



U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

June 2024

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

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By Frank Wardynski

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Seems like the weather can change so fast, from one extreme to another. Last month I wanted to discuss drought management, but the Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza issue needed front page attention. We have had plenty of rain to make for good first crop hay yields through the Upper Peninsula. Believe it or not, the national drought monitoring system has Gogebic and Ontonagon counties in the abnormally dry and moderate drought designation. All other UP counties show no drought and only three Lower Peninsula counties are listed as abnormally dry.

I would advise you to remember we are only into June with lots of summer left. Only a few years ago I was getting reports of how good the first crop was and by the end of the year we were applying for drought disaster. Never quit planning for drought. If we do not get anymore rain this summer, what are we going to do? Also, as I have begun studying regenerative agriculture, I am starting to believe the best drought management strategies should be focused on keeping the water we get.

Two questions: 1. How much moisture can your soil hold? And 2. When it rains for example, one inch in one hour, and then another inch, what percentage of that water stays on the farm? Over the past few years, I have been so shocked to see the differences in those two questions on soils only a few meters apart from each other. The difference is how they are managed. I do not care if it is pasture, hay or row crop, we have opportunities to keep and store more water on the farm, in the soil.

Every year we are worried about drought. Maybe now is the time to start worrying about the next dry spell. Use this opportunity of adequate moisture and rapid root growth to build soil holding capacity. Because when we are in the middle of the drought and it's affecting crops drastically, is not the time to try and build water infiltration and holding capacity. Whether its using cover crops, changing tillage practices, changing grazing rotation, cutting forages higher, we need to start those practices before it gets too dry. Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) – an important place to find info is at Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) site. Many have been upset at the state's response with mandatory biosecurity issues. I do not want to make light of the situation, but I have not been upset by it. I thought it needed to happen. I doubt we are going to see 100% compliance. If I find out about penalties and fines to dairy farmers, I will change my opinion. We all can and probably should be ramping up our biosecurity protocols.

The MSUE beef team talked about this in detail at our last meeting. We all know the situation with dairy cows, but has it affected beef cattle? We have not seen any positively tested HPAI in beef cattle. That statement is different than no beef cattle have contracted HPAI. An important point is to understand the differences between how lactating dairy cattle and beef cattle are observed. Many dairy operations know how much milk each cow gives at each milking. Decreased milk production is one of the first symptoms of HPAI. If your beef cow is moving a little slow, head hanging a little lower, probably is not getting treated and probably is not getting tested. My point is, it is probably not just a poultry and dairy issue. It is going to be a beef issue also. Biosecurity is important and we should be looking forward on this.



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Cattlemen's Education Series ® At Michigan Summer Round-Up

Michigan Cattlemen's Association members have an exciting opportunity awaiting at Summer Round-Up! The event, which is sponsored by NCBA and The National Corn Growers Association, MCA presents three educational opportunities as part of the Cattlemen's Education Series®. The dates for Summer Round-Up are June 21 and 22, held in Holland, Michigan.

"Summer Round-Up is the perfect time for members to come together to celebrate our cattle community and keep up to date on what is happening in the industry," says Eric Salinas, MCA Summer Round-Up planning committee chair. "With new research and developments happening every day, it is important to us as an association that we provide our members with the best opportunities to stay educated and informed."

Topics this year will include market updates and Michigan's climate variation compared to other states provided by CattleFax, Beef on Dairy research provided by Dr. Jared Jaborek of Michigan State University, and vaccination program education provided by Merck Animal Health.

Additionally, the event offers the opportunity to compete in contests, such as the BBQ and dessert creation contests. There will be a demonstration that shows the process of making candles and skincare products out of beef tallow. On the second day of the event, there will be tours of the West Michigan Beef Company and Schaendorf's Dairy.

"We will host our annual awards banquet at Summer Round-Up to honor some outstanding MCA members," says Matt Noggle, member of the Summer Round-Up committee.

All those who are interested in attending the event should register on the Michigan Cattlemen's website: www.micattlemen.org

SUMMER ROUND-UP

JUNE 21 & 22, 2024

Featuring:

- Tours to West Michigan Beef & Schaendorf Dairy
- BBQ & Dessert Contests
- Annual Award Reception & Dinner
- Women's Demonstration
- Political Fund Auction & 50/50
- Cornhole Tournament

Educational Series:

- CattleFax
- MSU Beef x Dairy
- Merck Vaccination Programs

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Scan to register!

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Michigan Farms host Soil Health Academies

By: Michelle Sweeten

Soil health and regenerative agriculture are hot buzzwords in farming. This past summer, JNelson Farms in Hope, Michigan hosted a Soil Health Academy (SHA) to train farmers, researchers, food advocates, and educators on soil health and regenerative agriculture principles focusing on adaptive grazing. According to the Midland Daily News, “Students came from eight states, including Michigan, as well as Canada, the United Kingdom, and Armenia.”

The training was useful as farmers explored how the principles could be applied to their farm operations. Black Swamp Cattle Co. posted on Facebook after attending the 2023 Michigan academy, “The Understanding Ag team did an excellent job working to help us better understand the observations we need to make at our farm in order to truly graze in adaptive way. I am excited to take some of the new practices and ideas home to try on our operation. If you ever get the chance to attend a Soil Health Academy, I cannot recommend it enough. It was a great balance of in class education as well as real world application in the field. This crew of folks is nothing short of a wealth of knowledge!” Michigan State University Center for Regenerative Agriculture in conjunction with Michigan State Extension supports the hosting of Soil Health Academies in Michigan. While the Academies focus on training farmers and ranchers, many researchers, extension educators, and other farm advisors find the training to be eye-opening and beneficial.

Each year the Soil Health Academy team works with 10 farms in the U.S. and Canada to host the 3-day training. The schools highlight the host’s progress towards regenerative agriculture in their context. This includes not only their location context but also their type of operation. Many producers are predominantly grazers, but others raise row crops, vegetables, or orchards. This fall in the Eastern Upper Peninsula of Michigan the Soil Health Academy will be exploring advanced grazing skills which will build on those developed at the 2023 JNelson Farm Soil Health Academy.

Sweeten Farms will host this academy on September 10-12,2024. This SHA will focus on the following:

- The Power of Observation
- How to Restore Vibrant Ecosystems through Adaptive Grazing
- Selecting cattle to fit their environment and be low-maintenance
- Develop cattle to perform and finish on forage
- Added pasture diversity, yield, and quality through adaptive grazing
- Use of bale grazing to regenerate soils
- Reduce inputs to improve profitability
- Build a more resilient ecosystem on your farm

SHA does limit attendance to 50 and registration is currently open. Instructors will include experienced regenerative ranchers and farmers which includes host and Understanding Ag consultant, Jeremy Sweeten, and Understanding Ag/Soil Health Academy founders, Dr. Allen Williams, and Gabe Brown. Find out how to register here: <https://soilhealthacademy.org/upcoming-schools/>



Photo By:
Tammy Nelson



Photo By:
Soil Health Academy

Farm Field Trips at UP Research and Extension Center Offer Hands-on Learning in Agriculture and Science

Abbey Palmer
Community Food Systems Educator

Miranda Fletcher
Agricultural Education Assistant

This spring UPREC hosted farm field trips for UP Schools. Approximately 240 K-12 students from 3 schools in Marquette county visited the North and South Farms to learn how agriculture and food systems relate to their lives and communities.

Groups of students tour the farm sites, learning about agriculture practices and the research projects that are carried out at UPREC. Then, students participate in a variety of small-group activities that connect with science standards. They learn about topics that range from grazing and forage production to integrated pest management, plant life cycles, and the history of agriculture in the UP. There is an emphasis on viewing a farm as a part of an ecosystem, recognizing that food production happens within a specific place that depends on the land and all the communities of plants and animals that live on that land as well. Each activity on a farm field trip is led by a person whose career is related to agriculture, farming, and food systems education, which gives students a first-hand opportunity to see a variety of kinds of jobs in the field.

A highlight for many students is the opportunity to ride in a wagon pulled by a tractor to visit the beef cattle, with Paul Naasz speaking about how grass-fed cattle are raised, the differences between grass-fed and grain-fed beef, and rotational grazing.

For teachers, farm field trips offer a unique opportunity to be outdoors with students while learning about agriculture. Many teachers who bring their students have school gardens or produce food on-site at their schools, so coming to a research farm to see agriculture in action helps students deepen their understanding of how their activities at school are connected to broader concepts in food systems. Student transportation was supported by the Growing UP Agriculture Association, which provided travel funding. Thanks to community engagement from their teachers, the schools that visited the farm this spring included Bothwell Middle School, Graveraet Elementary, and Gilbert Elementary.

Farm field trips are supported by all staff at UPREC, who generously contribute their time and energy to helping future generations understand where food comes from and how it is produced. Paul Naasz, James DeDecker, Christian Kapp, Abbey Palmer, Anna Ellis, Rene Sanderson, Miranda Fletcher, Joe Charlebois and Darin Tyner all shared their areas of expertise with students. Anna Ellis, our MSU Extension forestry and natural resources educator in Alger County, educated students on natural resources and how trees use them to thrive and survive. Dr. James DeDecker educated students on farm equipment while at The South Farm, and introduced students to integrated pest management at The North Farm. Christian Kapp, Research Technician who manages cover crop trials and the barley lab, led students through a tactile exploration of seeds while educating students what is grown and why. Abbey Palmer worked with students at The North Farm, educating them on farm life while also challenging their memorization skills. Miranda Fletcher introduced students to the story of The Three Sisters, and then led a group discussion on how we can use this knowledge to help us farm more sustainably. Rene Sanderson, MSU Extension's new Administrative Assistant, helped students engage with local foods by preparing samples of Trenary Toast and locally produced squeaky cheese. Joe and Darin brought joy to the students by driving the students through the pastures.

A big thank you to everyone who helped make this year's farm field trips a success! If you're interested in learning more about farm field trips or visiting MSU UPREC, please contact Miranda Fletcher at fletc216@msu.edu. We will be conducting more tours in the fall of 2024, we hope to see you there!



Dr. James DeDecker educates students on farm equipment. Miranda Fletcher Spring 2024



Paul Naasz educating students on beef cattle on a tractor ride. Miranda Fletcher 2024

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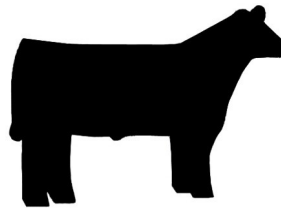
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Straw for Sale: Small squares or 4x5 Large round bales. Call
Paul at MSU 906-439-5114 Ext. 2

FOR SALE: Hay, mixed round bales, 700# stored inside. Also
small square bales of straw. Call Jim Myers (906)399-1649 or
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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#, \$20. Call Alan or
Karen Raynard @ (906) 647-6697, Pickford.

FOR SALE: Black Angus Bull , 16 months old, AI sired by
Architect. Semen tested and vaccinated. Call or text Tammy
Klink (906)630-9784

Market Report

Choice Steers	\$160-\$198 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$115-\$173 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$57-\$61 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$200-\$280 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$110-\$155 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$300-\$650 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$250-\$350 per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows top \$2400/head

Grade Holstein bred heifers top \$2800/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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Q&A 7:35 - 8:00
April - September 2024

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August 10, 2024

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