



# U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

August 2023

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

Volume 27 Issue 8

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## Passing of Dr. Bob Robinson, State Veterinarian, MDARD

By Frank Wardynski, MSUE

I am sorry to announce the passing of Dr. Robert (Bob) Robinson. Dr. Robinson passed of unexpected, natural causes on July 24, 2023, at the age of 73. He received his Doctorate of Veterinarian Medicine from Michigan State University. Dr. Robinson spent much of his professional career in private practice in his own vet clinic in Wisconsin and the last part working for MDARD covering Northern Michigan and the Upper Peninsula. I always appreciated working with Bob. He brought a very practical approach to following animal health regulations and helping people make things work. Below is a note from Dr. Goodrich with MDARD.

From Dr. Goodrich at MDARD:

"It is with much sadness that I have to report that Dr. Bob Robinson, MDARD-AID's field veterinarian in the U.P., passed away unexpectedly. You may have already heard this but wanted you to know. If you would be so kind as to relay this information to the fairs assigned to him, I would greatly appreciate it. Obviously, there may be no inspections of these fairs this year. However, should they have an issue that they need help with, either have them contact our office at 800-292-3939 (daytime) or 517-373-0440 (nights, weekends, holidays), or they can contact me directly at 517-243-2935. I can always get them to the correct person, be it a field veterinarian or program manager, if I cannot answer their question or they actually need someone to come to their fair."

Here is the list of fairs assigned to Dr. Robinson: Menominee County Fair, Luce, West Mackinac, Schoolcraft County Fair, Ontonagon County Fair, Alger County Fair, Baraga County Fair, Marquette County Fair, Gogebic County Fair, Iron County Fair, Upper Peninsula State Fair, Emmet Charlevoix County Fair, Houghton County Fair, Chippewa County Fair, Dickinson County Fair, Stalwart Agricultural Fair.

## New Paradigms

I think of a paradigm as a way of thinking with particular rules of the way things work. These paradigms have tendencies to put us in the right vs wrong way of doing things and lead into the "you can't do that" way of thinking. I attended a soil health academy a couple weeks ago and found myself frustrated at times when my paradigms were being shattered. Things like monocultures are bad, meaning corn for corn silage with no weeds is bad, straight alfalfa is bad, hay fields should have many species of forages including forbs. For an Illinois farm boy growing up with corn, soybeans, and cattle, those statements are frustrating. I found myself saying "can't." I hate that word. That word stops too many of us from achieving.

And then they show the results. Beautiful stand of corn with diverse cover crops growing between corn rows and forage stands of 20+ species for hay production and grazing. Then they showed pictures of the Chihuahuan Desert. A desolate land with sand, rock, and woody brush that supports one cow with 2-300 acres. With regenerative practices in three years they were able to re-establish green foliage covering most of the ground and in six years they were able to cover 100% of the ground with foliage improving livestock stocking rates by 100 fold. It is a bit humiliating to be one of those people saying "can't" when they show they already did it.

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## MSU Extension online meat cutter training course available

By Andrea Garmyn and Jeannine Schwehofer, Michigan State University Extension

The demand for skilled talent in the meat industry is strong at the state and national level. [Michigan State University Extension](#) is offering a workforce development opportunity formatted as an online meat cutter training course. Whether you are a current or aspiring meat cutter or just looking to gain additional meat science knowledge, this self-paced course, which is open to the public, offers detailed demonstrational beef and pork cutting videos, supplemented with helpful information for any meat enthusiast.

Offered on-demand, the online meat cutter training course includes multiple demonstrational videos on pork and beef carcass breakdown (Figure 1) into wholesale, subprimal, and retail cuts.



Figure 1. Screenshot of 1 of 13 beef fabrication videos demonstrating separating the beef rib from the beef chuck.

### Beef Forequarter Breakdown

- Skirt steaks
- Brisket
- Bone-In Chuck
- Boneless Chuck
- Short Ribs
- Rib

### Beef Hindquarter Breakdown

- Bone-In Loin
- Boneless Loin
- Sirloin
- Round
- Flank

### Wholesale Pork Carcass Breakdown

- Ham
- Boneless and Bone-In Loin
- Belly
- Spareribs
- Boston butt
- Picnic shoulder



The program contains additional videos beyond beef and pork fabrication, such as grinder and bandsaw operation, as well as beef carcass ribbing. Beef carcasses are ribbed between the 12th and 13th ribs (Figure 2). Any easy way to identify this location is by counting down  $7\frac{1}{2}$  lumbar vertebra from the tailbone. First saw through the backbone; then, finish the cut through the ribeye muscle with a knife by the following the curvature of the rib bones. This process is routinely performed to expose the ribeye muscle for beef quality and yield grading or simply to start the fabrication process by dividing the side into hindquarter and forequarter.

This interactive certificate training program also includes material and exercises covering meat inspection, food safety, beef grading, fabrication, meat grinding, aging meat, retail display, and labeling. In addition to serving as a training asset for meat cutters, this course will also benefit employees with cut identification, packaging, and labeling to aid in sales, marketing, and customer service. Upon successful completion, each individual will receive a Certificate of Completion. Registration details can be found on the [Meat Cutter Training Course](#) website. Course content is estimated to take 6 to 8 hours to complete, and the course is designed for participants to work at their own pace as time permits. [Registration](#) is \$125 and includes continued access to course materials.

Figure 2. Ribbing a beef carcass between the 12th and 13th ribs to expose the ribeye muscle for quality or yield grading and separate the carcass into the hindquarter and forequarter. Photo by Andrea Garmyn, MSU.



**MPIC and MSU**  
**U.P. Potato**  
**Field Day**

Close

**Tuesday, August 22nd**  
**4:00p.m.—7:00 p.m.**

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MICHIGAN POTATO INDUSTRY COMMISSION

- 4:00 pm **Welcome**  
James DeDecker, MSU U.P.R.E.C.
- 4:15 pm **Michigan Potato Industry Update**  
Kelly Turner, Executive Director,  
Michigan Potato Industry Commission
- 4:30 pm **Seed Industry Update**  
Damen Kurzer, Executive Director,  
Michigan Seed Potato Association
- 4:45 pm **Variety Trial Update**  
Chris Long, Potato Specialist, MSU
- 5:15 pm **Local Research Update**  
James DeDecker, MSU U.P.R.E.C.
- 5:30 pm **MSU Potato Research Updates**  
MSU Specialists TBD
- 6:00 pm **Dinner**  
Sponsored by: 
- 7:00 pm **Adjourn**

To register, or for more information,  
contact MSU UPREC at (906) 439-5114

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## Michigan State University hosts 2023 Beginner Grazing School

By Michelle Sweeten, MSUE

The Beginner Grazing School on Aug. 22-23 will answer questions on improving pastures, stock health and provide networking opportunities.

According to the National Agriculture Statistics Service, Michigan farmland contains over 523,905 acres of pastureland. Often these acres are marginal ground that is minimally managed. The [Michigan State University Extension](#) Beginner Grazing School is designed to provide participants with the latest livestock and forage research on grazing management. The Beginner Grazing School is for individuals new to farming as well as established farmers looking to improve their grazing skills. New farmers learn what is needed to start a grazing operation while networking with those who are more experienced.

Bring your grazing experiences and questions to the 2023 Beginner Grazing School on Tuesday, Aug. 22, and Wednesday, Aug. 23, at the [Michigan State University Lake City Research Center](#). Extension educators and specialists are excited to return to this 100% in-person event.

Topics will include:

- Introduction to school and overview of grazing terms
- Graziers are grass farmers!
- Soil health and fertility
- Nutrition, health and welfare of grazing animals
- Pasture establishment and renovations
- Fencing and water systems for grazing management
- Pasture allocation, stock density, costs
- Designing a grazing plan

Plan for times to be in the field to ask questions and see grazing tools and practices in person.

After attending in 2022, Tiffari Jenkins said, “The training was great. There was just enough field portion to demonstrate activities as well as a class size conducive for learning different methods to be utilized in our grazing techniques moving forward.”

Join us to learn and improve your grazing operation. To be notified when registration is open, [subscribe to the Great Lakes Grazing Newsletter](#).

Successful grazers are flexible and adaptable to change. For more information and to register, contact Michelle Sweeten at [sweeten1@msu.edu](mailto:sweeten1@msu.edu), Kable Thurlow at [thurlowk@msu.edu](mailto:thurlowk@msu.edu) or Frank Wardynski at [wardynsk@msu.edu](mailto:wardynsk@msu.edu). We are here to help you reach your goals and want you to be outcome-driven!



2022 Beginner Grazing School participants lay out paddocks for Lake City cattle. Photo by Brandi Mitchell.

## Beef Industry Commission Restores State Checkoff

*Move will boost MBIC budget; officials note funding needed to 'battle for beef.'*

The Michigan Beef Industry Commission voted Thursday to restore a state checkoff program on the sale of cattle in Michigan.

The move is expected to generate as much as \$500,000 annually for the Commission, which works to inform consumers about the dietary benefits of beef consumption, build consumer trust and promote the safe, responsible practices used to raise and process beef.

Checkoff programs are a tool commonly used by agricultural commodities to support their respective industry programs. Michigan had a state checkoff program, which assessed producers one-tenth of a percent on the sale of all cattle, but shelved its program when a federal dollar-per-head checkoff program was created in 1985.

The MBIC has operated for nearly 40 years on one half of the federal dollar-per-head checkoff revenue. Industry leaders noted the buying power of a dollar has decreased significantly over time. In recent years, producer organizations have recommended MBIC re-start its state-authorized percentage-based checkoff with a \$1-per-head cap. The commission's vote today means Michigan will join 18 other states with a state checkoff in addition to the federal program.

"This change is long overdue," said MBIC Chairman Monte Bordner. "This is about growing consumer trust, improving beef's visibility, and enhancing our educational programs. A state checkoff program will modernize our efforts and raise our voice in support of Michigan cattle producers more effectively. This decision was a decade in the making but has been among my top priorities as chair of this commission."

Michigan beef leaders say the state program will also help ensure that money raised by Michigan cattle producers goes to directly support Michigan's beef industry and create in-state opportunities.

"Michigan beef producers are facing intense pressure today," said MBIC Executive Director George Quackenbush. "Consumers in Michigan and around the nation are more disconnected than ever from how their food is raised, have been fed a distorted image of how beef is raised by groups intent on removing beef from the diet. As the face and voice of the beef industry, we need a modernized resource model to inform this conversation more effectively and to keep beef at the center of the plate."

Michigan's checkoff program is set to begin Jan.1, 2024. Quackenbush said the coming months will be spent working with producers and others in the sector to ensure a smooth implementation.

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### Join Michigan State University Extension staff and local farmers to learn about grazing and pasture management. Three individual farms across the Upper Peninsula have agreed to host our 2023 Pasture Walks.

John Ahlberg will host the first U.P. pasture walk at his farm near Iron River. We will be meeting at 6 p.m. Central time on Wednesday, August 30, 2023. John and his wife have been longtime advocates of rotational grazing with their herd of Angus beef cattle. More recently they have been using Red Angus bulls and transitioning to raising grass-fed beef. Discussions will focus on soil health and the positive impact the cattle can have on the pastures. <https://events.anr.msu.edu/AhlbergPastureWalk/>

The second host is Dalgord Beef Farm near Fayette, Michigan. Dan and Jeani Dalgord are raising beef on a fourth-generation family farm located in Fayette Michigan. They are a cow/calf operation, raising freezer beef and showing cattle with their grandchildren. They focus on grazing as many days as possible, utilizing grazing wheels, poly wire, stockpiling, and windrow grazing in winter. They will be hosting their pasture walk from 6-8 p.m. on Thursday, August 31, 2023. Please register here: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/DalgordPastureWalk/>

Our third pasture walk will be hosted on Wednesday, September 20, 2023, from 6 pm to 8 pm at Harter Family Farm. Harter Family Farm custom grazes 40 young dairy heifers and steers on 65 acres. When the cattle arrive, they experience their first out-of-barn experience and need to be trained to electric fences, outdoor life, new humans, and grazing. The early weeks are challenging especially during thunderstorms! Their goal is to be as sustainable/holistic as possible as they mature the cattle over the summer months to reduce feed costs for the dairy. Please register for this event here: <https://events.anr.msu.edu/HarterPastureWalk/>

Pasture walks are designed to be informal meetings allowing for short presentations, question/answer times, and networking opportunities for both experienced and inexperienced grazers of all types of livestock. Please come ready to be outside with proper attire and walk to see the pastures and cattle.

Please contact Michelle Sweeten, [sweeten1@msu.edu](mailto:sweeten1@msu.edu), Frank Wardynski, [wardynsk@msu.edu](mailto:wardynsk@msu.edu), or Kable Thurlow, [thurlowk@msu.edu](mailto:thurlowk@msu.edu) for more events on these events.

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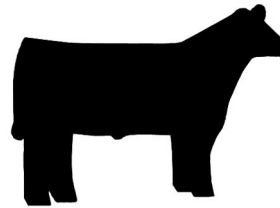
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### WANTED:

Seeking an experienced farmer to help with cattle operation and grain crops on an 800+ acre farm in Garden, Michigan on the Upper Peninsula. Now accepting applications. Farmer is responsible for daily care, health and over all well-being of cattle and will have experience in hay or grain production. Applicants should have the ability to lift up to 50lbs and to operate various farm equipment and provide basic repair and maintenance. Compensation is competitive based on experience. Housing is available for this position. Please forward a summary of your current skills and relevant work history to [deltagardenfarm@gmail.com](mailto:deltagardenfarm@gmail.com) or contact us at 773-929-6007. Please also include a contact number so we can call you to discuss the opportunity further.

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### **FAIR DATES:**

- Marquette County Fair—Marquette, August 10-12
- UP State Fair—Escanaba, August 14-20
- Houghton County Fair—Hancock, August 24-27
- Cedar Polka Festival—Hancock, August 24-26
- Chippewa County Fair—Kinross, August 29-September 4
- Dickinson County Fair—Norway, August 31-September 4

### **Market Report**

Choice Steers	\$160-\$165 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$150-\$155 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$67-\$71 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$140-\$220 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$90-\$100 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$150-\$225 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$200-\$300 per 100 lbs.

#### Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows top	\$1650/head
Grade Holstein bred heifers top	\$1850/head

#### Feed Prices across the U.P.

	Avg. \$/cwt	Avg. \$/ton	Price Range
Corn	\$17.03	\$340.65	\$265-528
Soymeal	\$29.72	\$594.40	\$540-650
Oats	\$17.56	\$351.25	\$319-416
Barley	\$13.96	\$276.25	\$212-386

Average price/100 wt. for 1 ton lots