



# U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

November 2019

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

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## Climate change and the good ol' U.P.

*Jim Isleib, MSU Extension crop production educator*

First, a disclaimer....I am not a climate change expert or meteorologist...just want to share a few thoughts about 'climate change' and its relevance to U.P. agriculture.

In Michigan, our climate, soils, topography and access to water have made us one of the most agriculturally diverse and productive states in the union. But 'zero in' on the Upper Peninsula, where most native soils are not so great and climate is much more challenging, and you'll see that agricultural diversity and productivity are not as good. Fortunately, there are strong, steady and resilient farmers in our region that have made it work for their farm businesses and families.

Dairy, beef, potatoes, diversified small farms, dry beans, certified seed, hay, nursery crops, sheep, goats, exotic species, pigs, mushrooms, cut flowers and perennials, specialty crops like pumpkins, sugar beets, sunflowers, ...the list goes on and on. To all those currently farming, retired, or moved from agriculture to new challenges...my hat is off to you!

There is difference in thought among 'experts' about the causes of the current weather trends. It has been a relief to me that the term 'climate change' has mostly replaced the term 'global warming'. Regardless if you think that human activity is the main cause of the current trends, or otherwise, its hard to deny that the weather is changing. And it doesn't always seem 'warmer' – just wilder. We are experiencing more extremes in temperature and precipitation. Weather scientists predict that we'll see more of the same in future years. I wonder if our ancestors noticed the approaching ice ages or warming times? Probably not, they were much too busy trying to stay alive.

How will climate change affect UP agriculture? Will we eventually become part of the corn belt? I'm hearing predictions for milder, shorter winters. Also more extreme periods of wetness and drought and a less stable weather environment. I think U.P. farmers, having dealt with harsh weather for generations, may not be as concerned as others around Michigan, the Midwest, and nation-wide.

The poor planting and harvest conditions of 2019 have certainly affected U.P. farms. We were farther behind in heat units this spring and summer compared to lower Michigan, but caught up with a warmer late summer. Enough in some cases to allow acceptable crop development...then 'wham!' – enough rain to cause serious problems with delayed harvest in parts of the U.P. The on-line [MSU Enviroweather Program](https://www.enviroweather.msu.edu/) (https://www.enviroweather.msu.edu/) has detailed ag weather data for Stephenson, Escanaba, Chatham and Newberry areas. Weather data is also available through the [National Center for Environmental Information](https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/) (https://www.ncdc.noaa.gov/). MSU Extension has put together a set of [Delayed Planting and Harvest Impacts Resources](https://www.canr.msu.edu/agriculture/delayed-planting-resources) (https://www.canr.msu.edu/agriculture/delayed-planting-resources) to provide information on managing immature corn harvest, farm stress and other topics. Reviewing recent weather information could make for an interesting winter evening activity.

What to do about climate change? Become informed, learn from past challenges, and brace for the future. Attitude is important – try to stay optimistic. Looking to the future is what keeps many farmers going.

I wish all of you a wonderful Thanksgiving and holiday season. Keep an eye out for those jumpy deer on the roads this time of year...and for all you hunters, a safe and successful deer season.

## Hemp Variety Trial Results 2019

James DeDecker, MSU UPREC Director

Hemp (*Cannabis sativa* L.) is cannabis cultivated to produce fiber, grain, biomass, or medicinal compounds, such as cannabidiol (CBD). As defined by law, hemp has less than 0.3% THC (tetrahydrocannabinol), the psychoactive component in marijuana. In April 2019, the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) launched their pilot research program for hemp under the authority of the 2014 Farm Bill. This program allowed 541 registered growers across the state to grow hemp for the first time in 2019.

Researchers at Michigan State University received funding from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch to conduct a grain and fiber hemp variety trial at two locations this year to begin gathering information on what varieties might be appropriate for Michigan conditions. Variety selection is particularly important in hemp relative to other crops because hemp is photoperiod sensitive, similar to soybean, and different varieties have been developed for specific purposes (i.e. grain, fiber, or CBD). Fiber can be harvested from grain hemp varieties as a byproduct, but yield is usually significantly lower than from dedicated fiber varieties.

Nine Canadian and European varieties of grain and fiber hemp were planted in East Lansing and Chatham, MI. Here we report only information regarding the trial conducted in Chatham at the MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center (UPREC) – North Farm. Hemp varieties 103-125 days to maturity were sourced from Canada under the assumption that conditions there would be similar to the U.P., particularly in terms of day length and temperature. 1,500 lbs. per acre of 10-0-4 poultry litter and 321 lbs. per acre of 0-0-22 Kmag were applied pre-plant based on soil test results.

The trial was initially planted on June 1<sup>st</sup>, but establishment was very poor. This highlights the need for a well-prepared and firm seedbed when planting hemp to ensure shallow placement and easy emergence. The trial was re-planted June 14<sup>th</sup> at 45 lbs. per acre. The experimental design was a RCBD with four replications. Plots were 4 ft. X 16 ft. with 7 inch row spacing. The trial was hand hoed once for weed control on July 1<sup>st</sup>. Observations of stand establishment, flowering date and height at flowering were recorded (Table 1).

Variety	Use	Habit	Maturity	Stand Est.	Stand Density (plants/m <sup>2</sup> )	Flowering Date	Height at Flowering (cm)
CFX-2	Grain	Dioicous	103 days	10.28%	47.48	7/12/19	81.48
CFX-1	Grain	Dioicous	105 days	8.64%	39.53	7/12/19	81.92
Grandi	Grain	Dioicous	110 days	13.95%	64.59	7/12/19	81.74
Katani	Grain	Dioicous	110 days	13.68%	62.24	7/11/19	81.99
Piccolo	Grain	Dioicous	110 days	7.65%	35.32	7/11/19	71.32
X-59	Grain & Fiber	Dioicous	110 days	2.79%	12.83	7/14/19	93.27
Anka	Grain & Fiber	Monoicous	110 days	11.71%	53.24	7/20/19	139.90
USO 31	Grain	Monoicous	125 days	10.81%	49.83	7/23/19	137.92
Fermion	Grain	Monoicous	125 days	8.68%	39.95	7/30/19	164.34

Table 1. Hemp varieties and early observations.

Hemp is wind pollinated and most varieties are dioicous, meaning that there are separate male and female plants. There are also some monoicous varieties, with male and female flowers on the same plant. In grain and fiber hemp production, male plants are allowed to persist and pollinate females to facilitate seed set. This is different from CBD hemp or marijuana production systems that strive to prevent or remove male plants to increase the yield and potency of un-seeded female flower material. Early in the season, neighbors near UPREC expressed concern that our grain and fiber variety trial could pollinate their cannabis crops. To help mitigate this risk for our neighbors, we took the unusual step of removing most male plants/flowers from our plots. Our plants were eventually pollinated by male escapes in the trial, but this likely influenced the timing of pollination and also yield, particularly grain yield in the monoicous varieties.

Flower samples were collected on August 25<sup>th</sup> and submitted to MDARD for THC analysis. State and federal law requires growers to demonstrate that their hemp crops contain less than 0.3% THC prior to harvest. If hemp tests higher than this threshold, it must be destroyed. This obviously creates risk for hemp growers, but grain and fiber hemp varieties are generally very low in THC, and all of our samples tested below the legal threshold. Results of THC analysis are shown in Table 2. MDARD also tests for CBD, although we would not expect grain and fiber varieties to have significant levels of CBD. CBD hemp varieties ideally yield 6-15% CBD.

Variety	Total THC	CBD	Variety	Total THC	CBD
CFX-2	0.10%	1.30%	X-59	0.04%	0.90%
CFX-1	0.10%	1.50%	Anka	0.10%	1.20%
Grandi	0.10%	1.50%	USO 31	n.d.	0.40%
Katani	0.20%	0.50%	Fermion	0.09%	2.00%
Piccolo	0.10%	1.70%			

Table 2. Hemp THC and CBD analysis results.

Plots were harvested on Sept. 5<sup>th</sup> (dioicous) and Sept. 12<sup>th</sup> (monoicous) based on maturity. We hand cut and separated flowers and stems from two 1 m<sup>2</sup> quadrats per plot. Flowers were oven dried at 140 degrees F and threshed using an Almaco small bundle thresher. Seed was cleaned using a Clipper seed cleaner, weighed and tested for moisture. Grain yields reported here are adjusted to the industry standard of 9% moisture (Figure 1). Stems were bundled and left in the field for four weeks to “ret”, a natural process of decomposition that helps to separate long bast fibers from the woody core, or hurd. Stems were then oven dried at 140 degrees F and weighed. Fiber yields reported here are adjusted to the industry standard of 10% moisture (Figure 2).

Varieties producing the highest grain yields were Grandi, Picolo and CFX-2 from Hemp Genetics International. Varieties producing the highest fiber yields were the later maturing monoicous varieties Anka, USO-31 and Fermion. Interestingly, both USO-31 and Fermion are listed as grain specific varieties, which highlights the importance of testing hemp varieties under local conditions. MSU UPREC thanks MSU Extension and AgBioResearch for funding this project. For more information on hemp, visit <https://www.canr.msu.edu/hemp/>.

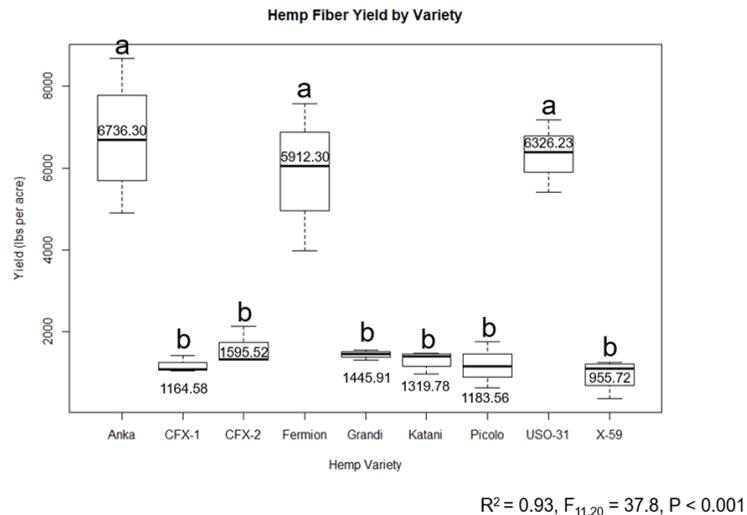
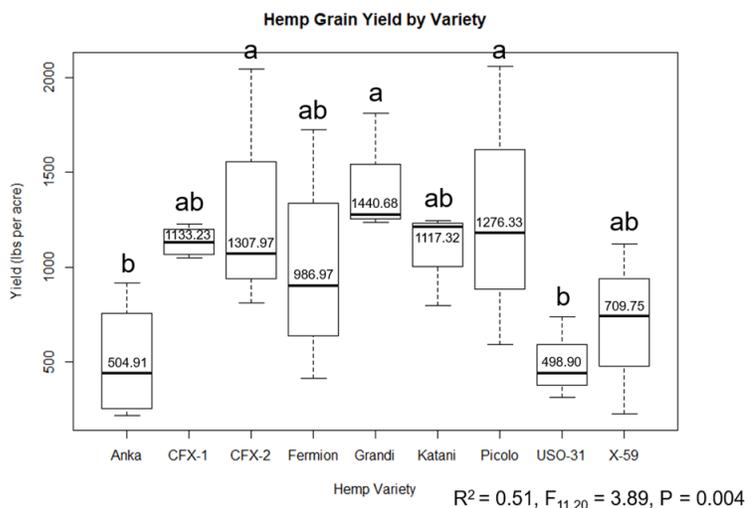


Figure 1. Hemp grain yields by variety. Varieties with the same letter are not significantly different. Numbers on bars are mean variety yields.

Figure 2. Hemp fiber yields by variety. Varieties with the same letter are not significantly different. Numbers on bars are mean variety yields.

## **REGIONAL UP FOOD SUMMITS**

### **WESTERN U.P. SUMMIT**

**Wednesday, November 6th, 2019 - 1:00pm - 5:00pm**

**Ojibwa Casino, 16449 Michigan Ave, Baraga, MI 49908**

Free! Register now: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/western-up-food-summit-registration-76803873453?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

### **CENTRAL U.P. SUMMIT**

**Friday, November 22nd, 2019 - 1:00pm - 4:30pm**

**128 W Washington St, Marquette, MI 49855**

Free! Register now: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/central-up-food-summit-registration-75742422625?aff=ebdssbdestsearch>

### **EASTERN U.P. SUMMIT**

**Wednesday, December 4th, 2019 - 1:00pm - 4:30pm**

**Bay Mills Community College, 12214 W Lakeshore Dr, Brimley, MI 49715**

Free! *Registration will be open soon!*

**Who:** Farmers, Institutions, Restaurants, Retailers, Policy Makers, Educators and those interested in Local Food Systems

**What:** These summits are happening in every region of the Upper Peninsula, and all will include an introduction to a new online purchasing platform for institutional purchasers; customized break-out sessions for policy makers, consumers/educators, farmers, and businesses that wish to purchase local; a farmer-buyer meet & greet, and other activities to assess the unique needs of the landscape and community.

**Why:** To strengthen local food systems by providing education and a space for collaboration and networking.

**Cost:** Free - although registration is required.

**Questions?** Contact Alex Palzewicz: 906-250-4507 or [alex@localdifference.org](mailto:alex@localdifference.org)

## **Management guidelines for immature and frosted corn silage**

*Condensed from September 12, 2019 MSU Extension webpage article by Dr. Maninder Singh, MSU agronomy specialist, and Dr. Kim Cassida, MSU forage specialist (see full article at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/management-guidelines-for-immature-and-frosted-corn-silage>)*

Extreme weather and delayed planting make it certain that some fields planted for corn silage will not have time to reach optimum maturity this year before frost brings an end to the growing season.

The greatest challenge of harvesting immature and possibly frosted corn for silage is that it is very likely to be too wet for ensiling. Target moisture at ensiling in bunkers and piles is 65-70% while corn ensiled in upright silos should be a little dryer at 60-65% moisture. More than 70% moisture leads to clostridial fermentation and excessive effluent loss, resulting in increased dry matter shrink, reduced nutritive value, reduced dry matter intake by cows and economic loss. Silo effluent is also a regulatory issue because it cannot be allowed to contaminate surface water.

It takes corn about 900 growing degree days (GDD) after silking to reach silage maturity. When planted at the normal time of year, this takes about 45 days. When planted later, it takes longer to accumulate 900 GDD after silking because growth is pushed into a cooler time of year, and development slows down to require 55 to 70 days to silage maturity.

Corn may withstand temperatures of 32 degrees Fahrenheit for up to four hours with minimal damage, but only a few minutes below 28 F. Be aware that frost damage can vary across a field due to differences in topography and exposure. Frozen tissue will quickly turn dry and brown. Be careful! Recently frosted immature corn can still be too wet to ensile even if the leaves seem completely dry because most of the moisture is in the stalk.

Do not be too quick to harvest just because a frost occurred. Frost is less damaging to yield and quality the closer the corn gets to physiological maturity, and frosted plants may continue to mature grain. To tell if the stalk is still alive, look for green color on the stalk itself, the bases of the leaves, and the husk. Corn whole plant moisture drops by about 0.5 percentage points per day during grain fill and this dry-down rate does not change after frost. Corn is usually near the ideal moisture for silage when kernels reach half milkline, but there is no substitute for actually measuring moisture in a sample of chopped silage using a Koster moisture tester or microwave.

Many delayed planting corn fields have lots of variability in maturity across the field. Be aware of these areas when harvesting and harvest sections separately if possible. If silage must be harvested above desired moisture, adding a source of dry matter as the silo is packed can help improve fermentation. Dry matter sources include straw, hay or grain. Silage moisture will be reduced by 1% for every 30 pounds of dry matter added per ton of fresh silage.

Frost can damage corn kernels and anything that damages kernels can allow fungi to get access to the plant. This may increase mold formation and the possibility of mycotoxins, especially if corn stands in the field for a long time before chopping.

Frosted corn silage may accumulate nitrate if the stalk and some leaf material is still alive. To reduce this risk, cut stubble higher than normal at 18 inches. This reduces yield but increases overall forage quality because the lowest part of corn stalk is wetter and of poor quality (low NDFD). By raising cutting height to 18 inches, forage moisture decreases by 3-4%, forage yield decreases 10-15% but forage quality increases 8-12%, so overall yield (milk per acre) is only reduced by 3-4%. For more information from MSU Extension on nitrate toxicity, see "Make a plan for drought-stressed corn silage in 2018" on the MSU Extension webpage.

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## Market Report

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Holstein Steers	\$85—\$95 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$36—\$42 per 100 lbs.
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### Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$11.31	\$226.25	\$195-280
Soymeal	\$19.40	\$388.00	\$350-450
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Barley	\$11.25	\$225.00	\$200-260

Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots



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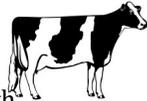
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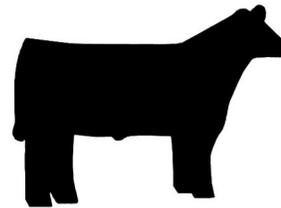
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## **Calendar of Events**

- Western UP Food Summit—Ojibwa Casino, Baraga, November 6, 1-5 pm
- Clare County Livestock Auction, Feeder Cattle—11228 S. Grant Ave., Clare, November 7, 1 pm
- Northern MI Livestock Feeder Sale—Town Line Rd., Gaylord, November 8, noon
- Central UP Food Summit—Washington St., Marquette, November 22, 1-4:30 pm
- Eastern UP Food Summit—Bay Mills Community College, Brimley, December 4, 1-4:30 pm

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