



U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

July 2025

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

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News and Views

By Frank Wardynski

As soon I start talking about drought management strategies, fears of drought are over, for now. We saw last year that early summer rainfall does not guarantee late summer forage growth. Last year the wet spring and early summer led to big hay yields through much of the UP. Rains again are bringing in good yield reports. I still see some low producing fields. Not everyone received the timely rain. Many have delayed harvest to reap the benefits of the June rains, and I believe it will be a year that testing for feed analysis will be important. Now we are in July I hear many producers are having trouble finding windows to dry hay and get it up without rain.

This reminds me of several years ago when the hay was ready, but the weather was not. Frequent rains in the western UP had the ground damp and would not allow hay to cure. Mowed hay laid on wet ground. The top of the windrow would dry but not the bottom. When the hay was raked, it would draw moisture out of the soil and refuse to fully dry, I have always believed that weather would not affect me because I like to make balage. So, I saw a 24hr break in the weather and start mowing. I baled it a bit wetter than I usually like, but it was going to be beautiful feed. I pulled into the field to start hauling bales to the wrapper and ended up pulling the truck and trailer out of the field on every load. I am still feeling those ruts. I realized that it was not going to be feasible to keep doing that throughout the season and switched to dry hay. Ultimately, most of my hay was musty.

I did not see the effects until the next year. I calve in the fall so most of my cows are pregnant before I start feeding hay, yet I had a high percentage of open cows. I think the moldy feed caused early term abortions and a greater number of cows were open in the spring. I received so many phone calls from producers experiencing problems with calving and then breeding. I never tested the hay for mycotoxins. Big mistake. And I think we felt the effects of that feed for two years.

I learned a lot that year. There were no great answers to those conditions, but I wish I had managed it differently. I could have sold my hay for mulch and bought good hay and been way farther ahead. More mature hay is better than poorly cured hay. Rained on hay losses a lot of nutritive value. Feed is our greatest cost of production. Try to save money on the cost of feed, but do not skimp on the quality of feed. Some years we need to invest in better feed than we produced. Test the feed, always for nutritive value and for other stuff like mycotoxins when we suspect problems.

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Strategies for Purchasing Farm Inputs

DEMaND

Developing and Educating Managers and New Decision-makers



Are farm input prices better now or should you wait to make a purchase?

Answering that question presents quite a challenge. Historically, farms that prioritize purchasing inputs early will lower total input costs. However, the long-term outlook for many

markets can remain unclear if domestic and global uncertainty impact supply chains and product availability. In order to decide whether buying now is right for your farm, you need to think a bit more strategically about your buying options.

Each year you develop a crop plan that identifies what you will grow. Crop plans look at acres, yield goals, nutrient needs and pest concerns. While crop plans are not a new concept for most farms, they are an important part of being strategic and maximizing your use of available cash. Cash is often limited to working capital or loan funds. Since they are used for numerous purchases throughout the year, efficient use of these dollars is important.

[Bulletin E-3508: Strategies for Purchasing Farm Inputs](#) offers insight into strategic approaches to buying farm inputs. Insights include understanding market conditions, identifying farm needs, maximizing available cash and prioritizing what products to buy and when. The bulletin also explores how to secure products at reasonable prices by creating an input purchasing plan. An input purchasing plan takes your crop plan and adapts it into an efficient buying strategy to obtain products at affordable costs. Borrowing from grain marketing concepts, input purchasing plans focus on being intentional and proactive about buying decisions.

Visit the [DEMaND Series website](#) to download this new resource today. Check out additional articles, bulletins, webinar recordings and more!

The DEMaND Series (Developing and Educating Managers and New Decision-makers) helps the next generation of farm operators learn about financial and business management strategies. These strategies help individuals grow in their capacity to meet the complex needs and challenges of managing a successful farm business. Whether individuals represent a succession of generations, transition from employee to owner, or are new to farming, the DEMaND series offers a fresh look at farm management.

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Have you experienced barriers or challenges to accessing farmland? We want to know!



Take part in a survey from a joint MIFarmLink-MSU Extension research project funded through a SARE grant.

If you've observed or experienced challenges in accessing farmland through leasing, buying or land transfer, we want to hear from you! Photo by Pixabay.

From spring tillage to the final harvest, farming is a tough business. Gaining access to farmland can be just as difficult but just how difficult? That's where

you come in! If you've observed or experienced challenges in accessing farmland through leasing, buying or land transfer, [MIFarmLink](#) and [Michigan State University](#) want to hear from you

This brief survey is part of a larger joint research project that aims to help identify common issues that hold up the process of acquiring or passing on farmland. Funded through a [Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education \(SARE\)](#) grant, the ultimate goal of the project is to develop new tools and strategies to enhance negotiation processes between farmland owners and seekers and support the successful transition of land.

SARE-funded research reveals 39% of farmers without heirs would prefer to pass their land to a non-relative farmer over liquidation—even if they made less money. To keep farmland in cultivation, there is an urgent need for farm link programs that provide the services, tools and information that retiring and beginning farmers need to make their land transfer goals successful.

If you have faced roadblocks in the pursuit of acquiring or passing on land, please take a few minutes to tell us about it. The survey can be accessed at: https://msu.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0cQtPm4vPD6V2TQ

This article was published by [Michigan State University Extension](#). For more information, visit <https://extension.msu.edu>. To have a digest of information delivered straight to your email inbox, visit <https://extension.msu.edu/newsletters>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <https://extension.msu.edu/experts>, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).

MSU Extension is offering 2 dates this summer for adults to become trained to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid in Rural Communities. The 2 training options will all be held online/virtually over Zoom and are being offered for free thanks to funding from the **[Great Lakes Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Regional Center](#)**.

Registration for all 2 trainings options is open at **<https://events.anr.msu.edu/yhmfa25rural/>**

Please share this opportunity with volunteers, community partners, and any adults who may be interested in participating. A **[flyer](#)** and **[graphic image](#)** are available to share with others and assist in promotion.

The **[Virtual Youth Mental Health First Aid for Rural Communities](#)** certification course, led by Michigan State University Extension, teaches adults (18 years and older) how to assist youth who are experiencing a mental health challenge or crisis. This course includes 2 hours of online self-paced pre-work and a 6-hour instructor-led training session via Zoom. The cost of this course is free thanks to a grant from the Great Lakes Rural Opioid Technical Assistance Regional Center.

Pre-registration is required at: **<https://events.anr.msu.edu/yhmfa25rural/>**

Training date options (participants will choose 1):

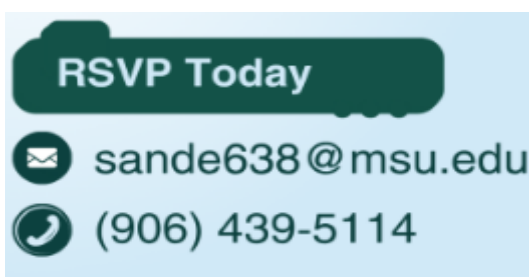
- July 23, 2025 @ 9 am - 3 pm (Registration deadline: July 9)
- August 19 & 21, 2025 @ 5:30 - 8:30 pm (Registration deadline: August 5)

Join Us!

Twilight Meeting & Pasture Walk

The MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center in Chatham will be offering a Twilight meeting and Pasture Walk on August 20th beginning at 5:00 pm ET. The evening will begin with a meal of Wagyu Sloppy Joes and other items. After the meal, we will proceed to the pasture and discuss the current beef cattle research project comparing feedlot cattle, grass-fed cattle, and grass-fed cattle supplemented with either the feedlot diet or Dried Distillers Grains. This project is evaluating not only cattle performance, but also the differences in various meat profiles. Following the pasture walk we will take a look at new and exciting Barley and Oat varieties from South Dakota and Canada. In addition, you will have the opportunity to look at new Hemp and Corn varieties which may be suitable to the UP.

Please join us for an informative evening and a chance to visit with your comrades!



Pasture Walk in Eastern UP

We are conducting a pasture walk split into two sessions at Jeremy and Michelle Sweeten's farm on September 11, 2025, with afternoon session starting at 2:00 ET with a light meal before starting an evening session at 6:00. Jeremy and Michelle have focused their grazing and feeding practices towards improving soil health. The farm address is 12248 S Bound Rd, Dafter, MI. Feel free to attend either both sessions or just one.

Afternoon Session (2:00-5:00): **A Deeper Dive into Adaptive Grazing**

- A look at 7 years of bale grazing and its effect
- Understanding soil function and aggregation
- A look at plant brix content
- Grass finishing grazing methods

Light meal of hamburgers (5:00 - 6:00)

Evening Session (6:00 - 8:00): **Cost of Production in a Pasture Based System**

- A look at farm stocking rate
- Stockpiled forage vs feeding hay
- Epigenetic selection of cattle to fit your farm

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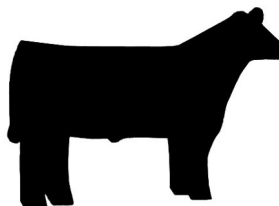
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Sale Date June 14, 2025

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6381 Euclid St., Marlette, MI 48453

Robert Filhart, Owner (989)330-6005

Haley Filhart, Owner (989)430-2055

Classifieds

Wanted: Pasture for 25-35 cow calf pairs for the summer of 2025 in the Eastern UP. Will consider a custom grazing arrangement as well. Call Ben (989) 370-3570.

FOR SALE: Hay, mixed round bales, 700# stored inside. Also small square bales of straw. Call Jim Myers (906)399-1649 or (906) 466-2672.

FOR SALE: small square bales of straw and small squares of first crop hay. Call Marenger's Farm (906)384-6587.

FOR SALE: Mixed Hay round bales 700# & 2nd cut small square bales, Call Alan or Karen Raynard @ (906) 647-6697, Pickford.

Market Report

Choice Steers	\$210-\$231 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$180-\$215 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$77-\$86 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$190-\$265 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$120-\$165 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$600-\$950 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$250-\$390 per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows top \$3300/head

Grade Holstein bred heifers top \$3800/head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$15.19	\$303.75	\$220-510
Soymeal	\$27.99	\$559.75	\$440-655
Oats	\$18.20	\$364.00	\$319-416
Barley	\$15.08	\$301.50	\$240-386
Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots			

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Calendar of Events



Schoolcraft County Fair— July 25-26—Manistique

Alger County Fair— August 1-3—Chatham

Iron County Fair—August 7-10—Iron River

Marquette County Fair—August 7-9—Marquette

UP State Fair—August 11-17—Escanaba

Houghton County Fair—August 21-24—Hancock

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