Chippewa Valley Agricultural Extension Report

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The Future of Farming: Wisconsin Farm Technology Days Will Forge Ahead in 2021

Green light means go for this year's Wisconsin Farm Technology Days – a three-day outdoor event showcasing the latest developments in production agriculture – which is scheduled for July 20-22 at Huntsinger Farms, the largest grower and processor of horseradish in the U.S., which is known for its Silver Spring brand.

Originally slated for last July, the Eau Claire show moved to 2021 as a result of COVID-19. This year, more than 350 exhibitors from across the Midwest and Canada have committed to the show, which will also feature intimate acoustic performances by singer-songwriter Chris Kroeze each day around lunchtime. A raffle aiming to benefit the local community will offer one lucky winner a private concert, courtesy of Kroeze.

"Farm Tech Days Eau Claire is officially on," said Mike Gintner, executive committee chair, in a media release. "The program committees have put together an amazing range of interesting and entertaining sessions – there's something for everyone!"

Wisconsin Farm Technology Days – originally known as Farm Progress Days – began in 1954, and was first held in Waupaca County. It has only been held in Eau Claire County once before, in 1992, although it has been held twice in Chippewa and Dunn counties over the years. Annually, this agricultural event (the largest outdoor agricultural event in the state!) brings over 45,000 attendees and more than 600 commercial and educational vendors.

Tickets for this year's event will go on sale by June, with final safety protocols and details decided by the Farm Tech Days committee at the end of June. This year, there will not be extended hours on Wednesday, but there will be local eats available for purchase, showcasing the brilliance of restaurants in the Chippewa Valley. "We are working with local restaurants and taverns so that show attendees can easily enjoy food, drink, and entertainment from the wide range of great options throughout the Eau Claire area," Gintner said.

Innovation Square – the heart of the show – will feature diverse area farms including Huntsinger Farms, Superior Fresh – the largest aquaponics grower of greens and salmon in the U.S.; Chippewa Valley Bean – the world's premiere kidney bean grower and processor and its home farm, Doane Farm; award-winning Marieke Gouda cheese company and its home farm, Penterman Dairy Farm; and Ferguson's Orchards – one of the largest apple growers and agritourism businesses in the Midwest.

Attendees can check out wifarmtechdays.org for a real-time map showing exhibitor and exhibit locations, program details, as well as a "My Show Planner" feature to ensure they get the most out of the show. Companies are invited to reserve their spots for the July 2021 show on the website.

Inside this issue:

Did you know?

Dunn County Farms produce:

- $82.1 Million in Grains
- $77.8 Million in Milk
- $18.8 Million in Cattle & Calves
- $11 Million in Vegetables
- $7 Million in Hay and Other Crops

Source: 2017 Agricultural Economic Impact Report

USDA to reopen sign-up for CFAP2, CFAP AA 'Pandemic Assistance for Producers'

USDA will reopen sign-up for CFAP 2 and AA for at least 60 days beginning on April 5, 2021.

Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced that USDA is establishing new programs and efforts to bring financial assistance to farmers, ranchers and producers who felt the impact of COVID-19 market disruptions. The new initiative—USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers—will reach a broader set of producers than in previous COVID-19 aid programs. USDA is dedicating at least $6 billion toward the new programs. The Department will also develop rules for new programs that will put a greater emphasis on outreach to small and socially disadvantaged producers, specialty crop and organic producers, timber harvesters, as well as provide support for the food supply chain and producers of renewable fuel, among others. Existing programs like the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) will fall within the new initiative and, where statutory authority allows, will be refined to better address the needs of producers.

USDA will reopen sign-up for CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning on April 5, 2021. The payments announced today (under Part 3, below) will go out under the existing CFAP rules; however, future opportunities for USDA Pandemic Assistance will be reviewed for verified need and during the rulemaking process, USDA will look to make eligibility more consistent with the Farm Bill. Moving forward, USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers will utilize existing programs, such as the Local Agricultural Marketing Program, Farming Opportunities Training and Outreach, and Specialty Crop Block Grant Program, and others to enhance educational and market opportunities for agricultural producers.

USDA Pandemic Assistance for Producers – 4 Parts

Part 1: Investing $6 Billion to Expand Help & Assistance to More Producers

USDA will dedicate at least $6 billion to develop a number of new programs or modify existing proposals using discretionary funding from the Consolidated Appropriations Act (CAA) and other coronavirus funding that went unspent by the previous administration. Where rulemaking is required, it will commence this spring.

Part 2: Adding $500 Million of New Funding to Existing Programs

USDA expects to begin investing approximately $500 million in expedited assistance through several existing programs this spring, with most by April 30.

Part 3: Carrying Out Formula Payments under CFAP 1, CFAP 2, CFAP AA

The Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021, enacted December 2020 requires FSA to make certain payments to producers according to a mandated formula. USDA is now expediting these provisions because there is no discretion involved in interpreting such directives, they are self-enacting.

- An increase in CFAP 1 payment rates for cattle. Cattle producers with approved CFAP 1 applications will automatically receive these payments beginning in April. Information on the additional payment rates for cattle can be found on farmers.gov/cfap. Eligible producers do not need to submit new applications, since payments are based on previously approved CFAP 1 applications. USDA estimates additional payments of more than $1.1 billion to more than 410,000 producers, according to the mandated formula.
- Additional CFAP assistance of $20 per acre for producers of eligible crops identified as CFAP 2 flat-rate or price-trigger crops beginning in April. This includes alfalfa, corn, cotton, hemp, peanuts, rice, sorghum, soybeans, sugar beets and wheat, among other crops. FSA will automatically issue payments to eligible price trigger and flat-rate crop producers based on the eligible acres included on their CFAP 2 applications. Eligible producers do not need to submit a new CFAP 2 application. For a list of all eligible row-crops, visit farmers.gov/cfap.
- USDA will finalize routine decisions and minor formula adjustments on applications and begin processing payments for certain applications filed as part of the CFAP Additional Assistance program in the following categories:

⇒ Applications filed for pullets and turfgrass sod;

⇒ A formula correction for row-crop producer applications to allow producers with a non-Actual Production History (APH) insurance policy to use 100% of the 2019 Agriculture Risk Coverage-County Option (ARC-CO) benchmark yield in the calculation;

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USDA to reopen sign-up for CFAP2, CFAP AA 'Pandemic Assistance for Producers' cont'd from page 2

⇒ Sales commodity applications revised to include insurance indemnities, Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program payments, and Wildfire and Hurricane Indemnity Program Plus payments, as required by statute; and

⇒ Additional payments for swine producers and contract growers under CFAP Additional Assistance remain on hold and are likely to require modifications to the regulation as part of the broader evaluation and future assistance; however, FSA will continue to accept applications from interested producers.

Part 4: Reopening CFAP 2 Sign-Up to Improve Access & Outreach to Underserved Producers

As noted above, **USDA will re-open sign-up for of CFAP 2 for at least 60 days beginning on April 5, 2021.**

- FSA has committed at least $2.5 million to establish partnerships and direct outreach efforts intended to improve outreach for CFAP 2 and will cooperate with grassroots organizations with strong connections to socially disadvantaged communities to ensure they are informed and aware of the application process.

Please stay tuned for additional information and announcements under the USDA Pandemic Assistance to Producers initiative, which will help to expand and more equitably distribute financial assistance to producers and farming operations during the COVID-19 national emergency. Please visit www.farmers.gov for more information on the details of today's announcement.

USDA touches the lives of all Americans each day in so many positive ways. In the Biden-Harris administration, USDA is transforming America's food system with a greater focus on more resilient local and regional food production, ensuring access to healthy and nutritious food in all communities, building new markets and streams of income for farmers and producers using climate-smart food and forestry practices, making historic investments in infrastructure and clean-energy capabilities in rural America, and committing to equity across the Department by removing systemic barriers and building a workforce more representative of America. To learn more, visit www.usda.gov.

USDA

New Extension Farm Management AgriVision podcast series

Katie Wantoch, UW-Madison Division of Extension Agriculture Educator, Dunn County

UW-Madison Division of Extension has a new farm management podcast series based on the Wisconsin Agriculturist magazine's Agrivision column. Katie Wantoch, associate professor and agriculture agent in Dunn County, hosts the podcast episodes and chats with fellow Extension educators to answer questions from farmers and share their knowledge and expertise on how farmers can improve their farm management skills.

Why would a farmer want to listen to a podcast? Wantoch explains, "People, especially farmers, have less time to read materials. Much of Extension's instruction has traditionally been done through print materials like factsheets, articles in newspapers or magazines, and available on websites. However, educators have been seeing an increase in farmers listening to podcasts while working or traveling. Audio allows them to listen in their tractors, while milking cows, or harvesting their vegetables."

How did the AgriVision podcast come about? Wantoch has been co-writing a monthly column for the Wisconsin Agriculturist magazine since 2013. Each month she and two other panelists respond to questions that have been submitted, varying around farm management related issues. Each panelist provides a short response that is compiled by the editor and published in the AgriVision column.

As 2020 evolved and the ability to meet in person became more difficult, Wantoch looked for opportunities to share the information and resources that she was writing about in the monthly column. This podcast has been a wonderful opportunity for educators to collaborate while embracing new technology and a new way to communicate with the farmers.

The AgriVision Farm Management podcast is available on Apple and Google Podcasts and Spotify. The podcast episodes and information discussed on each topic is available on the UW Division of Extension's Farm Management website at https://farms.extension.wisc.edu/programs/agrivision-podcast/

PPP and EIDL Loans—What Farmers Should Know

Katie Wantoch, UW-Madison Division of Extension Agriculture Educator, Dunn County

Paycheck Protection Program

SBA is **currently offering PPP loans until May 31, 2021**.

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) provides loans to businesses to keep their workforce employed during the Coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis. Farmers are eligible for PPP loans through the Small Business Administration (SBA), if they have fewer than 500 employees. Borrowers may be eligible for PPP Loan Forgiveness if certain conditions are met.

The PPP loans are facilitated through participating lending institutions with established SBA relationships. Farmers can also work with the Farm Credit Service organization that services their geographic area. Some lenders and Farm Credit Services are limiting their PPP lending to businesses with whom they have existing relationships. The SBA offers a map and search function for those seeking a PPP loan and looking for eligible PPP lenders. After reviewing the eligibility criteria below, **the first recommendation is for farmers to call their current lender(s) to see if they have that SBA relationship and ask if they are accepting PPP applications**. Be sure to inquire if the lender has their own loan restrictions, application form and documentation requirements.

Who may qualify?
Small businesses and farms who have fewer than 500 employees (those receiving W2s in the previous year) may qualify. Independent contractors/self-employed farmers and small businesses are also eligible to make their own applications to this program. Partners in partnerships or members of an LLC taxed as a partnership should submit one PPP application for the partnership/LLC. The self-employment income of general active partners or LLC members/managers can be reported as payroll costs (up to $100,000 annual salary basis) filed on behalf of the partnership or LLC.

How much can a farmer borrow through the PPP loans?
The amount of the loans are 2.5 times the amount of your average monthly payroll costs from the prior 12 months or the 2020 / 2019 calendar year, capped at $10 million. For specific direction on calculating the loan, the SBA website has details on how to calculate First Draw PPP loan amounts based on the type of business entity. See below for loan amount calculations.

Payroll costs included in the calculation
Payroll costs, including wages, benefits, such as paid leave, health care benefits, any allowance for dismissal or separation, and any state and local taxes assessed on employee compensation, are included in the calculation for the PPP loan amount. The portion of federal taxes that are normally taken from the employee's gross wages can be included in the calculations and used to pay their portion of federal employment tax. Housing stipends or allowances are considered part of payroll and subject to the $100,000 per employee limits.

Excluded from payroll costs
The employer's share of payroll taxes should be excluded from the calculations.

The PPP cannot cover the costs of paying independent contractors (those who get 1099s instead of W2s). Independent contractors and other self-employed individuals, including farmers, should apply for their own PPP loans.

The PPP loan cannot cover payroll for those employees whose principal address is not within the United States. See IRS regulations (26 CFR § 1.121-1(b)(2)) for additional guidance on determining an employee's principal place of residence.

Qualified sick and family leave for which a credit is allowed under section 7001 and 7003 of the Families First Coronavirus Response Act is also not covered.

How does a farmer with employees calculate the loan amount?

Step 1: Calculate payroll costs by adding the following:
Step 2: Divide the total amount from Step 1 by 12.
Step 3: Multiply the amount from Step 2 by 2.5.

Step 4: Add the outstanding amount of an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) made between January 31, 2020 and April 3, 2020, less the amount of any "advance" under an EIDL COVID-19 loan (because it does not have to be repaid).

Can a farmer without employees receive a loan for their own lost income?
Self-employed farmers and ranchers (i.e., those who report their net farm profit on IRS Form 1040 Schedule 1 and Schedule F) should use IRS Form 1040 Schedule F.

Step 1: Find your 2019 or 2020 Form 1040 Schedule F line 9 for gross income amount. If this amount is over $100,000, reduce it $100,000.

Step 2: Calculate the average monthly gross income

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PPP and EIDL Loans—What Farmers Should Know cont'd from page 5

amount by dividing the number from Step 1 by 12.

Step 3: Multiply the average monthly next profit amount from Step 2 by 2.5.

Step 4: Add the outstanding amount of an Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) made between January 31, 2020 and April 3, 2020, less the amount of any "advance" under an EIDL COVID-19 loan (which does not have to be repaid).

Only self-employed who file a Schedule F (self-employed farmers/ranchers) can use gross income to determine the loan amount. Farmers that file taxes as partnerships must calculate by using net earnings. More information about calculating loan amounts based on the type of business structure can be found the SBA website page: https://www.sba.gov/document/support-how-calculate-first-draw-ppp-loan-amounts.

How to calculate the loan if you're a seasonal employer
Seasonal employers can determine their maximum loan amounts by selecting any 12-week period between February 15, 2019 and February 15, 2020 and using the average total monthly payroll costs and multiplying by 2.5.

How can these loan proceeds be used?
- Owner compensation replacement (for the self-employed).
- Payroll costs.
- Cost related to the continuation of:
  - employee benefits, and
  - employee benefits during periods of paid sick, medical or family leave.
- Mortgage interest payments (but not prepayments or principal payments) on business mortgage on real or personal property.
- Business rent payments.
- Business utility payments.
- Interest payments on other debts incurred before 2/15/20 (not forgivable).
- Refinancing a SBA EIDL loan made between Jan. 31, 2020 and Apr 3, 2020.

The Economic Aid Act that was signed into legislation on December 27, 2020 made additional business costs eligible. Those four additional categories of eligible non-payroll expenses include:

- Certain operational expenses, such as payments for software, cloud computing services, human resource and accounting needs.
- Property damage costs: defined as costs that are related to property damage and vandalism or looting due to public disturbances that occurred during 2020 and not already covered by insurance or other compensation.
- Supplier costs, i.e., expenditures that a borrower made to a supplier of goods pursuant to a contract, purchase order, or order for goods in effect before the borrower's applicable PPP loan disbursement that were essential to the borrower's operations at the time the expenses were incurred.
- Worker protection expenses, such as the costs of personal protective equipment for employees or expenses including capital costs to adapt the business to comply with federal, state, or local requirements or guidance with respect to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Are these truly forgivable loans?
At least 60 percent of the PPP loan proceeds must be used for payroll expenses. If an EIDL is refinanced, that amount will be used in the calculation to determine the percentage used for payroll costs. If 60 percent is not used for payroll, a proportionate amount of the loan can be forgiven.

If PPP funds are used for unauthorized purposes, the borrower will be required to repay the loan. Additional liability may be placed on a borrower who knowingly uses the funds for unauthorized purposes. This additional liability could include charges for fraud.

PPP loans will be forgiven as long as:
- The loan is used to cover payroll costs, and mortgage interest, rent, and utility costs over the 24-week period after the loan is made; and
- Employee and compensation levels are maintained. Unless an exemption to maintaining these levels applies to the farm's or business's circumstances.
- For a loan to be completely forgiven, no more that 40% of the loan can be used for anything other than payroll. For example, if you use 45% of the loan for mortgage interest, rent and/or utilities, you are required to pay back 5% of the total loan because that is the amount over the 40% you spent on things other than payroll costs.

If someone is required to pay back a portion of the loan, what are the loan terms?
- Interest at 1%, accrues immediately.
- Payments deferred for six months.
- Loan due in two years if the loan was made before June 5, 2020. If the loan was made on or after June

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PPP and EIDL Loans—What Farmers Should Know cont'd from page 6

5, 2020 the loan is due in five years. However, as with any loan, there is always potential for renegotiation. Lenders and borrowers can discuss and if they both agree, the earlier loans could be modified.

Forgiveness process for loans of $150,000 or less
Borrowers that received $150,000 or less can apply for forgiveness using the SBA Forgiveness Application Form 3508S (effective Jan. 19, 2021). These borrowers are not required to submit an application or documentation in addition to the certifications and information required by the Small Business Act. Borrowers must retain records that prove their compliance with the PPP requirements for four years (employment records) and for three years for any other records. Borrowers could be audited or reviewed by SBA.

Can I ask for an increase in my PPP loan that I've already received (First Draw Loans)?
Borrowers who have not yet received forgiveness can request an increase in their loan amount if they returned all or part of a PPP loan or didn't take all of a PPP loan to which they were entitled. A borrower can also be eligible to increase a first loan if the rules changed that allows for an increase. The Center on Agriculture Law and Taxation (CALT) has more information on these circumstances in its blog post: https://www.calt.iastate.edu/blogpost/sba-has-issued-rules-first-draw-second-draw-and-increased-ppp-loans under the section: Increases to First Draw Loans.

Second Draw Loans
The Economic Aid Act authorized the Second Draw Loans with the same terms and conditions as first draw loans to borrows who have previously received a First Draw Loan and have used or will use the full amount of their initial PPP loan for authorized purposes on or before the expected date of disbursement of their Second Draw Loan. Eligibility for the Second Draw Loan include businesses with 300 or fewer employees and has a revenue reduction of 25% or more in 2020 when compared to 2019. More information on revenue reduction calculations can be found at the same CALT blog post listed in the previous section under the section: Second Draw/Revenue Reduction

Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program
The Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) purpose is to meet financial obligations and operating expenses that could not have been met had the disaster not occurred. These are loans that the borrower makes an application directly to the SBA.

While the EIDL ***Advance*** funding has all been distributed, the EIDL COVID-19 loan program is still open for applications. In addition, EIDL COVID-19 loans may be increased from the original funded amounts in 2021. The online application is available at address: https://covid19relief.sba.gov/#/

To be eligible for an EIDL, a business must have 500 or fewer employees and have been in operation by January 31, 2020.

The SBA EIDL COVID-19 loans amounts are for six months of working capital, up to a maximum of $150,000. The interest rate is 3.75% for businesses and 2.75% for non-profits. Maximum loan term is 30 years. The emergency **loans** are not forgiven (except for emergency advances).

Loans can be used to cover:

- Payroll,
- Fixed debts (like mortgages but not on federal debts),
- Accounts payable,
- Rent,
- Other operating expenses.

Can Businesses Apply for both the EIDL and Paycheck Protection Program (PPP)?
A borrower can generally obtain both an EIDL and PPP; however, the proceeds may not be used for the same purposes. A borrower still must meet eligibility requirements for each program individually. If an application has already received other disaster assistance that must be declared in the application.

Go to the SBAs web page https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/covid-19-relief-options/covid-19-economic-injury-disaster-loan and its FAQ, https://www.sba.gov/document/support-faq-regarding-covid-19-eidl for the most up to date information.

Federal and WI Tax Treatment of PPP Loans, EIDL Advances, and CARES Act State Grants

Katie Wantoch, UW-Madison Division of Extension Agriculture Educator, Dunn County

On Monday, December 21, 2020, Congress passed the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (CAA) which contained a $900 billion COVID-19 relief package that reauthorized and modified the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP). The PPP, implemented by section 1102 of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act, expanded the Small Business Administration (SBA) 7(a) loan program to provide up to $349 billion in 100 percent federally-guaranteed loans to small businesses and eligible self-employed individuals impacted by COVID-19.

Consolidated Appropriations Act clarifies tax treatment of PPP loans

In section 276 of the CAA's COVID-Related Tax Relief Act of 2020 (the "Tax Relief Act"), Congress explicitly overrode the Treasury guidance by providing that "no deduction shall be denied, no tax attribute shall be reduced, and no basis increase shall be denied by reason of a forgiven PPP loan's exclusion from gross income." The original CARES Act provided that the proceeds of PPP loans, if forgiven, are excluded from the gross income of the borrower. However, U.S. Treasury guidance (IRS Notice 2020-32 and Rev. Rul. 2020-27 directed that expenses paid with loan proceeds "reasonably expected to be forgiven" were not deductible. This rule rendered the exclusion from gross income unhelpful for many businesses because the elimination of the deduction offset the benefit of the income exclusion.

The CAA states that while some states may treat forgiven loan proceeds and their corresponding deductions differently, PPP loan proceeds will not be reported on a Form 1099 and will not be reported on the borrower's federal income tax return. Businesses that paid otherwise deductible expenses with PPP loan proceeds will continue to deduct those expenses—most notably payroll costs—on their tax returns.

Economic Injury Disaster Loans

In 2020, some farmers also received Economic Injury Disaster Loans (EIDL) from the SBA. Although these loans were not forgivable like PPP loans, the CARES Act allowed those who applied for such a loan (whether they actually took out the loan) to receive an EIDL advance (grant). The SBA limited the grant amount to $1,000 per employee, up to a total of $10,000, for eligible businesses. In mid-2020, Congress specifically granted permission for farmers to receive EIDL loans and EIDL advances.

Section 278 of the Tax Relief Act reports EIDL advances are excluded from gross income and corresponding expenses remain deductible. Additionally, PPP loan forgiveness is not reduced in the amount of the EIDL Advance.

Wisconsin Adopts Federal Tax Laws

Wisconsin law does follow the federal law with respect to the treatment of original and subsequent PPP loans and expenses for the tax years beginning in 2020 and beyond. On Feb.. 18, 2021, Wisconsin lawmakers and Governor Evers signed a tax bill (Assembly Bill 2). Taxpayers may exclude from income the forgiveness of debt on PPP loan proceeds and deduct expenses paid with PPP loan proceeds that are otherwise deductible.

Wisconsin law also follows the federal law regarding the tax treatment of income and expenses relating to certain federal grants, loans, and subsidies. Taxpayers may exclude from income emergency grants of economic injury disaster loans (EIDL) and targeted EIDL advances.

CARES Act State Grants

Many farmers may have received other grants funded by CARES Act money provided to their state. In Wisconsin, these programs included the Wisconsin Farm Support Program and the We're All In Small Business Grant. These grants are not excluded from gross income under federal law and should be reported as regular farm income on the federal income tax return's Schedule F.

Wisconsin agencies reported these grants to the Internal Revenue Service and mailed farmers a copy of their Form 1099-G. s. Some of these grants may be excluded from Wisconsin taxable income. Income received from the State of Wisconsin under the Farm Support Program is exempt from Wisconsin income tax. Also, expenses paid directly or indirectly with these funds that are otherwise deductible for Wisconsin income tax purposes remain deductible even though receipt of the funds are not taxable for Wisconsin income tax purposes. (Wisconsin Tax Bulleting February 2021.

Iowa State University's Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation (CALT) has provided guidance for this article.

Spring Green-Up, Don't Let Grazing Get Ahead of You

Lyssa Seefeldt, UW-Madison Division of Extension Agriculture Educator, Eau Claire County

As we start to see the robins flying, frogs starting to chirp at night, and the grass starting to green up, we need to think about acclimatizing our animals to pasture again. The microbes in the gut of ruminant animals (and also horses) needs time to adjust to the different type of feed- the pasture. This is a process that should be done over a period of time to allow the microbes and the animal to adjust to the "new" feed. You especially don't want hungry animals going out on pasture in the spring.

To complete the transition, you want to continue to offer the normal winter feed along with the spring pasture. You may also want to offer hay as part of the transition process (i.e. supplementing a haylage diet with hay). This allows your livestock to nibble on the higher fiber feed from the winter when it is needed. Over the course of a couple of weeks you can then reduce the amount of higher fiber feeds in the animal's diet as long as there is adequate pasture growth. Make sure to "read" your animals though: if you see signs of diarrhea, you want to increase the amount of hay/high fiber feed supplied in the diet. You can read more about the transition process at https://goo.gl/eQGRBk.

One thing to remember is that you want to remember when turning out to spring pasture is to make sure there is adequate growth of at least six inches. Grazing on pastures with less than six inches puts your animals at risk of experiencing grass tetany. Grass tetany is a condition where the animal has low levels of magnesium in the blood, usually occurring when animals graze fast growing cool season grasses in the spring. You can read more about grass tetany at https://goo.gl/qoOZPd.

Another reason that you want your pasture plants to be at six inches or higher before you turn your animals out is that grazing done in the spring sets the bar for pasture yield throughout the summer. If your animals are allowed to graze plants below six inches, the plants are set back and are taking energy reserves from their roots, stressing the plant. This decreases yield of the pasture, especially if each grazing event takes the plants below three or four inches of height.

At some point over the course of the spring, the opposite problem may occur: the pasture gets ahead of the herd. If you are rotationally grazing, your animals will be grazing one paddock at a time. Spring green-up tends to have plants growing at about the same rate, so by the time you get to the last paddock in the rotation, it may be more mature than is ideal for animal palatability. There are a few strategies you can take to better utilize your pasture:

1. Stagger your last grazing in the fall.
2. Mow pastures or make hay when the forage gets ahead of the herd.
3. Adjust the number of animals utilizing the pasture.

DATCP 'Rural Realities' Podcast to Focus on Farmer Stress, Adaptability

Given the variety of ongoing challenges facing the agriculture industry, from low prices and uncertain markets to inclement weather and COVID-19, it's no surprise Wisconsin farmers and their families are experiencing increased stress.

To provide relevant information and resources on this important topic and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health issues in rural communities, the Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has created a new audio podcast series called "Rural Realities."

"The goal of the podcast is to provide farmers, farm families and everyone in the agriculture sector with information and techniques to decrease stress in their lives and navigate the various challenges in farming," said Jayne Krull, director of DATCP's Farm Center. "While the first group of podcasts will focus on stress on the farm, the podcasts eventually will cover a wide range of topics impacting farmers and rural audiences."

To listen, visit https://datcp.buzzsprout.com/1160120

Calendar of Events—webinar educational sessions

April 2021

21	Jumping Worms: The Impacts of a New Soil Invader | 12pm — *Register at https://go.wisc.edu/5y045k*
21	Small Ruminants: Designing Your Sheep and Goat Grazing System | 7:30pm— *Register at go.wisc.edu/FarmReadyResearch*
23	Farm Management Fridays: FARMing for Health | 11am — *Register at https://go.wisc.edu/bccspring2021*
28	Badger Crop Connect: Wheat Fungicides & Corn Nitrogen Mgt | 12:30pm — *Register at go.wisc.edu/FarmReadyResearch*

May 2021

12	Badger Crop Connect: Corn and Insect Update | 12:30pm — *Register at go.wisc.edu/FarmReadyResearch*
18	Testing, Amending, and Managing Gardens for Soil Health | 6pm—Register at https://go.wisc.edu/461n76
26	Badger Crop Connect: Soybean Update and Roller Crimping Rye | 12:30pm — *Register at go.wisc.edu/FarmReadyResearch*

July 2021

20-22	Wisconsin Farm Technology Days—Huntsinger Farms: *for more information, visit https://www.wifarmtechdays.org/*

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