



UP Ag Connections

725 Greenland Road, Ontonagon, MI 49953

Vol. 18 Issue 5 MSU Extension May 2013

Published Monthly

NEWS & VIEWS

By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

At the Growing U.P. Agriculture Association meeting in April, Dr. Min was awarded the Service to Ag Award. I wrote last month, of Min's contributions to the farmers of the U.P. in his forage and bio-fuel crops. Again, I want to thank Min and wish him the best of luck with his future endeavors at Kansas State. Congratulations for a much deserved award.

Last year after hosting a pasture walk, Jon Ahlberg wrote an excellent article discussing his operation and grazing practices that was very well received. In this edition, Dallas Brusso has written an article regarding his fall calving season. It too, is excellent and I would like to thank them both.

I've lived in the U.P. for the last 19 years, and this spring seems to be the longest since I've lived here. Just

last year, I was talking about the earliest spring since I had lived here. I suppose it all averages out but this year is particularly difficult given our current forage supply. I get calls frequently of farmers looking for hay to buy. The fact of the matter is, there is just hardly any hay available and it would appear the hay and pasture harvest are going to be delayed this spring.

While this spring could turn fast and yield a great forage crop, there are so many factors that should keep forage prices at an extremely high level. Carry-over stocks are nearly non-existent; acres in forage production across the US have been reduced as corn acres continue to increase. The forage market situation is setting up to have high prices and that doesn't account for any drought conditions that may loom this summer. Dairy farmers are already looking at winter wheat and pricing its value as a forage crop, as opposed to harvesting the grain. Securing adequate forage for next winter is going to an important management task this coming growing season.

This coming growing season is about to be upon us. Be ready and be safe.

~Frank

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MARKET REPORT (4/30/13)

By Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

Market Ready Prices

Choice Steers	\$110-\$128	per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$95-\$114	per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$58-\$65	per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$110-\$165	per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$70-\$83	per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$100-\$150	per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$50-\$95	per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows	\$1750-\$2400	per head
Grade Holstein bred heifers	\$1000-\$1600	per head

Feed Prices across the U.P. (4/23/13)

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$18.90	\$378.00	\$320-436
Soymeal	\$29.18	\$583.50	\$499-668
Oats	\$19.23	\$384.50	\$265-504
Barley	\$16.38	\$327.50	\$259-396

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: Small herd of bred Angus cows and heifers. Due in August and September
Bruce Crossing Contact: 906-827-3390

For Sale: 4 yearling Black Angus Heifers (not registered). Out of A.I. Sires. \$1,000 per head
Veesser Farms Contact: 906-466-2512

Wanted: Hay for sale. If you have any hay for sale, please call the MSU Extension office in Ontonagon.

Contact: 906-884-4386

Pullorum Testing

On behalf of Michigan State University, Dr. Richard "Mick" Fulton, will be teaching a certification class on Pullorum Testing on Saturday, May 18, 2013 at 9:00 a.m. Eastern at the Upper Peninsula State Fair Grounds. The class will be held in The Fine Arts/Horticulture Building #5.

Dr. Fulton is an Associate Professor in the Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health at Michigan State University.

The school will be approximately four hours long and there is NO FEE for this certification class.

All birds will be provided on site. Please do not bring your own birds.

Requirements for the class are that the participants must be 18 years of age and there must be at least 15 people registered to hold the class. Pre-registration is required. To register, contact Andrea Sorensen, Pullorum Certification Workshop Coordinator, at royalfeathers@earthlink.net Andrea may also be reached by calling her home at 906-864-2551 or cellphone at 715-923-0410.

Upon completion of Certification for Pullorum Testing, the Michigan Allied Poultry Industries (MAPI) requires a \$20.00 licensing fee to be certified for three years, payable the same day.

Participants under the age of 18 are allowed to attend but they will not receive Certification and they will not count towards the 15 participant minimum. Deadline to register is May 11, 2013.

Educational Program for U.P. Horse Owners

Michigan State University Extension will be hosting an educational program for horse owners. This session will be conducted at the MSU Extension and Research Center (formally referred to as the MSU U.P. Experiment Station) in Chatham on Saturday, June 8, from 9:30-12:30 EDT.

Topics to be covered:

Horse Pasture Management – Frank Wardynski, Ruminant Extension Educator

Horse Health Considerations – Dr. Judy Marteniuk, Equine Extension Veterinarian

Feeding Alternative Forages – Karen Waite, Equine Extension Specialist

Manure Happens....Now What? – Tom Guthrie, Equine and Pork Extension Educator

Cost of the program will be \$10, participants can register online at: <http://events.anr.msu.edu/horseownerseducationalprogram/>

You can also register by sending check or money:

Made payable to MSU

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MSU Extension

725 Greenland Rd

Ontonagon, MI 49953

If you have any questions, please contact Frank Wardynski at 906-884-4386 or msue66@msu.edu

4-H Youth Market Livestock Clinic

MSU Extension will host a 4-H Youth Market Livestock Clinic on Sat., May 11th from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m. cst at the Iron County Fairgrounds in Iron River, MI. It is open to any youth ages 5-19 and adults interested in learning more about the market livestock program. Workshops sessions will focus on caring for your market animal & record keeping, fitting & showing your animal, and marketing your animal for the sale. Educational youth development resources will also be on hand to help leaders and volunteers in this project area. Pre-registration and a \$5 non-refundable fee per participant are required by May 3rd. Contact the Iron County MSU Extension office at 906/875-0606 or kranstr@anr.msu.edu to register.

Planting too soon when soils are damp can be costly

Producers may be tempted to jump the gun and get into fields while soil moisture conditions are still too damp. This could lead to soil compaction, a restrictive rooting zone, and yields could be reduced far more than from delayed planting.

By Dan Rossman, Michigan State University Extension

The extreme wet and cold weather has delayed the start of the 2013 field work. Producers know that yield potential is reduced when corn planting is extended beyond the first week in May and soybeans will start losing yield when planted after mid-May. Also, corn will have higher moisture levels and drying costs in the fall with later planting. With a large number of acres to get planted in a short time frame, it is easy to see why everyone is anxious about getting started.

The concern is that if soil is worked before it is ready and the crop is “mudded in,” the soil structure can be damaged. Every soil is different and some are more resilient than others. When the soil structure is damaged, soil compaction can result. The damage can affect plant growth season long. According to the [University of Minnesota Extension](#) bulletin “

needs to be communicated to others. With larger farms, hired employees are operating tillage equipment and will need to understand what to look for and be patient as well. Sometimes it only takes a day or two to make a big difference.

In addition, build soil organic matter to help maintain and even improve soil resiliency and productivity. Common methods to build organic matter are to return crop residues, add manure and utilize cover crops. This is discussed in detail in a [Michigan State University Extension](#) article, “[Manage cropping systems to reduce compaction and re-](#)

Copper Country Farm Bureau Workshop Series

Hosted by the CCFB Young Farmer Committee
To be held In the SISU Room of the Houghton County Arena
1500 Birch Street, Hancock, MI
\$5.00 per person for non Farm Bureau members for each workshop

Small Livestock and Poultry swap and sale Saturday May 4th 8 a.m. – 12 noon

To be held next to Erickson Feed, Seed and Pet Supply in Hurontown (Houghton). The public is invited and welcome; No admission fee for buyers or sellers.

Swap participants are reminded that they are responsible for complying with all state and local rules and regulations regarding transportation and sale of animals.

Pullorum testing will be available on-site for poultry over 6 months of age. All sheep and goats must be scrapie tagged.

For any questions contact Melanie Lampinen @ 281-4759 or Arthur Lampinen @ 281-2574

In early February, Michigan 4-H announced the selection of the following scholarship recipients. One winner from the Upper Peninsula of the **MSU 4-H Scholarship**, which provides a \$2,500 annual scholarship renewable for 4 years of undergraduate, full-time enrollment at MSU is:

**Michaela Marks of
Menominee County 4-H**

Cow Herd from Chatham Sold

By: Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension Educator

The Michigan State University U.P. Research and Extension Center in Chatham sold the herd of black Angus-Simmental cross cows earlier this spring by sealed bid. They were sold in 12 total lots, grossing \$215,962.27 and averaged \$1349.14 per head of 160 head. Final destination of the lots: one lot to Ohio; three lots went to Indian River, MI and the remaining eight lots were sold to U.P. producers.

In April, 80 Red Angus cows were brought to the station in Chatham from the station in Lake City.

Fall Calving: How It Started & Why We Like It

By: Dallas Brusso
Phone: 906-884-4212

In 1994, we had a group of heifers in the area, where we kept our bulls. Believing in the common wisdom that you couldn't breed cows before 60 days after calving, we left the bulls with the cows. At the time, our calving season started about January 1st. The first 12 cows that calved, cycled at 29 to 30 days and were bred. We made room for the bulls and sorted them. None of the cows cycled again. We decided to let these cows calve in the fall. In late October, we had 12 calves. The calves were born unassisted and were smaller than we expected. We heard all the reasons why you couldn't calve in the fall in Michigan, but found them not to be true. The fall calves stayed with the cows during the winter. They were eating a little hay and nursed often. We decided fall calving would work and started turning out the bulls on November 15th to keep the early calves from being bred to early. We were able to move 70 cows to fall calving over a three year period. We had ten cows that did not move forward in their calving dates and were kept open to be bred later in the year with the other fall calving cows.

We now calve all cows in the fall. About 95% of the cows calve in the first 30 days of the calving season. We calve the cows on regrown hay fields from about August 25, through mid-October, checking twice a day with extra trips as needed if a cow is showing signs of labor. Most calves are born and have nursed when we make our morning trip. Cows are calving in good weather, on dry ground, have room to move off by themselves and the fly season is over. We no longer have to treat for Grubbs. In 18 years, we have assisted four head and have had no problems with two year old heifers either calving or caring for their calves. Calves winter with the cows with no additional grain. They are weaned in May, vaccinated, wormed and turned to separate pastures. The yearling cattle are shipped to Waukon, Iowa about the middle of October and will average over 900 pounds in the ring.

If it weren't for the decreased work load with fall calving and at our age, we would have quit a few years ago. We would be happy to talk about our program over a cup of coffee with anyone interested.

Continued...

Fall calves could be fed about three pounds of grain during the winter and spring months and sold as calves weighing 550 to 600 pounds in a strong market, ready for grass. These fall calves would work well on a grass fed program. They could go through the second winter on hay and finish on grass at about 24 months of age with desirable carcass that would be accepted by the consumer.

Agriculture For Tomorrow Follow Up

By: Jim Isleib, MSU Extension , Educator

Thanks for another successful Agriculture for Tomorrow Conference

The 7th annual Agriculture for Tomorrow Conference was held at Bay College in Escanaba on March 6. The conference consisted of four 1-hour class time slots with a choice of 5 sessions per time slot, a luncheon with keynote speaker, Jamie Clover Adams, Director, MI Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, and commercial and educational displays. Attendance of 147 was down a little from last year, but close to the 6-year average of 157. On-line registration was offered for the first time, with 61 takers. The program stayed within budget. The conference attracted a diverse group of participants, including full-time and part-time farmers, ag businesses and organizations. Participant feedback indicated a high level of satisfaction with most sessions and the overall conference experience. 44 people who have attended the conference in past years responded to questions about how the conference has impacted their agricultural businesses. Of these 44 people:

50% developed new business strategies to supply products to local restaurants, retail or institutions.

55% connected with new stakeholders in the food supply chain.

36% created a new business and 15% created new jobs
41% added a new enterprise to an existing agricultural business

53% expanded an existing agricultural enterprise
63% had increased economic activity and 46% made new investments in their agricultural businesses
68% increased income and 55% decreased production costs on their farms

75% implemented new "best management practices"

A follow-up survey in fall, 2013 will provide additional information on conference impact.

The planning committee wishes to thank all sponsors, exhibitors, speakers and attendees who helped make the conference successful again this year. If you would like a report with more details about the conference, contact Jim Isleib, MSU Extension at 906-387-2530 or isleibj@anr.msu.edu.

May 2013 - FSA News

CRP Sign-Up 45 Starts Soon

USDA will conduct a four-week general sign-up for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP), beginning May 20 and ending on June 14. CRP protects the nation's natural resources through voluntary participation, while providing significant economic and environmental benefits to rural communities across the United States.

Currently, about 27 million acres are enrolled in CRP. Producers that are accepted in the program can receive cost-share assistance to plant long-term, resource-conserving covers and receive an annual rental payment for the length of the contract which is 10-15 years.

Contracts on 3.3 million acres of CRP are set to expire on Sept. 30, 2013. Producers with expiring contracts or producers with environmentally sensitive land are encouraged to evaluate their options under CRP.

For more information on CRP and other FSA programs, visit a local FSA service center or www.fsa.usda.gov.

CHANGE IN FARMING OPERATION

If you have bought or sold land, or if you have picked up or dropped rented land from your operation, make sure you report the changes to the office as soon as possible. You need to provide a copy of your deed or recorded land contract for purchased property. Failure to maintain accurate records with FSA on all land you have an interest in can lead to possible program ineligibility and penalties. Making the record changes now will save you time in the spring. Update signature authorization when changes in the operation occur. Producers are reminded to contact the office of a change in operations on a farm so that records can be kept current and accurate. **REMEMBER: If you carry NAP, all changes in farming operations must be made before filing a Notice of Loss.**

NAP - Notice of Loss – Has Weather Effected Your Crops?

Policy holders are reminded that they must submit a "Notice of Loss" (FSA-576) within 15 days of when the loss becomes apparent. If you have noticed that your crop might be light due to frosts, cold weather, or excessive moisture contact the office so that we have the opportunity to take a look at your crop. For those of you that have filed a notice of loss, you need to keep us informed of your harvest decisions. If you are not going to harvest all or part of a block, an appraisal will need to be completed on that block. This appraisal will be used in calculating your loss claim.

Prevented Plant

If you are unable to plant crops this spring due to a natural disaster, you should report these prevented planted acres to the Farm Service Agency county office staff within 15 days of the crop's established final planting date to maintain eligibility for some FSA programs. RMA crop dates are as follows:

Crop	Earliest Plant Dates	Final Plant Dates	Acreage Reporting Dead-line	End of Insurance – Claims
Oats	April 5, 2013	May 20, 2013	July 15, 2013	October 31, 2013
Barley	April 16, 2013	May 31, 2013	July 15, 2013	October 31, 2013
Corn	April 25, 2013	June 5, 2013	July 15, 2013	December 10, 2013
Soybeans	May 9, 2013	June 15, 2013	July 15, 2013	December 10, 2013

Failed Acreage

Reports of failed acreage must be filed before disposition of the crop, and producers must be able to establish to the satisfaction of the county committee that the crop failed and was prevented from being replanted through the normal planting period because of natural disaster conditions.

Lease Requirements for DCP and ACRE Contracts

Leases must contain:

- The type of lease (cash, share, etc.)
- Landowners name, signature, and date
- Farm operator name, signature, and date
- Length of lease (list number of years)

Farm Safety

Flowing grain in a storage bin or gravity-flow wagon can be fatal. It takes less than five seconds for a person caught in flowing grain to be trapped.

The mechanical aspects of grain handling equipment, also presents a real danger. Augers, power take offs, and other moving parts can grab people or clothing.

These hazards, along with pinch points and missing shields, are dangerous enough for adults; not to mention children. It is always advisable to keep children a safe distance from operating farm equipment. Always use extra caution when backing or maneuvering farm machinery. Ensure everyone is visibly clear and accounted for before machinery is engaged.

FSA wants all farmers to have a productive crop year, and that begins with putting safety first.

FSA News continued on next page.....

FSA NEWS continued

Dates to Remember

CRP sign-up begins May 20, 2013
ACRE sign-up ends June 3, 2013
SURE sign-up ends June 7, 2013
CRP sign-up ends June 14, 2013
DCP sign-up ends August 2, 2013

GREAT INTEREST RATES: Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL)

Remember: these loans are now available for Hay/ Forage Storage as well as traditional grain storage!

April Interest Rates:

- 1.375 percent for 7 years with a loan of \$100,000 or less
- 2.000 percent for 10 years with a loan of \$100,000 - \$250,000
- 2.250 percent for 12 years with a loan of \$250,000 - \$500,000

Contact your local FSA county office for May's interest rates.

Target tillage to protect the soil

Timing and intensity of spring tillage can have long-term impacts on soil health.

By: James DeDecker, Michigan State University Extension

Every year about this time (late April), a deep agrarian urge to turn the soil takes hold of many. Tillage has epitomized a farmer's relationship with the land for nearly 10 millennia and, until recently, spring tillage was considered an essential tool for weeding, amendment incorporation and seedbed preparation prior to planting. However, soil scientists and growers are becoming increasingly aware of the long-term negative impacts mechanical disturbance can have on soil health.

Tilling destroys soil's natural structure, breaking-up colloids and collapsing macro pores. The short-term result is a warmer, aerated and competition-free environment suited to seed germination. Yet, the fine particles and small pores characteristic of tilled soil are ultimately unstable, leaving fields vulnerable to erosion and compaction over time.

Tillage can also alter soil ecosystems. Research has shown that decomposition rates often increase behind the plow, hastening the breakdown of soil organic matter and subsequent release of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere. Organic matter loss paired with the drying effect of tillage dramatically limits soil water holding capacity and moisture available for plant growth.

All of these concerns have spurred the development of reduced tillage cropping systems in recent decades. Herbicides, tolerant crop varieties and innovative equipment now make it possible to control weeds and plant a field without upsetting the ground. [Michigan State University Extension](#) research on [tillage effects on soybean yields in Michigan](#) has demonstrated that no-till cropping systems can also yield as well as conventional systems.

(continued) This spring, no-till may be an [especially attractive option](#) for Michigan growers thanks to a winter of multiple freeze-thaw cycles that loosened soils across the Midwest.

Yet, there are cropping systems and situations where few alternatives to tillage are available. For example, when tillage is minimized, crop stover often builds-up on the soil surface. A certain amount of surface residue protects against erosion and excessive soil drying, but too much can keep soils wet and cool, complicating early-season field work. Shallow tillage is often the only practical way to manage this excess of surface residue.

The production of certain crops, like potatoes, requires significant soil disturbance. Innovative systems have been developed to reduce tillage in potato production, but conventional seedbed preparation, hilling and harvest operations used by the majority of growers move a lot of soil.

Tillage is also necessary in organic cropping systems. Without viable chemical control options, organic growers rely on tillage to kill and incorporate weeds or cover crops. In these and other circumstances where spring tillage cannot be avoided, it is important to consider how the timing and intensity of operations can be managed to minimize any negative impact. The points below offer some practical guidance to sorting this out.

Timing

- Before tilling, check soil moisture to a few inches below the anticipated tillage depth to make sure the field is sufficiently dry.
- It is hard to be patient, but tilling too early increases the likelihood of soil compaction, non-uniform soil moisture, crusting and clodding.
- When tilling for seedbed preparation, a single pass just prior to planting will maximize moisture uniformity and minimize water loss from the seed zone compared to multiple passes.
- Each additional spring tillage pass increases the potential for soil erosion, compaction and excessive drying while also adding to production costs.

Intensity

- If primary tillage was completed in the fall, consider no-till options for weed control and planting this spring.
- When tillage is necessary, choose the least aggressive implement and run it as shallow as possible to meet your objectives.

References

[Agronomist: Winter weather loosened soil; no-till a viable option](#), Purdue Agriculture News

[Spring Tillage Preparation](#), Iowa State University Extension Integrated Crop Management News

[Just say no to spring tillage, NRCS advises](#), Carbon County Utah Sun Advocate.

[Timing of Tillage Crucial to Crops](#), Soil Science Society of America

This article was published by [Michigan State University Extension](#). For more information, visit <http://www.msue.msu.edu>. To contact an expert in your area, visit <http://expert.msue.msu.edu>, or call 888-MSUE4MI

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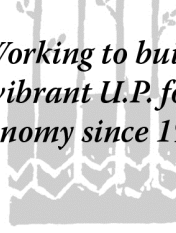
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Meetings & Events Calendar

May

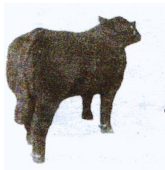
- 4 Small Livestock and Poultry Swap and Sale, 8 am to Noon, See page 3 for details
5 Annual Club Lamb Sale, 10 a.m. EST, 2 miles North of Bark River, MI
Contact Bob St. John 906-466-2535 or rastjohn@gmail.com

- 5 FFA Alumni Consignment Auction, Wallace, MI Contact: 906-753-4192
9 Clare County Livestock Auction, Clare, MI 1 p.m., Contact 810-441-6191
11 4-H Youth Market Livestock Clinic, 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. CST at Iron County Fairgrounds,
Contact Iron County MSU Extension at 906-875-0606 **See page 3 for details**
18 Pullorum Testing Certification class, 9 a.m. EST, UP State Fair Grounds,
Contact: Andrea by email royalfeathers@earthlink.net
or phone 906-864-2551

JUNE

- 8 Educational Program for UP Horse Owners, 9:30 am to 12:30 pm, at MSU
Extension Research Center, Chatham, MI, Contact Frank 906-884-4386

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