay Farm - Bay Mills Community College, 10135 W Mills Rd, Brimley, MI 49715

Contact: Kathryn Jacques, MSUE Chippewa Co. [odonne94@msu.edu](mailto:odonne94@msu.edu) or (906) 280-1786

Beginning Grass-Fed Beef Production Workshop lead by Dr. Jason Rowntree, MSU Associate Professor of Animal Science. Free lunch provided by Chippewa County Farm Bureau. Hosted in partnership with Bay Mills Community College's Waishkey Bay Farm, Bay Mills Health Center, Chippewa County Farm Bureau and the MSU Federally Recognized Tribes Extension Program (FRTEP).

- Benefits of Grass-Fed System - Economic, Health & Environmental
- Foundations of Grass-Fed Systems
- Genetics
- Land Management
- Processing
- Production Cycle and Timelines
- Data from Grass-fed Research at Upper Peninsula Research & Extension Center (UPREC)
- Soil Health, Plant Diversity and Preparing Land for Grass-Fed Cattle
- Touch on Grass-Fed Systems for Small Ruminants and Bison

### Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop

With Jim Isleib and Dylan Parker



February 15, 2020  
1PM—3PM  
Bay Mills Boy's & Girl's Club  
12099 W. Lakeshore Dr, Brimley

Come prepared to be outside.  
Workshop will be both indoors & outdoors

For more information:  
(906) 635-1278  
[jennifer.parks@macd.org](mailto:jennifer.parks@macd.org)  
[www.clmed.org](http://www.clmed.org)



**February 13, 2020**  
**6 pm - 8 pm**  
**Rudyard Township Hall**



## Raising Sheep for Food & Fiber

MAEAP Phase I Event

Free Program Featuring:  
Eric Wallis  
Selden Collins  
Justin Hoolsema  
Country Spinners & Bridge Shuttlers

For more information contact:  
(906) 635-1278  
Jennifer.parks@maed.org  
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## Food & Forages

Learn about crops successfully grown in the EUP  
& tools for the small farm  
MAEAP Phase I Event  
Presented by Jim Isleib

**March 19, 2020**  
**6 pm - 8 pm**

**Pickford Township Hall**

For more information  
(906) 635-1278  
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**FOR SALE: Hay**, Sorghum-sudan grass round silage bales, dairy quality alfalfa round silage bales, grass alfalfa mix round dry bales. Johnson's Bros. Livestock. Call Bill (906)630-4945.

**FOR SALE: Hay**, large square bales 3x3x7.75 Timothy grass, 4,000 to sell. Former dairy farm doing all big square bales hay. Call Dave Bell in the EUP 906-440-6455 or email Bellsdairy@yahoo.com. Also a realtor in the UP so contact me for real estate here. Dave@smith-company.com

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Henry DeGroot (906) 238-4251

[hjdegroot@alphacomm.net](mailto:hjdegroot@alphacomm.net)

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For details, see <https://up.craigslist.org/reo/d/au-train-net-zero-wind-powered-home/6983991936.html>.

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## Market Report

Choice Steers	\$100—\$120 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$80—\$112 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$48—\$54 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$150—\$170 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$40—\$55 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$20—\$80 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$200—\$300 per 100 lbs.

### Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows \$750—\$1250/head

Grade Holstein bred heifers \$1800—\$2250/head

### Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$11.69	\$236.25	\$195-320
Soymeal	\$19.53	\$390.50	\$350-450
Oats	\$13.49	\$265.00	\$239-340
Barley	\$11.75	\$237.50	\$190-310

Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots



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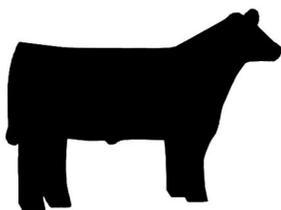
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### MCA/MSU Bull Evaluation Program

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## **Calendar of Events**

Grass-Fed Beef Production Workshop—Waishkey Bay Farm, Bay Mills Comm College, Brimley, February 8, 10-3:00 pm  
MSUE Field Crops Webinar Series—online Monday evenings, February 10-March 30  
Pesticide applicator review session—Marquette Co. Negaunee Service Center, Negaunee, February 11, 9am-1pm  
Michigan Potato Industry Commission Winter Conference—Mt. Pleasant, February 12-14  
Raising Sheep for Food & Fiber—Rudyard Township Hall, Rudyard, February 13, 6-8 pm  
Fruit Tree Pruning Workshop—Ojibwe Charter School Orchard, Brimley, February 15, 1-5 pm  
Farm Bill PLC/ARC Meeting—Menominee Co MSUE office, Delta Co FSA office, Baraga Co FSA office, Chippewa Co FSA office,  
February 21, 9 :00 CST/10:00 EST  
Invasive Species in Our Forests—Pickford Township Hall, Pickford, February 22, 2:00 pm  
Dry Bean Producers meeting—USDA Service Center, Gladstone, February 26, 1-4 pm  
Timber Tax Workshop—St. Ignace Public Library, St. Ignace, February 29, 1:00 pm  
Great Lakes Hop & Barley Conference—Ann Arbor, March 5-7  
UP Forage Meeting—Rudyard Township Hall, Rudyard, March 9, 6:30-8:30 pm  
UP Agriculture for Tomorrow Conference—Bay College, Escanaba, March 11, 9:15am-4:05pm  
Maple Syrup Workshop—Bay Mills Culture Center, Brimley, March 14, 10:00 am  
Food & Forages in the EUP—Pickford Township Hall, Pickford, March 19, 6-8 pm  
UP Forage Meeting—Delta Co Extension Office, Escanaba, March 26, 6:30-8:30 pm  
Beekeeping Workshop—Ewen Trout Creek School, Ewen, April 4  
UP Forage Meeting—Mass City Community Center, Mass City, April 6, 6:30-8:30 pm (tentative)  
Advanced Grazing School—Bay Mills Community College, Waishkey Bay Farm, Brimley, April 9-10  
Mushroom Workshop—Pickford, May 16, 10am-noon  
UP Swine Health Meeting—Delta Co Extension Office, Escanaba, May 18, 6-9 pm  
UP Swine Health Meeting—St. Ignace Public Library, St. Ignace, May 19, 6-9 pm