



# U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

May 2022

*Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch*

Volume 26 Issue 5

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## Thank You – You do Care

The GUPAA annual meeting on April 7 was attended by over 40 people from almost every county in the UP. Thank you for your support and especially to both the 13 new members and the people who didn't attend, but sent VERY generous "dues" in support of the GUPAA. While it's always good to see farmers and friends from across the UP, it's really great to see that people haven't forgotten that "the world (UP ag research & extension) is run/driven by those people who show up".

There were three parts to the GUPAA meeting:

The updates on past and future projects with an important but negative report on a grant that GUPAA applied for to fund a new plot planter for UP crops research. MSU could not directly apply for these state funds and therefore GUPAA was the requesting agent. Hopefully, better luck next time and that the old planters hold up a while longer. The current livestock and crops research priorities were reviewed and will be sent on to East Lansing. Elections were held and the new board members are: Jon Haindl, Dan Bahrman, Jon Ahlberg, Ethan Kurtz, Caleb Accaccia and Bill Pirman.

Instead of the "usual" one recipient of the GUPAA Service to Agriculture Award, this year we had two winners. Warren Schauer presented our Service to Ag award to Steve Zimmerman (see page 3) who is the tax and management advisor for Greenstone Farm Credit Services. Steve is retiring this summer and helped and guided many, many farmers across the UP. His cheerful nature and sage advice will be missed, but we wish him the best in retirement. A second Service award went posthumously to the duo of Paul and Mike VanDamme by Jon Haindl. Paul and Mike were not just "potato farmers" from the middle of "nowhere". They were inventors and entrepreneurs (the French fry business, erosion control for the mines, a trucking company), served on many ag committees and were frequent partners in ag research plots, and were "special examples" of UP – "sure – we can do that" - attitude. Their names will join previous awardees on the special plaque that hangs in Chatham at the UPREC office.

The last part was a great panel discussion on value added marketing across the UP. Many UP producers, both livestock and vegetable crops, are exploring ways to market their products more directly. The bottleneck of animal harvesting/butchering received considerable discussion by the very knowledgeable and experienced panel. This seems to be an issue that Covid made more challenging with increased demand and hopefully, future efforts to increase capacity could become available. (post meeting opinion – I am hearing of people growing wheat in response to the Ukraine war and expect that food security will only become a larger issue).

Again, a BIG Thanks to the people who showed up and voiced their wishes for future UP agricultural issues. Thanks to the people who sent in their dues to show support of the GUPAA. And, I invite you, if you haven't already, to send in your \$10 dues to support GUPAA supporting UP Agriculture. Check with Michelle, (906) 439-5114, for dues info.

Ben Bartlett – UP Sheep & Cattle Producer

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## 2021 Bell Pepper Variety Report Seed to Kitchen Collaborative

### Management

In 2021, five early bell pepper varieties were trialed at the MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center in Chatham, MI. Peppers were seeded in the greenhouse April 9 into 3/4 inch soil blocks using Morgan Composting Dairy Doo Seed Starter 101 soil media, potted up to 4 inch plastic pots on May 2, and transplanted into the hoop house June 11. Plots 3 ft wide x 5 ft long were laid out in a RCBD design with four replications. Fertility was applied just prior to planting, and consisted of a poultry based 7-6-5 fertilizer from Morgan's Composting called Healthy Garden applied at 1,450 lbs/ac (0.033 lb/ft<sup>2</sup>). Plants were spaced 16 inches apart in-row, with 2 staggered rows per bed, and trellised using the Florida weave method. Irrigation was provided 2 hrs weekly via two lines of drip tape. Weeds were controlled with hoeing and hand weeding. Peppers were harvested weekly July 27 – September 10.

### Varieties tested

	<u>Supplier</u>	<u>Variety</u>	<u>Market Class</u>	<u>Color</u>
	Johnny's	Ace	Early Bell	Green to Red
	Enza Zaden	Beachcraft	Early Bell	Green to Red
	Fedco	King of the North	Early Bell	Green to Red
	North Circle	King of the North Circle	Early Bell	Green to Red
	Nature & Nurture	Wisconsin Lakes	Early Bell	Green to Red

### Traits

Marketable Count, Marketable Weight (lbs), Unmarketable Count, Unmarketable Weight (lbs), Proportion Unmarketable.

### Quality Evaluation

#### *Chef taste testing:*

Flavor evaluation was done by eight local chefs in the Marquette/Alger County area. Varieties were packed with an individual alphanumeric code (no variety names were included in boxes). Boxes were delivered to chefs, including instructions for evaluation and a QR code linking to Qualtrics where data was entered. Flavor intensity and complexity were rated on a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high). Appearance, texture, and overall flavor were rated from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent). The likelihood that they would buy it for their restaurant (1=no way, 5=yes, definitely) and perceived ease of preparation (1=difficult, 5 = easy) were also rated.

#### Early Bell Peppers (high tunnel)

(\* indicates varieties statistically similar to the “best” variety in each category shown in **BOLD**)

Variety	Total weight (lbs/plant)	Marketable Count (#/plant)	Marketable Weight (lbs/plant)	Unmarketable Proportion (%)	Overall Flavor (1-5)	Willingness to Purchase (1-5)
Ace	1.55*	<b>5.64</b>	1.21*	22%*	<b>3.50</b>	<b>3.70</b>
Beachcraft	<b>1.81</b>	4.44	<b>1.55</b>	<b>14%</b>	3.20*	3.10*
King of the North	1.03	2.01	0.60	41%	3.40*	3.60*
King of the North Circle	1.68*	4.39	1.31*	23%*	2.80*	3.44*
Wisconsin Lakes	0.84	2.32	0.55	37%	2.50*	2.60*

## **Piles of Black Gold**

*By Frank Wardynski*

Have you driven through the countryside and seen those farms piles of black gold? Those piles I am talking about are manure accumulated from cleaning the barns for many years. These fertilizer prices are at historically high levels. The nutrients in those piles of manure are increasing in value. If you have one of those piles, try to get it spread on the fields this spring. If you are driving by, stop in to see if you can clean it up for them. I had that opportunity when prices of fertilizer was cheaper, and it still paid. I hired a local contractor with an end loader and dump trunk and started spreading. I do not recommend spreading fresh manure pack onto hay fields, but does incorporate well into tillage systems. Those piles that have been there a while will spread like black dirt and can go onto the hay fields directly. This is just a point brought up to me for farmers looking for opportunities to save money. Below is an article with links written by Jon LaPorte from the MSU Farm Business Management Team with a fertilizer cost comparison tool.

### **Analyze Best Options for Your Farm**

Knowing what options you have available is one part of minimizing costs. The key is deciding which options will work best for your farm and its current situation.

- To find which options are best for your farm, start with your soil. Soil sampling is critically important to reducing fertilizer costs. You need to know what you've got to work with before considering any other decisions.
- As you think about yield goals, consider how reasonable those goals are to meet. Are they based on historical trends or wishful thinking? It is always best to focus on a goal that is within your farm's potential. Remember, you are basing your cost planning on what yield you want to achieve.
- Account for all options to reducing costs. Those options can include changes in planting intentions, renting out acres, or adopting new practices to reduce fuel or chemical usage.

Last but not least, weigh through options using available decision tools. [Michigan State University Extension](#) offers a number of decision tools through the [Farm Management](#) website. One of the latest resources is the [Fertilizer Cost Comparison Decision Tool](#) that can consider nutrient needs and fertilizer product costs. The decision tool does not replace soil testing or soil-based recommendations. Instead, it offers an opportunity to consider how to meet nutrient needs at the lowest possible cost. For more information, visit: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/msu-extension-introduces-fertilizer-cost-comparison-tool>.

### **Steve Zimmerman receives Service to Ag award**

Steve was a long-time employee of Greenstone Farm Credit Services. He is known to many farmers across the Upper Peninsula for his expertise in taxes and farm management. He has helped many with tax preparation. Some of his biggest impacts to U.P. agriculture was working with many operations in making important investment and management decisions affecting their businesses. He also was one of the founding people of the U.P. Market Livestock Recordkeeping Project at the U.P. State Fair. This project has helped hundreds of Upper Peninsula youth gain an appreciation of the business management aspects of their market livestock projects. Congratulations to Steve on this well-deserved award.



## [How profitable does 2022 look for your farm?](#)

By Jonathan LaPorte

What are the best opportunities to maximize profits in 2022? In any given year, there are tried and true methods that every farm pursues. Minimizing our investment in input costs or securing optimum prices for production are just a few. But deciding which opportunities are best this year is more difficult with additional factors of supply chain concerns and availability of inputs. As we move into spring, these factors have many farm managers continuing to weigh options and finalize plans.

As your farm's manager, you may be considering making last minute changes as well. The use of budgeting tools can be a helpful way to fine-tune your plans. [Michigan State University Extension](#) offers several decision tools through the [Farm Management](#) website. Many of these tools focus on creating a projection of each individual enterprise. But what does the overall picture look like once those budgets are put together? MSU Extension has released a new decision tool to help answer that very question for your farm.

The [MSU Cash Flow Estimator](#) is intended to help create an overall cash flow projection for a farm's business. Farm managers can create three types of projections based on which production enterprises make up their farm. The projection options include crops only, livestock only, or crop and livestock combined.

The tool design allows for five different enterprises into each of the projection options. Enter the per unit (i.e., acre, head, cwt.) income and expenses for each enterprise to create a total farm income and expense projection.

The estimator tool works best with the Crop Budget or Livestock Budget Estimator tools. Both the simple and detailed versions of these tools create a "per unit budget" that can be used. Those tools are found here:

(for those reading a hard copy, go to the MSU website [www.canr.msu.edu](http://www.canr.msu.edu) and search for crop budget estimator tool)

[Crop Budget Estimator – Forages \(Detailed\)](#)

[Crop Budget Estimator – Forages \(Simple\)](#)

[Crop Budget Estimator – Grains \(Detailed\)](#)

[Crop Budget Estimator – Grains \(Simple\)](#)

[Crop Budget Estimator – All Crops \(Simple\)](#)

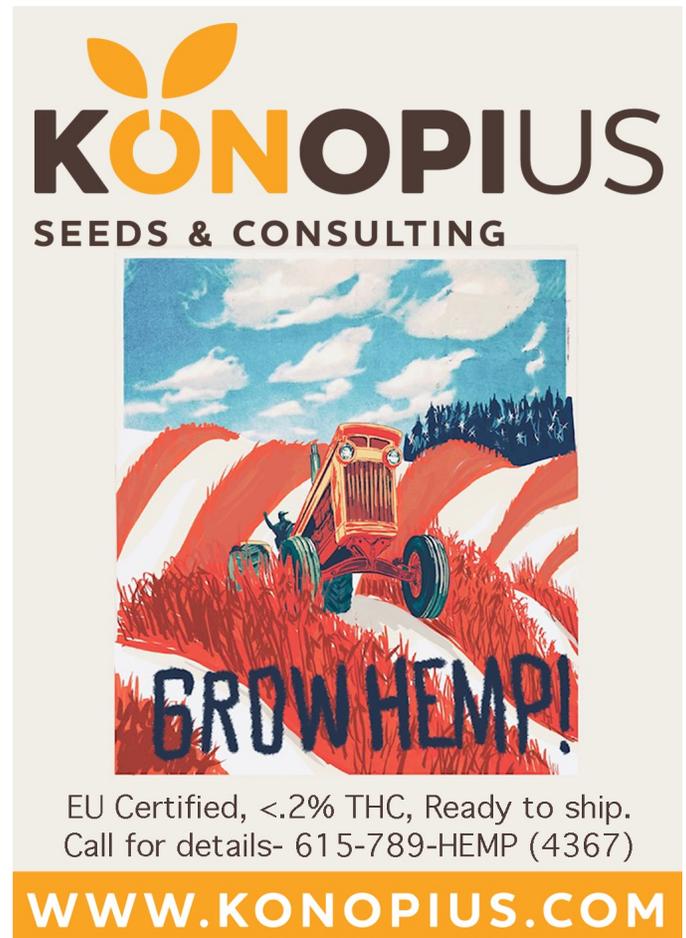
[Livestock Budget Estimator – Beef \(Simple\)](#)

[Livestock Budget Estimator – Dairy \(Simple\)](#)

[Livestock Budget Estimator – Swine \(Simple\)](#)

[Livestock Budget Estimator – Swine Contract Grower \(Simple\)](#)

Knowing how profitable each farm enterprise looks is one part of planning. The key is understanding how those parts affect what is best for your whole farm and its current situation. Being able to see impacts from changing your plans will help you find your farm's best path to profitability.



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## [MCA/MSU Bull Evaluation Delivers Performance and Value](#)

Bulls graduating from the 34<sup>th</sup> Annual MCA-MSU Bull Evaluation Program were sold Saturday, March 19<sup>th</sup> in Crystal, Michigan. The valedictorian of the 2021-22 Bull Evaluation Program was Lot 2, MBF Blackstone Powerball I9, consigned by Maplebrook Farm Holdings of Holland, Michigan. This March born Angus bull was purchased by Michigan State University for a sale sale-topping \$7,500. He completed the evaluation with an impressive test average daily gain of 4.73 lb/day and ranks in the top 1% of the breed for calving ease, top 5% for weaning weight, top 3% for yearling weight, top 5% for beef value and top 4% for combined value.

The sale averaged \$3,783 on 68 lots. Breed results were as follows: 40 Angus bulls averaged \$3,663; 23 Simmental and SimAngus bulls averaged \$3,935; 3 Red Angus bulls averaged \$4,500; one Charolais bull sold for \$3,000 and one Gelbvieh bull sold for \$3,750.

The MCA-MSU Bull Evaluation Program is the regions premier central bull appraisal and testing facility, setting the industry standard for evaluated bulls. The program's motto is "We do more, so you know more" because all test procedures follow the Guidelines for Uniform Beef Improvement Programs published by the Beef Improvement Federation. Additionally, only bulls meeting a minimum average daily gain requirement and passing stringent evaluations for reproductive potential, disposition and structural soundness are marketed through the sale.

Each year, bulls are intensely selected and nominated by breeders across the Great Lakes region. Breeders interested in consigning to the 2022-2023 MCA-MSU Bull Evaluation should visit the program's website [www.MIBulls.com](http://www.MIBulls.com) for details. The next evaluation will begin in October, with nominations opening July 2022 and accepted until September 1, 2022.

## [Produce Safety Grower Tool Survey](#)

This letter provides information to Michigan growers about Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule inspections. Produce growers are asked to help the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) in their efforts to prioritize their inspection [resources](#).

The FSMA Produce Safety Rule (PSR) was adopted into state law in 2018. By adopting the PSR into state law, MDARD conducts on-farm produce safety inspections rather than the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA). All farms eligible for inspection can expect to have an initial inspection by 2026. Initial inspections are heavily focused on helping growers understand how PSR requirements apply to their farms.

MDARD needs your help to determine which farms are eligible for PSR inspections. In general, a farm that grows, harvests, holds, or packs fresh produce is eligible for inspection. However, there are exemptions available depending on a farm's sales and distribution. As MDARD is learning, many farms in the U.P. primarily sell their produce locally and through direct market channels, which may provide an exemption from inspection by MDARD.

To understand whether your farm is eligible for a PSR inspection or an exemption, MDARD is asking farms to fill out the Produce Safety Grower Tool. The tool, which is a survey, will ask for some basic information about your farm details and activities, will help determine the farm's status and if your farm needs an inspection.

If an inspection is required, an MDARD produce safety inspector will reach out during the growing season to schedule a time. Michigan produce farms can utilize free resources, including Marquette Conservation District's Produce Safety Technician Landen Tetil. She is available throughout the entire U.P. for free, confidential, on-farm technical assistance and may be able to assist farms with completion of the online survey as well. If you would like to speak with Landen she can be reached at (906) 251-3061 or [Landen.Mqtcondist@gmail.com](mailto:Landen.Mqtcondist@gmail.com).

If you have questions or concerns, or wish to speak with an inspector, please contact MDARD Produce Safety Inspector Joe Smith at (269) 930-0443 or [smithj133@michigan.gov](mailto:smithj133@michigan.gov). Click on link below for survey:

[MDARD Produce Safety Tool Survey \(surveymonkey.com\)](https://www.surveymonkey.com)

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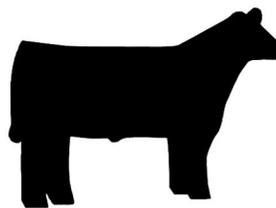
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### Classifieds

**FOR SALE: Red Angus Bulls**, 2 and 3 year olds, forage fed,  
asking \$3,000 each. For more information contact Ty  
Hugheston, 231-468-7131, MSU Lake City Research Center.

**FOR SALE: Hay**, 5x6 round bales legume grass hay, stored  
inside. Call Jon and Donna Ahlberg, Iron River (906)265-9333.

**WANTED: Pasture** for 25-35 cow calf pairs for the summer of  
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Miller 2351 W 6 Mile Rd, Sault Ste Marie, 49783

**FOR SALE: High moisture corn**, approximately 5,000 bushels in  
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0225.

**FOR SALE: Simmental Bulls**, mature and young, registered and  
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**FOR SALE: Hay**, large square bales 3x3x7.75 Timothy grass,  
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**Market Report**

Choice Steers	\$120-\$144 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$120-\$131 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$78-\$80 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$225-\$310 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$70-\$85 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$100-\$135 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$200-\$450 per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows top \$2400/head  
 Grade Holstein bred heifers top \$2500/head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$16.31	\$326.15	\$265-440
Soymeal	\$28.68	\$573.50	\$540-624
Oats	\$18.75	\$375.00	\$320-420
Barley	\$13.90	\$278.25	\$200-394
Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots			

**E-WASTE and FREON APPLIANCE COLLECTION**

**June 17th 4 pm-8pm & June 18th 8 am-noon**  
**Munising High School parking lot, 810 M-28**

The Alger Community Recycling Committee in cooperation with Michigan EGLE, Superior Watershed Partnership, Alger County Conservation District, Munising Public School and Library and UPPCO will be hosting an Electronic Waste and freon containing appliance collection. Items to be accepted 6/17 & 6/18:

- |                        |                      |
|------------------------|----------------------|
| Computer Monitors      | Video Game Systems   |
| CPUs                   | DVD, VCR, CD Players |
| Tablets                | Routers              |
| Televisions            | Also Accepted:       |
| Radios                 | Refrigerators        |
| Telephones             | Freezers             |
| Cell Phones            | Dehumidifiers        |
| Copy machines/scanners | Air conditioners     |
| Fax Machines           |                      |
| Stereos                |                      |

Thank you to our planning partners MSU Ag, MSUE and Munising Twp  
 The freon appliance recycling is a special collection sponsored by UPPCO