



# NEWSLETTER

## Driftless Ag Update

Ag news for La Crosse, Vernon, and Crawford Counties from UW-Madison Extension



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Here's your July Driftless Ag Update!

Hello and congratulations on receiving our July Driftless Ag Update! This newsletter is co-written by your local UW-Madison Extension Ag Educators, Beth McIlquham (livestock) and Sam Bibby (crops).

**Please contact your local extension office for the print version of any article included in this newsletter.**

## **Notes from your Regional Crops Educator- Sam Bibby**

-Early planted soybeans are beginning to flower across the region. Liberty and Enlist may only be applied up to the R1 growth stage (1st flower on main stem).

-Save the date for the 2nd annual WI Weeds Workshop on September 11th. If you spray herbicides you will want to be there. This workshop focuses on how to maximize the effectiveness of our chemistries and highlights new technology.

-We will host a NOPP sunflower field day on my home farm near the beginning of August. I will likely send out an email when we finalize the date and have details. Stay tuned.

## **Notes from your Regional Livestock Educator- Beth McIlquham**

-Buyer Beware When Purchasing Electronic Identification (EID) Tags: Remember to be a smart purchaser! Carefully read all labels and packaging so that the product you purchase is in fact the one you want, and this applies to your purchase of ear tags and electronic identification (EID) tags. To be official, tags must be imprinted with the animal identification number (AIN, 15-digit number starting with 840), the official US ear tag Shield, the phrase, 'UNLAWFUL TO REMOVE' and the manufacturer's logo or trademark.

-Finding a Veterinarian for your Chickens: Many people with small poultry flocks and backyard chickens struggle to find a veterinarian which will take chickens as patients. Unfortunately, this often becomes an urgent problem when the chickens are sick.

-Disease Digest: The UW-Madison Extension Livestock team has created a webpage that houses resources and information on Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza. There have been no cases of New World Screwworm in the U.S., but more information can be found at: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/cattle/ticks/screwworm>. *Theileria*, a parasite carried by Asian Longhorned Ticks, was confirmed in Iowa. For animal owners of all kinds, please evaluate your biosecurity protocols, including pest management.





## Winter Camelina Agronomy and Market Opportunity Workshop

**Learn about novel cover crop and oilseed production opportunities for Wisconsin**

**Date/time:** July 23rd, 2025 10:00am-12:30pm with a complimentary lunch to follow

**Special Guest:** Anna Teeter, Novel Oilseeds Program Manager (CCA) with Cargill

### Topics Covered:

- ✓ Winter Camelina Cover Crop
  - Impacts on corn yield
  - 1<sup>st</sup> year results from on-farm research
  - Drone seeding: does it work?
- ✓ Winter Camelina for Grain Harvest
  - Planting, relay cropping, harvest, storage and more
- ✓ Grain Contract Opportunities with Cargill
  - Current contract specifics
  - Expected market growth



Register by a call or text to Sam Bibby at 608-219-2055 or use QR code



**Hosted by:** UW-Madison Extension Educators: Anastasia Kurth, Will Fulwider, and Sam Bibby

**Location:** Town Hall of Greenfield, N1800 Town Hall Road, La Crosse, WI 54601



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**JULY 16**



**E7552 HWY 14  
WESTBY WI**



**10 AM - 2 PM**



# Cover Crop Grazing Workshop



UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



**Extension**



Natural Resources Conservation Service  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE



Join Crawford Stewardship Project, UW-Madison Extension, and Vernon County Land & Water to discuss grazing cover crops. Topics include:



- ✂ Pasture walk with Ron Leum to see cover crop grazing in action!
- ✂ Panel of producers actively grazing cover crops
- ✂ Partnering with Vernon County for cover crop success
- ✂ Cover crop grazing strategies
- ✂ On-farm research update on interseeding cover crops
- ✂ Lunch provided by Coon Creek Watershed

Questions?  
Call or text Beth  
(608) 632-0599

*The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.*

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# Badger Crop Connect

## Badger Crop Connect 2025

Badger Crop Connect is back for 2025. Every 2nd and 4th Thursday from 12:30 to 1:30 via Zoom UW faculty and other topic experts will provide timely recommendations, share research findings and provide program updates.

[https://cropsandsoils.extension.wisc.edu/programs/badger-crop-connect/?utm\\_source=newsletter&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_campaign=wcm\\_march\\_ii](https://cropsandsoils.extension.wisc.edu/programs/badger-crop-connect/?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=wcm_march_ii)



### This project helps you:

- Understand the nitrogen content in your irrigation water.
- Assess potential to save money on inputs and improve water quality.
- Improve nitrogen decisions for the future.

### What we offer:

- **Free water testing:** Analyze nitrogen levels in irrigation water.
- **Custom report:** Receive a detailed nitrogen balance tailored to your fields.
- **1-on-1 support:** Get help in interpreting data and identifying days to increase efficiency.

Scan to learn more and sign up by July 15th, 2025



### PROGRAM DETAILS

#### Who should join?

- Farmers using high-capacity irrigation wells
- Those interested in reducing N loss

#### What is needed to participate?

- Collect in-season irrigation water samples from up to five fields.
- Provide field-specific nitrogen management records, irrigation schedules, and crop yields.

#### For more information, contact:

Guolong Liang,  
gliang6@wisc.edu,  
(715)-540-8653, UW-Madison  
Extension Ag Water Program

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming in compliance with state and federal law.



 <b>GREAT RIVER GRAZIERS</b> EST. 1993			<b>2025 Pasturewalks</b> All are welcome! Facilitated by Vance Haugen (507) 459-0495 vjhaugen@gmail.com <a href="http://www.crawfordstewardship.org/grg">www.crawfordstewardship.org/grg</a> **check Facebook for schedule updates**
Tuesday May 20 10:30a	Don Bolland 18732 Hwy 27 Gays Mills, WI	How to improve paddocks using your nutrient management plan. Guest Speaker: Michael Geisinger, UW Nutrient & Pest Management Program Regional Outreach Specialist.	
Tuesday June 3 *** 5pm ***	Rod Ofte E 5702 Spring Coulee Rd. Coon Valley, WI	Special <b>evening</b> pasturewalk with beef cookout dinner, free but <b>ADVANCE REGISTRATION REQUIRED BY MAY 23</b> . Are well-managed pasture and bird-friendly habitat compatible? Guest Speaker: Ashley Steinke, Audubon Conservation Ranching and grassfed beef producer. Register at <a href="http://crawfordstewardship.org/events-1">crawfordstewardship.org/events-1</a>	
Tuesday June 10 10:30a	Christopher Baird 12241 State Hwy 27 Ferryville, WI	Methods for managing micro swards in paddocks. Dealing with winter feeding areas for paddock improvement. How to reliably feed salt and minerals economically.	
Tuesday June 17 10:30a	Taylor Henry E 6627 County Rd XX Viroqua, WI	Using cover crops and summer annuals to finish fat cattle. Guest speaker: Jim Munsch.	
Tuesday July 1 10:30a	Andy Mullikin 53280 County Rd N Wausau, WI	Methods for rejuvenating the existing pasture. Grazing timing, grazing intensity, adding species, and rest period.	
Tuesday July 15 10:30a	Chad Sime 16451 Freeman Rd. Gays Mills, WI	Demo of electronic Pasture Trak device. How to better utilize new lane system and maximise the grazing management on 50 acres of dedicated paddocks. Guest Speaker: Kelsey Vance, Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship.	
Tuesday July 29 10:30a	Matt Dahlberg 54500 Snyder Rd. Gays Mills, WI	Evaluating the economics of getting water to remote and high (300 ft +) paddocks up the ridge. Guest Speaker: John Anderson, plumber and philosopher.	
Tuesday August 12 10:30a	Silas Dodgeon 19663 Stove Rd. Eastman, WI	Targeted feasibility of converting 92 acres for profitable custom heifer grazing. Guest Speaker: Aaron Pape, NE Wisconsin grazing guru.	
Tuesday August 26 10:30a	Andrew Miller E10096 Andy Miller Rd Westby, WI	Small acreage dairy looking to increase grazing productivity.	
Tuesday Sept 16 10:30a	Kelsey Vance E4998 Irish Ridge Rd. Viroqua, WI	Methodology of gearing up for profitable grazing on an under-grazed heritage farm.	
Tuesday Oct 7 10:30a	Michelle Skaden S2720 Stellner Lane Viroqua, WI	Calculating how much to hay & how much to graze for maximum profitability on 50 fenced acres. Guest speakers: Jim Munsch and Gene Schreifer, commercial scale sheep and beef graziers of 30+ years.	
Tuesday Oct 21 10:30a	Jim Munsch S995 Bagsted Rd. Coon Valley, WI	The cost of pasture as feed. What management tools do you have that can change cost.	



## Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Grants

DATCP is offering equipment only grants. The deadline is 7-21-25. The purpose of the Resilient Food Systems Infrastructure Program (RFSI) is to expand capacity and infrastructure for the aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, and distribution of locally and regionally produced food products.

### More Information:

<https://datcp.wi.gov/pages/agdevelopment/rfsi.aspx>

## **4 Ways to Maximize Calf Value**

Written by Beth McIlquham and Adam Hartfiel

### **Introduction**

With fewer feeder calves available, prices have continued to stay high and will most likely stay that way into the fall run. In a strong feeder calf market, it can often be difficult for producers to identify areas where premiums can be made come sale time. Producers can still increase calf value through proactive management practices before marketing. Optimizing weight gain and minimizing stress through practices you start the day the calves hit the ground will benefit your pocketbook in the fall.

### **Vaccination**

Calves, at minimum, should be vaccinated for the most common respiratory diseases (IBR, PI3, BRSV, and BVD type 1 and 2) and Clostridia. Work with your vet to set up a plan and always follow the instructions on the label of the vaccine. Note that vaccinations given at the time of weaning will not be as effective due to the stress of weaning, which could reduce the immune response to the vaccine.

### **Castration**

The preferred method of castration by buyers is surgical removal of the testes (knife) as this method provides a visual of a healed scrotum and gives trust that both testes have been removed. Placing a band above both the testes (banding) is also common. Most importantly, both methods of castration should be done before two months of age. As calves get older, swelling and chronic pain increases. Pain mitigation should be used if castrating calves older than two months. Decreasing pain in any stage of life helps calves return to feed faster and allows them to be more resilient.

### **Weaning**

At a minimum, calves should be weaned for 30 days. Recent market data research by Oklahoma State University reported premiums for weaning length beyond 59 days at some markets. These premiums do not account for associated costs of keeping calves on the farm. Be sure to acknowledge your input costs when determining how many days your calves will be weaned. The time between weaning and sale allows for calves to adjust to living without the guidance of their mothers. Weaning is one of the most stressful times in a calf's life. During this time, try to avoid any other stressful events, such as castration, dehorning, or vaccinating. Spreading stressful events out across the early lifespan of a calf is a great way to help build resilient calves.



## **Nutrition**

Calves need to learn to eat and drink independently post weaning. Although it seems simple, these aspects can be easily overlooked. Calves should learn how to eat from the bunk before leaving the farm. Recommended bunk space for calves weighing 400-800 lbs. is 18-22 inches. It is common for young calves to want to eat together as a group, especially after being weaned because they don't realize feed is always available. Not providing enough bunk space early on can lead to variable growth within the group, and a group of calves lacking uniformity is less attractive to buyers.

Access to clean, potable water is essential for health, growth, and development. If possible, calves should be familiar with drinking from a tank or fountain by allowing their mothers to teach them prior to weaning. Water intake levels will vary based on weight and environmental conditions (Table 1), but the importance of clean, potable water cannot be overlooked.

	Temperature in Fahrenheit			
	50°	60°	70°	80°
Weight (lb.)	Daily Water Requirements of Growing Steers and Heifers (Gallons)			
400	4.3	5.0	5.8	6.7
600	5.8	6.6	7.8	8.9
800	7.9	9.1	10.7	12.3

*Table 1: Water Requirements of Beef Cattle*

## **Summary**

High prices should not be an excuse for poor management. Opportunities for premiums still exist for the seller in a high market if good management practices are utilized. Building a reputation for high-performing, quality cattle can take a while to build, but choosing to take a short cut in a bullish market can have long lasting consequences.



## **MEMORANDUM**

**DATE:** June 13, 2025

**TO:** Industry Partners & Iowa Licensed Veterinarians

**FROM:** Dr. Jeff Kaisand, State Veterinarian

**RE:** Important Animal Health Updates

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Industry partners,

We have two important animal health updates to share with your organization and stakeholders.

### **Asian Longhorned Tick**

There has been a confirmed case of *Theileria orientalis* Ikeda in bovine in Van Buren County, located in southeast Iowa. *Theileria* is a protozoan parasite carried by the Asian Longhorned Tick (ALHT); the parasite infects red and white blood cells and causes bovine infectious anemia. According to USDA records, this is the first time *Theileria* and the ALHT have been confirmed in Iowa.

There are no approved treatments for *Theileria* in the United States. The best way to protect livestock is through tick control methods and proper biosecurity to prevent blood-borne spread between livestock.

If producers observe signs of anemia, lethargy, fever, jaundice, abortion or difficulty breathing in their livestock, they should contact their herd veterinarian. Veterinarians should include *Theileria* among the list of differentials for livestock displaying these clinical signs. Veterinarians should collect appropriate samples and submit to Iowa State University Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory for diagnosis.

*Theileria* primarily affects ungulates, including cattle, sheep and deer. There is no known impact on public health in the U.S.

Additional resources are available at:

- <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/livestock-poultry-disease/cattle/ticks/asian-longhorned>
- <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/bovine-theileriosis-infosheet.pdf>
- <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/alert-asian-longhorned-tick.508.pdf>

### **Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Fund**

During the 2025 session, Iowa legislators voted to eliminate the Brucellosis and Tuberculosis Eradication Fund and the associated programs in Senate File 646. Effective July 1, 2025, Iowa taxpayers will no longer be assessed a property tax levy to support the fund and vaccine reimbursements.

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship will continue reimbursing Iowa veterinarians for brucellosis vaccinations administered through June 30, 2025. Veterinarians should submit vaccine vouchers to the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship by July 31 to receive reimbursement.

Costs for brucellosis vaccinations administered on or after July 1, 2025, will not be reimbursed.

If you have questions or need assistance submitting your vaccine voucher, please contact Blake Ehler at [blake.ehler@iowaagriculture.gov](mailto:blake.ehler@iowaagriculture.gov).

Jeff Kaisand, DVM  
State Veterinarian  
Animal Industry Division



# **Defined breeding season: Simple yet important strategy**

## **Introduction**

Albert Einstein is often credited for saying, "Everything should be made as simple as possible, but no simpler." So, what does Einstein have to do with breeding beef cows?

The simplest recommendation we can offer to cow-calf producers is to have a defined breeding season length, which in turn sets calving season length. Open-ended access to the herd sire can lead to year-round calving, and no consistent plan for when to wean and market calves.

## **Defined breeding season**

Having a defined breeding season, which also then sets the calving season, offers several advantages. Cows are closely grouped at a similar stage of production to balance rations and implement herd health practices. Shorter calving seasons concentrate the time demands for extra labor and attention to calvings, ensuring calves get off to a good start. There is also greater potential to market a uniform group of feeder calves based on their age and weight.

Defined breeding seasons can range from 45 to 90 days; longer seasons of 120 to 180 days are also observed. If we assume an average estrous cycle length of 21 days and cows are cycling at the beginning of the breeding season, a 45-day breeding season provides cows with two opportunities to become pregnant. Longer breeding seasons spread out calving but offer more opportunities for cows to breed.

Despite the upsides of controlling breeding and calving season length, a 2017 USDA survey found 58% of farms do not have a set breeding season (defined as removing the bull for 30 days or more). Differences existed by herd size, with the following reporting not having a defined breeding season:

- 64% of farms with one to 49 cows
- 44% of farms with 50 to 199 cows
- 26% of farms with 200-plus cows

## **Determine length of breeding season**

This “simplest recommendation” is not specific, though, and does not inform the length of the defined breeding season once a producer has changed his or her management practices to remove the bull. Differences in how calves are marketed and options for cows that do not conceive make this decision unique to every farm. This can become a balancing act of testing how short you can go, without going too short.

While the advantages outweigh the negatives, Beard, McCarthy and Mulliniks from the University of Nebraska Extension beef team point out how shortening the defined breeding season can come at the expense of having to market more cows due to reproductive failure. A shorter defined breeding season requires you to be at the top of your management game and pay attention to details like body condition scores, nutrition and pasture management, minimizing the incidence of dystocia and retained placentas, and more.

Questions all farms should ask include:

- What are the marketing options for cows that do not conceive during the defined breeding season?
- Is there an opportunity to introduce a second breeding season for fall calving?
- Are there opportunities to continue breeding but market pregnant cows that fall outside of your desired calving season?
- Do you have a marketing plan for open cows?

Each farm needs to assess the pros and cons of shorter vs. longer defined breeding seasons. For example, a farm that markets all feeder calves may opt for a more aggressive, shorter breeding season to more closely group and optimize the value of feeder calves. Conversely, a farm that retains ownership and direct-markets may have opportunities to capture value from later-born calves resulting from a longer breeding season. In both examples, consideration should be given to what opportunities do or do not exist to market cows that fail to conceive in the defined breeding season.

Track reproductive performance against changes you make to breeding season length. For example, first-calf heifers may have a harder time conceiving during a shorter breeding season. In that case, you need to assess whether changes to management can improve reproduction, or if a longer defined breeding season better suits your herd.

Consider the long-term value of placing selection pressure on cows that do not perform in your environment by removing cows that do not conceive during the defined breeding season.



# **Unlocking Nitrogen Insights: From Irrigation to N Balances**

## **Why should you test nitrogen in your irrigation water?**

Irrigation water can carry nitrogen—just like fertilizer. This source is often overlooked in nitrogen management. If you're using pivot irrigation, you might be adding more nitrogen than you realize. Too much nitrogen can lead to waste, higher costs, and environmental risks.

That's why we're working with farmers to better understand the nitrogen balance in irrigated fields—how much nitrogen goes in (e.g., water, fertilizer) and how much goes out (e.g., crop yields). This project helps find out how much nitrogen is running through your irrigation water and how to make more precise decisions about your nitrogen use.

## **Why should you test nitrogen in your irrigation water?**

Calculating your nitrogen balance can help you:

- Assess if excess nitrogen can be leached into the groundwater of your fields.
- Assess potential to save money on inputs by accounting for all sources.
- Explore alternative management strategies to reduce nitrogen leaching risks.

## **Who should join?**

Farmers with irrigated fields growing crops such as field corn, potatoes, and vegetables.

## **What's included for you?**

- Free water testing: Nitrate-N content in irrigation water by a certified lab.
- Custom report: A detailed nitrogen balance just for your farm.
- 1-on-1 support: Help making sense of your numbers and what to do next.

## **What's included for you?**

- Irrigation water samples from up to five fields per farm, collected during growing season.
- Share field-specific nitrogen management record, irrigation schedule (how much and when), and crop yield. (Free data sheet templates will be provided for record-keeping)
- Meet with an outreach specialist 2–3 times across the season to review results and explore ideas.

## **When does this take place?**

- Summer: Collect water samples; we'll provide free testing kits (and technical assistance for testing if needed) and data sheets to track irrigation and nitrogen management.
- Fall: Share field data, receive your first nitrogen balance.
- Winter-Spring: Final report and focused conversation.

## **COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE**

United States Department of Agriculture  
University of Wisconsin-Extension  
La Crosse County Offices  
212 North 6th Street  
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UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-EXTENSION, U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND WISCONSIN COUNTIES COOPERATING. UW-EXTENSION PROVIDES EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IN EMPLOYMENT AND PROGRAMMING, INCLUDING TITLE VI, TITLE VI, TITLE IX, THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT (ADA) AND SECTION 504 OF THE REHABILITATION ACT REQUIREMENTS. FOR COMMUNICATIVE ACCOMMODATIONS IN LANGUAGES OTHER THAN ENGLISH, PLEASE CONTACT [LANGUAGEACCESS@CES.UWEX.EDU](mailto:LANGUAGEACCESS@CES.UWEX.EDU)