



Land and Water Conservation

Ag Education Newsletter #7

Happy New Year! I hope everyone has had a great holiday season!

Because of its importance, I wanted to highlight something right away. Please be aware: H5N1 (HPAI) has been identified in three poultry flocks in Wisconsin, in [Barron County](#), in [Kenosha County](#), and in [Burnett County](#). The Wisconsin Department of Health Services also identified [one case in a human being](#). The person had exposure to the infected flock in Barron County. To learn more about HPAI from the CDC [read here](#). To read the latest update and resources from the DATCP division of Animal Health, [click here](#).

No cases have been identified in Calumet or surrounding counties, but please be conscientious; continue taking precautions if you come in contact with flocks of wild or domesticated birds of any kind, and continue following [biosecurity recommendations](#) when working with animals.

If you are concerned about HPAI in the county or have any questions, please get in touch with me.

Winter Farmer Meetings

Shop Talk:

A farmer-to-farmer event series



- ✓ By farmers, for farmers
- ✓ Topics you care about
- ✓ Free pizza and refreshments

January Topic:

The Good, the Bad and the Rainy: 2024 in Review

Suggested talking points: Replant decisions, timing, cover crops/no till effects on drainage, what went well, how to tackle a year like this in the future

January 22nd, 5pm

📍 **Ledgeview Customs Shop, 2400 Plymouth Street,
New Holstein WI, 53061**

Call or text 920-666-5539 to RSVP

Planning for the Future

As I get to know the farms and farmers that make Calumet the county it is, I've spoken with many folks preparing to retire and worrying a lot about what they'll do with their farm, land, or assets. While retirement should mean time to relax, getting there can be extremely stressful. As long as the weather stays cold and everyone is working on their end-of-year finances, I thought it might be a good time to think about what your goals are for the future of your operation. It's never too early to [make a plan!](#)



Passing down to children or other descendants

Many folks consider this the dream, and it can be; however, without clearly established expectations and boundaries it can be a real nightmare. Make sure you've **talked to your children early and often** about who will take on the business, and set appropriate expectations. A sentence I see over and over: "**Fair isn't equal and Equal isn't Fair**" ([Progressive Farmer](#)). The dream scenario, in which children have assisted equally with the operation and become equal owners, rarely actually occurs. If I can emphasize one thing to you it is communication; make sure your family knows what to expect and are on the same page.

When you've decided on a plan, even if you think everyone is on the same page, **put it in writing**.



Renting out Land or Assets

If you're unsure about a long-term plan and aren't ready to sell, **renting your land can be a good option** until you decide on a longer-term plan. Many farmers in Calumet County operate some or all rented land, and landlords are important players in the agricultural landscape. If you,

- Have a good relationship with someone who's been helping you run your land,
- Know a neighbor looking to expand,
- Want to help out a beginning farmer,

Renting your land could be a great arrangement for you, but be aware; **renting is not an entire succession plan**. Make sure you consider who the land will go to upon your passing.



Nontraditional arrangements

There's no one way to pass a farm down, and with something as important as your business it's absolutely worth getting creative. Some ideas:

- **Check out a Land Link:** There are online [websites and forums](#) dedicated to matching retired farmers with up and coming successors, that could help you find someone to take over your business. Try posting your business on the [forums at Marbleseed](#).
- **Develop a plan with trusted employees:** Work with a lawyer and/or financial advisor to develop a plan by which employees can work to buy the business or land, or land can be passed down to non-operating children with a lease guaranteed to those same employees.
- **Switch things up:** Consider dividing the farm and assets and handling those parcels differently, gifting to a charity or nonprofit, or any number of other creative arrangements ([Farm Bureau](#)).



Selling to non-family

While many people would prefer not to sell their land or their farm to non-family, there are cases where it is absolutely the best choice. Without a next generation to take over the farm or reliable lessees to operate it, **the payout from selling can alleviate financial burden and lead to a comfortable retirement.**

If you're concerned about keeping your land in agriculture, there are ways to ensure it continues to be operated as such.

- **[Land Trusts:](#)** There are many nonprofit organizations that would purchase your land, and ensure that it is managed in a particular way. There are [land trusts](#) that will ensure the land remains undeveloped, kept as a hunting preserve, or remains as farmland. If you don't have a particular lessee or purchaser in mind but want to make sure the land remains in agriculture, consider working with the [American Farmland Trust](#). While they may not purchase your land themselves, they have contacts with many other land trusts in our area that could work with you. To get in touch with a representative from AFT, reach out to [Angie Doucette](#).
- **Beginning Farmer:** Ask around your community if there are any up-and-coming farmers looking for land or assets. You may be able to serve as a mentor or set up a leasing arrangement, to help a young producer get their start. If you're not sure where to find beginning farmers, consider contacting the [Farm Bureau](#), or Wisconsin Farmers Union, or **reaching out to local colleges or online forums**. Take a look at the [Farmland Access Hub](#) to be matched with land seekers.

After you've decided

Even when you're sure of your plan, making it happen can be very stressful. I would encourage anyone going through succession planning or the transition itself to **reach out to friends and neighbors**. Lean on your community; there will come a day when they need help too, and then they'll know they can lean on you.

If you know what you want but just aren't sure where to start, try **filling out a [planning workbook from UW Extension](#)**; if you prefer to talk it out with someone, consider **[contacting a certified farming succession coordinator](#)**. If all else fails, **get in touch with me**. There are extension specialists, financial planners, and farmers in our area who have advice and guidance, and we can figure out what will work for you.

Whether you're 3 months from retirement or 30 years, it's always the right time to start making a plan!

Conservation and Ag News

[Congress Passes Emergency Aid for Farmers](#)

Congress has passed an emergency aid package, including \$10 billion earmarked for farmers who suffered losses in expected gross returns. Read Congress' fact

sheet [here](#), and find a helpful summary of the funding [here](#).



[Group Landowner Survey](#)

Via Lake Tides: "Do you own or manage land with a group of people (3+), with at least part of that land kept natural or conserved? If so, Hilary Habeck Hunt, PhD Candidate at UW-Madison, would love to hear from you." Please consider responding to the survey [here](#). Questions reach out to h hunt@wisc.edu or call/text 608-515-8474.

[78th Alice in Dairyland Applications Open Now](#)

Via DATCP: The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) invites individuals with a passion for promoting agriculture to apply for the position of 78th Alice in Dairyland through January 31, 2025. To apply, provide a cover letter, completed application form, resume, and contact information for three professional references to DATCPAlice@wisconsin.gov by 4:30 p.m. on January 31, 2025. Application materials are available on the [Alice in Dairyland website](#).



[New Marketing Assistance Now Available for Specialty Crop Producers](#)

Via USDA: "The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Farm Service Agency's (FSA) \$2 billion Marketing Assistance for Specialty Crops (MASC) program, aimed at helping specialty crop producers expand markets and manage higher costs, is now accepting applications from Dec. 10, 2024 through Jan. 8, 2025." To apply, contact the county FSA office at 920-849-3570, ext-2.

USDA NASS Releases

- [WI Milk Price 12/24](#)
- [WI Milk Production 12/24](#)
- [WI Prices 12/24](#)
- [WI Chickens 12/24](#)
- [WI Annual Crop Progress 2024](#)
- [WI Dairy Products 12/24](#)

If you would like to receive these reports directly to your inbox when they are released, you can sign up [here](#).

Upcoming Dates

- Jan 1- March 25: [Navigating your Ag Business: From Stress to Success](#)

- **January 6-10:** [Crop Scouting Training with Fox Valley Tech](#)
- **January 10:** [Virtual Nutrient Management Training for Farmers](#)
- **January 21:** [2025 Wisconsin Agricultural Outlook Forum](#)
- **January 22:** [Shop Talk](#)
- **January 28th:** [Green Bay CAFO meeting](#)
- **January 29th:** [Fond Du Lac CAFO meeting](#)
- **January 29th:** [Commercial Pesticide Applicator Training](#)
- **January 30th:** [Manitowoc CAFO Meeting](#)
- **Jan 30 and Feb 21:** [Private Pesticide Applicator Training](#)
- **February 18:** [Farmer Roundtable at Van Abels](#)
- **February 26th:** [Midwest Manure Summit](#)

Ag Education Website

Calumet County Land and Water Conservation, 206 Court Street, Chilton, WI 53014

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