

# **Richland County AG News & Notes**

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

**Summer 2005**

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## **Calendar of Events:**

### **June:**

- 7 Brush Management & Invasive Species Field Days - Grant Co.
- 8 Brush Management & Invasive Species Field Days - Lafayette Co.
- 9 Brush Management & Invasive Species Field Days - Green Co.
- 10 Brush Management & Invasive Species Field Days - Iowa Co.
- 12 Farm Women's Dairy Breakfast - Greg and JoAnn Kinney Farms
- 15-16 Four State Dairy & Nutrition Conference, Dubuque IA
- 16 Youth Meat Animal Quality Assurance – 2 p.m., Pippin Center
- 21-22 Wisconsin Grazing School - River Falls
- 21 Pathways to Success – Heisner Family Farm – Mineral Point

### **July:**

- 2 Southwest Wisconsin High Protein Dairy Show – Grant Co. Fairgrounds
- 5 Richland County Fair market lamb ID forms due into Extension Office
- 12-13 Wisconsin Grazing School- Arlington
- 12-14 Farm Technology Days- Clark County
- 12 Youth Meat Animal Quality Assurance – 7 p.m., Pippin Center
- 13 Parlor Tour- Putz Farm, Avoca
- 27 Parlor Tour- Bechtel's, Richland Center

### **August:**

- 2-3 Wisconsin Grazing School- Wausau
- 4-14 Wisconsin State Fair, West Allis
- 9 Dairy/Livestock Nutrition Series - Quality Forage
- 24 Parlor Tour- Brian Denman- Richland Center

## **Improving Milk Quality with Milk Money**

The Milk Money program is designed to get dairy producers, local advisors, and consultants working together in a farmer-directed milk quality team. Teams will then work together to improve milk quality on your farm. The goal of the Milk Money Program is to increase the profitability and competitiveness of Wisconsin dairy farms through the production of high quality milk.

The milk money team is created and decided by the farm owner. Teams can be comprised of the farm owner, the Extension agent, veterinarian, dairy plant field rep, nutritionist, dairy equipment dealer, key employees, and others. This team will then have monthly meetings lasting a minimum of 4 months, to accomplish the farmer-directed goals for milk quality. The team is encouraged to look at topics that may get overlooked in the day-to-day operations. These overlooked topics include vet costs, drug costs, and production loss from clinical and sub-clinical mastitis. In addition to cost analysis, the team will also track farm progress on identified milk quality issues. And, as a team, the responsibilities and accountabilities are spread among the team.

For more information on the Milk Money Program, please contact Adam Hady at the Richland County Extension Office 647-6148.

## **FARM BUILDINGS Farmstead Plan Can Prevent Problems**

Building a new freestall barn or a milking parlor to update a dairy business can save time and labor and increase income. However, a University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension agricultural engineer urges farmers to develop an overall long-range plan for the farmstead. Not having a plan, he said, can result in costly mistakes.

“Without a plan, you might find that something you added last year is in the wrong place for something you want to do this year,” said Brian Holmes.

“For example, a farmer might need more feed or manure storage. But, if he or she is just focusing on the current project, without thinking about how it will fit in with future renovations, there can be problems in the future.”

“Consider developing a feed center plan that is expandable and has room to expand,” he suggested. “Consider feed handling traffic patterns that minimize handling time and congestion on the farmstead. Think about water drainage and maintaining an all weather road system to allow access to feed.”

People who modernize a dairy by building a milking parlor often decide to add more cows to the herd either because they have to increase income to pay for the parlor or because they find they can easily handle more cows. More cows need more housing, heifer housing, feed storage and manure handling, Holmes explained.

“Each of these facilities requires good planning to function correctly and fit together as a system,” he said. “Farmstead planning considers the existing resources and the near-term resource needs as well as longer-term resource needs.”

These considerations include the amount of land available; constraints such as roads, runoff drainage, rock outcroppings, water supply; and resources to be protected such as groundwater, streams, wetlands, neighbors and communities. People also need to think about where crops will be grown and how manure will be used to grow crops.

“Midwest Plan Service has recently introduced the “Farmstead Planning Handbook,” which can help a person better

understand factors to consider and how to develop a farmstead plan," Holmes said. The publication, in CD format, can be obtained by ordering from the web site, [www.mwpsdq.org](http://www.mwpsdq.org) or by calling 1-800-562-3618. You can also get help at your [University of Wisconsin-Extension office](http://www.uwex.edu).

Contact: Brian Holmes  
E-mail: [brian.holmes@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:brian.holmes@ces.uwex.edu)

## **Planning to Upgrade Your Milking Facilities? Here are Some Tips for Doing it Right**

Are you a dairy farmer who is thinking about updating your milking facilities? Building a new milking parlor or retrofitting a parlor into an existing structure can make a dairy farm more efficient, can permit one or two people to milk more cows, and can minimize work-related injuries to knees and hips. But Reinemann, milking equipment/electrical specialist with UW-Extension, says it may not be for everyone. In addition, the kind of updating you choose depends on your own circumstances. He offers some suggestion to help farmers make decisions about an upgrade.

1. *Know how much you can spend.* The first step is to do a financial analysis of the farm operation. An unprofitable business cannot afford to invest in anything and saving time does not improve profitability unless you have a more profitable way to use that time.

The cost of milking a cow in the Midwest is almost twice as much as in any other dairy region. To be competitive, Wisconsin farmers should build reasonably sized parlors. The economic optimum for herds up to about 600 cows is a "double eight". Don't plan to put an extra person in the pit. Adding a second or third milker to a milking parlor smaller than a double 12 is never a good economic move. The cows milked per hour never increases proportionately to the added labor cost. If you do hire extra help,

pay your workers a decent wage to inspire and reward good work.

2. *Let the installer design the milking system.* Find a competent milking equipment installer who will work with you to design a parlor that meets all of the sanitary and safety regulations. This is a highly skilled task. The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection has an installers' guide on the Web at [http://www.uwex.edu/uwmril/milk\\_parlor/](http://www.uwex.edu/uwmril/milk_parlor/).

3. *Don't over estimate the value of old equipment.* Most milking equipment is no longer supported after about 10 to 20 years. You may be unable to find replacement parts for older equipment. Available parts may be very expensive. Maintaining old equipment is labor intensive.

4. *Get the building right.* Buildings last for 50 years and are difficult to remodel. Equipment lasts for 10 years and is easy to upgrade if the building is not a limiting factor. Consider the cost of renovation versus a new building. In the long run, it is almost never cheaper to remodel. As you plan the building, make sure the holding area, cow platform and pit floor all slope same direction. Plan a tunnel under platform for heating, ventilation, wiring, milklines and airlines. Leave room to fix mistakes and add more equipment. If you need to cut costs, start small and simple and plan to expand and add other updates later. Be careful if you try to economize with used equipment. Finally, Reinemann cautions farmers not to try to do it themselves.

"Owner-built projects take a lot of time from other profitable tasks and any mistakes you make may be very costly," he said. Consult the "the Wisconsin Idea Milking Parlor", a publication available at <http://www.uwex.edu/uwmril/milkparlor/> for ideas about how to build a parlor you can afford now and can expand later.

5. *Plan the building, stalls and holding area for good cow movement.* Try to avoid making the cows turn. A "straight-in, straight-out" cow flow is the most efficient. If you do have to turn the cows, create two 90-degree turns rather than one 180-degree turn and allow for extra wide alleys in areas when cows make a turn.

6. *If you are going to remodel, you should rewire the barn.* Almost all old barns and many newer ones do not have adequate, safe electrical systems. Wiring wears out and existing wiring almost certainly does not have the capacity for new electrical equipment in the parlor. Every electric utility in Wisconsin now offers grants and low-interest loans to rewire barns. More information about this assistance is available at [www.mrec.org](http://www.mrec.org).

7. *Put in good lights.* Having quality and lots of light will make for a good work environment. Install energy efficient lights when you rewire. Some utilities and the FOCUS on Energy Program offer incentives. You can learn more about lighting system design at [www.uwex.edu/uwmril/milk\\_parlor/](http://www.uwex.edu/uwmril/milk_parlor/), [www.focusonenergy.com](http://www.focusonenergy.com) and [www.mrec.org](http://www.mrec.org).

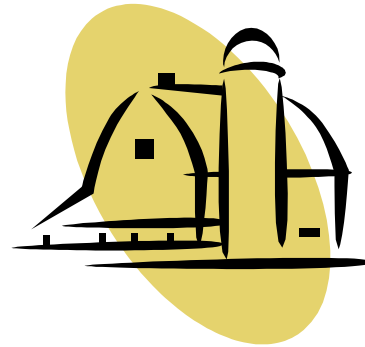
8. *Consider other energy saving technology.* Energy efficiency is a good investment with a two to six-year payback on things like variable speed vacuum pumps, well water pre-cooling of milk, and heat recovery on refrigeration systems. For more information about these technologies, consult UW-Extension's "Dairy Energy Efficiency", [www.uwex.edu/uwmril/rural\\_energy/dairy\\_energy.htm](http://www.uwex.edu/uwmril/rural_energy/dairy_energy.htm); FOCUS on ENERGY Program Incentives, [www.focusonenergy.com](http://www.focusonenergy.com); or "2005 Dairy Energy Symposium Proceedings", [www.MREC.org](http://www.MREC.org).

9. *Make sure floors drain well.* Wet floors make for a slippery, unpleasant work environment. In winter, wet floors may be icy. Plan to slope all floors to a gutter rather than build multiple slopes to a point drain.

10. *Put in good ventilation.* You'll need two ventilation systems. In winter, you need to move air, remove moisture and add heat. In summer, you need to move lots of air and be able to open walls.

**Reinemann recommends following these step in designing a parlor:**

1. Define your parlor work routine.
2. Choose parlor size and type.
3. Calculate cost of milking.
4. Repeat, steps one, two and three until your cost of milking is competitive.
5. Identify key utilities.
6. Develop a list of questions for builders, electricians, plumbers and equipment dealers.
7. Talk to builders and equipment professionals and create your redesign team.



**Richland - Iowa County  
Parlor Tour Series**

Thinking about building a parlor? Wondering what direction to take to modernize your dairy? Come join us for a series parlor tours. All the tours will start at 1pm. The first tour will be held June 21, at the Heisner Family organic dairy. This will be in conjunction with the "Pathways to Success" program. The farm is located 4499 Antione Rd., Mineral Point. Other tours will include Putz Farm (Avoca), Bechtel's (Richland Center), Denman (Richland Center), and more. Keep an eye out for the full press release this month.

## **Dairy Conference Focuses on Nutrition and Management**

**Madison** - Dairy agri-business professionals from Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa and Minnesota are invited to attend the Four-State Dairy Nutrition and Management Conference **June 15 and 16** at the Grand River Center in Dubuque, Iowa. This seminar, sponsored by Extension services in the four states, with support from many agricultural businesses, will offer current information on a variety of issues related to dairy cattle nutrition and management.

The conference will begin with a technical symposium on the morning of June 15. This will cover topics such as trace minerals, reproduction, and lameness prevention. Speakers for this pre-conference symposium include university and industry experts. Dr. Dan Weary, a featured speaker from the University of British Columbia, will present "The art and science of improving cow comfort" during the afternoon session.

Thursday's program features a plenary session on silage management and feed ingredient variation. Small group sessions will allow participants to choose from several offerings.

The registration fee prior to June 1 is \$125 per person. This fee covers meals, breaks and proceedings. Registration after June 5 is \$150 per person. For a copy of the program brochure and registration and lodging information, contact Randy Shaver, 608-263-3491, [rdshaver@facstaff.wisc.edu](mailto:rdshaver@facstaff.wisc.edu). You can download the brochure at <http://www.wisc.edu/dysci/uwex/brochures/brochures/20054StateDairyNutritionManagementBrochure.pdf>

## **Grazing Schools Offered During Summer 2005**

Four management intensive grazing schools will be offered across the state this summer. Sessions will be offered June 21-22 in River

Falls, July 12-13 in Arlington, August 2-3 in Wausau, and Sept. 20-21 in Fond du Lac.

The Wisconsin Grazing Schools are designed to teach producers, educators, and agency staff the basics of management intensive grazing with a hands-on approach. The two-day intensive workshops will provide opportunities for in-depth discussions, field exercises, and reference materials that cover both livestock and agronomic topics related to grazing. The program is the same at each location. Sponsors are University of Wisconsin-Extension, UW-River Falls, Wisconsin GLCI, and the Natural Resource and Conservation Service.

Presenters include UW-Extension agronomists, Natural Resources and Conservation Service grazing specialists, UW dairy and beef nutritionists, fencing and water systems experts, agricultural economists and veterinarians. In addition, several Wisconsin grazing producers will provide a "real world" perspective.

Management intensive grazing is based on four key factors:

- Meeting the nutrient requirements of the grazing animal;
- Optimizing forage yield, quality, and persistence;
- Environmental stewardship; and
- Integrating knowledge and technology into a practical and profitable management system

Cost for the school is \$50 for either one or two people from the same farm. The fee includes materials and meals. Registration deadlines are June 10 (River Falls), July 1 (Arlington), July 25 (Wausau) and September 5 (Fond du Lac).

For a brochure and registration information, contact Dennis Cosgrove, UW-Rivers Falls, 410 S. Third Street, River Falls, WI 54022 (715) 425-3345 or by email: [dennis.r.cosgrove@uwrf.edu](mailto:dennis.r.cosgrove@uwrf.edu).

## **Richland County Agriculture On-Line**

The Richland County Extension agriculture website is available with many convenient links to agriculture related sites. There are links to the Wisconsin Cattleman's Association, Pork Association, Milk Marketing Board, Equity Livestock Markets, 2004 custom rate guide and more.

To search through the website: go to <http://richland.uwex.edu> and click on Agriculture.

### **Date Change for November Dairy Beef Seminar**

In the last issue of the Richland County AG News & Notes, there was an announcement regarding the Dairy Beef Seminar set for November. The new dates for the seminar are now November 2 and 3 rather than the previous dates of November 1 and 2. Please take note of these changes. For further information, or if there are any questions regarding the Dairy Beef Seminar, feel free to contact the Extension Office at 608/647-6148.

### **NRA Rescinds Sheep Material Policy**

At a meeting of the National Renderers Association (NRA) Board of Directors voted to rescind the policy which recommended the exclusion of the collection of sheep materials for rendering.

The NRA policy, which has been in place for many years, recommended voluntary guidelines for renderers not to collect or render sheep material for animal protein (meat and bone meal) use. This was initially put into practice based on a theory of the correlation of scrapie with bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE). Since that time, more scientific information has become available and with the implementation of the 1997 feed rule

prohibiting the feeding of mammalian derived materials to ruminants, the NRA policy was no longer relevant for BSE risk reduction.

According to the letter from NRA to the American Sheep Industry Association, a renderers decision to collect or not collect sheep material will now be based on marketing needs rather than on regulations. "This is good news for the U.S. sheep producers and processors who have struggled with offal disposal options for the past 16 years. There will likely be several renderers who are not exporting meat and bone meal that will now be willing to process offal from sheep," commented Paul Rodgers, deputy director of animal health for ASI.

Staff contact: Paul Rodgers, 303-771-3500

### **Brush Management and Invasive Species Field Days Coming in June**

Are you interested in learning more about the management and control of multiflora rose, prickly ash or wild parsnip? If so, you won't want to miss the field days planned for southwestern Wisconsin during June. Each field day will include discussions on using herbicides and other non-chemical means of control, how to develop effective control strategies, and emerging invasive species to look out for. UW Extension Weed Scientist Jerry Doll will cover the biology and control of some of the most problematic invasive species in southwestern Wisconsin pastures and woodlands. All field days begin at 1:00 p.m. and will conclude about 3:00 p.m. The following are the dates and locations in each county:

**June 7<sup>th</sup>, Grant County:** Chuck & Donna King Farm, rural Boscobel. Directions: take Hwy 133 West 5.3 miles from Boscobel. Enter the red gate on the east side of the road, just north of Woodman village limits. Multiflora rose and thistle control will be featured.

**June 8<sup>th</sup>, Lafayette County:** DNR

Yellowstone Wildlife Area. The starting point for the field day will be the red barn on the Wildlife Area property. Directions: take County Hwy F south from Blanchardville past the entrance to Yellowstone Lake State Park. The barn is on the west side of the road, north of the intersection of County Hwy G and County Hwy F). In addition to multiflora rose, prickly ash and wild parsnip, honeysuckle will also be discussed.

**June 9<sup>th</sup>, Green County:** Franbrook Farm, 6397 Locust Rd., southwest of New Glarus. This farm is where the UW Department of Agronomy is doing its most comprehensive research on multiflora rose. Attendees will also see the effects of foliar herbicide applications on prickly ash; management of other invasive brush and herbaceous weeds such as musk and plumeless thistles will be discussed. Directions: take County Hwy H west from Hwy. 69 (about 1 mile south of New Glarus) to County Hwy J. Turn south on J and then turn right onto Holstein Prairie Rd. to Locust Rd.

**June 10<sup>th</sup>, Iowa County:** Otis Nelson Farm, Iowa County. Directions: from Hollandale take County Hwy K north for about three miles and turn left on Urness Road. The pasture is on the right side of Urness Rd, just off of Hwy K. Park along Urness Rd. In addition to multiflora rose, prickly ash, wild parsnip, and thistles will be covered at this site.

For more information, please contact Ted Bay, Grant County UW Extension, (608) 723-2125; Mark Mayer, Green County UW Extension, (608) 328-9440; Rhonda Gildersleeve or Paul Ohlrogge, Iowa County UW-Extension (608/935-0391); Lisa Trumble, Lafayette County Conservation Office (608/776-3836); or Peggy Compton, UW- Extension Basin Educator (608/342-1633).

## A Walk in the Pasture

Are you interested in grazing? Are you looking for ways to manage your pastures? Well, take advantage of the summer long pasture walks available. These are farmer hosted get togethers, to discuss many different topics of grazing and pasture management. There is something for everyone. For more information on the pasture walks in Richland County log onto the Richland County Website at [Http://Richland.uwex.edu](http://Richland.uwex.edu) or contact Adam Hady, Richland County Agriculture Educator, at the Extension Office at 647-6148 or Jean Stramel, NRCS Grazing Specialist, at 647-8874 ext.110.

## Change in Yield and Quality of Alfalfa

Many growers are asking about the tradeoffs in yield and quality as they enter quality pricing contracts for hay or haylage. The situation is that premiums are paid for quality but some of the higher price for increased forage quality is offset by lower yields of fields cut earlier for the higher quality.

This is difficult to assess since both alfalfa growth and change in forage quality vary considerably depending on environmental conditions. Little data on both yield and quality change over time has existed. The USDA-Dairy Forage Research Center is conducting a detailed study (jointly with the Universities of Pennsylvania) to attempt to get some answers. They have data from this study for 2004. This, combined with some of my studies, can give a few benchmarks and then the grower can decide if the season is proceeding 'normally' or not.

First, yield change around harvest time varies considerably and has ranged from 0 to 200 lbs per acre per day. From a number of studies, it seems reasonable to plan on the yield increase of alfalfa being about 100 lbs

per acre per day near harvest if growing conditions are 'average.' This yield change is consistent across cuttings, exclusive of late fall. Remember that daily yield increase will be less in cool, cloudy weather, and if insects, disease or drought occur. It may be greater in periods of good moisture, sunshine and 75 to 85 degree weather.

We have analyzed forage quality changes over time across cutting of alfalfa for several years. It appears that quality of first cutting changes at the fastest rate and later cuttings change in fiber at a slower rate. We have found that first cutting decreases about 5 pts RFV per day, second cutting decreases 2 to 3 points per day and third and fourth cutting during the growing season decline 1 to 2 points per day. The late fall growth may change little in forage quality during mid to late September and early October. Relative Forage Quality (RFQ) will change about the same as RFV on first cutting and then decline about 3 points per day on 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> cuttings during the growing season. Factors such as drought and potato leaf hopper will dramatically reduce yield but increase forage quality.

Alfalfa forage change in yield and quality during the growing season			
Cutting	Yield (lb)	RFV	RFQ
-----Daily Change-----			
1	100	-5	-5
2	100	-2 to -3	-4
3	100	-2	-3
4	100	-1	-3

The table above will allow you the grower to calculate changes versus the payment basis for quality of forage. Yield appears to increase by 100 lb/acre/day near harvest regardless of cutting if growing conditions are good. Forage quality declines at a variable rate depending on which cutting is being considered. Remember that the change in quality is on the total forage harvested for the cutting (usually 1.5 to 2 t/a per cutting).

Dr. Dan Undersander, Forage Agronomist

## The First of a Monthly Dairy/Livestock Nutrition Seminar Series

August will mark the kick off to a new Dairy/Livestock nutrition seminar series. Each month the Richland County Extension Office will host a seminar on a different topic relating to nutrition for dairy and livestock.

The first of the seminar series will be on harvesting forages for the high forage quality and nutritional value. The presenter for this seminar will be Dr. Dan Undersander, UW-Extension Forage Agronomist. The Seminar will be held on **August 9, at 10 a.m., Pippin Center**, in Melville Hall, UW-Richland campus. Please contact the extension office by August 5<sup>th</sup> if you plan to attend.

For more information on the Dairy & Livestock Nutrition Seminar series, contact Adam Hady, Richland County Agriculture Educator, at the Extension Office at 647-6148 or long on to [Http://Richland.uwex.edu](http://Richland.uwex.edu) for meeting times and places.

## Farm Women's Dairy Breakfast

On June 12<sup>th</sup>, a traditional dairy breakfast hosted at Greg and JoAnn Kinney Farms, located in Richland County in Richwood Township near Excelsior. Serving from 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., then tour the farm! FREE SHUTTLE BUS available from Blue River Park to the farm! (Directions to farm: Take Hwy 60 to Cty F; take F 4.5 miles to Buffs Ln. Farm is on the right. OR, take Hwy 14 to 171. From 171, turn left onto Cty F and travel 6 miles to Buffs Ln.) Phone: Annette Louis, dairy breakfast coordinator (608) 585-3362



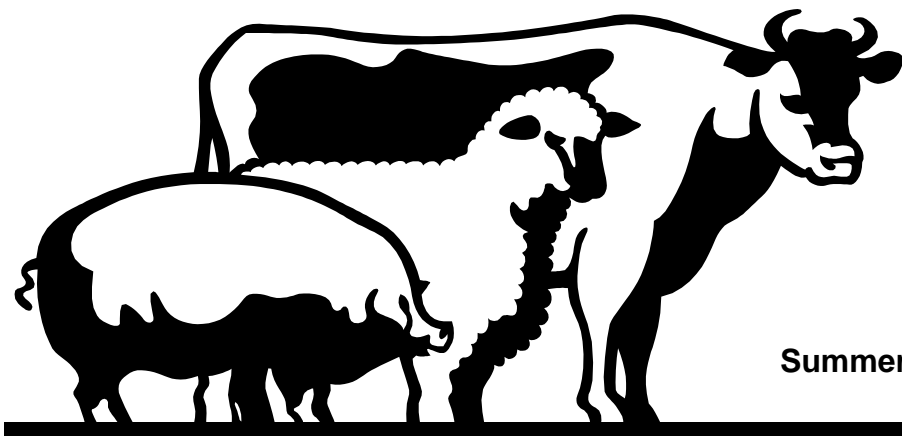
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