



# U.P. Ag Connections Newsletter

November 2024

Agricultural News from MSU Extension and AgBioResearch

Volume 28 Issue 11

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### News and views

By Frank Wardynski

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- Beef nutrition for beginning farmers

One of my colleagues from Lower Peninsula and I are planning to develop a program to work with cooperating farmers willing to implement management practices that we hope will improve soil health as measured by water infiltration, forage root growth, soil aggregation, and increased biological activity. We are applying for a grant that will help pay for some soil health analysis testing to demonstrate changes from the beginning to the end of the summer.

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- Cultivation success building your farms future with MSU Extension

I started using some of these management practices on my own farm and I am seeing minor differences in the soil already. One of the key practices is to allow longer recovery and rest periods. As compared to a shorter rest period, the root growth is deeper with improved soil aggregation and the soil is less compacted and easier to dig with a spade. In October I hosted a field day to show the differences between the two soils. We had been quite dry. We conducted a water infiltration test. The long recovery and rest period pasture soil accepted an inch of water in about 22 seconds and another inch in four and a half minutes. The other soil did not absorb an inch of water in over 30 minutes

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- New to Crop Insurance?

In a time when weather patterns seem to have us all talking about drought, maybe one of the keys to long term farm success is to develop management strategies to make our soil more drought resilient. If we can get deeper root growth with improved soil aggregation, maybe we can improve the rate at which our soils absorb water and hold onto that water.

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- Michigan's earned sick time act will affect farm business with employees

So, in this project I am looking for cooperating farmers willing to utilize some of these practices on a portion of their farm while still managing parts of their farm like they always have, to compare the differences. Some of the management practices I am looking for include long recovery and rest periods (like at least 90 days before grazing a second time), bale grazing during the winter, super high stock densities for short durations, and other practices we can discuss later.

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I am really hoping the cooperative farmers will commit to two years of cooperation. The cooperating farmers need to be willing to designate a portion of the farm to regenerative management practices, host pasture walks and allow me to share soil health data collected with other farmers at forage/pasture meetings and maybe host a high school agri-science field trip.

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- Pasture Walk in the western UP

Yes, part of the project will include agri-science students. I believe we are up to four programs across the UP. I am really excited about that and hope to be able to work with those programs and support them in any manner I can. Hopefully this is one of those supporting methods.

This is one of those projects I think can demonstrate differences in management techniques. I am not guaranteeing it's all perfect. Example, leaving pastures untouched for 90 days after grazing is a long time. I usually am back on with about 30-45 days, depending on the time of year. It is like losing an entire grazing pass. I had to start buying most all my hay to implement this on my farm. That is a significant cost. But if we can produce more forage per acre with fewer times grazing over time, especially in drought, I think it is worth investigating.

If you are interested in cooperating with this project, please give me a call 906-884-4386, or email at wardynsk@msu.edu

## Beef nutrition for beginning farmers

Beef cattle can maintain body weight by digesting fibrous feeds and grow rapidly on high grain rations. Due to this versatility, beef cattle are fed a broad variety of rations to match animal performance goals with feed resources.



(Photo by Jerad Jaborek Michigan State University Extension)

Ruminant animals are unique because of their digestive system, which allows them to digest forages. Beef cattle are ruminant animals with a [four-compartment stomach](#) made up of rumen, reticulum, omasum and abomasum. The rumen and reticulum are where fermentation occurs. They are full of anaerobic bacteria that utilize nitrogen compounds and carbohydrates to grow and multiply in numbers. The microbial population is made of bacteria, protozoa, yeasts and fungi.

Most of the nitrogen consumed by microbes is taken from amino acids. Amino acids are the building blocks that make up protein. They also can utilize non-protein nitrogen (NPN) which can be supplemented in the diet in a limited amount to boost the crude protein of a ration. Non-protein nitrogen as the term indicates, is nitrogen that is not part of true protein, but rather nitrogen compounds such as ammonia or urea.

Ruminants have a uniquely beneficial ability to digest various forms of carbohydrates. Monogastrics, or non-ruminants have a simple stomach digestive system meaning they have one stomach. Examples include humans, pigs and chickens. Monogastrics can digest and absorb sugars and starches but can not digest structural carbohydrates such as lignin, cellulose, and hemi-cellulose. Lignin, cellulose and hemi-cellulose make up the cell wall of plants and give them their structure.

As the ruminant microbes consume nitrogen and carbohydrates to grow in numbers, they produce volatile fatty acids (VFA) as a byproduct. The VFA are absorbed mostly through the rumen wall and to a smaller extent the lower digestive tract. The VFA are utilized as an energy source by the ruminant animal. The bacteria themselves also pass through the digestive system and serve as energy and protein for the animal.

The design of the ruminant animal allows it to survive on low-quality forages. Because of the bacteria in the rumen, they can digest low-quality fiber carbohydrates and low protein feeds. The ruminant digestive system is designed to allow animals to roam through prairies eating grasses, legumes, forbs and woody materials. These feedstuffs are sufficient to support their basic body functions including reproduction and lactation. However, as we have selected animals for higher performance of growth and milk production, low-quality forages do not contain enough nutrition to support high levels of production. While ruminants were designed to digest fibrous diets, they can be fed rations containing higher concentrations of high energy and protein feedstuffs such as grains and seed oil meals.

[Michigan State University Extension](#) specialists and educators understand the great diversity of feeding regimens that can be managed by cattle producers depending on their feed resources and the types of cattle they are feeding. Cattle can be fed fibrous feeds with lower energy and protein content to maintain body weight while lactating and raising calves or concentrate feeds with higher nutrient digestibility for rapid growth. For more information regarding beef cattle nutrition, contact [Frank Wardynski, MSU Extension educator](#) at 906-884-4386 or [wardynsk@msu.edu](mailto:wardynsk@msu.edu).

## Cultivating Success: Building Your Farm's Future with MSU Extension

Succession planning for a family farm requires time, patience and the right advisors to guide each person throughout the transition plan. Join MSU Extension educators for a four-part series covering major topics for a positive farm transition.



Michigan State University Extension presents the “[Cultivating Success: Building Your Farm's Future](#)” workshop, designed to help farm families plan for the future through effective farm succession strategies. With over 59% of Michigan’s farm owners aged 55 or older, this workshop provides essential guidance to support the next generation of agricultural leaders.

The [program](#) will take place from January to February 2025 at Montcalm Community College in Sidney, Mich. This four-part series will provide practical insights and expert-led discussions with agricultural attorneys and farm business management advisors, equipping participants with the knowledge needed to manage ownership transitions and maintain family harmony.

### **Workshop topics**

- Preparing for succession planning discussions
- Asset transfer and estate planning strategies
- Business structures and operational transitions

Working with attorneys for effective succession planning

### **Why succession planning matters**

Succession planning ensures the longevity of farm operations while addressing the financial security of the senior generation, minimizing taxes and fostering unity among family members. This workshop offers tailored solutions to meet individual farm needs and address the challenges of ownership transfer.

### **Key workshop benefits**

- Expert guidance: Access to agricultural attorneys for presentations and Q&A.
- Family-oriented solutions: Strategies for supporting both senior and successor generations.
- Interactive learning: Hands-on exercises and scenario-based discussions.

Cost: \$250 per family, including personalized planning resources.

### **Join us and secure your farm’s future**

This workshop series is your chance to prepare for a sustainable transition that benefits both current and future generations.

Plan now to attend “[Cultivating Success: Building Your Farm's Future](#)” at Montcalm Community College where you will gain the tools and resources needed to ensure your farm’s success for generations to come.

New to crop insurance? See the 'Beginner's Guide to Crop Insurance' by USDA

The "Beginners Guide to Crop Insurance," recently released by the USDA Risk Management Agency, is available in Spanish and English.



Photo by Pixabay

Are you wondering if crop insurance might be valuable for you and your farming business but are unsure of the options? The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Risk Management Agency (RMA), which oversees crop insurance programming, has released a useful document, "[Beginners Guide to Crop Insurance](#)," available in both English and Spanish.

This guide provides basic information about crop insurance, a handy glossary of terms, contact information for RMA regional offices and links to other resources. Some of the resources include how to purchase crop insurance, a brief explanation of the approach to insurance costs, and important policy dates to remember.

For beginning farmers, purchasing insurance can be overwhelming and challenging to navigate. Each type of insurance has its own set of unique features or considerations. RMA's new guide is a great first step to gaining better understanding of how to begin mitigating on-farm risks.

The guide can also be combined with information available on crop insurance at [Michigan State University Extension's Farm Business Revenue Insurance](#) webpage. There you can find articles, videos and publications that dive deeper into the considerations of various insurance policies. These include comprehensive Michigan State University Extension bulletins on crop insurance options for [field crop growers](#), [vegetable growers](#) and [fruit growers](#).

## Michigan's Earned Sick Time Act will affect all farm businesses with employees

Michigan's new sick leave law provisions apply to all employers, regardless of industry or number of employees.



Dairy employees milking cows in a parlor. Photo by Mark Stebnicki for Pexels.

Michigan's [Earned Sick Time Act](#), a revised sick leave law, goes into effect for all Michigan employers on February 21, 2025. A Michigan Supreme Court judgment earlier this year modified the current law to include broader provisions that impact all employers, regardless of size.

Beginning on February 21, 2025, employees accrue one hour of sick time for every 30 hours worked. This applies to all employees, whether they are salaried or paid hourly and full-time or part-time. Employees can use up to 72 accrued hours of sick leave per year, although the specific provisions depend on the number of employees. Businesses with 10 or more employees must allow employees to take up to 72 hours of paid sick leave each year. Businesses with less than 10 employees must allow employees to take at least 40 hours of paid sick time but also an additional 32 hours of unpaid sick time. An employer is considered to have 10 employees if it employs 10 or more employees in 20 or more workweeks in the current or previous calendar year. Workweeks do not have to be consecutive.

Employees must be allowed to use sick time as soon as it is accrued. After an employee's initial 90 days of employment, the use of accrued sick time cannot be restricted. Accrued sick leave must carry over from year to year, but employers are only required to allow at least 72 hours to be taken in a given year. Sick time is accrued at the same increment as time is recorded, at least hourly. Accrued leave does not need to be paid out upon the end of employment. Current programs that allow paid time off can be utilized to meet these requirements as long as they allow the use of approved sick leave uses (see below) for the required hours.

The law provides a wide range of approved uses of sick leave. Time may be taken for the employee's physical or mental illness, as well as treatment and preventative medical care. Likewise, time can be taken for a family member's physical or mental illness, treatment, and preventative care. In addition, the employee may use time to attend to medical care or educational meetings regarding a child's health or disability. Additional provisions exist for closure of the employee's business due to an order by a public official, as well as issues around domestic violence. The employer cannot require that the employee find a replacement worker as a condition of using earned sick time. More information can be found in the [FAQ](#) from the Michigan Wage and Hour Division.

An employer can require up to seven days of advance notice for a foreseeable need for sick time. However, the only requirement for unforeseeable needs can be that the employee provide notice as soon as practicable. An employer can require documentation for uses of more than three days, but leave may not be withheld due to not receiving documentation. Employers must pay for the cost of any documentation that they require from the employee.

Employers must post written notice of employee rights at hiring on or after February 21, 2025. The State of Michigan offers posters in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#). Find more information about posters at the [Earned Sick Time Act information page](#) of the [Michigan Wage and Hour Division](#), and the text of the law at MCL 408.963 (amended) et seq. For further questions about the law, please contact [Corey Clark](#) or another member of the [Farm Business Management Team](#) at [Michigan State University Extension](#). Owners may need to contact their trusted legal counsel for details on how it might apply to their specific situation.

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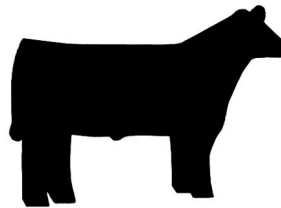
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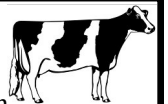
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Robert Filhart, Owner (989)330-6005

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### Classifieds

**For Sale:** Red Angus Bull , 1 1/2 year old, Great bloodline,  
good disposition, 1832#. Call Don Nault 906-786-3951 Or Cell  
906-398-9865

**Wanted: Pasture** for 25-35 cow calf pairs for the summer of  
2024 in the Eastern UP. Will consider a custom grazing  
arrangement as well. Call Ben (989) 370-3570.

**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  
(906) 466-2672.

**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.

### Market Report

Choice Steers	\$165-\$192 per 100 lbs.
Holstein Steers	\$160-\$185 per 100 lbs.
Hogs	\$58-\$66 per 100 lbs.
Lambs	\$120-\$210 per 100 lbs.
Cull cows	\$110-\$125 per 100 lbs.
Calves	\$250-\$550 per 100 lbs.
Goats	\$250-\$350 per 100 lbs.

#### Breeding and Feeder Animals

Grade Holstein cows top \$3300/head

Grade Holstein bred heifers top \$3400/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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## Pasture Walk in the Western UP – In December???

**Date:** Saturday, December 7, 2024

**Time:** 10:00 am EST

**Location:** N11298 Matchwood Tower Rd, Ewen, MI 49925

Michigan State University Extension in conjunction with Duane Kolpak, Manager of Pine Rock Ranch, is hosting a pasture walk. Duane is going to talk about improved grazing practices that have allowed him to stock pile forage and graze longer into the Fall and Winter.

Call Frank Wardynski at 906-884-4386 to RSVP along with any questions.