



U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

August 2020

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

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News and Views

By Frank Wardynski, MSUE

The times are crazy. Some commodity prices are getting better, some are just plain sick. After Covid broke, we were dumping milk and prices seemed to be on the verge of collapse. I did not believe milk prices could recover until we got kids back into school, but now milk prices are getting pretty good. Beef prices dropped but never fell apart from decreased slaughter capacity and are gaining strength as slaughter becomes current and feeder cattle prices have gained a lot of strength. Fear of drought was helping corn prices until timely rains hit the Midwest and now feed prices look like they could be cheap. Pretty good news for finishers, not so much for grain farmers.

The challenging market prices brings me to my next topic. Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) is designed to help farmers suffering from low market prices. CFAP is a direct payment program and signup deadline is August 28, 2020. If you have not signed up yet, contact your local USDA Farm Service Agency service center or go online to download the forms yourself. The forms can be filled out at home and mailed to FSA. If you have not used FSA before, I recommend contacting them directly and get their input to be certain all the appropriate forms are filed.

I know times are challenging and it can be difficult to be positive and abide by all the rules, such as wearing a mask. Try to be positive. Try to understand that we are all in it together. Maybe wearing a mask does not help minimize the spread, BUT maybe it does, and it probably will not increase the spread. Calling our elected officials names is not helping. Fighting every form of authority is not helping. Ignoring social distancing is not helping.

And so, my next point is, I understand the UP State Fair needed to be cancelled or postponed, but I am so thankful for those willing to carry out the Lori Branstrom Memorial Livestock Expo. I have heard lots of gripes about almost everything involved with it. If you can not go with the attitude you are going help make the event a success, please do not go. I personally have three youth I am involved with that were upset when they learned of the fair cancelation. They were so happy to learn that the memorial expo was going to take place. They have worked so hard with their projects. I am certain all the youth across the UP have also. So, let us make a pact. Let's go with intentions of making the show successful, making the show a positive experience for the exhibitors, making life for superintendents and their staff as easy as possible, follow social distancing rules, and finally let us come together to help make this livestock expo a true memorial to Lori that she and all of us can be proud of.

I then want to close with this. These are stressful times and some of us may deal with the stress better than others. If you are stressed out, needing a listening ear, I and so many others, are just a call away. If it's not me, you know somebody with a sympathetic ear. Make the call and use them. And if you are not stressed out, keep your eyes open. You may know somebody that needs that listening ear. Sometimes their problems may be more than you can deal with and they may need to seek professional help. Pay attention, keep an eye and ear out for those needing help.

Corn Tar Spot in Michigan – Keep an eye open in U.P. corn fields

Martin Chilvers, Michigan State University, Department of Plant, Soil and Microbial Sciences, and Kristin Poley, Michigan Corn Marketing Program - July 1, 2020

Tar spot is caused by the fungus *Phyllachora maydis* and can be identified by the raised, black spots that appear on corn leaves and husks. Surrounding some of the black spots may also be a tan halo, which is called a fish-eye lesion.



Each one of those black tar spots is the reproductive structure of the tar spot fungus, which can produce thousands of spores. Research has demonstrated that the tar spot fungus can overwinter in those black spots, releasing spores the next year.

Don't confuse insect frass with tar spot. Frass will rub off the leaf with some water while tar spot structures will be embedded in the leaf and often protrude through the underside of the leaf.

Recent tar spot pressure in Michigan – 2018 and 2019

Tar spot pressure in 2018 was significant with losses of up to 50 bushels per acre. Frequent rainfall in 2018 and increasing disease inoculum load in the region led to those dramatic losses.

The 2019 season saw a much drier July and August, which put the brakes on tar spot and resulted in much lower losses. Although tar spot pressure was relatively light across Michigan in 2019, the disease did continue to spread and is now present across most of our corn acres.

Outlook for tar spot in 2020

What weather patterns could lead to greater tar spot pressure?

Cool, humid conditions with prolonged leaf wetness can lead to higher tar spot pressure in fields. Windy and rainy conditions may also spread spores to new fields, or new areas within a field. Irrigators should be careful that they do not promote tar spot with light frequent irrigation which may increase leaf wetness events.

At what point in the season should scouting start?

Tar spot has been found in early July in some years. As we approach silking, it's a good time to scout for tar spot and other diseases such as northern leaf blight and gray leaf spot.

What control measures are available?

There are no hybrids currently available that are completely resistant to tar spot, but some varieties may have more resistance than others.

Testing of several fungicides is underway across the state and the Midwest for managing tar spot. One of the biggest factors for successful tar spot suppression is application timing. To date, early applications at the V8 growth stage are too early and provide little benefit. Research this season is going to focus on optimizing fungicide timing. It appears that scouting is critical to get fungicide applications at the beginning of an epidemic.

How can farmers get confirmation of tar sport in their fields?

Feel free to reach out to get assistance in identifying tar spot. Pictures can be emailed to chilvers@msu.edu or via Twitter @MartinChilvers1. Physical samples can be submitted to Michigan State University Plant & Pest Diagnostics.

How can farmers get more information?

Additional articles and resources can be found on the MSU Extension Field Crops News website and the Crop Protection Network website.

You can also access these additional resources:

Facebook Checkoff Check-in video interview on tar spot from Michigan Corn
Corn Disease Management: Tar Spot from the Crop Protection Network
Fungicide efficacy table for control of corn diseases from the Crop Protection Network
YouTube video demonstrating tar spot symptoms from Michigan State University

Potato leafhoppers are doing more harm than alfalfa growers may realize

[Philip Kaatz, Michigan State University Extension](#) - July 23, 2020

Hot, dry weather has led to high numbers of leafhoppers in 2020.

Tropical Storm Cristobal roared into Michigan from the U.S. Gulf states in June 2020 and many remember the massive flooding and water damage near Midland, Michigan. However, the storm brought more than just huge amounts of rainfall. The storms also brought potato leafhoppers along with the rain. The period since the storm passed through has had hot, dry weather. This is the ideal type of weather pattern that favors high potato leafhoppers feeding and damage in both alfalfa and dry beans.



Potato leafhopper hopperburn

There are numerous reports of alfalfa fields with significant levels of hopperburn. Unfortunately, once hopperburn is visible, the damage is done. It is already too late to prevent the damage. The picture above displays severe damage to alfalfa. With slight yellowing of the plants, yield reduction has already taken place.

Potato leafhoppers feed by sucking sap out of plants, injecting saliva as they feed. Unlike most other leafhoppers, potato leafhopper's saliva is toxic and results in abnormal cell growth and blockage of fluid transport in the leaf. The visual symptom in many plants is a characteristic yellowing called hopperburn (see photo). Both nymphs (immatures) and adults cause this damage. Because of the damage, reduction of yield, forage quality, plant vigor and winter-hardiness will occur.

New seedlings and fields with regrowth less than 3 inches are particularly susceptible to damage from the pest. The recommendation from [Michigan State University Extension](#) is to utilize an [integrated pest management](#) approach to dealing with this insect.

[MSU entomologist Christina DiFonzo](#) says, "Potato leafhopper is the most important insect pest of alfalfa and dry beans in Michigan." In alfalfa, sample using a sweep net and treat based on a combination of potato leafhopper number per sweep and average plant height. Regrowth (plants under 3 inches) is particularly vulnerable to potato leafhopper damage. As the crop grows, it can handle a greater number of leafhoppers.

The threshold values are:

- Under 3-inch alfalfa (regrowth): 0.2 adults per sweep = 20 per 100 sweeps
- 3-to-8-inch alfalfa: 0.5 adults per sweep = 50 per 100 sweeps
- 8-to-12-inch alfalfa: one adult and/or nymphs per sweep = 100 per 100 sweeps
- 12-to-14-inch alfalfa: two adults and/or nymphs per sweep = 200 per 100 sweeps

When using a sweep net, split the number of sweeps into smaller groups of 10 until you reach 100. It is easier to count the elusive adults that fly quickly.

The preferred method for controlling potato leafhoppers is cutting. If a spray is used, it is better to spray smaller plant regrowth rather than taller growth. Only use approved insecticides labeled for potato leafhoppers and follow all label requirements. A major concern with spraying insecticides for control is that beneficial insects will also be killed along with the potato leafhoppers.

Although no issues have been reported with potato leafhopper resistance to insecticides, the number of insects showing pesticide resistance is growing across the United States. Pesticide resistance is described as the decreased susceptibility of a pest population to a pesticide that was previously effective at controlling the pest. Research shows that resistance problems have increased because pesticides are applied more frequently and at higher dosage rates.

Continue to monitor your alfalfa fields closely as conditions change going into August. With wetter weather, or with heavier morning dews, potato leafhoppers can diminish quickly due to the entomopathogenic fungi that can cause the population to collapse. When these conditions exist, and populations of potato leafhoppers drop, there is no need to spray.

For more information, contact Phil Kaatz at 810-667-0341 or kaatz@msu.edu.

THE SEED TO KITCHEN COLLABORATIVE

Michigan boasts a thriving conventional vegetable industry consisting of large wholesale growers who are well supported by trade organizations, as well as MSU research and extension programs. However, smaller vegetable growers in Michigan have historically received less support from trade organizations and MSU for their research and education priorities. For example, many small vegetable growers in Michigan are using organic practices and direct marketing to add value to their products. A 2017 survey of direct market vegetable growers in our neighboring state of Wisconsin identified flavor, disease resistance, yield and early maturity as the most important vegetable traits, in that order. Yet, traditional vegetable variety testing programs do not focus specifically on cultivar performance in organic production systems, nor on sensory characteristics, like flavor and texture, that drive marketability in a direct market vegetable business.

In 2020, UPREC received funding from [Organic Valley - Farmers Advocating for Organic](#) to address the limitations of traditional vegetable research and outreach by implementing the [Seed to Kitchen Collaborative \(SKC\)](#) project in Michigan. SKC, started by Dr. Julie Dawson at UW Madison, brings together vegetable breeders, seed companies, researchers, organic vegetable growers and professional chefs to evaluate the productivity and quality of elite vegetable varieties in organic research station and on-farm trials. This year the North Farm at UPREC is growing forty-three different varieties of six vegetables (cucumber, tomato, sweet pepper, onion, carrot and lettuce) in replicated variety trials. Two UP farmers are also growing subsets of these veggies and collecting observations on their farm to capture the practitioner’s point of view.

If vegetable variety trials at UPREC and cooperating UP farms aren’t exciting enough, something that makes SKC especially unique is taste-testing. Customers buying local produce at a farmers market, the local food co-op, or for use in a restaurant expect that the vegetables they buy will not only be plentiful and beautiful, but also tasty. That is why SKC collects sensory (tasting) data post-harvest in addition to yield and quality data in the field. In 2020, UPREC worked with [Taste the Local Difference](#) to recruit eight local chefs to participate in SKC sensory evaluation. Their expert palates will provide valuable feedback on the flavor, texture and desirability of our many vegetable varieties.

Due to COVID-19, collecting sensory data will look a little different from the group tasting event we originally planned. The process starts at the North Farm with harvesting, washing and packing the produce for tasters. The North Farm is certified organic and GAP certified annually to ensure the highest standards for food safety are consistently maintained. At the time of packing, individual vegetables are sanitized and labeled with an alpha-numeric variety code, so as to not bias tasters who may be familiar with certain varieties/variety names. Tasting boxes are then delivered to local chefs on Fridays with masking and distancing protocols observed. When chefs receive a box, they scan a QR code inside to access the tasting survey, taste the produce, and enter their responses online. The sensory data is then summarized and reported alongside yield and quality info generated on the farm.

SKC is a game changer for vegetable research at UPREC and across the state of Michigan. This project represents some of the first grant funded vegetable research conducted at the UPREC North Farm since its founding in 2014. It is also some of the first vegetable variety performance testing at MSU to focus specifically on the needs of small, organic and direct-market vegetable growers. Finally, [SKC data](#) is reported in a unique qualitative way that make the information usable for any farmer, gardener, chef or consumer. Varieties are ultimately assigned a rating (poor, acceptable, good, best) on four aggregate parameters of flavor, production, disease and earliness. By summarizing data in this manner, it can be quickly and easily applied by the end user. Many thanks to our partners and funders who have made this project possible! Keep an eye out for SKC reports from the North Farm at UPREC later this fall.



Chef Kris Stunkard and staff at Delft Bistro in Marquette, MI taste Seed to Kitchen cucumbers

JOB OFFER

I would like to offer a unique opportunity for an artistic, entrepreneurial self starter willing to locate in the Upper Peninsula of MI.

SKILLS

An understanding of agriculture & the physicality of it.

Small engine repair & maintenance.

Mechanical or artistic aptitude.

Willingness to live a little crudely for the 1st year or so.

OFFER

Shelter, heat, electric, wells & some food provided free.

A stipend of \$500/month for 32 hrs. labor maintaining grounds. \$15.per hr.+

I will pay for equipment, upgrades & licenses as needed.

Heated workshop for metal & wood. Sauna, root cellar, outbuildings.

Farm equipment, metal smithing tools, woodworking tools, stained glass tools.

I can teach skills in edible/poisonous plants, skills in metal, wood & stained glass. I can also teach sustainable debt free lifestyle going into the future.

BIZ OPPORTUNITIES

Nursery start-up with a ready crop of perennials. An established biz from a patent. A production line of numerous proven art objects & designs. Green burial on a portion of the property is a possibility as is beekeeping & chickens. I am open to suggestions as well. Think earthship for housing.

ABOUT ME & YOU

I am very progressive, artistic & concerned about sustainability. I have no heirs. I am easy going but project driven and goal oriented. I have made a good living with the lifestyle I've put together but getting rich should not be your goal in life. A contract will be negotiated as time goes by and the applicant shows a willingness & ability to work towards any or all of these goals.

The property is 3 acres at this time with more property available in the future.

I am not a micro manager & expect the applicant to be very motivated on their own.

THE AREA

Property is located 32 miles west of Marquette in a park-like setting with 2 fields, woods & plenty of water. 57 miles from Chatham, 68 miles east of MTU in Houghton. 491 County Rd. A.O. & A.A.J. or Cemetery & Main in Champion township.

Thank You,

Barb Bolle

shotglance@gmail.com Ph. 906-339-2141

Classifieds

FOR SALE: Mixed hay, large round bales, 800#, \$20/bale. Call Al (906)647-6697.

FOR SALE: 3 Registered Dexter bulls, 6 years, 18 months and 8 months of age. All red, PHA and Chondro free and test 9/10 for tenderness. Tolfree Farms (908) 884-2351 or email countryj@jamadots.com.

FOR SALE: Reg. Shetland Sheep closed flock. Producers of winning fleeces at Wisconsin Sheep and Wool Show. Excellent spinning fleeces. 10 ewes, 6 wethers, and 1 polled ram. Would like to sell all together. Owner selling due to medical reasons. Rick (906) 789-9718.

FOR SALE: Pregnant Black Angus Cows, most due in the month of May, but possibly into the month of June. Contact Jon (906)265-9333 or email jahlberg@fast-air.net

FOR SALE: Hay, large square bales 3x3x7.75 Timothy grass, 4,000 to sell. Former dairy farm doing all big square bales hay. Call Dave Bell in the EUP 906-440-6455 or email Bellsdairy@yahoo.com. Also a realtor in the UP so contact me for real estate here. Dave@smith-company.com

Beautiful property in the Upper Michigan, 130 acres In Perkins for sale or pasture for rent for livestock for the 2020 season. Beautiful river running through it. Great for hunting, building or developing, or simple grazing livestock. Land is divided into 9 paddocks with high tensile electric fence and 5 stock watering ponds. Call (906) 359-4825.

FARM FOR SALE: Upper Peninsula Farm with over 1,100 acres, water access, maple syrup production, and much more! **Shady Lane Farms**
<http://shadylnfarms.wixsite.com/shadylnfarms>
Henry DeGroot (906) 238-4251
hjdegroot@alphacomm.net

FOR SALE: John Deere B. Clean, less than 50 hrs on rebuild. **Allis-Chalmers C.** New paint, runs good. **Hay Hauler.** Hauls up to 10—4x6 round bales, use spear on back, don't have to unhook. Call Terry (906)644-2777.

During this period of reduced contact with U.P. farmers, Jim Isleib has started an on-line, video project to keep people informed about current activities at the MSU Upper Peninsula Research and Extension Center at Chatham, MI. He's calling it "What's U.P. @ UPREC?". The videos are short, 4-5 minutes, and feature interesting activities going on at the Center. Please check it out at [MSU Extension Upper Peninsula facebook page](#) or Google **youtube what's up at UPREC.**

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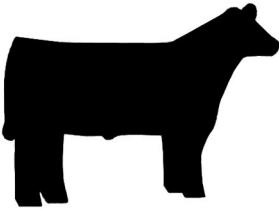
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Market Report

Choice Steers	\$95-\$105 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$75-\$90 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$38-\$40 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$120-\$160 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$60-\$70 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$50-\$110 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$200—\$330 per 100 lbs.

Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows	\$1300-\$1600/head
Grade Holstein bred heifers	\$1300-\$1650/head

Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$11.28	\$225.50	\$160-342
Soymeal	\$19.75	\$395.00	\$372-450
Oats	\$13.38	\$267.50	\$230-340
Barley	\$11.68	\$233.50	\$180-310
Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots			