

# Agricultural Newsletter

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



## Patience When Thinking About Planting Corn this Year

*Kevin Schoessow*  
*Adapted from Joe Lauer*  
*UW-Madison Corn Agronomist*

The weather this year has many farmers and agronomists wondering, “What if?” What if I had planted corn the first week in April? What if I plant before crop insurance kicks in on April 11? What if I wait until “normal” planting dates?

Every year we recommend, when planting prior to April 20, that field conditions must dictate when we start planting. This year field conditions were right in March for southern Wisconsin. The historical optimum planting date for corn is May 1 in southern Wisconsin and May 7 in northern parts of the state. Keep in mind that every field and farm likely has slightly different optimum planting dates. We also know that delayed planting often results in lower yields as well as the “double-whammy” of higher grain moisture, which can be as expensive as lower yields.

So what are the risks? Since 1991, UW-Extension agronomists have conducted a planting date trial every year at the UW Agricultural Research Center in Arlington. We target May 1 as the optimum planting date and we plant as early as field conditions allow before that date and every two weeks after (May 15, June 1, and June 15). Often when we plant corn on the first date, there is still snow on the sides of the fields in ditches.

Based on these 20 years of planting data at Arlington, we have seen a steady increase in overall corn grain yields, however the optimum planting date to maximize corn grain yield has still remained May 1. All April planting dates had grain yields that were slightly less (within 5%) of the average yields of corn planted by the May 1 optimum planting date. The data clearly shows that corn planted in Arlington after mid-May has a significant reduction in yield potential. During 1995 and 2001 no grain yield was produced on the last planting dates in June.

So what does this mean? Statistically speaking, you have the best yield potential if you plant your corn as close to the optimum planting date (May 1 for southern WI and May 7 for northern Wisconsin).

The earliest we have ever planted corn at Arlington was during 2010 in a trial designed to test the effect of seed treatments on early season stress. In that trial we planted March 31, April 14, and May 18. This was not a planting date trial

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### Table of Contents

- 1 Patience When Thinking About Planting Corn this Year
- 2 Crop Insurance Implications of Planting Crops Early
- 3 Basic Vaccination Protocol for Beef Cow/Calf Herds
- 4 Repro Money - Improve Production in your Herd
- 5 News from Douglas County
- 5 Soybean Maturity Selection
- 5 Corn Variety Improvements over the Years
- 6 Dairy 30x20 Grants Available for Farmers
- 7 New Tool Available for Pregnancy Diagnosis
- 7 This Quarter's Events



# Agricultural NEWSLETTER

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since treatments were planted in side-by-side blocks by planting date, but it gives us some sense of what might happen with March planting. The average yield for each respective planting date among all of the treatments was 227, 238 and 227 bu/A.

**Insurance** coverage needs to be considered when thinking about when to start planting corn. For northern WI April 21 is the earliest planting date for RMA insurance (see crop insurance article that follows).

When planting early, we are most concerned about the **last spring killing frost**. This has to occur before the growing point moves above ground after the V5 developmental growth stage (Abendroth et al., 2011). We don't have to go too far back to remember the devastating effects of a late-killing frost that occurred on June 20, 1992 when most of the Wisconsin crop was between V6 and V8. Unfortunately, the last killing frost is difficult to predict and manage for.

Of course replanting can occur for numerous reasons besides late-killing frost. The biggest concern in a replant situation is **hybrid choice** of the replanted hybrid. Can I replace the hybrid I chose? If I have to settle for another hybrid, what is the yield penalty of the alternative hybrid? What is the yield penalty of the later planting date? What about the "double whammy" of lower yield AND higher grain moisture?

Patience is key here. You only get one chance to do things right in a field. Be ready to go. Get as much of your spring work done as you can. Waiting until the crop insurance dates kick in is not unreasonable.

# Crop Insurance Implications of Planting Crops Early

*Paul D. Mitchell*  
*Agricultural and Applied Economics*  
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With the continuing record-breaking temperatures and sunshine-warming soils this year, some farmers may be thinking of planting their crops earlier than usual. Climatologists and meteorologists, and many other people, will remind us all that we could still get severe frosts. Regardless of these warnings, some farmers have and/or may plant early. This short piece is just to remind farmers of the crop insurance implications if they should choose to plant early.

Most Wisconsin farmers buy crop insurance for their major crops, such as corn and soybeans, with a sales closing date of March 15th. Among its many details, the crop insurance contract specifies an "earliest planting date." For corn, the official RMA earliest planting date is April 11 in most of the state and April 21 in the far northern counties (see the map below for details). For soybeans, the official RMA earliest planting date is April 26 for all Wisconsin counties. No earliest planting date is used for spring-seeded small grains or forage seeding policies. If soils warm up and this warm weather continues, some farmers may want to plant before these dates.

If a farmer choose to plant earlier than the specified earliest planting date for the insured crop in their county, the crop is still insured and losses will be covered, as long as the farmer

follows all the remaining contract specifications. However, the farmer gives up eligibility for replant payments that are part of the standard yield protection and revenue protection included in these combo policies. Specifically, if a crop stand is damaged early in the season so that the projected yield is less than 90% of the yield guarantee, a farmer can receive an indemnity for part of the actual cost of replanting. The affected area must exceed 20 acres or 20% of the unit's acreage. The maximum indemnity is the chosen price election multiplied by the 20% of the yield guarantee, up to 8 bu for corn, 3 bu for soybeans and 1 ton for corn silage.

This year, based on crop insurance prices of \$5.68/bu for corn and \$12.55/bu for soybeans, these allowances imply a maximum replant payment of \$45.44/ac for corn and \$37.65/ac for soybeans. Farmers who plant before the earliest planting dates give up their eligibility for these payments if they were hit with a late killing frost or similar problems that would normally trigger replant provisions. Note that the yield guarantee is not reduced for late planting reduction if a farmer replants crops under policy replant provisions, so the crop has the same production guarantee as for the original plant date. Farmers with additional questions should contact their crop insurance agent.

If the warm weather continues, growers will have to weigh the risks and benefits of planting early. For farmers with crop insurance coverage, which is most Wisconsin farmers, one of the risks of planting early to consider is the loss of replant coverage.

# Basic Vaccination Protocol for Beef Cow/Calf Herds

*Sandy Stuttgen, DVM, UWEX Agriculture Educator, Taylor County*

The key is to tailor all vaccination protocols to the life cycle of the cow, bull and calf targeting those disease events that challenge the individual at stages of their production cycle. Call your veterinarian for your specific herd details.

- Dry cows - two months pre-calving**
    - IBR/PI3/BVD (2)/Lepto(5) \* if primary injection
    - Clostridia \* if primary injection
    - Rota/Corona/E.coli/Clostridia \* for calf scour
  - Dry Cows - one month pre-calving**
    - IBR/PI3/BVD (2)/Lepto(5) \* booster primary or all subsequent vaccinations
    - Clostridia \* booster primary or all subsequent vaccinations
    - Rota/Corona/Clostridia/E.Coli \* for calf scours
  - Lactating cow - one month pre-breeding**
    - IBR/PI3/BVD(2)/Lepto \* especially need booster of Lepto
    - Vibrio \* if bull breeding
- If using modified live IBR/PI3/BVD - administer this vaccination during the open, lactating period. Duration of immunity for these products is 12 months, so you do not need to booster again during the dry period, unless the interval between injections becomes longer than 12 months. Another reason to booster a modified live product during the dry period is to booster colostrum antibody.
- Bull - two months pre-breeding**
    - IBR/PI3/BVD(2)/Lepto \* if primary injection
    - Clostridia \* if primary injection
  - Bull - one month pre-breeding**
    - IBR/PI3/BVD(2)/Lepto \* booster primary or all subsequent vaccinations
    - Clostridia \* booster primary or all subsequent vaccinations
  - Newborns - at birth**
    - Rota/Corona/E.Coli/Clostridia \* for calf scours
    - IBR/PI3 intranasal \* for calf pneumonia
    - BRSV intranasal \* for calf pneumonia
  - Calves - two months pre-weaning**
    - IBR/PI3/BVD(2)/Lepto
    - Clostridia
  - Calves- one month pre-weaning**
    - IBR/PI3/BVD(2)/Lepto \* boosters primary dose
    - Clostridia \* boosters primary dose
  - Calves - one week prior to shipping**
    - IBR/PI3/BRSV intranasal

# Repro Money - A Team-Based Program to Improve Reproductive Performance in Your Herd

*Adapted by Otto Wiegand  
Area Agricultural Agent  
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties*

Repro Money is designed to help *you* improve the reproductive performance of *your* dairy. The program is based on forming an on-farm team to focus specifically on issues related to increasing your farm income by enhancing the reproductive performance of your cows.

Reproduction is at the center of this program. The program helps you focus on individual farm goals. Your goals drive the actions taken by your farm team.

With clearly defined goals and expectations, team members have a better understanding of the importance of improving reproductive performance and also their individual role and contribution to making that happen. By bringing together a team, each person can understand where your dairy is starting and where you're going.

**What is Repro Money?** Repro Money is a team-based farmer-directed program aimed at improving your dairy farm's profitability by improving the reproductive performance of your herd.

- √ Each farm owner decides who to have on their reproduction team. The team members can include an extension agent, AI company consultant, AI technician, veterinarian, nutritionist, key employees and others.
- √ At the beginning of the program, you'll assess your current practices, determine your priorities, calculate the economic benefit of improving your herd's reproductive performance and assign specific tasks for people to carry out. At subsequent meetings, you will evaluate progress and make adjustments as needed.

Repro Money is not about telling you what to do and how to do it. It is about providing you with the resources and tools needed to make better management decisions regarding the reproductive management of your dairy farm.

**Benefits:** When you enroll in the Repro Money Program, you become eligible for several services and products:

1. Review of Dairy Comp or any other software
2. Farm record summary evaluation and benchmarking
3. Dairy management economic analysis tool (Repro\$)
4. Review of rations by UW faculty if requested
5. Support for development of action plan by UW Faculty
6. Artificial insemination techniques for dairy cattle DVD-English and Spanish

**How Does Repro Money Work?** Once you register, establish who will make up your Repro Money Team. This is totally up to you. The most successful teams typically include you (the farm owner), your veterinarian, your AI technician, AI company consultant, herd manager and your local county agent. Frequently, county agents act as effective team leaders who will be in charge of coordinating meetings and handle some of the paperwork. Once you have the team, you only have to set the date for the first meeting!

**What happens at a regular meeting?** With your team you'll go through your farm records information and look up key indicators of reproductive performance. Once your reproduction parameters have been determined, you and your team will identify all the management factors that impact your reproduction program (facilities, breeding protocol, estrous detection, nutrition, semen handling, etc.) to let you know if there are areas in your program that need some improvement. Then you and the team will define your farm's goals and design an action plan so you can improve results and track your progress over time.



Identifying your actual situation and your weak points is key for setting realistic goals and optimizing your future results. The Repro Money material provided will guide you through the entire reproduction analysis process.

**How many meetings are we going to have?** Repro Money lasts for six months allowing you the time it takes to make adjustments and see results.

We know you can't do everything at the time and right away. That's why when you start a team you commit to meet four times during a period of approximately 6 months; this way you can get organized and set up a time where reproduction is the priority, and where you can pick those things you can change and want to change first.

**Registering for Repro Money gets you started.** Go to the "Enroll in Repro Money" tab on the website and you'll find the registration form. You can either fill it up on line or print it out and mail it. Once we have your completed form, you become eligible for program benefits. Or you can contact us by phone or call your local UW-Extension Ag Agent.

Website: <http://fyi.uwex.edu/repromoney>. Email: [repromoney@ces.uwex.edu](mailto:repromoney@ces.uwex.edu). Tel: 608-265-9746. Contact: **Connie Cordoba**, Repro. Mgt. Outreach Specialist, 608-265-9746, [mccordoba@wisc.edu](mailto:mccordoba@wisc.edu), or **Victor Cabrera**, Assist. Prof. Dairy Mgt. Extension Specialist, 608-265-8506, [vcabrera@wisc.edu](mailto:vcabrera@wisc.edu).

## News from Douglas County

*Jane Anklam  
Agricultural Agent  
Douglas County*

Thank you to our dairy farmers who are taking the time to attend the recent Dairy Roundtable meetings. Our next session will be held at 10:30 a.m. on April 13, at the Nathan and John Johnstad Farm. We will have soil sampling demonstration along with a brief review of how to account for the nutrient credits from your manure and legumes BEFORE you add fertilizer. Contact Jane Anklam (715-395-1515) for site location.

A pasture stand inventory will be held 5:00 pm May 23<sup>rd</sup> at the Dale Nummi Farm on 22 Road, Wentworth. Dale Peacock, our Grazing Specialist will lead us through a tour of the pasture to determine its potential nutritional value and management options for raising excellent forage.

The Meat Animal Quality Assurance training will be held at Northwestern High School in Maple on June 9 at 9:00 am. Those that are

showing meat animals at the fair should plan to attend. Others who would like to learn or refresh their knowledge about meat quality for market are welcome. Contact Jane Anklam for more information (715-395-1515).

## Soybean Maturity Selection

*Phil Holman  
Superintendent  
Spooner Ag Research Station*

I compiled data for all the soybean variety individual results from the past 5 years. I was trying to determine the relationship between rated relative maturity and yield. The average yield for each point in maturity was calculated. Overall the best yields were obtained with the maturities of 1.1 or greater. Earlier season soybeans varieties on average yielded less than full season varieties. This is no surprise, but 1.1 is a bit later than I would have expected. There have been a few varieties over 1.4 in the trials. These late season varieties have yielded well, but some years, these varieties have been very green at first frost and still green at harvest.

## Corn Variety Improvement Over the Years

*Phil Holman  
Superintendent  
Spooner Ag Research Station*



Examining the Irrigated Corn Grain Variety trial plots averages over time shows that corn grain yields are increasing 3 bu/A per year over the last 10 years. This is comparing a 10 year running average of the Irrigated Variety Trial Averages.

This increase is probably a bushel or two higher as one of the recent years had an unrelated production problem and one year had low yields due to severe wildlife damage.

However, this yield improvement vanishes in the dryland and silt loam trials as we have experienced 5 years of drought in the past. Looking at just the irrigated trial yield trend shows the improvement in company genetics by taking out the drought factor.

# Dairy 30x20 Grants Available for Farmers to Become More Profitable

*Contacts: Ashley Huibregtse, 608-224-5002; Jim Dick, Communications Director, 608-224-5020*

MADISON – The Grow Wisconsin Dairy Team at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) has been working for dairy farmers for years, and now there are new grants available to do more. The Grow Wisconsin Dairy Producer Grants offer technical assistance to dairy farmers to help them meet the state’s goal of the Dairy 30x20 Initiative.

“Governor Walker recently announced the Dairy 30x20 Initiative and his commitment to the long-term viability of the state’s \$26.5 billion dairy industry,” said DATCP Secretary Ben Brancel. “The Grow Wisconsin Dairy Producer Grants are a new tool available for producers to retain farms, facilitate operational changes and improve profitability. By helping each farm become profitable, Wisconsin will produce 30 billion pounds of milk annually by 2020.”

The grant will be flexible and customizable to meet the needs of individual farms.

Monies from the grant will be used by farmers to hire consultants and build a team of experts with a broad range of expertise to address specific business needs on their operation.

Two types of grants are available:

√ **Planning & Preparation Teams:**

Up to a \$5,000 grant to be applied towards business development and expansion needs. Examples include business planning, financial analysis, transition planning and farm transfers. The grant money can also provide assistance with professional services costs related to dairy farm modernization and expansion efforts such as siting, engineering, design, layout of new barns, parlors or farm structures.

√ **Dairy Profit Teams:** Up to a \$5,000 grant to develop an on-farm management team to assist dairy producers in improving management of existing operational systems and identify opportunities to improve profit. Topics include new or appropriate technology implementation, farm growth, financial success, long-term sustainability, and production enhancing measures.

Cost share payments by the farmer are required at 20% of the grant amount. A grant request for proposals for the Grow Wisconsin Dairy Producer Grants includes a one-page pre-application that covers contact information, farm information, business goals and project area(s) of focus.

These grants were created by the DATCP 161.60 emergency rule, which authorizes DATCP to award grants and loans to dairy producers for projects designed to promote the growth of the dairy industry. When the former Dairy 2020 Program transferred from the then Department of Commerce to DATCP with Wis. Act 32, the budget act also transferred an annual appropriation of \$200,000 for each year of the biennium.

The Grow Wisconsin Dairy Producer Grants are part of the Dairy 30x20 Initiative, which grew out of months of discussions between DATCP staff and dairy industry leaders across the state. Representatives from the Dairy Business Association, Cooperative Network, Professional Dairy Producers of Wisconsin, Wisconsin Farm Bureau Federation, Wisconsin Farmers Union, Wisconsin National Farmers Organization, Wisconsin Cheese Makers Association, Wisconsin Dairy Products Association, GrassWorks Inc, UW-Extension, Wisconsin Center for Dairy Research, Wisconsin Center for Dairy Profitability and the Wisconsin Milk Marketing Board worked with DATCP staff and determined Wisconsin needed more milk to meet the growing demand of the marketplace.

To access the grant application materials, visit [GrowWisconsinDairy.wi.gov](http://GrowWisconsinDairy.wi.gov).

To contact the Grow Wisconsin Dairy Team, email [GrowWisconsinDairy@wi.gov](mailto:GrowWisconsinDairy@wi.gov),

or call toll-free 1-855-943-2479. You can also connect with DATCP on Twitter at [twitter.com/widatcp](https://twitter.com/widatcp)

# New Tool Available for Pregnancy Diagnosis

Otto Wiegand

Adapted from Amy Radunz

UW-Extension Beef Specialist

Non-pregnant cows are non-productive cows and can cost \$100 or more per cow per year. There is a greater risk that the cow will be open next year. Breeding cows back late will result in them calving outside of your calving window. One should cull open heifers or cows prior to winter feeding. You will have to decide how long you want to give your younger cows a second chance.



The value of a weaned calf per cow exposed if 100% cows are pregnant = 500 lbs x 100% x \$1.50/lb = \$750 per cow. The value of a weaned calf per exposed cow when 85% cows are pregnant = 500 lbs x 85% x \$1.50/lb = \$638/cow. Loss in this example due to a 15% failure to become pregnant during the breeding season = \$750-\$638 = -\$112 per cow.

A new technology has been made available to farmers to diagnosis pregnancy in the form of a blood test. With the new test, a blood sample can be taken at anytime after 30 days post-breeding and results come back within 48 to 72 hours after sent to the lab. The accuracy of the test is between 93 to 96%, similar to ultrasound. The test works by identifying concentration of a protein produced by the placenta during pregnancy.

Farmers can obtain the blood sample themselves by either bleeding the cow from the tail or jugular vein. The supplies needed are blood tubes and vacutainter needle which cost approximately \$0.50 per cow. The test costs will vary from lab to lab but typically is between \$2.50 to \$3.50 per test. This test can be a cost effective and convenient option for farmers to diagnosis pregnancy.

At this time two products are available on the market:

- 1) **BioPRYN®** - one local lab is Dairy Pharm & Diagnostic Services in Frederic (715-653-2201), and;
- 2) **DG29TM** – one local lab is Ag Source in Menomonie (715-235-1128). Check the websites for BioPRYN or DG29TM for more labs and information.

## This Quarter's Events

**Contacts:** UW-Extension Ag Agents Otto Wiegand or Kevin Schoessow, Spooner Station, 715-635-3506/800-528-1914, Jane Anklam Douglas Co, 715-395-1363, or Jason Fischbach, Ashland & Bayfield Counties, 715-373-6104 x5 for more information

**April 21, Sat, 11:00-3:15 – Fresh Market Production Workshop for Women, Polk County** – \$10, subjects include: getting the most out of your garden, insect and weed control, soil quality, composting & marketing, pre-register by April 16, contact Jennifer Blazek, 715-485-8600

**April 24, Tues – Protecting the St. Croix Annual Conference, UW-River Falls** – University Center, contact John Haack 715-635-7406

**April 25, Weds – Sustainable Living Fair, LCO College, Hayward** – contact Amber Marlow, 715-634-4790

**May 19, Sat – Lilac Fest, Siren** – Lodge Center Hockey Arena

**June 2, Sat, Noon-4 PM – N. Wis Beef Producers Picnic, Birchwood** – Bill Peterson Farm. Bring dish to pass & lawn chairs. Contact & registration: Lori Lyons, 715-210-0049 or [www.wisconsinbeefproducers.com](http://www.wisconsinbeefproducers.com)

**June 9, Sat AM – Washburn County Dairy Breakfast, Spooner** – Fairgrounds

**June 9, Sat 9 AM – Douglas County MAQA Training** – Maple High School, contact Jane Anklam, 715-395-1363

**June 16, Sat AM – Burnett County Dairy Breakfast – Melin Family Dairy Farm, 12475 Cty Hwy O, Grantsburg**

**June 18, 19, 21, Mon, Tues & Thurs – Spooner, Washburn County, Tractor Safety Training** – Spooner Ag Research Station – for youth 12-17, contact Lorraine, Otto or Kevin at UWEX-Spooner, 715-635-3506

**June 23, Sat AM – Sawyer County Dairy Breakfast, Hayward** – Fairgrounds

**July 12-14, Thurs-Sat – Central Burnett County Fair, Webster** - Fairgrounds

**July 17-19, Tues-Thurs – Farm Technology Days, New London, WI** – Heideman Farms, Outagamie County



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**Inside**

**This  
Issue**

**Agricultural  
Newsletter**

**April  
May  
June**

**2012**

**Should you plant corn and other crops early this year?**

**Learn about grants available to increase profitability of your dairy farm business**

**Utilize a new tool for pregnancy diagnosis**

**Kevin Schoessow  
UWEX Area Agricultural Agent**