

# **Richland County AG News & Notes**

**Agricultural Newsletter of the Richland County Extension Office**

**Fall 2007**

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Requests or reasonable accommodation for disabilities or limitations should be made prior to the date of the program or activity of which it is intended.

## **Calendar of Events:**

### **October**

- 2-6 World Dairy Expo – Madison, Wisconsin
- 18 Local Fare Meeting – 7 p.m., Pippin Center, Melvill Hall, UW-Richland Campus

### **November**

- 1 Beef 101 – 7 p.m., Room 408, Melvill Hall, UW-Richland Campus
- 1-3 2007 13th Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium; Guelph, Ontario, Canada
- 5 Pest Management Update Meeting – Sparta
- 9 Pest Management Update Meeting – Arlington
- 13-14 Management Assessment Center for Dairy Farmers - Chetek
- 14 Pest Management Update Meeting – Platteville
- 15 Heart of the Farm Program - Lancaster
- 15 Beef 101 – 7 p.m., Room 408, Melvill Hall, UW-Richland Campus
- 29 Beef 101 – 7 p.m., Room 408, Melvill Hall, UW-Richland Campus

### **December**

- 13 Beef 101 – 7 p.m., Room 408, Melvill Hall, UW-Richland Campus

## **It's Sire Summary Time Again . . . Zero In on the Information You Really Need**

**Dr. Kent Weigel**  
**Extension Genetics Specialist**  
**University of Wisconsin**

It happens around the middle of February, and then again in May, August, and November. Maybe you'll see some bull lists in your favorite dairy magazine, or maybe your semen salesmen show up with an armload of new promotional materials. Either way you'll know – it's sire summary time again!

Data for important traits like milk production, type, and somatic cell score are collected throughout the year on millions of dairy cows, but analyzing this mountain of information is a big job, so scientists only do it four times a year. Performance records are adjusted for factors such as age of cow and stage of lactation, and then each cow is compared with other cows that were in the same herd during the same time period. The result of this exercise is a set of predicted transmitting abilities (PTA) for each animal – these are estimates of the genetic superiority (or inferiority) that a particular animal will pass to its offspring. Genetic information is produced for both sires and cows, but because few farms have the luxury of using this information to select among a big group of excess replacement heifers, this article will focus on using genetic information for dairy sires. Each sire is evaluated for milk, fat, protein, fat percent, protein percent, productive life, somatic cell score, calving ease, male fertility (ERCR), final type score, seventeen linear type traits, and four composites. This means that you

can get information for 31 traits on about 800 active AI bulls (roughly 600 Holstein) at any given time. Nobody has time to study all of this data, so what's a sensible farmer to do?

A common, but incorrect, approach is to pick several important traits and apply an independent culling level for each one. For example, you might decide that you'll only use bulls that are at least +1200 milk, +0.05 protein percent, +1.25 udder composite, and +1.00 feet and legs composite. This seems like a reasonable approach, but setting these levels is very difficult, and the tendency for most people is to include too many traits. How could we leave out somatic cell score, or fat percent, or productive life, or stature? As you keep adding traits, there will be fewer and fewer bulls that meet your criteria. And, more importantly, you'll probably select a bunch of bulls that are pretty mediocre for every trait. In other words, you'll end up with a "jack of all trades", but a master of none.

A better approach is to combine information from all of these traits into an economic index. Individual traits are weighted according to their economic importance, and genetic relationships between traits are taken into consideration. Fortunately, USDA Animal Improvement Programs Laboratory and the major breed associations will take care of this task for you. The primary index is Lifetime Net Merit – this index measures the expected lifetime net profit of daughters of each dairy sire, relative to the breed average. Each of the breed associations produces an index of its own, but for the most part these are quite similar to Net Merit, so I'll limit my discussion to the Net Merit, Cheese Merit, and Fluid Merit values provided by USDA.

**Net Merit** = 36% Protein + 21% Fat + 15% Productive Life – 9% Somatic Cell Score + 7% Udder + 5% Milk + 4% Feet and Legs – 4% Body Size

**Cheese Merit** = 42% Protein + 18% Fat + 12% Productive Life – 8% Somatic Cell Score + 6% Udder – 6% Milk – 4% Body Size + 3% Feet and Legs

**Fluid Merit** = 43% Milk + 16% Fat – 12% Protein + 11% Productive Life – 7% SCS + 5% Udder + 3% Feet and Legs – 3% Body Size

For the vast majority of dairy producers, Net Merit will be the index of choice. It considers production, health, and functional type, and the weights given to milk, fat, and protein are based on national average milk prices. About two-thirds of the emphasis is on production, and the remaining one-third is on functional traits. Note that somatic cell score gets a negative weight, because we want lower scores. There is also a slight negative weight on body size – this reflects differences in maintenance feed requirements for large versus small cows. Two alternatives are offered for producers with unique milk payment situations. For farmers who are paid exclusively for components, with no premiums for milk volume, Cheese Merit would be an appropriate choice. It places more emphasis on protein yield, and excess milk volume is penalized. On the other hand, Fluid Merit may be a useful choice for farmers who are paid solely for milk volume. This index places much more emphasis on milk yield, and protein actually gets a negative weight (if you don't get paid for it, why produce it?).

What about semen price? Obviously this is a consideration, but cheap bulls are usually cheap for a good reason. In fact, if you have a good reproductive

management program, you will find that the highest Net Merit bulls tend to be the best bargains. This will certainly be the case for virgin heifer matings, because conception rates are quite high. You should always use your most expensive semen where it is most likely to result in a heifer calf; it will take twice as many units of semen to get a live calf from a high-producing mature cow than from a virgin heifer. Lastly, remember that there are a lot of good bulls available, and chasing the “hot” bull with limited semen availability and a premium price isn't necessarily a good use of your semen dollar.

What about reliability? Reliability measures the accuracy of the genetic information for a given sire and, hence, the variability in results that you should expect when using that bull in your herd. Bulls that have been adequately progeny tested across many herds will typically have reliability values of 80% or higher. Although bulls shouldn't be selected or excluded based only on reliability, it can be a guide as to how many units of semen should be purchased for each bull.

Hey! What about young sires? The genetic merit of young sires has been well documented. The average young sire from a major AI organization will rank slightly higher than an average proven AI sire, but the price will be lower, and well-managed herds will usually be eligible for incentive payments from the AI stud. On the other hand, the average young sire will not be nearly as good as an elite proven AI sire. Mating 25-30% of your herd to AI young sires is a reasonable strategy, but herds that pick from the top end of the Net Merit list will make much faster genetic progress than herds that rely too heavily on young sires or inexpensive proven sires.

Once you've selected a top group of bulls, the job's almost done. You'll probably get good results even if you randomly mate these bulls to the cows in your herd. However, you can get some extra profit by using a corrective mating program. These programs were designed to correct faults in the physical appearance of the cow, and there's nothing wrong with that. But the best part is that most mating programs will also help manage inbreeding. Most farmers have neither the time nor the desire to scan the pedigrees of every bull and cow to search for common ancestors. A computer can do this much more quickly and more effectively. Mating programs are inexpensive, and most AI studs and breed associations will be happy to provide this service.

In summary, remember these key points and you'll have little trouble using sire summary information successfully:

1. Identify your selection goal. For most producers, this will be Net Merit. But producers who are paid exclusively for

components may wish to consider Cheese Merit, and those who are paid solely for milk volume might want to consider Fluid Merit.

2. Identify a group of five to ten bulls that rank as high as possible for the index you've chosen. Check to make sure that you have a few calving ease bulls to use on your virgin heifers, and try to avoid expensive, limited supply bulls if other good bulls are available. Plan to use the most expensive semen on your virgin heifers, because you'll increase your odds of getting a calf.

3. Consider enrolling your herd in a corrective mating program. Most AI studs and breed associations will evaluate your cows and subsequently mate them to the group of bulls that you've chosen. You might improve functional type traits in your herd, and you'll definitely do a better job of managing inbreeding.

4. Have fun, and look forward to doing this again in three months.

## Richland County Farm Facts

**Beef Cows in Richland County:  
Total Number 5,275**

Cow/Calf Farms by Size:

1-9	Cows	119 farms
10-19	Cows	75 farms
20-49	Cows	77 farms
50-99	Cows	18 farms
100-199	Cows	3 farms

Source: 2002 Census of Agriculture

## Production in the Past

### *Milkfat Testing in the late 1800's*

Milk throughout the years has always been a big part of our heritage here in Wisconsin. Milk, as we all know, is the foundation for great Wisconsin cheese and butter. The foundation in the milk, of course, is the solids fat and protein.

So what started the concept of testing milk for solids? Well, it started in the late 1800's when cheese and butter factories came into their own. Testing for fat became an important means for determining the quality of the milk and the price that producers received.

One of the earliest methods was the cream gauge. This was a simple method to determine the quality of milk. The principal was that a small portion of milk was placed into a glass gauge, set under the right conditions. The cream would then separate out and be measured. However, because of the difference in the size of fat globules, this method did not provide a consistent relationship with the amount of cream and the actual fat content.

Next was the lactometer, which used the specific gravity of milk to determine its quality. The theory behind the lactometer was that the better the quality of the milk the greater the specific gravity.

As industries tried to more accurately calculate the solids in the milk, the butter industry started using the Churn test. This test is exactly what it sounds like...a small sample was taken and churned to determine the butter making qualities. The producer would then be paid based on the quality of the product supplied. However, this was very cumbersome and the small amounts of butter were inferior and could not be mixed with the mass produced butter.

In 1890, Dr. S.M. Babcock, a chemist from Wisconsin Agricultural Experiment Station, created the Babcock test. Babcock's test started by using sulphuric acid to destroy all the milk solids, except for the fat. Next he used a centrifuge to spin the fat globules out of the solution. He then added hot water to bring the fat to a narrow graduated neck on the small glass test bottles. This method is still the basis for milk testing today.

**Source:** *Milk and its Products: A treatise upon the nature and qualities of dairy milk and the manufacture of butter and cheese.* Henry H. Wing, Mount Pleasant Printery, Harrisburg, PA. 1897.

## Beef 101: Management Strategies for Small Acreage Beef

Do you want to raise a few beef cows, but have little to no experience with cattle? Here is an opportunity for you! The Richland County Extension Office will be offering a four session course on the basics of beef care. Topics will include the different types of beef enterprises, nutrition, reproduction, pasture management, handling, and other husbandry needs.

Classes will meet every other week starting **Thursday, November 1 at 7 p.m., in Room 408 of Melvill Hall, located on the UW-Richland Campus.** There will be no charge for the classes, and everyone is welcome. Please register for the classes **by Monday October 22.**

For more information on this program or other beef related topics, please call Adam Hady, Richland County Agriculture Agent, at 608/647.6148 or send an e-mail to [adam.hady@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:adam.hady@ces.uwex.edu).



## **Tax Planning for Higher Net Income**

**By: Ken Williams  
Agriculture Agent  
Waushara County UWEX**

The sharply higher grain markets, plus the outlook for possible record high milk prices paid to dairy producers, could result in higher net income this year for area farmers. This could result in some large tax bills for Wisconsin's farmers when tax time rolls around next spring.

It may be early in the year, but producers need to take a serious look at where they are financially and start planning now in order to maximize the use of expenses and deductions as a way to reduce their tax due next spring. The most important requirement is to maintain good records and to track all of your farm or business expenses.

Generally records should be kept for at least three years from the date your tax return was due or from the date it was filed or within two years of the date the tax was paid, whichever was later. Employment records and receipts for the purchase of capital assets need to be kept longer depending on the asset type.

A part of good record keeping is to keep and update financial statements such as balance sheets and profit and loss statements. This allows a producer to track their progress over time as a way to assess how their business has been progressing. Mileage for business use of vehicles needs to be logged or recorded. For 2006 the allowable deduction for business use of vehicles was \$.445/mile.

Producers may want to look at ways of transferring income into the 2008 tax year.

Sales of farm products are reportable in the current tax year, if the money from the sale is available to the seller at that time whether or not the farmer receives the money at that time. If grain is sold in December and the producer has the elevator hold the money until after January 1, the proceeds are still reportable in the current year because they were available to the farmer.

Farmers may prepay for the purchase of farm inputs to be used in the following year. In general this is limited to 50 percent of the farmer's expenses in the current year. Family employees may be paid and the amount may be deducted as a farm business expense.

There are deductions available currently for the purchase of certain types of assets used in a business. There is a section 179 deduction which allows up to \$108,000 of the cost for that asset to be used as a deduction. This deduction may be used for the purchase of certain types of depreciable property. The state of Wisconsin currently has a dairy investment tax credit program which allows a deduction of 10 percent of the cost for durable assets, such as milking parlors, barns, manure handling equipment and feed storage structures that dairy producers purchase for their operations up to a limit of \$50,000.

Depending on the financial situation of each farm, it may be better to pay any tax due and use the additional income to pay down current loans or farm debt. Another option available as a way to reduce taxable income is to set up an Individual Retirement Account (IRA). This allows a person to place money into an IRA and use those dollars to reduce your current taxable income. Farmers should think about this option as a way of setting funds aside for retirement and deferring taxes on those

funds, until they are withdrawn from the account after retirement when a person's income is normally lower.

The most important thing a producer should do is to consult with a well qualified tax planner, who is knowledgeable and up to date on the current tax laws.

### **Explore and Enhance Your Management Capabilities at a Management Assessment Center Workshop**

What kind of a dairy manager are you? In today's changing farm environment, producers are required to take on more of a managerial role on their farms. The Management Assessment Center for Dairy Farmers, designed by a team of University of Wisconsin-Extension Agriculture and Natural Resource Extension (ANRE) personnel, helps dairy farms better assess their managerial strengths and weaknesses.

A two-day assessment center workshop will be held at the Luther Park Bible Camp, in Chetek, Wisconsin on Nov. 13-14, 2007. The assessment center model is based on a thorough job analysis of dairy farm owners and managers and the competencies/attributes necessary for effectiveness and success. It incorporates activities and simulations that enable a participant to demonstrate his or her skills and abilities on eight job-related dimensions. These attributes include communications, planning and organizing, leadership, decision making/judgment, management control, empathy, teamwork, and initiative.

Businesses and organizations have used this assessment center methodology to select, evaluate and develop individuals for

managerial positions for many years. The assessment center method is unique in that it combines standardized procedures in which competencies for a specific position are identified and assessed using both individual and group simulations and activities. Participants are observed and evaluated on their performance in contrast to their competencies and attributes in several exercises by a team of trained assessors, using a multiple assessment technique. This means that the feedback provided to an individual participant is based upon pooling of information, multiple observations of assessors and consensus decisions.

Activities in the Management Assessment Center include a group discussion with non-assigned roles, a group discussion with assigned roles, a background interview, an in-basket activity, a written case study and a personnel discussion. Feedback will be delivered to participants as soon as possible following the actual Management Assessment Center workshops. Suggestions are discussed individually with participants for self-improvement in order to increase their effectiveness in any of the eight attributes.

Registration for the workshop is \$100 and includes two days of management capacity building experiences, lodging, meals and breaks; individual oral and written feedback; and coaching to assist in action strategies.

For more information on the Management Assessment Center please visit the website at: <http://cdp.wisc.edu/mac.htm>, or contact Jenny Vanderlin, Center for Dairy Profitability, 608-263-7795, [jmvander@wisc.edu](mailto:jmvander@wisc.edu). For registration materials please contact Carl Duley, Buffalo County Extension Office, 608.685.6256, [carl.duley@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:carl.duley@ces.uwex.edu)

# WISCONSIN AGRICULTURE FACT

Goat Milk in Wisconsin

Year	Price	Milk Sold	Receipts
2006	\$27.90 cwt	271,250 cwt.	\$7,568,000

Source: Wisconsin Agricultural Statistics Service

## Heart of the Farm – Women in Agriculture Workshop set for November 15<sup>th</sup> in Lancaster

The Heart of the Farm – Women in Agriculture Conference will be **Thursday, November 15, 2007**. The conference will begin at 9:30 am and end at 3:30 pm. The location of the conference is the Grant County UW-Extension Youth & Ag Center, 916 E. Elm St., Lancaster, WI.

*Heart of the Farm - Women in Agriculture* workshop series is a UW-Extension program that is committed to addressing the needs of farm women by providing education on farm business topics, connecting them with agricultural resources and creating support networks.

Topics for the Lancaster workshop include:

- **Balancing Act—Or Is It a 3-Ring Circus? Joy Kirkpatrick, Outreach Specialist, UW Center for Dairy Profitability.** This will be a fun, facilitated discussion for participants. We will break up into groups to discuss the issues of balancing farm, family, & personal priorities. This will be a great opportunity to learn how other participants “do it all” or avoid feeling guilty if they don’t!
- **Labor Laws and Employee Management. Todd Pfeil, Pfeil & Millonzi, LLC.** This workshop will

give you a sound basis for hiring and managing ag employees in WI. Issues include: interviewing & applications, overtime, hours of work, wage payment requirements, child labor & minimum wage, unemployment & workers compensation.

- **Wellness, Nutrition Fitness. Daneen Bernhardt, Registered Nurse and Certified Tai Chi Instructor.** Take a break and have some fun learning how to enhance physical and emotional well-being through Tai Chi. Tai Chi is a relaxing series of graceful movements to help build strength & reduce stress. It is an ancient martial arts exercise from China. You will learn basic movement patterns essential to the Tai Chi Fundamentals Form as well as mind and body principles of this ancient eastern art. **Tracy Ackerman, Registered Dietician, Certified Diabetes Educator & Registered Clinical Exercise Physiologist, Grant Regional Health Center.** Tracy will discuss the importance of nutrition and exercise for not only weight management but also for overall wellness for you and your family.
- **Ask the Marketer. Karen Voigts, Hedge Specialist, First Capitol Ag, Galena, IL; Kevin Bernhardt, Professor of Agribusiness, UW Platteville School of Agriculture and UW-Extension Farm and Risk Management Specialist.** Karen and Kevin will start out with a quick overview of price risk management and the tools you can use to manage price risk. The remainder of the time they will focus on your questions –



no question is too basic to ask in this session.

- **Ask the Vet. Dr. Jennifer Rediske, Partner, Veterinary Associates, Hazel Green.** Having trouble with your calves? Is your milking herd having feet problems? Want to know the latest in vaccinations? Find out the answers to these and your own herd health questions and issues in this breakout session and pose them to Dr. Rediske.
- **Agriculture Jeopardy Game. Katie Reichling and UW-P students.** This fun session is similar to the game you watch on T.V., the only difference is the categories will be focused on agriculture. Oh, and no cash prizes. The group will be divided into two teams. Categories might be: Ag Issues – at the county, state and national levels, music and agriculture, ag in the media, and ag statistics. Remember to phrase your answer in the form of a question!

Pre-registration is \$15.00 per person; at the door registration is \$25.00 per person. Registrations are due by November 8, 2007. To register, send payment to: c/o Lori/HOF, Grant Co. Extension, 916 E. Elm, P.O. Box 31, Lancaster, WI 53813. Make checks payable to Grant Co. UW-Extension. Visit the Heart of the Farm website [www.uwex.edu/ces/heartofthefarm](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/heartofthefarm) to download a brochure.

*Heart of the Farm – Women in Agriculture* is sponsored at the state level by the UW Center for Dairy Profitability and UW-Extension's Farm and Risk Management Team. First National Bank of Platteville, Grant County UW-Extension and the Regional Dairy Modernization Task Force and its funding sponsors are all local sponsors of this workshop.

## **SARE Farmer-Rancher Grant**

The SARE Call for **Farmer-Rancher Grant** proposals is now available. This grant program can provide up to \$6,000 for an individual farmer or \$18,000 for a group of three or more farmers to work on research or education projects related to sustainable agriculture. If you know of farmers who are interested in sustainable agriculture, please let them know about this opportunity. The grant proposals are due on December 3, 2007, and the application form can be downloaded from the web at <http://ncr.sare.org/prod.htm>. If you have any questions about the grants or would like a copy of a press release or a two-page handout on the program, please contact Diane Mayerfeld at [dbmayerfeld@wisc.edu](mailto:dbmayerfeld@wisc.edu) or (608) 262-8188.

## ***SOUTHWEST WISCONSIN LOCAL FOOD PRODUCERS INVITED TO COMMUNITY MEETINGS ABOUT NEW INITIATIVE CALLED "LOCAL FARE"***

Southwest Wisconsin is fortunate to have top cheese makers, livestock producers, fruit and vegetable farmers - innovative and hardworking individuals who are as committed to the quality of what they produce as to the quality of our lives in this region. Yet having access to their products is often challenging. Local Fare, a new initiative through UW-Platteville's Office of Continuing Education, will work to expand the visibility, availability, and sales of these locally grown products in our region. Local Fare is holding a series of community meetings throughout the region to introduce the project and to hear directly from local producers about their goals for a Southwest Wisconsin that celebrates local food. Expect pertinent information and a lively conversation.

A series of meetings will be held throughout the region in the month of October:

- Tuesday, October 2, 7:00-8:30 pm  
Dodgeville, Plymouth Congregational Church UCC, 115 West Merrimac Street
- Wednesday, October 10, 11:30am-1:00pm  
Spring Green, The Shed Restaurant, 123 North Lexington Street
- Thursday, October 11, 7:00-8:30 pm  
Darlington, American Legion Hall, 1400 Keep Street
- Thursday, October 18, 7:00-8:30 pm  
Richland Center University of Wisconsin-Richland, 1200 Highway 14 West, Pippin Center, Melvill Hall
- Tuesday, October 23, 2:00-3:30pm  
Fennimore Southwest Wisconsin Technical College, 1800 Bronson Boulevard, 493 Building 400
- Thursday, October 25, 7:00-8:30 pm  
Seneca Crawford County Highway Department Building, 21515 State Hwy 27
- Tuesday, October 30, 7:00-8:30 pm  
Monroe Blackhawk Area Technical College, 210 Fourth Avenue, Room 101 North Building.

Please call 608-342-1314 or 1-888-281-9472, or email Rink DaVee, Local Fare Coordinator, at [localfare@uwplatt.edu](mailto:localfare@uwplatt.edu) or [daveer@uwplatt.edu](mailto:daveer@uwplatt.edu) to RSVP or for more information about Local Fare.

Local Fare is a UW-Platteville Continuing Education economic development initiative, made possible by a UW-Extension Continuing EDvantage grant.

## 2007 Wisconsin Pest Management Update Meetings

As we wrap up 2007, it's time to start thinking and planning for 2008, which means that it is time to announce the 2007 Pest Management Update Meetings. Please check the meeting dates and locations and reserve a date on your calendar. Please pre-register with the host agent as they have to make the meal reservations. Most agents have had to add an additional "walk-in" fee for those who have not pre-registered. Also please note that we are increasing the registration fee to \$30 (fee includes program, meal, and information packet). Unfortunately, after 12 years at the old price, we needed to increase the fee to cover the higher meal and meeting room expenses that we are being charged. We will have many topics and issues to discuss as we review this year, especially with the changing and challenging pests and new traits and technologies. The speakers at the meetings will be Eileen Cullen, field crop entomologist, Mark Renz, weed scientist, Chris Boerboom, weed scientist, and Paul Esker, our new field crop plant pathologist. These meetings will be an excellent time to meet Paul and discuss plant disease problems that you are facing. We hope to see you this fall at the meetings and hope you have a safe harvest in the mean time.

- Chris Boerboom  
UWEX Weed Scientist

For a complete list of location please contact the Richland County Extension Office or go on line at

<http://ipcm.wisc.edu/Portals/0/Blog/Files/30/373/2007-PestUpdateMeetings.pdf>

## Molds and Mycotoxins

**By: Steven E. Kohlstedt**  
**Resource Agent**  
**UWEX-Richland County**

This year has been a very unusual year, from drought to floods to wind damage. Each brings the challenges of mold production. It would be worth the time to watch your feed this fall and winter.

Drought-stressed corn, dirty corn, and smutty corn all provide the opportunity for mold to start. We have seen hot and humid conditions this fall which are prime conditions for mold production. Whenever there is mold development in the field and stored corn, there is also the risk of mycotoxins.

Stresses such as water stress, disease, high temperatures, humid conditions, insect damage, or reduced vigor increased the possibility of an infestation of mold and mycotoxins.

Mycotoxin is a highly toxic by-product of mold growth in feed and grain. *Myc* means fungus and *toxin* means poison. They represent a broad spectrum of acute and chronic diseases to livestock. Mycotoxins can remain as a residue in meat and milk, posing a possible threat to human health. Mycotoxins are generated from a variety of molds through naturally occurring secondary metabolic processes. The amount and type of mycotoxin or secondary metabolite varies with environmental conditions such as temperature and humidity. *Aspergillus*, the mold which produces aflatoxins, grows in warm, dry conditions. *Fusarium*, which produces Zearalenone and the “T” toxins, grows in cool, wet conditions.



There are some signs that will give you an idea that your feed has a mold problem. They are: dustiness of the feed; caking of feed; poor feed flow out of the bins; feed refusal by animals for no apparent reason; feed has a moldy or mildew smell to it; and/or dark unnatural color. Any one of these signs or a combination of signs may indicate that your feed or stored grain may have mold problems.

Mycotoxins affect animals in a variety of ways. The worse case scenario is death, but there are general signs before this such as the animal going off of feed, losing condition, losing balance, and reproductive disorders. If these things happen, it could be caused by the quality of the feed source.

If you believe that your feed may be moldy and you want to test for mycotoxins, there are several labs in Wisconsin that test for a variety of mycotoxins. For concerns related to mycotoxins, consult either your feed representative or your UW-Extension office for assistance.

We have had a variety of weather challenges this year, so it would be wise to watch your animals and feed this fall for molds and mycotoxins.



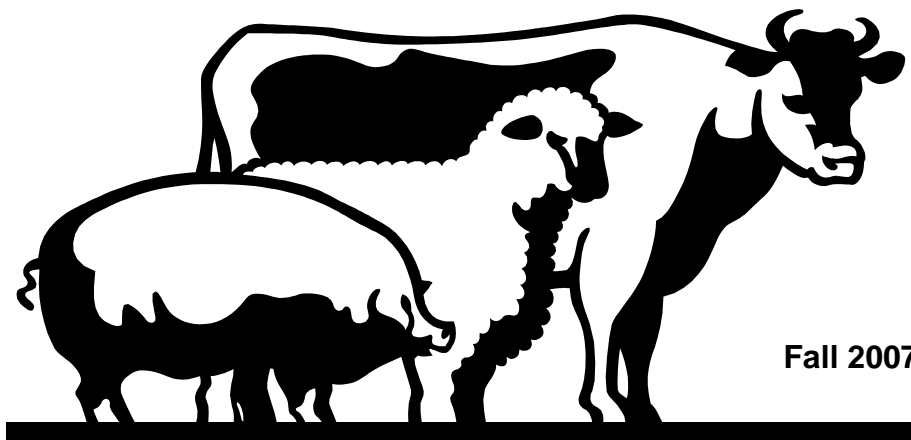
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Fall 2007