

Fall 2022



EXTENSION CENTRAL NEWS

In this issue

Growing Great Pasture & Forage in Sandy Soils2
Determining a Fair Cropland Rent3
Quarterly Card Parties / Pasture Walk & Cover Crop Field Day 4
Testing Hay for Accurate Nutrient Content Quarterly Farm Succession Peer Support Groups5
Boerson Farm Soil Walk6
Aerial Application of Cover Crops / Annual Forage Mixtures7
Midwest Cover Crop Council's Cover Crop Selector Tool 8&9
Private Applicator Certification Information
Sovbean Cover Crops On Farm Research

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Extension

Cold Weather Calf Care is Important to Your Bottom Line

Submitted by Heather Schlesser, Dairy Agent, Marathon County

As winter approaches, we must start thinking about management practices to keep our calves warm. The thermoneutral zone for newborn calves is between 50°F and 78°F. When these calves reach one month of age, their thermoneutral zone expands from 50°F down to 32°F. The thermoneutral zone is the temperature at which the animal's heat loss equals the heat it can produce. If the temperature is below this zone, the calf cannot produce enough heat to keep up with the amount it is losing. To help



warm itself, the calve will start to divert energy and resources into heat production. This action Reduces the amount of energy and resources put into growth and development, ultimately affecting your bottom line.

To prevent the calf from diverting energy and resources as the temperature starts to fall, we must prepare for cooler weather before it arrives. To help keep calves warm, there are a few management practices we can implement. If you have calf blankets, ensure they are cleaned and ready to use when temperatures drop below the calves' thermoneutral zone. You can also increase the amount of bedding that is provided. Providing enough straw for the calf to burrow in and partially bury itself will aid its heat retention ability. You could also provide the calf with additional feed; these additional calories will provide the needed energy to warm itself. The calves' energy requirement for maintenance increases by 1% for every degree below the thermoneutral zone. If the daily temperature averages 35°F, a newborn calf needs 15% more energy for maintenance. Along with increasing the amount of feed fed, you can also increase the fat content of that feed. Additionally, providing calves with warm water instead of cold water to drink will prevent energy from being spent on warming water up to body temperature. It is important to check for drafts and make sure calves are dry and clean. The animal's coat helps to provide insulation against the cold but is ineffective if matted with mud and manure. Lastly, it is important to maintain proper ventilation so humidity in the barn does not increase.

All these steps will help to protect your bottom line by creating healthier calves that continued to grow during the winter months.

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Growing Great Pasture and Forage in Sandy Soils, Can it be Done?

Submitted by Natasha Paris, Regional Crops Educator Marquette, Waushara, Green Lake & Adams Counties UW-Madison Division of Extension

Crops & Soils Topic Hub

Topic: Forage Production & Management

"If you graze it, it will grow." This variation on the old *Field* of *Dreams* adage often seems to be the mantra of grazing influencers. And in many cases, adding livestock to a forage system can induce growth through disturbance and nutrient cycling. But what if the tips and tricks you collect don't seem to work as well as everyone says they do? Well, you might be on non-irrigated sandy soils, where a lot of the conventional wisdom needs some tweaking.

Rule #1 - Sand doesn't hold onto anything: Nitrogen

Sandy soils typically have less than 2% organic matter. Since the sand particles are too big to interact with the very tiny molecules of organic matter, they don't hang on to each other well. Without much organic matter, sandy soils can't hold nitrogen, water, or really anything else.

How does this affect the conventional wisdom of managed grazing? Well, some grazers advocate for leaving lots of residue behind after a rotation to allow for thatch which will break down and turn into that coveted organic matter. Unfortunately, the long chains of carbon in grasses can't break down without adequate nitrogen, and if our soil is low in nitrogen due to low organic matter, that's a problem. You can end up building up so much thatch that won't break down that it chokes out regrowth and delays the nutrient cycling your soils would like to be doing.

Ways to help this process along include grazing a little harder so less residue (but not none!) is left and the manure your animals leave is more concentrated so the carbon to nitrogen ratio is better; bringing in outside sources of manure to add some nitrogen to the system and begin the breakdown process; planting more legumes like alfalfa or clover to increase nitrogen fixation; or adding nitrogen fertilizer, which in sand has actually been shown to help increase organic matter.

Rule #2 – Sand doesn't hold onto anything: pH

Soil pH is one of the most important properties of soil. If the soil is too acidic or basic, plants won't be able to take up proper nutrients and may not grow at all. In sandy soils we deal a lot with soil acidification, because the minerals that keep pH in check aren't held onto well by the sand particles and are whisked away by the water that flows so easily through sand. It's not uncommon to find sandy fields with a pH under 6, which may prevent many pasture forage species from growing. This is most easily remedied by applying lime. See https://soilsextension.webhosting. cals.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/68/2014/02/ A2458.pdf for more information on calculating lime needs.

Rule #3 - Sand doesn't hold onto anything: Sulfur

So, say you fix the nitrogen and pH issues in your sandy soil, but the growth is still lackluster and maybe a little pale. This is the point where a lot of producers want to throw up their hands and say, "nothing grows in this stuff!" Let me tell you about our friend, sulfur. Sulfur is critical for plants to create proteins, which is really important when growing feed for livestock. A lack of sulfur can actually look like a lack of nitrogen. Now a lot of people don't have to worry as much about sulfur as there's some in rain and some in manure, and it usually just hangs out in organic matter in sufficient amounts. But of course, sandy soils are a different story. The low organic matter combined with the constant leaching of sand combined with the high sulfur need of forages makes for a perfect storm for sulfur deficiency.

This is where a soil test is critical. You can add a sulfate test to your normal soil tests for a very small fee, and it can be very revealing. If you get a reading under 7 ppm sulfate, then it's definitely time to think about applying sulfur. But be careful about your source, as elemental sulfur needs to be broken down by microbes that unfortunately are just not as abundant in our low organic matter. You can combine sulfur with your nitrogen application by using products like ammonium sulfate or gypsum, so you can take a one-two punch at your stubborn sandy soil and get to producing better forages.

Conclusion

We wish it was as easy as "if you graze it, it will grow." But those of us in sandy soils know that is definitely not always the case. Our pastures and hay fields need a little extra attention to make sure that we aren't a) choking them with carbon and starving them of nitrogen, b) letting the pH get too low that acidity becomes an issue, and c) getting low on sulfur. For more information, see the links below or talk to your Extension Crops Educator.

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Determining a Fair Cropland Rent

Submitted by Richard Halopka, CCA, Senior Outreach Specialist UW-Madison Division of Extension Clark County Crops & Soils Educator

With the end of the growing season, the next question is what is a fair cropland rent for 2023? It is a legitimate question and many people do not always like my first response, depends. I must ask a number of questions first; was the rent paid last year? Where are you located in the state, which county? What are typical yields on your farm? What is the demand for cropland in your area? Are you happy with your current renter? Is your renter a good steward of your cropland? Who will pay for lime, if needed? Who will receive any USDA payments? How many years is the rental agreement?

Remember, after I get off the phone the next call usually is the potential cropland renter with the same question. Therefore, my story is generally the same and I have not mentioned a rental price.

National Agriculture Statistics Service (NASS) gather cropland rental rates and this is a good source to begin a conversation. Here is a link: <u>https://www.nass.usda.gov/</u><u>Statistics_by_State/Wisconsin/Publications/</u>

<u>Annual Statistical Bulletin/2021AgStats-WI.pdf</u>. Now there will be an "on the street" rental rate and it may or may not be accurate. So, what should be involved to determine a cropland rental rate?

A method to consider is to know your market and then set a price in your market area. If you are happy with the relationship with your current renter, is it worth increasing or decreasing rent to continue working with this renter?

Can the landowner and/or cropland renter think in a different manner to determine a fair rental rate? The landowner has an investment in land and that land has a monetary value. If you had money to invest in a low risk investment, what would you like for a minimum return on your investment?

Now let us look at cropland as the landowner's investment and the cropland renter as the financial company paying on that investment. From the NASS link from above, you may also find the value for cropland sold in Wisconsin in each county. Both parties may use an average sale price for negotiations to determine a rental price/rate. If both parties agree that cropland is worth \$4,000.00 per acre and a desired return on investment for cropland is between 3% -5% this would give a range of \$120.00 - \$200.00 per acre for a rental rate. Remember there may be other considerations (lime, conservation practices, USDA payments, etc.) not just a price per acre.

These numbers would provide a guideline in which both parties can negotiate a cropland rent price. Understand every situation will be different. So, who pays to apply lime to correct pH? Who pays for soil testing? If a landowner agrees to pay for lime then the rental price will be greater versus the cropland renter paying for the lime, which may result in a longer-term contract at a lower rate allowing the renter some reward for their purchased inputs. Next many only want a verbal agreement. Understand verbal agreements are only enforceable for one growing season. It is wise to write things down, even if it is just the renter and landowner writing down their thoughts, dating, and then signing a hand written notebook paper. Once written it eliminates any he/she said situations. There are examples of crop rental agreements online, https://clark.extension.wisc.edu/ here is а link agreements-leases/. What is nice about these examples is they are word documents and you can download them and enter in terms you would like included in the agreement. One is a very simple agreement and the other has more details.

- . To summarize:
 - 1. Crop rent leases should be written, dated, and signed. Write out terms of the agreement. There are forms online or contact your local extension office for some help.
 - 2. Verbal agreements are enforceable, but can only be in force for one growing season, and many times people forgot what was verbally agreed on a year later.
 - 3. Rental rates are negotiations; there is no one price fits all.
 - 4. To determine rental rates knowing current land values is beneficial and may help in determining a return on investment of cropland.

If you have questions on renting cropland please contact your local extension office or email <u>richard.</u> <u>halopka@wisc.edu</u>.



Quarterly Card Parties ***

Do you miss playing cards with friends? Stop out to the Homestead Restaurant and join us for a good time.

10.12.22 @ 7:00 pm 01.11.23 @ 7:00 pm

04.12.23 @ 7:00 pm

details at https://go.wisc.edu/cardparty

Do you miss the good old days of playing cards at the kitchen table after milking? Do wish that you could play cards with a group of people again? Well, wish no longer and join us at the Homestead Restaurant for an evening of card playing.

No experience is necessary. The games we play will depend on the expertise of those that attend.

<u>Cost:</u> \$0, but feel free to eat dinner while playing a hand of cards

Location: Homestead Restaurant 162765 WI-52, Wausau, WI 54403

When: Quarterly on the second Wednesday of the month at 7 pm.

October 12, 2022 / January 11, 2023 / April 12, 2023 Sponsored by: UW-Madison Division of Extension and Marathon County Farm Bureau

Pasture Walk / Cover Crop Field Day

Marathon County
Farm Bureau

October 19 10:00 am—3:00 pm

Levi and Martin Hoover Farms 3 Miles South of Curtiss

N13382 County Rd E—Colby WI 54421

10:00 AM—Pasture discussion "Fall Pasture Management in Annual and Perennial Systems" *led by Jason Cavadini, Grazing Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison Division of Extension*

- **12:00 PM**—Lunch provided; lunch topic- "Cover Crop Cost Sharing Options" Jim Arch, Clark Co. Land Conservationist
- 1:00 PM—Cover Crops- see no-till, multi-species, organic cover crops established mid-summer in organic corn; *Discussion with host farmers and Jason Cavadini* 3:00 PM—Wrap Up

There will be wagon transport available to get to the sites.

Registration deadline is October 14, 2022 Clark Co. Extension: 715-743-5121 Email: matthew.lippert@wisc.edu

Testing Hay for Accurate Nutrient Content

By Carolyn Ihde, Agriculture Educator Richland and Crawford Counties for the WI Cattlemen's Newsletter, September 2022 Provided by Sandy Stuttgen, Taylor County

Fall is when a year's hard work comes together; calves are weaned, field crops harvested, and forages stored in bales, bunkers, bags, and silos. Fall is the time to "reap what we sow", but will the hay harvested this summer and fall be adequate feedstuff for the winter and early spring months? Counting the number of hay bales is a simple way to calculate the tons of feed available for the upcoming seasons of non-active pasture growth. Testing harvested forages provides a more accurate estimate of the forage's ability to meet the nutritional needs of cattle during the winter months.

With the drought in most of Wisconsin lessening (National Drought Mitigation Center, 2022) during the summer of 2022, the rain was a familiar foe in harvesting hay. Hay should be at 85% DM before it is baled. Consider wrapping bales and or using preservatives when rainfall hinders that goal. Waiting for optimal haymaking windows may result in harvesting mature forages or baling hay that has not had adequate time to cure; both scenarios can lead to hay with less-than-ideal nutritional values.

When rain delays mowing, forages continue o mature and may mature to a stage where the hay will have greater concentrations of fiber and lower energy. According to Wayne Coblentz and Richard Muck from the US Dairy Forage Research Center, supplementation with concentrates may be necessary to meet energy requirements. On the flip side, baling hay that is too wet can lead to mold growth and reducing the available protein or even spontaneous combustion hay fires. Either way, the hay will not be ideal and producers will play a guessing game as to the nutritional value. During the production cycle, cows have different nutritional requirements. For example, in late gestation, two- to three-year-old cows need significantly higher nutrition than dry and early-gestation six- to seven-yearold cows. Forage testing allows the producer to know if the hay meets the nutritional needs of the entire beef herd. With hay test results in hand, cattle producers can sort batches of hay and create a feeding plan. For instance, you may be able to feed lower quality hay to mature, dry, higher body condition score (BCS) and midgestation cows; and higher quality hay to young, late gestation, or lower BCS cows.

Forage testing is a relatively simple process with high impact, especially when quality hay is in short supply. According to the UW Soil and Forage Lab "The key to successful forage analysis is taking a good, representative forage sample on the farm." To achieve a good representative sample, group hay by cutting, type and location, and take a core sample of 12 bales from each group. Follow the directions provided by each testing lab for sample size and packaging directions. Use the results to create a feeding program to best utilize your forage while meeting the cow herds' nutritional needs for optimal growth and performance.

Coblentz, W.K. & Muck, R. E. (2013). Effects of rain damage on wilting forages. Retrieved from: <u>https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/forage/effects-of-rain-damage-on-wilting-forages/</u>

Lewandowski, R. (2019, July 3). Rain damage to hay. Ohio State University Extension Beef Team. Retrieved from: <u>https://u.osu.edu/beef/2019/07/03/rain-damage-to-hay/</u>

National Drought Mitigation Center University of Nebraska-Lincoln (2022, August 22). Midwest US Drought Monitor Map. Retrieved from: https://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap/StateDroughtMonitor.aspx? Midwest

UW Soils and Forage Lab. (2022). Feed-Forage. Retrieved from: https:// uwlab.soils.wisc.edu/forage/feed-forage

Reviewed by: Bill Halfman, UW-Madison Extension Beef Outreach Specialist

Sandy Stuttgen, UW-Madison Extension—Taylor County



Quarterly Farm Succession Peer Support Group

Are you going through a farm succession and need someone to talk to? Do you have questions on how others have or are completing their farm transition? Then this is the group for you.

This group provides the space people need to talk about the farm succession process. There will be short presentations on topics relating to farm succession, followed by time to talk with others in the group.

Session dates and topics if known:

October 10—10:30 am – The importance of transferring management during the farm transition, Heather Schlesser Extension Marathon County

January 9—10:30 am – How to cope with the stress of a farm transition

April 10—10:30 am – Communication through Farm transition

July 10—10:30 am - TBD

Extension Central News Fall 2022



1972-2022 Conservation That Works!

Boerson Farm Soil Walk

Come and join us at Boerson Farm and see how they are utilizing rotational grazing, silvopasture development and minimum-till vegetables to build their soil health. Then learn how to properly take a soil sample to send in to Midwest Laboratories and how to read the results.



Date and Time

Thurs, Oct 13th, 2022 1pm-3pm

Location

Boerson Farm W995 Brooklyn J Rd Green Lake, WI 54941

Learn more at <u>www.goldensandsrcd.org</u>

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Aerial Application of Cover Crops to Lengthen the Cover Crop Growing Season

Submitted by Ken Schroeder, Portage County Ag Agent

One of the biggest challenges to using cover crops in corn silage, corn grain, and soybean rotations is the short window of opportunity for cover crop establishment before winter.

Aerial application or overseeding cover crops into a standing crop allows for more cover crop options beyond cereal rye due to the longer establishment and growing period. Early application produces more growth before winter kill and better overwintering of winter hardy cover crops.

Application timing, adequate moisture, and a timely crop harvest increases your chances of success. Silage corn may be overseeded ten days to two weeks prior to harvest. Longer than that will stress the cover crop from lack of light. Wait until leaves are dry up to the ear for grain corn. At this point the canopy begins to rapidly open up. Soybeans can be overseeded when the leaves are turning yellow before leaf drop. Successful establishment also



depends on adequate moisture. Moist soil before application helps start the germination process while rain after improves seed to soil contact. It's all about getting the seeds growing and keeping them growing strong.

Additional resources:

- Aerial Application of Cover Crops by the Soil Health Partnership <u>https://go.wisc.edu/u185e4</u>
- 6 Tips for Flying on Cover Crops Successfully by Damon Reabe, Dairyland Aviation and Reabe Spraying Service <u>https://go.wisc.edu/ z53a0x</u>



Annual Forage Mixtures or Cover Crops?

Matt Lippert Clark and Wood County Dairy Agent

Although cover crops can also be forage, suggested management differs depending on intended use. Even if using the same seed, the seeding rate, blend or mixture of seed species, fertility and preferred planting date change depending on intended use. More fertilizer, earlier fall seeding dates, more seed all mark a mix as a forage rather than just a cover crop.

There is value in diversity. Multiple species planted together increase the likelihood that one of the planted crops will respond favorably during adverse weather conditions. Some species probably should not be included in forage mixtures but are desirable cover crops. Sunflower comes to mind. However, in extreme need (lack of other crop seed availability), they could be utilized. Some turnips, radish and other root crops may be utilizable in a grazing system, but not as desirable for mechanically harvested forage.

The same species, including the same varieties can and are successfully being used as cover crops or as forage mixtures. However, we should manage them differently. Higher seeding rates, managed N fertilizer application rates, timing of fertilizer application(s) and more timely planting dates are typically needed for successful forage mixtures which are becoming more widely accepted for their ability to provide a combination of significant DM yield and high quality feed. Alternative forage mixtures, fall seeded, cool season and warm season are showing up as some of the best for high yields of highly digestible fiber. They also utilize the ends of the season providing more flexibility to cropping systems intended for livestock.

Midwest Cover Crop Council's Cover Crop Selector Tool: A Web-based System to Assist Farmers in Selecting Cover Crops.

The Midwest Cover Crops Council (MCCC) Cover Crop Selector Tool <u>https://go.wisc.edu/i85wv8</u> consolidates cover crop information by state to help you make cover crop selections at the county level.

Information for each state/province was developed by a team of cover crop experts including university researchers, Extension educators, NRCS personnel, agriculture department personnel, crop advisors, seed suppliers, and farmers.

Information and ratings contained in the Cover Crop Decision Tool is the team consensus based on literature, research results, on-farm experience, and practical knowledge.

<u>Using the Cover Crop Selector Tool</u>: There are three simple steps. First, indicate where your farm is located (State and County). Next, select your cover crop goals (you can select up to 3 goals): Nitrogen Source, Nitrogen Scavenger, Weed fighter, Quick growth, Erosion fighter, Lasting residue, Soil builder, Interseed with cash crop, Good grazing, Mechanical forage harvest value, and Grain/Seed harvest value. Then, indicate the current cash crop with planting date and projected harvest date. Your results will block out the current cash crop growing period on the suggested cover crop planting times. Click on "find cover crops" and you will see the list of suggested cover crops and their numerical ranking based on your selected cover cropping goals.



Plant cover crops now: Planting cover crops this time of year after small grains or short-season vegetable

No-Tilling Cover Crops into Sorghum Sudan

crops greatly expands the palette of species we have from which to choose. We have the opportunity to include legumes to produce nitrogen and brassicas to add more diversity. Cover crops planted in August

greatly increases the amount of biomass produced before frost providing more soil cover for erosion protection, weed suppression and more organic matter to improve soil health.

On the following page is a screen shot of a table using the MCCC selector tool of suggested cover crop options for Portage County. I included two cover crop goals of nitrogen source and quick growth plus indicated a cash crop growing period as an example.

Note the number of options and how they greatly diminish as we approach the end of September.



Oats Radish Mix 10 wks growth. Planted Aug 23

Table. Cover crops for Portage County with goals of Nitrogen source first column of numbers, Quick Growth second column, and greyed out area indicates current cash crop growing period.



ATTENTION PRIVATE APPLICATORS

Do you know your Private Applicator Certification expiration date?

County Extension Offices will no longer be sending you a letter alerting you of when your certification expires. Please be aware that you are going to have to be responsible for knowing this.

When is my Expiration Date?

Please check your card to identify when your certification expires. If you cannot see the date, go to the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection's website and look yourself up. If you are not there, then your certification has expired.

http://www.kellysolutions.com/WI/Applicators/index.asp

Where do I take the test?

Not all County Extension Offices are giving the Test. To find one that is go to this website:

https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/pat/county-testing-sites/

If you are unable to check online yourself, please contact the UW PAT Program (patprogram@mailplus.wisc.edu - 608-262-7588) or your local County Extension Office to help.

What about training?

There will be training with tests provided in select counties in 2023. There is also online training available this year. To find training near you:

https://fyi.extension.wisc.edu/pat/events/

For further information, either contact the <u>UW PAT Program</u> or your local County Extension Office for assistance.





Are you a COVER CROPPER?

Do you grow SOYBEAN AND CORN in rotation? Want to host interesting ON-FARM RESEARCH?

We are recruiting growers for on-farm research starting in the fall of 2022!

We are looking for dedicated cover crop farmers to help our research effort!

Our Objectives

- I Test "planting green" in field-scale plots
- Look at the relationship of cover crop stand variability and soybean yield
- Develop site specific cropping system management recommendations that incorporate a forever green approach

Want to Participate?

Our requirements are:

- 1. Active cover cropper
- 2. Grow corn and soybean in rotation
- 3. Willingness to share management & yield data
- 4. Allow us to take measurements and data from your field over two rotation cycles (5 years)
- 5. Ability to plant and terminate rye & legume cover crops
- 6. Large enough field to accommodate 4 treatments with field size equipment
- 7. Start this fall (2022) by planting a rye cover crop in standing or harvested corn for grain or silage





This is a joint project of UW-Madison Agronomy, the Nutrient and Pest Management Program, and Extension Funding provided by the soybean checkoff through the Wisconsin Soybean Marketing Board

Determining the Utility of Cover Crops in optimized soybean systems for Sequestration of Carbon

> We will provide an honorarium and assistance with cover crop seed sourcing!

Please contact us and we'll talk over the logistics

Contact John Gaska john.gaska@wisc.edu 608-220-2693





Green Lake County 571 County Road A Green Lake WI 54941-8630



Please contact your local Extension Office for the following:

- \Rightarrow To receive this as an eNewsletter emailed to you
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EXTENSION CENTRAL NEWS

A cooperative effort of multiple Central Wisconsin Counties and Wisconsin Extension.



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