

# Agricultural Newsletter

UW-Madison College of Ag & Life Science  
University of Wisconsin-Extension



## What Is Pri-Ru-Ta?

The Pri-Ru-Ta Research, Conservation and Development Council (RC&D), Inc. is a private, non-profit 501(c) 3 corporation that was established in 1964. The Council is made up of one representative from each of the 10 supporting counties in Northwest Wisconsin. There is a close relationship between Pri-Ru-Ta and local Land Conservation offices, DNR, USDA-NRCS, and UWEX and others. Pri-Ru-Ta uses its ability as a nonprofit to help area partners access technical and financial resources in the areas of agricultural, economic development and natural resources protection. It recently helped to complete the soil mapping project of ten NW Wisconsin Counties in 2005, and is developing soil data products such as web surveys, CDs, maps, manuals and tables for public and private use. Lanice Szomi, Project Manager, and Chris Borden, Coordinator, can provide assistance to local organizations with project design and grant research, writing and management since they have knowledge of and access to outside technical and financial resources.

Pri-Ru-Ta has been active in promoting Management Intensive Grazing (MIG) in North central Wisconsin. The Council hired its first Grazing Specialist, Adam Abel in 2004. Adam works with producers in Clark, Taylor, Price, Rusk and Sawyer counties. Currently he has almost eight square miles of land in MIG. In January of 2006, the Council, as fiscal agent for the Northwest Wisconsin Graziers Network, employed Dean Retzlaff as a Grazing Specialist for the Network in Burnett, Washburn, Sawyer, Polk, Barron and Rusk Counties. Dean will be working out of Spooner with Ag Agents Otto Wiegand and Kevin Schoessow, and NRCS Agent Tom Fredrickson, as well as other UWEX Ag Agents and NRCS Agents.

Pri-Ru-Ta RC&D can be contacted at its address in Medford below. Or you can contact local Council members: Ashland - George Mika; Bayfield - Verne Gilles; Burnett - James Engelhart; Douglas - Kathryn McKenzie; Iron - James Byrnes; Price - Arthur Pritzl; Rusk - Gene DuSell; Sawyer - Shirley Suhsen; Taylor - Mary Williams; Washburn - Robert Washkuhn.



## PRI-RU-TA

Resource Conservation & Development Council  
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# Agricultural NEWSLETTER

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## **Representing Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties:**

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UWEX Area Agricultural Agent, Spooner Ag  
Research Station, W6646 Highway 70,  
Spooner, WI 54801 or UWEX Area  
Agricultural Agent, Ashland Ag Research  
Station, 68760 State Farm Road, Ashland, WI  
54806.

## Youth tractor & machinery training dates set

*Kevin Schoessow*  
*Area Ag Development Agent*  
*Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties*

Wisconsin Law requires that any youth less than 16 years of age be certified to operate a tractor or machinery on public roads—even if working for a parent or guardian. In addition, Federal Child Labor regulations make it unlawful to hire or even permit without pay any youth under age 16 to participate in any work activities listed as hazardous unless the youth is working on a farm owned and operated by the youth's parents or legal guardian, or the youth has a training certificate which provides an exemption from certain hazardous work activities. Operating a tractor over 20 PTO horsepower is included in the list of hazardous work activities.

Wisconsin training guidelines require that youth participate in 24 hours of classroom training and complete a driving course. A course satisfying these requirements will be conducted in Spooner at the Spooner Agricultural Research Station on June 19, 20, and 22 from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Students must be at least 12 years old to enroll in the program and attend all the training sessions to receive their certification.

In order to have time for parents and students to complete permission forms, preregistration for this course is required.

To preregister for the training, contacting Lorraine Toman at the

Spooner Area Ag Agents UW-Extension office at 715-635-3506 or 800-528-1914. Please provide the name, address, telephone number, date of birth, and social security number of the youth to be certified.

## Bayfield Fruit Growers Clinic to be held in April

*Vijai Pandian*  
*Area Agricultural Agent*  
*Ashland & Bayfield Counties*



UW-Extension takes pride in inviting you to the Bayfield Fruit Grower's Clinic 2006. It is to be held on April 26 from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. and continues on April 27 from 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at the Bayfield Town Hall located on Hatchery Road west of Bayfield.

This clinic is devoted to addressing commercial fruit production problems and to providing growers with the latest production technology in the fruit industry.

The registration fee for this program is \$20 per person which includes dinner on April 26, lunch and refreshments on April 27, and presentation materials.

Preregistration is strongly encouraged to assure sufficient materials and meals. For further information on the program and to receive registration materials, please call 715-373-6104, extension 245.

# This Quarter's Events

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**Contacts:** Ag Agents Otto Wiegand or Kevin Schoessow, UW-Extension, Spooner Station, 715-635-3506 or 800-528-1914, Tom Syverud, UW-Extension, Ashland Station 715-682-8393, or V.J. Pandian, Bayfield Co, 715-3732-6104 for more information, brochures or how to register.

**April 26-27, Wednesday 8 a.m.-6 p.m.-Thursday 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Bayfield Fruit Grower's Clinic** - Bayfield Town Hall, addresses commercial fruit production problems and latest production technology in the fruit industry, \$20/person, includes dinner Apr 26, lunch and refreshments Apr 27, and presentation materials. Contact Vijai Pandian: 715-373-6104, ext 245.

**April 27, Thursday, 4:30-8:00 p.m., Ladysmith, Cow-Calf Seminar** - Roger and Marie Svoma Farm, features farm tour, dinner, seminars on handling facilities, livestock risk insurance and beef industry outlook, \$10. For details contact: Ag Agents Aliesha Crowe, 715-532-2154, or Otto Wiegand, 715-635-3506.

**April 30, Scholarship Deadline** – The Northern Wisconsin Beef Producers Association is offering two \$250 scholarships for students enrolled in a Farm & Industry Short Course Program, Vo-Tech Ag Program, or Univ. of Wisconsin or Minnesota Ag School. The application deadline is April 30, 2006. Contact for application forms or questions: Lori Lyons, 2958 1<sup>st</sup> Ave., New Auburn, WI 54757, 715-237-2746.

**June 3, Saturday, 6-11 a.m. Rice Lake, Barron County Dairy Breakfast** – Curt & Connie Hanson Farm, 2404 24<sup>th</sup> Ave, featuring retro-fit milking parlor display.

**June 10, Saturday, 6 a.m.-Noon, Spooner, Washburn County Dairy Breakfast** – Fairgrounds, Spooner, featuring retro-fit milking parlor display.

**June 13, Tuesday, 9 a.m.-Noon, Goat Producer Seminar** – Spooner Ag Research Station, W6646 Hwy 70, Spooner, WI (also Sheep Pasture Walk, 1-4 p.m.).

**June 17, Saturday, 6 a.m.-Noon, Webster, Burnett County Dairy Breakfast** – Kent Krause Farm, 26927 Krause Rd, featuring retro-fit milking parlor display.

**June 19, 20, 22, Monday, Tuesday & Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Spooner, Tractor Safety Training**, for students aged 12-15, Spooner Ag. Research Station.

**June 24, Saturday, 6 a.m.-Noon, Hayward – Sawyer County Dairy Breakfast** – Fairgrounds, Hayward.

**July 6-9, Thursday-Sunday, Webster – Central Burnett County Fair**

**July 11-13, Tuesday-Thursday, Cedar Grove, Sheboygan County – Farm Technology Days**

**July 18-19, Tuesday-Wednesday, Abbotsford – Wisconsin Grazing School** (see also August 23-24).

**July 22, Saturday – Garden Expo, Spooner Ag Research Station**

**July 27-30, Thursday-Sunday, Spooner – Washburn County Fair**

**August 3-6, Thursday-Sunday, Hayward – Sawyer County Fair**

**August 22, 5-8 p.m. – Spooner Garden Tour** – Spooner Ag Research Station.

**August 23-24, Wednesday-Thursday, Rice Lake – Wisconsin Grazing School** – details pending.

**August 24-27, Thursday-Sunday, Grantsburg - Burnett Agricultural Society Fair**

**August 26, Saturday, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. – Spooner Sheep Day** – Spooner Ag Research Station.

# Notes from Dairy-L

Tom Syverud  
Extension and Outreach Educator  
Ashland & Iron Counties

“I am looking for ideas for preventing milk fever in Jersey cows,” asked an Eastern farmer. The majority of responses centered on nutrition and the use of anionic salts.

A veterinarian responded that, “Forages play a large role in dry cow mineral nutrition, due to the variability of some minerals content and the high level of forage in dry cow diets. Certainly the first step is to evaluate the current forages. Just about everyone in the industry is recommending dry cow diets with K levels down below 1.25% if possible.”

A nutritionist added, “For fresh cow health, control of milk fever, both clinical and sub-clinical will assist in control of mastitis, displacements, retained placentas, metritis and ketosis. Control is achieved by ration formulation to control potassium levels, but more than this, is to feed rations that are negative in dietary cation anion difference. This causes the cow to slightly acidotic, and this triggers bone mobilization before freshening so that the cow is prepared to supplement her blood calcium level at onset of lactation. DCAD science is the best new knowledge we have in the 26 years I have been doing nutrition consulting.”

A farmer suggested that “An anionic salts program for second and later calving cows is very effective in reducing the incidence of

milk fever around the time of calving. I think three weeks is the minimum time you should plan to feed the diet before calving. Some will calve early and not get enough time on the diet if you cut the feeding time down. Watch this factor when feeding a close up group. A TMR or corn silage is the best way to get the cows to eat the mineral. The water consumption of the cows eating the anionic salts will be increased dramatically.”

Another nutritionist stated, “I have been feeding 80+ grams of Ca, less than 40 grams of P, and a little extra Mg and S, though not up to anionic levels. These guidelines came from Cornell’s Advanced Nutrition School a few years back. My clients have had less milk fever since I have gone this route...could be due to either diet formulation or just better selection of forages down on the farm.”

A Wisconsin farmer said that, “The most important step in preventing milk fever is properly managing their entire dry-period ration—no ‘last-minute fix-its.’ Feed balanced multiple protein sources, minerals with minimal potassium, and a forage intake adequate to maintain a 3+ body condition. For those few cows more susceptible, keep some tubes of calcium paste on hand, watch them carefully as calving approaches, and intervene quickly when the slightest signs of trouble appear.”

Another added, “We give each cow five slow release CMPK boluses and a probiotic bolus at freshening and the calcium bolus every 12 hours for two days. This helps the majority of our cows. Some still need IV calcium to get them going.”

From Denmark a farmer said, “Plenty of exercise will help; however,

milk fever can be prevented by using Zeolit, a calcium binder in the feed prior to calving. The following link may be helpful for you: <http://www.zeolit.sk/zeoliten.htm>.”

**Recommendations:** Milk fever prevention begins in the last months of the previous lactation. Set the cow up well by gaining any necessary weight then. During the dry period feed a lower calcium diet (example: grass silage or hay) while just maintaining good body condition. 10 to 14 days before freshening slowly re-introduce the milking diet. Balance for minerals, especially selenium if you are in an area where the soils are low. Be ready with calcium at the first signs of problems at or after calving. Anionic salts are good and work well, as noted there are feeding problems. Go ahead and use them if you continuing problem after making feeding and management changes.

## New Goat Specialist

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has established a Dairy Goat Initiative to assist producers and processors alike in growing the industry. Wisconsin has more licensed dairy goat farms than any other state. At least twelve processing plants currently utilize goat milk. Processors are interested in developing value-added cheeses and other products and in marketing those products. The purpose of the Dairy Goat Initiative is to design and implement effective programs to serve the industry. **Jeanne Meier**, a former DATCP employee who headed up the Wisconsin Farm Center, has come back from retirement to head up the Initiative. She can be reached at 608-224-5121 or e-mail at: [jeanne.meier@datcp.state.wi.us](mailto:jeanne.meier@datcp.state.wi.us).

## NW Cleansweep “Milk Run” to collect hazardous waste

*Rick Schneider  
NWRPC Environmental Services*

The Northwest Cleansweep hazardous waste “milk run” program, which is designed to accept hazardous wastes from municipalities, businesses and schools from our ten-county region, is again offering hazardous waste collections this spring. The “milk run” program had a very successful fall 2005 collection and anticipates the same this spring.

This year’s spring collection schedule is currently being planned and Northwest Cleansweep invites your participation. Items accepted are fluorescent bulbs, computers, oil-based paint, solvents or adhesives, antifreeze, aerosols, batteries, poison solids, pesticides (solid or liquid), ballasts, and other items considered hazardous. This year, a special emphasis to remove all mercury containing items will be emphasized. Examples of items that may contain mercury include laboratory thermometers, barometers, fever thermometers, blood pressure gauges, thermostats, bulk mercury and also dental amalgam containing mercury. Mercury is a highly toxic, naturally occurring element that can cause adverse impacts on human and environmental health and is especially dangerous to children. Exposure to mercury through touching, breathing, or ingesting can cause reduced neurological functions, tremors, weakness, impaired memory, and headaches. Once exposed to mercury, a person’s health may be

irreversibly damaged. There are fish consumption advisories in over 350 bodies of water in Wisconsin due to mercury contamination.

To inquire about prices and scheduling, please feel free to call Bill Welter at 715-635-2197.

## Are weeds tougher to kill with glyphosate?

*Phil Holman  
Asst. Superintendent  
Spooner Ag Research Station*

*Rewritten from the Wisconsin Crop  
Manager*

At the November Pest Management Update Meetings across Wisconsin, Chris Boerboom, UW-Extension Weed Scientist, surveyed the audience to see if they thought weeds were more difficult to control with glyphosate now than eight years ago. On average, 70% of those responding believed weeds are now more difficult to control with glyphosate. The response was amazingly consistent across the state.

There is not any research to prove if weeds are truly more difficult to control or if it is just a perception. But, when 70% of the audience has that belief, there may be some truth to it. Especially when most people who attend the pest update meetings work in agronomy related fields (agronomy plant managers, applicators and certified crop advisors).

There could be several reasons for this change. Less consistent control could be primarily related to application issues (rates, volumes, surfactants, environment, etc.), weed related issues (size, tougher species, resistance), or both. When asked why, a majority (62%) of those

surveyed believe both application and weed related factors account for the change. One person’s comment might capture a significant part of the change. The person wrote, “Producers have been programmed by ads to expect glyphosate to solve all problems. Thus, glyphosate has been expected to do more than it was ever capable of.”

Part of these expectations might be that glyphosate will control all weeds regardless of their size or without increasing the rate or under most weather conditions. Clearly, that isn’t the case as producers and applicators are using glyphosate on more acres, application timings, and environmental conditions.

Chris Boerboom recommends that we still need to be good managers to make glyphosate work consistently. We need to understand our target weeds, make applications at the correct stage of growth, and use other herbicides, such as preemergence herbicides, to compliment glyphosate.

## DATCP hires organic/grazing specialist

The Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection has hired former Columbia County Ag Agent, Laura Paine, as its new organic/grazing specialist. The position was authorized in the 2005-2007 state budget to promote organic agriculture and management intensive rotational grazing--two growing movements in Wisconsin. Paine will assist in business planning, leadership and entrepreneurial efforts. She will also administer federally-funded grazing and organic grant programs.

## Grazing efforts move forward

*Otto Wiegand  
Area Ag Agent  
Burnett, Sawyer Washburn Counties*

The Northwest Wisconsin Graziers Network has hired Dean Retzlaff of Danbury to assist prospective rotational graziers in Burnett, Washburn, Sawyer, Polk, Barron and Rusk Counties to develop grazing plans. Dean retired from Natural Resources and Conservation Service (NRCS) in Polk Co. last year. He is a certified grazing planner and has done several plans with NRCS.

Retzlaff will work halftime for the next two years and be employed through Pri-Ru-Ta Resource Conservation and Development. Two grants from the federal Grazing Lands Conservative Initiative (GLCI) are supporting his activities. Dean will also be assisting with educational efforts of the Network through pasture walks, seminars and supervision of a summer intern also being hired under the grants. Retzlaff will be working out of NRCS in Spooner. He can be contacted through Tom Fredrickson at NRCS or through Otto Wiegand and Kevin Schoessow, UW Extension Ag Agents at Spooner Ag Research, or through UWEX at Barron, Polk or Rusk Counties.

Grazing efforts in Douglas, Bayfield, Ashland and Iron Counties will be covered through GLCI grants administered through Land and Water Conservation in Ashland. Contact Diane Daulton, 715-682-7187.

Northwest Graziers was formed in 2001. It has grown to over 500

members. The recent winter meeting in Rice Lake drew over 50 attendees. Pasture walks in the past two years--usually 5-6 events--consistently drew large crowds. The current Northwest Graziers pasture walk schedule for 2006 is as follows:

**May 17, Wednesday, 1-3 p.m.--  
Barron County, Almena - Pasture Walk** – Richard Koehn, 737 15th Ave.

**June 7, Wednesday, 5-8 p.m.--  
Polk County, Turtle Lake - Beef Pasture Walk** - Wayne & Bev Jansen, 196A 183<sup>rd</sup> Ave. – features rotational grazing of dairy heifers, dairy beef and cow-calf beef, also red clover interseeding trial.

**June 13, Tuesday, 1-4 p.m.,  
Washburn County, Spooner, Sheep Pasture Walk** – Spooner Ag Research Station, W6646 Highway 70, features rotational grazing of 300 milking ewes (see Goat Seminar).

**July 7, Friday, 1-4 p.m., Polk County, Comstock – Dairy Pasture Walk** - Neal & Janice Jensen, 1938 25<sup>th</sup> Pl., features rotational grazing of 100 Guernsey dairy cows.

**August 5, Saturday, 9 a.m.-Noon, Sawyer County, Hayward - Beef Pasture Walk** – Tom, Janet, Tweed and Melanie Shuman, 11110 N Company Lake Rd., features cow-calf beef, grazing planning.

**September 23, Saturday, 9:30 a.m.-Noon, Burnett County, Barronett – Horse Pasture Walk** - Phil and Elsa Odden, 20337 County Highway H, features rotational grazing of Norwegian Fiord horses, family woodcarving business.

There will be a Wisconsin Grazing School in Rice Lake. The tentative dates are August 23-24. Details will be provided later.

## Private Pesticide Applicator Training still available

*Vijai Pandian  
Area Agricultural Agent  
Ashland & Bayfield Counties*

Farmers who purchase, transport, or apply restricted-use pesticides are required to be certified by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection. To become certified, people must participate in a private applicator training session offered by the University of Wisconsin-Extension or complete a self-study program also offered by UW-Extension.

Ashland & Bayfield County area farmers can attend a private applicator training session on Monday, April 17, 2006 at the Bayfield County UW-Extension Office in Washburn starting at 9.30 A.M. This is the only time the training will be offered in Ashland & Bayfield County this year. People who cannot attend a training session can also become certified by studying the materials independently and successfully passing the examination.

Pre-registration for the private applicator training is strongly encouraged. The cost of the program is \$30, which includes the five-year certification and all training materials. Private Pesticide Applicator Manual books are now available at UW Extension Offices. Call the Bayfield County UW-Extension Office at 715-373-6104, ext. 245 to register for the Private Pesticide Applicator Training & Exam session. Training session participants should bring their Private Pesticide Applicator manual, a calculator, and a lunch.

## Soil testing: the first step in managing your spring fertilizer bill

*Adapted from Carrie Laboski  
UW Dept. of Soil Science*

As fertilizer prices have increased over the past few years and continue to rise, soil testing is more valuable than ever. Soil testing is the best tool that we have to assess the nutrient status of the soil and determine how much fertilizer is needed. Unless you have current (less than four years old) soil test reports for each field, you are making fertilizer application and purchasing decisions without all the information that you should have. Uniform fertilizer applications across your farm likely results in some fields being over-fertilized and others under-fertilized. Both situations result in reduced net return. Using soil test data, you can match fertilizer applications to crop nutrient needs, which is essential to maintain profitability in the current price climate. While fall is the ideal time for collecting samples because you have more time to make fertilizer purchase decisions, early spring would be the second best time.

Start by determining how many acres each soil sample should represent. For fields tested five or more years ago, collect one sample per five acres. For non-responsive fields tested less than four years ago, you may be able to take fewer samples. Next collect 10 to 20 soil cores throughout the entire area that the sample represents. These cores should be mixed thoroughly, composited into one sample, and then send the sample to a lab for

analysis. Also note that the depth of soil sampling should be consistent, for example 8 inches. The actual depth you choose to sample to should be based on the depth of tillage. For no-till practices, take two soil samples: one to a depth of six or seven inches, and an additional sample to a depth of two inches. The shallow sample will be used to determine the lime requirement, while the deeper sample will be used for P and K recommendations.

For more information on soil sampling, contact your local agronomist or county Extension Agent or read "Sampling soils for testing" online at: [cecommerce.uwex.edu/pdfs/A2100.PDF](http://cecommerce.uwex.edu/pdfs/A2100.PDF).

## What do basin educators do?

*Otto Wiegand  
Area Agriculture Agent  
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties*

Basin Educators provide expertise in natural resources issues, group process and facilitation, organizational knowledge building, adult education and educational program design and implementation. Basin educators help communities address natural resources issues by: (a) developing, delivering and evaluating educational programs, (b) supporting informed decision-making by providing access to sound science and encouraging the concept of ecosystem management. (c) helping local groups come together and organize to address natural resources issues, (d) providing a connection between the UW System and communities, local groups and individuals, (e) designing and facilitating educational programs by helping groups clarify issues, ensure

equal participation and find common ground, and (f) by engaging people in issues and build partnerships by working with community organizations and individuals to collectively address natural resources issues.

Wisconsin's Basin Education Initiative works toward a notion advanced by Aldo Leopold more than 50 years ago. According to Leopold, a true conservation ethic will evolve only when citizens, not just government alone, take responsibility for managing and protecting our lands and waters. "We need knowledge," Leopold wrote... "public awareness of the small cogs and wheels" of the natural world.

Wisconsin's "basin" approach to natural resources management began in 1997. It was developed in response to state and federal changes in conservation programs that emphasized watershed management. The DNR restructured its programs to focus on citizen-led decision-making in geographic areas defined by the state's major river basins. UW Extension supports the basin approach by providing a team of 15 Basin Educators. To support their educational efforts, Basin Educators work with UW-Extension's Environmental Resources Center to create regional and statewide publications, web sites and other educational materials.

For more information about the program, please visit <http://basineducation.uwex.edu>.

Each Basin Educator maintains a web site with information about the basin and current educational activities. The St. Croix River Valley Basin Educator is John Haack He is located at the Spooner Ag Research Station (715-635-7406).