



# U.P. Ag Connections

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## NEWS & VIEWS

By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

I would like to send a **big thank you and congratulations** to everyone that helped make the Breakfast on the Farm at the Taylor Creek Farm over in Chippewa County a great success! John and Julia Kronemeyer along with the rest of the Kronemeyer family deserve great thanks for offering their farm and the tremendous job they did in having the farm looking so neat, clean and welcoming. Michelle Walk, MSU Extension Educator working in Community-Based Food Production and Marketing served as chair person for the event along with Mary Dunckel and Nancy Thelen, MSU Extension Educators and Breakfast on the Farm Organizers. There were over 140 volunteers assisting to host over 1000 visitors. From my observation, the day was highly successful in telling agriculture's story to many non-farm families. Everyone involved should be proud and I've said it before, we in agriculture need to understand that we are all on the same team and speak with a unified voice. With so many people working together for the cause of agriculture, I thought it was truly inspiring.

While the weather turned out beautiful that day, the morning started with a cold, hard frost. Most of the UP has seen killing frost that has brought an end to much of our growing season. It appears most all of the corn is going to be harvested as silage. Also drought through many locations across the UP has decreased hay and pasture yields.

These factors are going to create challenges for livestock farms this winter. I am looking for suggestions on extension programming efforts to help livestock producers deal with some of these situations.

I would like to congratulate Warren Schauer, MSU Extension Farm Business Management Educator for receiving the National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA) 2011 "Distinguished Service Award." Warren has served most of his 32 year Extension career delivering farm financial management and agricultural educational programs to clientele in the Upper Peninsula and Northeastern Michigan. Significant programming includes: farm financial analysis, business planning, estate planning, Agriculture for Tomorrow Conference, Annie's Project, livestock marketing, U.P. Youth Market Livestock recordkeeping project, Bay de Noc Garden Conference, Master Gardener, wind energy programs, and farm financial management seminars in Ukraine, Africa, and Eastern Caribbean. I know I speak for all of the MSU staff here in the UP when I say that we rely heavily on Warren's leadership and attention to detail.

Congratulations and Thank you!

~Frank

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## Market Report 9/23/2011

By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

### Market Ready Prices

|                 |              |              |
|-----------------|--------------|--------------|
| Choice Steers   | \$110- \$119 | per 100 lbs. |
| Holstein Steers | \$ 98- \$105 | per 100 lbs. |
| Hogs            | \$ 70- \$ 90 | per 100 lbs. |
| Lambs           | \$160- \$180 | per 100 lbs. |
| Cull cows       | \$ 60- \$ 70 | per 100 lbs. |

### Breeding and Feeder Animals

|                             |                 |           |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------|
| Grade Holstein cows         | \$1,250 - 1,850 | per head  |
| Grade Holstein bred heifers | \$1,600 - 1,800 | per head  |
| Deacon calves (MI. Market)  | \$40-130        | per 100 # |

### "Farm Account"

#### Feed Prices across the U.P. (as of 9/23/2011)

|                | <u>Avg. \$/cwt</u> | <u>Avg. \$/ton</u> | <u>Price Range</u> |
|----------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Corn</b>    | \$16.26            | \$344.75           | \$279-\$438        |
| <b>Soymeal</b> | \$23.60            | \$467.00           | \$399-\$600        |
| <b>Oats</b>    | \$12.85            | \$257.00           | \$250-\$260        |
| <b>Barley</b>  | \$14.67            | \$293.50           | \$239-\$348        |

Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots

## Wanted & For Sale Listings

Personal ads will be removed monthly. We reserve the right to edit your ad. Free ads must be no more than 110 spaces. Please respect the space requirements. You can always purchase an ad if more space is required. Please call or email your ad no later than the 15th of each month. Call the Ontonagon County MSU Extension office at: 906-884-4386 or email msue66@msu.edu.

**For Sale:** Hay 4x4 round bales grass mix. no rain. 300 available. \$18.00-\$20.00 per bale. Iron River area. 906-284-0349 Lv. Msg.

**For Sale or trade for feeders:** Quality NIR tested round 4x6 bales of hay and wheat straw. Dan Dalgord 906-644-2276

**For Sale:** Registered springing Holstein heifers. MSU U.P. Research Center 906-439-5114

**For Sale:** Pure Breed Dexter Cattle all types Jim Countryman 906-884-2351

## Go Green!

### Attention Subscribers

If you would like to help reduce our monthly publishing/ mailing expenses and also to be environmentally friendly, we encourage you to receive the newsletter by email.

To be added to our email list, please provide your email address to: msue66@msu.edu.

## Raising Dairy Calves in the UP

By: Ben Bartlett DVM

I am working for the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDA&RD) on a special project to evaluate the potential of expanding the number of dairy bull calves raised in the UP. The State is very interested in growing the economic potential of Agriculture. Raising more of the deacon calves born in the UP to yearling size before they leave the UP could generate more dollars for UP farmers.

There are three parts to the project: #1 is determining how many deacon calves are born in the UP and what happens to them currently. #2 is looking at why more deacon calves are not raised now, and #3 if there is potential to increase deacon calf production, what could be done to expand this opportunity.

I will be calling all UP dairy farms in October with the following questions:

How many bull calves were born on your farm in the last year? (does not have to be exact!)

Did you raise the calves on your farm? Yes/No ..

if YES, to what size and how did you market them?

If you sold the calves before 3 weeks of age, was it to someone in the UP or outside the UP?

And of course I am very interested in your comments, concerns and suggestions.

I know many of you will be busy with fall work and if you can jot down the answers ahead of time and have them by the phone it should go faster for everyone.

The weather, high input costs and highly variable selling prices have been a real challenge to all of agriculture and especially UP agriculture. I see farmers across the UP going out of business while we have ample land to grow crops, we have young people who want stay in the UP, and we have a growing interest in buying food produced locally. Your help in determining if raising more deacon calves in the UP will help grow UP agriculture and its economy is greatly appreciated.

Ben

For past U.P. Ag Connection issues visit-<http://www.agbioresearch.msu.edu/uprc/newsletter.html>

## Corn Grazing Pasture Walk

By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

Paul Naasz, MSU AgBioResearch Station Manager and Frank Wardynski, MSU Beef and Dairy Extension Educator will be hosting a Corn Grazing Pasture Walk at the Chatham Station. The pasture walk will begin at 11:00 am Saturday, October 29, 2011. The pasture walk will feature a demonstration project of grazing standing corn with the beef cows. Preliminary data will be available with measurements of pre-grazing yield and post-grazing utilization.

### Lower Michigan Feeder Cattle Sale Dates

October 7: N MI Lvstck, Gaylord

October 7: UPI, St Louis

October 8: Clare Co Lvstck, Clare

October 21: UPI, Cass City

October 21: N MI Lvstck, Gaylord

November 4: UPI, St Louis

November 5: Clare Co Lvstck, Clare

November 11: N MI Lvstck, Gaylord

December 2: UPI, St Louis

December 3: Clare Co Lvstck, Clare

December 9: N MI Lvstck, Gaylord

## Early Michigan Feeder Cattle Prices Start High

By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

The Photo-rama feeder cattle sale conducted by United Producers Inc. had excellent prices earlier this September. Four and five cwt steers ranged between \$123-128 and heifers \$123.5. Six weight steers were at \$118-139 and heifers at \$110-125. Heavier steers weighing 850-1020 at \$107-115 and similar weight heifers at \$109-121. Six plus weight Holstein steers at \$93-101 and five weight and under Holstein steers \$97-115.

### Social Security Basics for Farmers

Part three will be published in a later issue. It will cover the subject:

### What About Retirement?

## Feeder Cattle Marketing Options

### Bay de Noc Beef Producers Association

1. A late September or Early October delivery to the Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association auction market at Waukon, Iowa. This is a good sale with access to Midwest and Western markets. This could be a good sale for those producers wanting to sell their yearling feeder cattle. However, calves can be sold at this time as well.

2. Late November/early December delivery to the Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association auction market at Waukon, Iowa. This would be a good option for late yearlings and weaned calves.

Each of these options will be used provided there are enough cattle to fill a semi-truck load. Each of these options offers good price discovery through open and competitive bidding.

Anyone interested in learning more about these sale choices please contact: John Rappette/President Bay de Noc Beef Producers Association 906-399-5510.

### Western UP

### Beef Producers

Steve Acciaccia is assisting Equity Cooperative Livestock Sales Association to coordinate putting truckloads of cattle going to Waukon, Iowa. Interested producers can contact Steve: 906-201-2078.

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## Fall Horse Pasture Management

By Dr. Doo-Hong Min, Extension Forage Specialist, UP Research Center/MSUE

Fall is the season when most horse owners should think of how they can improve their horse pastures for the coming year. Horse pasture improvement and renovation requires some time and patience. However, small changes in your horse pasture management practices can make a significant improvement in your current pasture.

Considered the following in fall horse pasture management.

**1. Soil Testing:** A soil test is like an annual physical check-up and optimum soil nutrient levels will help horse pasture maintain its performance. Without testing soils, it would be difficult to determine a precise amount of lime and nutrients to add to the horse pasture. Too little generally prevents optimum plant growth; too much not only is a waste of money, but can also cause plant growth and environmental problems such as ground and surface water contamination and air pollution. Divide the pasture into areas that have uniform soil color and texture as well as similar cropping histories. Sample each area separately using a soil probe, drawing 15 random soil cores at 6 inches deep. Place samples in a clean plastic bucket, mix them thoroughly, and put either wet soil into zip-loc bag or dry soil using soil containers.

**2. Liming and Fertilizing:** Soil pH is one of the most important factors determining pasture health so it is very important to adjust soil pH for optimum plant growth. In general, optimum soil pH for plant growth is between 6.0 and 7.0. If the soil pH is greater than 6.0 on mineral soils (less than 20% organic matter) and greater than 5.4 on organic soils (more than 20% organic matter), no limestone will be needed on established grass pastures. Lime may take 6 to 12 months to alter the pH of the soil at depth. Lime materials that are less coarse will react more quickly with the soil and increase pH faster. It's good to have a 100 mesh or above lime materials to increase the soil pH in a short time period. In the fall, no nitrogen fertilizer is generally required because most plant growth slows down due to shorter day length and cooler temperatures. Applying phosphorus and potassium is important based on soil test results since these two elements are essential for good winter survival, in particular potassium. In general, if there are more than 50% of legume plants in the pasture, no nitrogen fertilizer is required because legume plants fix nitrogen via symbiotic nitrogen fixation process. Including legumes also reduces pest incidence and improves horse performance by increasing forage quality. Therefore, it is important to identify what percentage of legume is present in your pasture. If there are not enough legumes

in the pasture, planting legumes via inter-seeding or frost seeding into the existing pasture will improve it. Caution: Do not plant alsike clover since it can cause photosensitization, liver damage, and possibly death.

**3. Weed Control:** Timing of herbicide application depends on the life cycle of weeds. For example, annual weeds can be controlled in the spring, whereas, biennial or perennial weeds can be killed by herbicides in the fall and spring. If herbicides are sprayed on the perennial weeds in the fall, the herbicides will be transported to the root systems by killing the whole plant of weeds rather than damaging top plants.

For controlling perennial weeds, different kinds of herbicides can be used as shown in the parenthesis followed by weed's name: bracken fern (Ally), butter cup (Banvel), Canada thistle (Stinger), common dandelion (2,4-D), curly dock (Banvel), golden rod (Banvel), horsetail (Stinger), and hoary alyssum (Stinger). Spraying with 2,4-D would work for most biennial weeds such as bull thistle, common burdock, poison hemlock, and spotted knapweed.

Due to potentially harmful or toxic weeds to horses, it is important to control weeds on a regular basis. Please keep in mind that the best weed control is to have healthy, thick forage stands on your horse pasture via right forage species selection, good soil fertility and rotational grazing management.

**4. Dragging pastures with a chain link harrow:** To take advantage of horse manure as a plant nutrient source, the pasture should be dragged periodically with a harrow. Dragging reduces parasite populations by exposing them to air and sunlight. Do this when the weather is hot and dry to ensure that parasite larvae contained in the manure are killed by the sun, otherwise dragging on cool, wet days only spreads out the parasites. Dragging also helps to smooth over areas dug up by horses' hooves on wet soil.

**5. Rotational grazing:** Some horse owners keep their horses at the same paddock pretty much year round. This continuous grazing system can damage the plants by heavy hoof action in particular on wet clay soils. Like hibernating animals, forage plants also need to store their food reserves in the roots in the fall through winter. That's why it is very critical to avoid stress to forage plants by heavy continuous grazing in the northern mid-west region, especially in September. If forage plants do not store enough carbohydrates in the roots, they may not survive over weather when harsh, cold winter comes with little snow cover. Therefore, it is very important to rotate the horses using several paddocks to maintain healthy plants, good stand persistence, safe environment, and further happy horses in the pasture.

## ***FSA News***

**ATTENTION PRODUCERS!! 2011 Production Due**  
Your 2011 production is needed!! All field visits and crop appraisals need to be completed as soon as possible. Turn your production into the FSA office.

### **DIRECT & COUNTER-CYCLICAL PROGRAM (DCP) – NEW LEASE LANGUAGE REQUIREMENTS**

Effective immediately all leases provided for DCP contract payments must include:

1. Landowner & Operators names printed, signatures, & signature dates
2. Length of Lease – if multiple years, list the number of years (Leases containing wording allowing the continuation past the terms of the lease in effect must have a notification date – month & day – disclosing the final date of termination.
3. Type of lease – cash, share, barter & barter terms  
Please contact your FSA office with questions.

### **Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Insurance Deadlines**

Has a natural disaster like drought, excessive rain, or high winds caused crop losses or prevented planting? Did this impact your bottom line? Crops not insurable under Risk Management Agency CAT Crop Insurance are covered under NAP and can be purchased for \$250 per crop and a maximum of \$750 per county!

To qualify for administrative service fee waiver, a limited resource producer must have a total household income at or below the national poverty level for a family of 4, or less than 50% of the county median household in both the previous 2 years. Limited resource producer status can be determined using a web site available through the Limited Resource Farmer and Rancher Online Self Determination Tool through the National Resource and Conservation Service at [www.lrfstool.sc.egov.usda.gov/tols.asp](http://www.lrfstool.sc.egov.usda.gov/tols.asp). Please note that limited resource producers are required to recertify limited resource producer status annually.

### **THE NEXT DEADLINE for purchasing your 2012 policy is:** December 1, 2011 - Honey & Maple Sap

### **Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) – Extreme Heat**

The Upper Peninsula has experienced some unseasonably hot weather this summer. As a result of this hot weather, some producers may have experienced livestock losses. The Livestock Indemnity Program (LIP) extreme heat provisions may be able to help. It has been determined that the emergency or danger level of heat stress can occur in cattle when the Temperature Humidity Index (THI) is 84 or greater. The THI is a function of relative humidity and air temperature. A THI of 84 is roughly the

equivalent of a heat index of 100. Heat stress becomes critical when night temperatures stay about 70 degrees F. The THI index will be used to determine LIP eligibility for deaths due to extreme heat. Both of the following criteria must be met in order to qualify for LIP.

1. The THI for each of the **2 days prior to the death** must have exceeded a THI of 84 based on the maximum daily temperature and average relative humidity.
2. The THI during the 2 days prior to the death was not lower than 75 during the night prior to the livestock death based on daily low temperature and average relative humidity.

Your FSA office will assist you in making these determinations. If you believe you have experienced livestock losses due to extreme heat be sure to file a notice of loss the earlier of 30 days of when the loss occurred or by October 31, 2011. Your FSA office will help you fill out and FSA914 Livestock Indemnity Program Application. Please bring with you the following documentation:

1. Livestock information including type and weight range
2. Verifiable documentation of inventory before and after the loss. This documentation can include but is not limited to rendering truck receipts, veterinary records, written contracts, purchase records, loan documents, private insurance documents. Please note a third party certification may be used as proof of death but the third party must be an independent source who is not affiliated with the farming operation such as an employee and is not a family member.

### **2011 ACRE Production**

As part of the ACRE program compliance, producers are to submit acceptable production evidence. Examples of acceptable production evidence are:

1. Sales receipts – Evidence must show the following: buyer or storing facility, transaction or delivery date, & quantity.
2. Measurement service
3. Crop Insurance or FSA appraisal. This option is available for those commodities not stored in a measurable facility or that will be harvested as either silage or forage.

Please contact your FSA office for assistance in determining the best method for obtaining acceptable production evidence. Failure to provide the necessary production evidence will affect payment eligibility for crops planted in 2011, and the farm's benchmark yield for the 2012 program year.

# Nitrate Toxicity in Forage Crops and Its Interpretation

By: Dr. Doo-Hong Min, Extension Forage Specialist, U.P. Research Center/MSUE

This summer was exceptionally hot and dry in most areas of the UP region, particularly central and western UP. Dairy farmers who have corn crops are much more concerned about nitrate toxicity and possibly additional caution needs to be made for severely drought-stressed corn crop.

## 1. Nitrate Poisoning Processes in Cattle, Sheep and Goats

Nitrate (NO<sub>3</sub>) is one of the inorganic nitrogen forms that is used by forage crops and converted to ammonia and then bacterial protein by rumen bacteria. When forage crops have a very high concentration of nitrate, the animals can not complete the conversion from nitrate to bacterial protein and rather nitrite (NO<sub>2</sub>) accumulates. Nitrite is absorbed into the bloodstream directly through the rumen wall and converts hemoglobin in the blood to methemoglobin, which can not carry oxygen. An animal dying from nitrate (nitrite) poisoning generally dies from asphyxiation (lack of oxygen).

## 2. Nitrate Accumulation in Forage Crops

In normal conditions, plant stem and leaves convert nitrate to plant amino acids and protein. This conversion, however, can be disrupted by inadequate water, energy from sunlight, and temperature. Sometimes nitrate can be accumulated from excessive nitrogen fertilization in the form of either chemical fertilizer or manure.

## 3. Clinical Signs of Acute Nitrate Toxicity

Typical symptoms of acute nitrate toxicity are: 1) Rapid and difficult breathing, 2) Brownish to bluish color to normally pink tissue of the mouth, nose, or vulva, 3) Dark brown or chocolate-colored blood, 4) Excessive salivation, grinding teeth, and unsteady gait, 5) a sudden decrease in milk production, 6) Collapsing, coma and dying, and 7) Abortions due to lack of oxygen to the fetus.

## 4. Ways to Reduce the Nitrate Toxicity

Raise the cutting height of drought-stressed forage crops (i.e., 12 to 18 inches for drought stressed corn), b) Blend high nitrate forages with low nitrate feeds such as alfalfa and small grains, c) Provide supplements such as cotton seed, corn gluten, or soybean hulls before turning animals into drought-stressed pastures, and d) Ensilage rather than feed green-chop to reduce the nitrate content by 30 – 60 %. It's important to test before feeding than before ensiling drought-stressed corn or other forages. It's also

very important to take a representative sample by mixing samples thoroughly and removing about 0.5 lbs for testing. Keep the samples refrigerated and send them to the lab as quickly as possible (Do not send the samples to the testing lab later in the week because there is the possibility of not delivering samples on weekend).

## 5. Interpreting Nitrate Test Results

If nitrate content of feed is reported on an “as-is” basis, convert to 100 % dry matter basis. For example, silage at 50 % moisture that contains 600 ppm NO<sub>3</sub>-N on an “as-is” basis contains 1200 ppm on 100 % dry basis. Values may be reported as percent nitrate (NO<sub>3</sub>) or nitrate-nitrogen (NO<sub>3</sub>-N) and to convert nitrate-nitrogen to nitrate, multiply by 4.4 (i.e., 0.1 % nitrate-nitrogen is equal to 0.44% nitrate). To convert nitrate to nitrate-nitrogen, multiply by 0.23 (i.e., 0.4% nitrate is equal to 0.09% nitrate-nitrogen). Also 0.1% equals 1000 ppm (parts per million). Guidelines for nitrate testing results can be varied with animal species. In particular, producers should pay attention to feeding forages that are high in nitrogen nitrate to lactating, pregnant, or sick animals.

### Interpretation of Nitrate Results

| NO <sub>3</sub> -N (%) | ppm         | NO <sub>3</sub> (%) | ppm          | Recommendations                                    |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|--------------|--|
| < 0 – 0.10             | <0 – 1000   | <0 – 0.44           | <4400        | Safe   |
| 0.10 – 0.20            | 1000 – 2000 | 0.44 – 0.88         | 4400 – 8800  | Generally safe when fed balanced rations           |
| 0.20 – 0.40            | 2000 – 4000 | 0.88 – 1.50         | 8800 – 15000 | Limit amount to less than half of total dry ration |
| > 0.40                 | > 4000      | > 1.50              | > 15000      | Potentially toxic – do not feed                    |

Following are the labs for the analysis and please check if they test nitrate for corn and other crops before sending samples: MSU Soil and Plant Nutrient Lab (517-355-0218), AgSource (715-758-2178), Dairyland Laboratory (608-323-2123), and Marshfield Plant and Soil Analysis Laboratory (715-387-2523).

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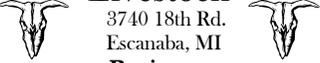
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***Meetings & Events Calendar***

**October**

- 7 Feeder Cattle Sale: N MI Lvstck, Gaylord
- 7 Feeder Cattle Sale: UPI, St Louis
- 8 Feeder Cattle Sale: Clare Co Lvstck, Clare
- 21 Feeder Cattle Sale: UPI, Cass City
- 21 Feeder Cattle Sale: N MI Lvstck, Gaylord

**November**

- 4 Feeder Cattle Sale: UPI, St Louis
- 5 Feeder Cattle Sale: Clare Co Lvstck, Clare
- 9 TelFarm Workshop: Escanaba from 1:00 to 4:00 p.m contact the TelFarm center at 517-355-4700 to register for the workshop or visit the TelFarm website for more information at <http://telfarm.canr.msu.edu/index.htm> and click on the “Workshops” tab on the home page
- 11 Feeder Cattle Sale: N MI Lvstck, Gaylord
- 20 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Insurance Deadline : Apples, Blueberries, Cranberries, Raspberries, & Strawberries

**December**

- 1 Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) Insurance Deadline : Honey & Maple Sap
- 2 Feeder Cattle Sale: UPI, St Louis
- 3 Feeder Cattle Sale: Clare Co Lvstck, Clare
- 9 Feeder Cattle Sale: N MI Lvstck, Gaylord

**SNOWBIRDS:** Please remember to give us your forwarding address or place your newsletter on hold while you are away. THANK YOU!

**U.P. Agriculture Connections**

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