



U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

September/October 2023

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

Volume 27 Issue 10

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Some of you may have wondered why the September issue of our UP Ag Connections newsletter failed to reach you. Let me explain...

After 25 years of service as the Administrative Assistant (Secretary III) at MSU's Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center (MSU-UPREC), Michelle Coleman retired officially on September 5th, 2023. To say we are grateful for Michelle's many years of service and dedication would be an understatement. Case in point: As one of the many duties graciously assumed by Michelle, our last newsletter issue fell victim to her required break in service before returning temporarily to keep us in-line while her replacement is hired. That is to say, Michelle is a highly skilled administrator, communicator, organizer and booster who touches all aspects of our work at UPREC, the newsletter being one small example. We truly could not accomplish much without her!

Michelle Coleman is at least the third consecutive Secretary to retire after 25 years of service at MSU-UPREC. She was first hired by MSU Extension (MSUE) in June 1998 to provide administrative support to Ben Bartlett and Jim Isleib, MSUE staff then based at UPREC and since retired. In January 2001, Michelle assumed the role of Secretary II providing support to the Farm Manager, Paul Naasz, and other staff at the State Farm. In July 2022, she was promoted to Secretary III to recognize her expanded responsibilities serving a growing list of staff and programs based at the Center.

Since day one, Michelle has gone above-and-beyond her assigned duties in finance and HR at UPREC to serve the citizens of Alger Co. in many extracurricular capacities. Michelle led the Au Train 4-H club for 25 years, teaching students in kindergarten - 9th grade valuable life skills through activities related to community service and recycling (Contact us if leading such a club sounds interesting to you!). She is also Treasurer of the Alger Co. 4-H Council, which provides leadership and oversight for all activities of the countywide MSUE 4-H program. Beyond 4-H, Michelle has served as bookkeeper and core volunteer for the Alger Co. Fair, Alger Co. Representative for Feeding America, Chatham Lions Club Trustee, and Secretary of St. Therese Parish Council.

After retirement, Michelle looks forward to traveling to warm places, volunteering at the Alger Co. animal shelter (just can't stop her giving back!), reading good books recommended by her sister, and binge-watching some good TV like Parks and Recreation, Big Little Lies and The Grinder.

Reflecting on Michelle's career, MSU-UPREC Farm Manager, Paul Naasz, wrote, "It has been a pleasure working with Michelle for the past 25 years. She has done an excellent job and completed every task in a professional and timely manner, and I feel we made a great team! She will be sorely missed, but we wish her many years of happiness in this next chapter of her life!" Despite only knowing Michelle since coming to UPREC in 2019, I could not agree more. Congratulations, Michelle! We will miss you, more than we even know!

Footnotes:

Please consider joining us to congratulate Michelle by posting a note to our [Facebook page](#) (MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center) or sending a card to E3774 University Drive; Chatham, MI 49816.

The full-time Administrative Assistant position at MSU-UPREC will open for applications soon! If you or someone you know might be interested in this position, please follow MSU's careers.msu.edu website for the forthcoming posting or reach out to Paul Naasz at naasz@msu.edu or (906) 434-5114.

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Making the most of low hay yields

*Michelle Sweeten, Michigan State University Extension
Updated from an original article written by Jerry Lindquist*

The dry weather has left most livestock producers in the Midwest scrambling for more hay. First cutting hay yields were down in many areas of Michigan, and if the dry weather continues, total hay yields for the year could be less than 50 % of normal production. To feed ruminant animals such as beef cattle, sheep and others through the winter season, many livestock farmers are looking for ways to stretch their feed resources.

Before livestock farms begin buying hay, they should look at their current storage system to determine if they can make changes to be better able to utilize the hay they already have. Properly made and stored round bales can minimize storage losses and maintain hay quality. Currently, Michigan Forage Council members report yields of 40% to 60% less than normal around the state. If hay yields on a farm are 50% less because of the weather and the farm does not normally cover all their round-baled hay, they can reduce this shortage by covering their hay. Increasing moisture protection for outdoor stored net-wrapped round bales will save quality as well as for twine-tied bales. According to Oklahoma State University Extension, “the value of a storage system depends on the projected hay loss and the price of the hay when sold or used.”

Hay loss is a factor of the amount of moisture the hay is exposed to:

- Rainfall, snow, dew or ground moisture.
- How long it is exposed.
- The air temperature during the storage period (higher temperatures lead to greater losses).
- The type of hay (the more digestible the hay is for animals, the easier it is for bacteria to thrive and spoil the hay).

University research has revealed that round-baled twine-tied hay sitting on the ground uncovered will suffer an average total loss of 20% to 35%. Net-wrapped round bales have become popular, and many assume that net wrapping protects the bales from rainfall. Net wrapping makes the bale surface smoother and denser so it can shed water, but the advantage is not significant. The [University of Kentucky trials](#) found net-wrapped bales still lose 15% to 25% of the hay (dry matter basis) on average when stored outside. Though some of the rain runs off the net-wrapped surface, enough soaks into the outer layer of the hay to cause deterioration. The water also runs to the bottom of the bale and is absorbed there where it contacts the soil surface which causes spoilage.

The best way to reduce round bale hay spoilage is to keep water off them and break the contact with the soil so the bales do not draw moisture from the ground.

The same [University of Kentucky study](#) analyzed various forms of hay storage and found some noteworthy results. Putting the bales inside under a roof is the best option, whether a steel roof pole barn, older wooden barn or hoop barn. Total dry matter losses of the hay are typically only 4% to 7% when stored inside out of direct contact with the ground. A new building is an investment that can pay for itself over the long term if hay is stored annually, especially with higher hay prices.

For short-term investors, plastic coverage offers protection in various forms. Renting an in-line plastic bale wrapper can protect dry round bales, with the Kentucky study reporting a similar storage loss compared with barn storage at 4% to 7%. For 2023, renting a wrapper can vary from \$18.59 per bale if hiring someone to do baling and wrapping to \$14.65 per bale if just renting the baler and bale wrapper. Covering stacked hay with plastic tarps on a pad of stone or porous material can keep the loss down to the same 4% to 7% loss if the tarp can be secured well enough against the wind to stay in place. Plastic bale sleeves slipped over the bale leaving each end open, diminishing rainfall and soil moisture entry, resulting in the same loss at 4% to 7%. Bale sleeves are labor intensive as they are put on by hand and are best utilized on smaller quantities of round bale. [Read more about the economics of wrapping dry hay](#) from [Michigan State University Extension](#).

Putting un-covered bales stacked on top of one another in a pyramid shape with the bottom bales in direct contact with the ground suffered a 25% to 35% loss even though half the bales were off the ground. Net-wrapped bales on the ground suffered a 15% to 25% loss and pyramid-stacked bales on stone or a porous pad suffered a 13% to 17% loss.

Any method of protection is better than leaving the bale outside exposed to the weather. In a short hay year where all feeds will be high priced, covering what hay you already have is the most crucial step in determining ways to lessen the impact of the lower yields.

Suspect herbicide resistance? Submit weed seeds for screening

Erin Hill, Michigan State University Plant & Pest Diagnostics

As we begin to prepare for fall harvests and make plans for the next year, consider any weeds that have escaped control with herbicides. If you are seeing survival in weeds that used to be controlled by your herbicide program, herbicide resistance could be an issue. [Michigan State University Plant & Pest Diagnostics](#) offers bioassay screening of weed species for herbicide resistance starting in the fall and winter months of each year. This screen can confirm resistance and rule out the many other factors that could contribute to weed escapes.

To screen for resistance, seeds are cleaned from dried plant material, treated for dormancy, grown in the greenhouse and treated with up to seven different herbicides (herbicides screened are based on the species, cropping system, suspected resistance, and quantity of seedlings). A known susceptible population is tested alongside all samples to verify results. The duration of the process depends on the species, but results are usually available no later than March. New incidence of resistance (i.e., not previously confirmed in Michigan) require additional testing.

If you are a soybean or vegetable grower, you likely qualify for free screening. The [Michigan Soybean Committee](#) will again be sponsoring the testing of select species (i.e., pigweeds/amaranths, ragweeds, horseweed and common lambsquarters) for Michigan soybean growers.

The cost of screening for non-soybean or for species not listed above for soybean growers is \$90 per sample. If you intend to submit a species not listed above, please consult with us ahead of time to ensure we have or can collect a known susceptible population of the same weed species (contact Erin Hill at hiller12@msu.edu).

Most weed seeds from summer annual species are maturing by September to October, depending on the species and time of emergence. If you plan to submit a sample, refer to the factsheet "[Tips for Collecting Weed Seeds](#)" to ensure you collect mature seeds (Figure 1), gather a sufficient quantity and package them properly. If the species you are submitting is not on the sheet, we can discuss tips for successful collection of mature seeds on a case-by-case basis. A [submission form](#) is needed with the sample, which can be found at the link or on the general [Plant & Pest Diagnostics](#) website.

We ask that all samples be submitted no later than **Nov. 17, 2023**, to ensure testing over the winter months.



Figure 1. Checking for mature seed before submission is important. Here you can see the black seeds of Powell amaranth are mature and can successfully be grown for screening. Photo by Erin Hill, MSU.

Pollinate Conference for Women and Beyond in Agriculture and Conservation

Consecutive Thursdays, 10:00 am – 3:00 pm

Contact: Pollinate Conference Website: michiganpollinate.com Email: mipollinate@macd.org
25 per session; scholarships available (email mipollinate@macd.org for scholarship information)

October 26, Pierce Cedar Creek Institute, Hastings

November 2, Chateau Chantal, Traverse City

November 9, Mid-Michigan College, Harrison

The Pollinate Conference, dedicated to fostering collaboration among women in agriculture and conservation, is back this year with a dynamic lineup of events. Organized on consecutive Thursdays, the conference offers an invaluable opportunity for individuals in these fields to connect, learn, and share insights.

Initiated in 2022 by the Agriculture Specialist of the Eaton Conservation District, the Pollinate Conference was conceived as a platform for women and underrepresented people in agriculture and natural resource conservation to engage in knowledge-sharing and cross-pollination of ideas across these related sectors. This year, the conference expands its reach by partnering with conservation districts throughout Michigan, making it accessible to a broader audience across the state.

The intricate connection between natural resources and agriculture is at the heart of this conference's mission. Often, these two essential industries operate independently, missing the chance to harness their collective wisdom and passion. The Pollinate Conference aims to bridge this gap by bringing together dedicated individuals from both sectors to cultivate collaborative relationships that will benefit our communities, natural resources, and food systems, as well as our wild spaces.

Each session of the conference will feature two or more speakers, delving into a specific theme. Following the presentations, attendees will have the opportunity to enjoy lunch together and take a guided tour of the host facility. Additionally, every conference date will include a networking session, providing attendees, presenters, and invited experts with a chance to connect, discuss their careers, share their passions, and exchange experiences.

The Pollinate Conference is made possible through the generous support of its sponsors, including Hutson, Michigan Farmers Union, and Pheasants Forever. For more information about the Pollinate Conference, registration details, and scholarship opportunities, please visit michiganpollinate.com or email mipollinate@macd.org.

A valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship is key to successful cattle health

Jerad Jaborek, Michigan State University Extension

By now, you have heard of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Center for Veterinary Medicine's (FDA-CVM) change of purchasing medically important over-the-counter antimicrobials for animals to now requiring a veterinary prescription as of June 11, 2023. This is one of many regulatory changes implemented regarding administering antimicrobials to food producing animals over the last decade due to the growing concerns of metaphylactic treatment of food-producing animals and antimicrobial resistance. As part of FDA-CVM's 2012/2013 release of [guidance for industry \(GFI\) #209, "The Judicious Use of Medically Important Antimicrobial Drugs in Food-Producing Animals,"](#) the FDA-CVM aimed to:

1. Limit medically important antimicrobial drugs to uses in food-producing animals that are considered necessary for assuring animal health.
2. Limit medically important antimicrobial drugs to uses in food-producing animals that include veterinary oversight or consultation.

This led to the introduction of [GFI #213, "New Animal Drugs and New Animal Drug Combination Products Administered in or on Medicated Feed or Drinking Water of Food-Producing Animals: Recommendations for Drug Sponsors for Voluntarily Aligning Product Use Conditions"](#) with [GFI #209](#). These recommendations led to changes of the Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD), where a written statement must be issued by a licensed veterinarian to authorize the use of a VFD drug in or on the animal's feed. The two goals of GFI #213 were:

1. To eliminate the uses of medically important antimicrobial drugs for enhancing production (i.e., increased weight gain or improved feed efficiency) claims rather than specifically treating an identifiable disease.
2. Implement additional veterinary oversight because of their scientific knowledge and clinical training regarding the treatment, control and prevention of disease to ensure judicious use of medically important antimicrobials.

Most recently, as part of the FDA's five-year action plan for antimicrobial stewardship, [GFI #263, "Recommendations for Sponsors of Medically Important Antimicrobial Drugs Approved for Use in Animals to Voluntarily Bring Under Veterinary Oversight All Products That Continue to be Available Over-the-Counter"](#) ensured that any medically important antimicrobials available over the counter were brought under veterinary oversight and prescription (Rx) marketing status for the therapeutic medical treatment of all animals.

After the brief history lesson, you can quickly see how veterinarians have become the gatekeeper for food producing animal production operations and their own ability to manage animal health and disease. This brings me to the point of this article. As beef or dairy cattle producers, we must maintain a valid veterinarian-client-patient relationship (VCPR) with a licensed veterinarian in order to obtain the antimicrobial drugs needed to treat sick cattle. The FDA defines a valid VCPR as one that meets the following requirements:

- A veterinarian has assumed the responsibility for making medical judgments regarding the health of (an) animal(s) and the need for medical treatment.
- The client (the owner of the animal or animals or other caretaker) has agreed to follow the instructions of the veterinarian.
- There is sufficient knowledge of the animal(s) by the veterinarian to initiate at least a general or preliminary diagnosis of the medical condition of the animal(s).
- The practicing veterinarian is readily available for follow-up in case of adverse reactions or failure of the regimen of therapy. Such a relationship can exist only when the veterinarian has recently seen and is personally acquainted with the keeping and care of the animal(s) by virtue of examination of the animal(s), and/or by medically appropriate and timely visits to the premises where the animal(s) are kept.

Veterinarians offer a wealth of knowledge on maintaining proper animal health and basic husbandry practices. Find a veterinarian who is willing to have and maintain a VCPR with you. Set up regular farm visits annually to keep your veterinarian accustomed to your farm's animals and management practices. Veterinarians can offer regular farm consultations on the phone (i.e., telemedicine), but an annual farm visit is still required. Veterinarians can offer advice on developing biosecurity protocols for your farm to prevent incoming disease threats. Work with your veterinarian to develop a herd health protocol/schedule for disease treatment, control and prevention throughout the year. This may include protocols for calving, breeding, vaccinations, weaning, receiving calves, dehorning, castration, euthanasia and medicated feed options when needed.

Beef Checkoff and Beef Quality Assurance have developed a [Cattle Care Tool Kit Checklist](#) to review and prepare for your cattle operation so you'll have these things ready for when the tool is needed. Preparation is critical when animal health is at risk because time can be of the essence for positive treatment and recovery outcomes. Take the time now to have meaningful conversations with your veterinarian about preparing your cattle operation for herd health events.

Apply now for four SARE grant programs to fund farmers, educators and researchers

Katie Brandt, Michigan State University Extension

North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR-SARE) grants could fund your project!

Sustainable farmers, educators and farm researchers can now apply for four grant programs funded by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) North Central Region Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (NCR-SARE). SARE [Farmer Rancher Grants](#) fund farmers who want to trial sustainable farming techniques and/or share practices with other producers. Although most grants require non-profit status, SARE grants can fund farms or individuals up to \$15,000 for one farm or \$30,000 for two or more farms to design and lead research, demonstration and education projects in sustainable farm practices.

SARE grants available in Michigan

- [Farmer Rancher Grants](#) – Up to \$15,000 for one farm or \$30,000 for two or more farms to design and lead research, demonstration and education projects in sustainable farm practices. **(Due Dec. 7, 2023)**
- [Partnership Grants](#) – Up to \$50,000 for farm educators and agriculture professionals to collaborate with three or more farmers to research, demonstrate, educate or collaborate on issues important to sustainable farming. **(Due Oct. 19, 2023)**
- [Youth Educator Grants](#) – Up to \$6,000 for projects that teach youth about sustainable agriculture and careers in sustainable agriculture. **(Due Nov. 9, 2023)**
- [Michigan SARE Mini-Grant](#) – Up to \$1,500 to organize a conference or workshop addressing environmental, social and financial sustainability for Michigan or regional farmers and educators. **(Apply year-round)**
- Michigan SARE Farmer Forum – \$6,000 to host and record an event featuring SARE grantees. Email Sarah Fronczak at froncza3@msu.edu for more information on this funding that is available for one Michigan conference per year. **(Apply year-round)**
- [Michigan SARE Travel Scholarship](#) – \$500 for sustainable farmers, agriculture educators, farm advisors and technical assistance providers to attend conferences, workshops or other professional development with a focus on sustainable agriculture topics. **(Apply year-round)**

Two NCR-SARE grants will release calls for proposals in February:

- [Professional Development Grants](#) – Up to \$120,000 for training agricultural educators, using farmers as educators and addressing emerging issues in the farm community. (Not open for proposals, typically due in April.)
- [Graduate Student Grants](#) – Up to \$15,000 for masters' and PhD students at accredited colleges and universities to address sustainable agriculture issues in the North Central Region. (Not open for proposals, typically due in April.)

Michigan SARE Coordinator Sarah Fronczak, Tribal SARE Coordinator Emily Proctor and Katie Brandt from the MSU Organic Farmer Training Program are glad to advise applicants, review proposals and support farmers, educators and students applying for NCR-SARE grants. Grant-writing support is available free of charge for all six North Central SARE grants and for Michigan SARE mini-grants. Email froncza3@msu.edu or brandtk7@msu.edu with questions, to have a proposal reviewed or to set up a time to discuss your proposal idea. Tribal members and communities are encouraged to reach out to Emily Proctor at proctor8@msu.edu for assistance with SARE proposals.

SARE has distributed over \$9 million to fund 313 grant projects in Michigan since 1988. Just in 2023, \$1,318,142 in new funding is funding 17 Michigan research and education projects.

SARE is a USDA program that shares numerous [resources](#) for farmers and agriculture educators including books, bulletins, videos and more. For more information about SARE grants and resources, visit the [Michigan SARE](#) or [National SARE](#) websites. The program aims to support an inclusive mix of farmers and does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program or political beliefs.

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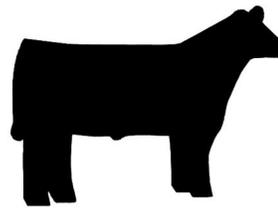
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Sale Date October 14, 2023

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Haley Filhart, Owner (989)430-2055

Classifieds

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 2nd & 3rd crop hay bales. Call Marenger Potato Farm (906)384-6587.

FOR SALE: Mixed Hay round bales, 700#, \$20. Call Alan or Karen Raynard @ (906) 647-6697, Pickford.

Market Report

Choice Steers	\$150-\$180 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$150-\$162 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$48-\$50 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$160-\$220 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$75-\$112 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$200-\$280 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$200-\$300 per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows top \$1900/head

Grade Holstein bred heifers top \$2050/head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$17.17	\$343.40	\$265-543
Soymeal	\$28.91	\$578.25	\$500-650
Oats	\$17.69	\$353.75	\$319-416
Barley	\$13.81	\$276.25	\$200-386
Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots			

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If you do not wish to receive this publication, please contact Michelle at colema98@msu.edu or (906) 439-5114

‘Finn Hollow’s Eve’: a Guided History Hike at the Rock River Kilns, October 28th, 3:00-5:00pm

Location: Rock River Kilns Site, Hiawatha National Forest

Coordinates: N 46° 27.568 W 086° 56.455

Walking through Michigan’s forests, one may experience many mysterious sightings. If you look closely, you might see crooked trees, random boulders, or old fence posts in the middle of nowhere. But what do all these features mean? The art and science of reading the clues on the forested landscape to decipher its history is referred to as forest forensics; the concept was developed by Tom Wessels of Antioch University and author of the book *Forest Forensics: A Field Guide to Reading the Forested Landscape*. In Michigan, glaciers created most of the landforms we see today, and our forested landscape is fraught with evidence of human influence. From plants grown on old homesteads to fires that burned across the state, the clues remain and tell the story of what once occurred in our Michigan forests.

In this installment of the Michigan Forest Forensics hike series, MSU Extension forestry educator Anna Ellis and Conservation District forester Sara Kelso will lead a guided hike at the Rock River Kilns site. The hike will explore the history and environmental impacts of the long-lost Finnish and Swedish immigrant community known as “Finn’s Hollow”, which once occupied the Rock River forest and relied on its timber to supply local mines with charcoal. Once-clearcut and barren, the site is now home to a dense forest, but many clues of Finn Hollow’s influence remain today, if you know where to look...

This will be an excellent activity for history buffs and nature lovers alike! All ages are welcome and Halloween costumes are encouraged!

You can register to attend this FREE event at the link below, as well as view the other forest forensics hikes that will be happening across Michigan in the coming months. After registering, you will receive an email containing more specific details of the event, such as directions and location information. There is an optional introductory webinar being held on October 18th from 6:00-7:00 pm for those who would like to learn more about the Forest Forensics program, and you can register for that on the same website.

Registration link: bit.ly/3rhPCKP

Contact Anna Ellis at ellisan9@msu.edu or 906-869-0776 for all inquiries.