



Land and Water Conservation

Ag Education Newsletter #3

This past weekend's County Fair was the perfect way to send off summer and start looking forward to harvest season. I was happy to meet and chat with some of you in the baby barn, and see all the great exhibits and animals; you all made my first Calumet County Fair super special. See you all next year!

I spent this August super busy, from attending field days and planting cover crops to working with producers around the county to provide cost-share for sustainable practices. As we move towards fall and start thinking about next year, if you're considering trying some no-till planting or cover crops reach out to me; the county has funding available to help with some of the costs.

Onward to fall!

Corn Silage Dry Down Days

2024 Calumet County Corn Silage Dry Down Days

Tuesday, September 10

11:00 am - 2:00 pm

Country Visions Coop, W2468 County Road E, Chilton

Tuesday, September 17

11:00 am - 2:00 pm

Ken Rach Farm, N4833 Twain Road, Chilton

Tuesday, September 24

11:00 am - 2:00 pm

Greg Bohman Farm, N8819 Cty Road PP, Brillion 54110

\$15 annual membership fee (covers Forage Council activities) OR \$3.00 donation per sample to cover costs is suggested. Donations to the Forage Council are appreciated.



Sampling Guidelines:

- Collect 3-5 stalks from a representative area within the field. (cut at chopper height)
- Please include name, address, email, hybrid planted, relative maturity, and planting date.
- Once samples are cut, do not delay bringing them to the site so that moisture is not lost.
- Getting a representative sample may be difficult this year. Sample corn from the same site in fields weekly. Bring more stalks if needed.

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What's New?





It's all Coming Up Cover Crops!

As summer annual crops come off, keep your eyes open for a new look on some of those fields. While in days past, a harvested field may be left bare for the winter, [many farmers are opting](#) for the soil and nutrient benefits a cover crop can bring.

Many cover crops have already been planted, and fields should be sprouting beautiful fall covers soon. Keep a lookout for this soil health practice in action!

[Get Ready for Hunting Seasons Opening in September](#)

Via DNR: The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR) reminds hunters to prepare for the opening of several hunting seasons in September. Hunters can once again head to Wisconsin's wild spaces as these seasons open across the state. There are six dates throughout September when seasons open. Hunters are encouraged to double-check [season dates](#) and that they have acquired all necessary licenses and stamps before going out for a hunt. Read more [here](#).



Corn Silage; How to Estimate Dry

Down?

One of the best parts of living and working in Wisconsin agricultural education is the opportunity to work with so many smart and experienced folks. I was having a conversation with UW Extension Crops Educator Liz Gartman recently, and she mentioned something that struck my interest, that could be important for some of you reading this newsletter.

When approaching the end of the season and estimating corn dry down, “milk lines” and their progression over time are a well-known method of predicting when silage will need to come off. While a useful shorthand, we do know that this kind of estimate is just that: an estimate.



In recent years however, using kernel stage as a means to estimate may be more misleading than helpful. When speaking with Liz she mentioned that due to hybridization amongst different corn varieties, we’re more often seeing kernel stages that are out of line with the development of the whole plant. As Liz put it:

“I think the challenge lies in the changes in corn breeding altogether – in some cases we are breeding for increased standability, stay green, etc. that likely results in the plant holding moisture longer, while the cob might be at a later maturity point. [...] The cob might be mature or ready from a traditional silage perspective, but the plant is WAY wetter than we would like. On the flip side, we could have cobs that are slow to mature, but based on disease, weather, growing conditions, the plant could be drying down faster than ideal, resulting in immature grain, but optimum/dry whole plant moisture.”

The takeaway? Until further research, the most accurate way to know when your corn is ready to come off is to **test it**. In our county we’re lucky enough to have a local forage council, who are hosting several dry down days. This year especially it’s important not to depend on estimation to maximize the quality of what you’re taking home at the end of the day.

A big thank you to Liz for sharing some of her knowledge with me. If you’re

interested in checking out more of Liz's work with extension or getting in touch with her, you can do so [here](#).

Conservation and Ag News

[USDA Updates Farm Loan Programs](#)

Via FSA: The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) today announces changes to the Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Farm Loan Programs, effective Sept. 25, 2024 — changes that are intended to increase opportunities for farmers and ranchers to be financially viable [...] Under the Biden-Harris Administration, USDA's FSA has embarked on a comprehensive and systemic effort to ensure equitable delivery of Farm Loan Programs and improve access to credit for small and mid-size family farms. [Read more here.](#)

[10 Tips to Shorten Your Cover Crop Learning Curve](#)

Cover crops can improve soil health, profit margins, and land value, but adopting a new practice isn't always smooth sailing. There are ways to ease some of those growing pains though, and learn from the mistakes of others. Read more [here](#).

[Local Farms in the News](#)

Episodes 26 and 27 of the Travel Calumet Original Podcast are now available, and feature some of our local farms! Listen to episode 26 to hear from Vern Gasch, owner of Heritage Orchard, or episode 27 to hear from Polly Roland of Polly's Pumpkin Patch. For these and other episodes, click [here](#).

[Groundwater Coordinating Council Releases 2024 Report To The Legislature](#)

Via DNR: the Wisconsin Groundwater Coordinating Council today shared key recommendations for protecting and preserving vital groundwater resources in its 2024 annual report to the Wisconsin State Legislature. Read more [here](#).

[EL "BREAK" INFO-LECHERO 2.0 - Spanish Webinars for the Dairy](#)

[Community](#)

Via UW Extension: UW-Madison Extension is offering the Dairy Spanish Webinar "El Break Info-Lechero 2.0" to bring the latest dairy research to Wisconsin's Spanish-speaking dairy community. Learn more and register [here](#).

USDA NASS Releases

- [WI Crop Progress, August 26 2024](#)
- [WI Milk Price, August 24 2024](#)
- [WI Prices \(all\), August 24 2024](#)
- [WI Crop Production, August 24 2024](#)
- [WI Chickens, August 24 2024](#)
- [WI Cash Rent, August 24 2024](#)
- [WI Honey Bee Colonies August 2024](#)

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

Upcoming Dates

- **Sept 4:** [Soybean Management Field Day](#)
- **Third Tuesday of the month:** Badger Dairy Insight. Register [here](#).
- **Sept 10:** [Nutrient Management Regional Meeting](#)
- **Sept 10:** Forage Council [corn silage dry down days](#).
- **Sept 17:** Forage Council [corn silage dry down days](#)
- **Sept 24:** Forage Council [corn silage dry down days](#).
- **Sept 29-Oct 2:** National 4H Dairy Conference. [Register here by Sept 15](#).

Ag Education Website

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

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