

April-May-June 1999
Volume 5, Issue 2

Inside this Issue

- 1 **Johne's is in the News Again**
- 2 **Y2K Preparations**
- 2 **Michigan State University and Canola Production**
- 3 **Two Approaches to Calf Housing**
- 4 **Making the Transition Into the New Millenium**
- 4 **Chain Saw Safety--Minimize the Risk of Kickback**
- 4 **This Quarter's Event Schedule**
- 5 **Alfalfa Establishment with Annual Ryegrass**
- 6 **Direct Marketing of Meat**
- 7 **News From the Spooner Ag Research Station**
- 7 **Northern Wisconsin Beef Day**
- 7 **Sustainable Woods Cooperative**

Agricultural Newsletter

University of Wisconsin-Extension
College of Ag & Life Science

Johne's is in the News Again

*Tom Syverud
Extension and Outreach Educator
Ashland, Douglas, & Iron Counties*

Johne's is a contagious bacterial disease of dairy and beef cattle, goats, and other ruminants. The disease is also called paratuberculosis, and affects the lower intestinal tract of animals. It is known as a wasting disease because animals can eat well but not get the nutrition from feed and gradually waste away. They are unthrifty, weak, lose weight, and have diarrhea at times. Low production is a common complaint as well. The disease is progressive and will eventually kill. Nationwide about 2% of cattle are infected; in Wisconsin 10% of dairy cattle may be infected. That could mean as many as 30% of Wisconsin dairy herds have one or more test-positive animals.

In Wisconsin, the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection will hold public hearings on the new rules regarding Johne's disease. At present, there is no test which can definitely rule out Johne's disease in an individual animal or herd of animals. Currently when an animal is sold there is an "implied warranty" that the animal is free of Johne's disease. If the animal turns out later to be infected, the seller may be liable unless they did one of two things: Either the seller complies with the WDATCP testing and disclosure requirements, or the seller gives the buyer a written disclaimer that the animal is sold "as is" without any warranty. Under the current system, most times an animal is sold "as is." This procedure has not led to the increased testing of animals for Johne's for animal sales, but more importantly, for controlling the spread of the disease. Under the new rules, no mandatory testing will be

required; however, the new rules proposed should increase the amount of testing done.

The proposed set of rules will classify dairy and beef herds into five categories based on the results of annual tests. All reactor animals will be permanently identified as reactors. Animals sold to slaughter will still need to be permanently marked. Reporting is mandatory, but the herd classification will be confidential unless released by the herd owner. The annual test must include 30 eligible animals or at least 10% of eligible animals, whichever is greater. Herds that don't have 30 eligible animals can test what they have. "Test eligible" animals are beef or dairy cows in second lactation and all bulls over three years old. This test needs to be done annually, within two months of the anniversary date. Under this new set of rules, every herd will be classified in one of the following Johne's preventative management levels. A herd can improve its classification level over time. Level A is the most desirable. At this level, a random or whole herd test reveals no Johne's reactor animals. A star is added for every year in this category. Level B is fewer than 5% of animals in a whole herd test are Johne's reactors. Level C is at least 5% but less than 15% of animals in a whole herd test are Johne's reactors. Level D is either more than 15% reactors in a whole herd test or a random test reveals one or more reactors and no follow-up herd test is done. The final category is called the "Maximum risk for Johne's disease." A herd will automatically be classified as maximum risk if a timely annual herd test is not done.

This rule does not require testing but if an owner doesn't have the herd classified based on an annual test, the herd is automatically classified in the maximum risk category. No confirmed reactors may be moved or sold unless they are identified as reactors. If passed, this rule will go into effect July 1, 2000. The delay is to give producers time

to test and receive classifications before the new disclosure provisions take effect. The most common herd test done will probably be the blood test for antibodies to M. Paratuberculosis (Johne's) called ELISA. It is fast, simple, and can detect infected animals before they show signs of the disease. The cost is around \$10 an animal, plus a farm call when done by a private vet. The manure culture test is the other test currently offered and approved. It takes up to sixteen weeks because of the extremely slow growth of the paratuberculosis organism.

Y2K Preparations

*Russell Kiecker
Area Agricultural Agent
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties*

How should we prepare for a severe winter storm? We know we should ALL have a winter storm plan. That same plan can be used to prepare for a potential Year 2000 disruption of services! The following are some reminders of what should be included in your personal preparation plan:

Water: Store one gallon of water per person per day. Keep at least a three-day supply of water for each person.

Food: Ready-to-eat canned meats, fruits, and vegetables. Canned juices, milk, and soup. Staples--sugar, salt, and pepper. Foods for infants, elderly persons, or persons on special diets.

High Energy Foods: peanut butter, jelly, crackers, or granola bars.

Clothing: Blankets and warm clothing.

First Aid Kit: Standard first aid supplies. Medications and prescription drugs.

Special Items: Battery powered radio, flashlight, and extra batteries. Non-electric can opener, fire extinguisher, extra toilet paper, and personal hygiene items.

Heat: Keep an adequate supply of heating fuel on hand and use it sparingly.

Automobile: Keep your car's gas tank full for emergency use.

Michigan State University Coordinates Canola Production in Great Lakes Region

*Mike Mlynarek
Superintendent
Ashland Ag Research Station*

Canola is a type of rapeseed which was developed in Canada during the 60s and 70s. Breeders produced rapeseed selections containing oil that was suitable for human consumption, where previously rapeseed oil was mainly used as a fuel and industrial lubricant. Canola is now among the world's top five oilseed crops and the market for "healthy" food-grade canola oil continues to expand. Current North American canola production is primarily in the Canadian prairie provinces, and south into North Dakota.

Over the past fifteen years there has been canola research, and limited production acreage, in the Great Lakes Region, including Wisconsin. During the next several years, Michigan State University (MSU) will lead an effort to develop a viable, coordinated canola industry in this part of the mid-west. Later this March, I will attend the first MSU Canola Summit in Mackinaw City, MI. The conference aims to create a network for sharing current information about research, production management, markets, shipping, product development, etc. Participants hope to identify strategies for making canola a profitable cropping option in our area. MSU plans to circulate a monthly canola newsletter and will continue organizing an annual conference. I'm optimistic about canola's potential for several reasons, including:

- Regional climatic conditions--and many soil types--are suitable for canola.
- Canola fits into existing crop rotations.
- Necessary implements (grain drills, swathers, combines) are common.

- Canola has been quite good over time--far less volatile than most feed grains.
- Research plots and production fields have shown that we can obtain "reasonable" yields with proper management.
- A UW-Madison plant breeder is developing higher yielding canola varieties which are better adapted to the region's conditions.
- Excellent production publications are available from various states, provinces, and seed companies.

Distance to established markets is a concern. The nearest large-scale crushing facilities for oil extraction are in North Dakota. Some years, however, the grain terminals in Superior/Duluth handle large quantities of canola for export. I'll learn more about markets at the upcoming conference, including smaller "pilot" and speciality oil pressing facilities in the Great Lakes Region.

Another concern is infrastructure. Current production areas--with a long history of cash cropping grains and oilseeds--have well established storage and transportation networks. Much of our region does not have large grain elevator complexes with rail service, as we see where cash cropping is common.

I look forward to learning more about the canola industry and will keep you updated about developments. This summer, the Ashland Station will continue evaluating canola varieties and I hope to "test crop" a ten acre production field.

Visit the Station or call me if canola interests you. For detailed production information, Extension offices and Ag Research Stations should have a copy of the excellent **Canadian Canola Growers Manual**. It is also available electronically at www.canola-council.org or through:

Canola Council of Canada
400-167 Lombard Avenue
Winnipeg, MB
Canada R3B OT6

Two Approaches to Calf Housing

*Tom Syverud
Extension and Outreach Educator
Ashland, Douglas, & Iron Counties*

It is generally recommended that calves are provided with their own housing soon after birth. Although housing costs are only about 6% of the total cost of raising a calf, it is still a significant capital expenditure for most operations. A good housing system, birth to weaning, must keep the calf dry and free from drafts, with clean bedding. A good rule of thumb is that you should not be able to feel air movement on the back of your hand in the area around the calf. Calves should be separated enough to prevent sucking but have enough room to be able to groom themselves easily. Good floor drainage is essential. One third less bedding may be required when the floor has adequate drainage. Bedding should absorb moisture, be a soft resting place, and provide insulation from the cold floor. Durability, ease of cleaning, flexibility, and cost are all factors in choosing calf housing. Many types exist: here are two successful examples.



Gary Peterson, Douglas County, remodeled this Quonset type building into a curtain sided calf barn. The lower eight feet of siding of each wall was removed and a roll-up curtain was attached on the outside. Located several miles from Lake Superior, the calves have done well for two years now. The height of the building provides plenty of natural ventilation.



Rows of calves are tied by chain to the outside walls and to several ropes running the full length of the building between the end walls. Plywood is attached to the inside walls to keep the calves off the curtains. Sand is used for bedding.



Tom Kriskovich, Ashland County, uses a greenhouse barn to raise calves and young heifers. An overshoot roof provides natural ventilation. On sunny days the calf pens are bright, and the full-length curtain is easily rolled up to maintain an even temperature. Winter snows have not been a problem for the roof.



Calves are raised in panel wire pens. Straw on a gravel/sand base is used for bedding. Pens are set away from the curved walls to protect the plastic. Calves have done well in this two year old barn.

Making the Transition Into the New Millennium

*Russell Kiecker
Area Agricultural Agent
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties*

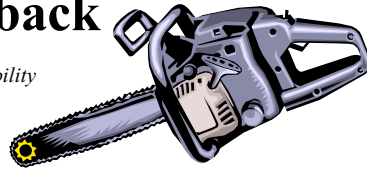
Will agriculture be stricken with the millennium bug (also known as the Y2K problem)? In a nutshell, this bug is a glitch that prevents computers from distinguishing between 2000 and 1900. Opinions vary on whether or not we should worry. What are some of the things we can do to ease our mind?

1. Make a list of businesses and institutions that you are involved with that use dates. These could be banks, credit card companies, insurers, medical facilities, pharmacies, animal drug suppliers, brokerage firms, credit unions, feed stores, milk buyers, or suppliers of fuel and electricity. Contact them and ask them what they have done to prepare. Urge them to not take this lightly because no one knows just how big of a problem this might become.
2. Get copies of statements from 1999 to prove balances, payment and assets held.
3. Get a copy of your social security earnings record in 1999 and again in 2000.
4. Be a regular visitor to one of the Y2K Web sites like www.year2000.com or www.y2news.com.
5. Keep a few weeks cash and a supply of prescription drugs on hand. Don't make a run on the bank a week before the years end. If everyone does that, there would be a lot of trouble.
6. Check out your farm generator. Assure yourself that it is in tip top shape for any demands you may make of it.

Most experts are saying that we should prepare the same as for a severe ice storm when we tend to lose services and communications. This is good advice.

Chain Saw Safety—Minimize the Risk of Kickback

--From AgrAbility



*John Markus
Area Agricultural Agent
bayfield & Ashland Counties*

With spring pruning and clean-up just around the corner, consider chain saw safety. Chain saw kickback can result in death or severe injury. The reaction to the saw chain striking an object can throw the saw violently back toward the operator, sometimes with disastrous results. Approximately one-fourth of the injuries associated with chain saws involve kickback.

Kickback is the term to describe unexpected upward motion of the guide bar. Kickback occurs when the end portion of the nose of the bar strikes an object and the chain momentarily snags.

The most common and probably most violent kickback occurs when the chain and cutter guide bar make contact, either accidentally or intentionally in the "kickback zone."

To avoid kickback:

- Don't touch the tip of the bar to any object while the chain is running.
- Always hold the chain saw firmly with both hands.
- Use the proper grip. Grasp the forward handle with your left hand, palm down, wrapping your fingers around the handle bar. Keep the handle bar in the webbing between your index finger and thumb. Grasp the rear handle firmly with your right hand.
- Use wedges to avoid pinching the bar when cutting larger pieces.
- Avoid cutting limbs above your mid-chest height.
- Wear protective clothing, such as a hard hat, hearing protection, a full face shield, protective leg chaps, sure-grip gloves, and safety shoes.

This Quarter's Events

March 16, 1999 John's Disease Workshop, 1:30 p.m., Courthouse, Barron.

March 18, 1999 Private Pesticide Applicator Training & Certification, 9:30 a.m., Spooner Ag Research Station.

March 20, 1999 National Ag Day.

March 20, 1999 Northern Wisconsin Beef Day, Spooner Ag Research Station. Details in this newsletter. Check for Information and ride sharing arrangements at local UWEX offices.

April 3, 1999 Dairy Breakfast and Farm & Garden Show, 8 a.m. - 2 p.m., Ashland Civic Center.

June 8-10, 1999 Tentative dates for Youth Tractor & Machinery Safety Training. Call Kevin Schoessow at 635-3506 or 1-800-528-1914 for more information or to register.

June 12, 1999 Washburn County Dairy Breakfast.

June 19, 1999 Siren Ag Association Dairy Breakfast.

June 26, 1999 Sawyer County Dairy Breakfast

May 8, 1999 - September 11, 1999 Northwest Cleansweep hazardous waste collection at area sites. Call the Northwest Region Planning Commission at 635-2197 for more information.

Alfalfa Establishment with Annual Ryegrass

Principal Investigator - Dan Wiersma, Asst. Superintendent, Marshfield Ag Research Station

*Robert Rand
Superintendent
Spooner Ag Research Station*

A trial was established at the station in 1997 to determine if alfalfa could be established with annual ryegrass as the cover crop and provide good yields of quality forage the establishment year. Both alfalfa and ryegrass would be harvested the seeding year for forage. In order to answer the preceding question, the following would be done; 1) Compare two annual ryegrass varieties, one with high, the other with low seedling vigor; 2) Compare rate of ryegrass seeding at 20 and 40 seeds per square foot (4 and 8 lbs. per acre); 3) Harvest the alfalfa ryegrass early in the seeding year, then kill the ryegrass to eliminate its competitiveness; and 4) Use the conventional alfalfa oat companion crop seeding system but remove oats with a herbicide in one treatment and allow them to mature to grain in the other. Forage yield tests would be done in 1998.

Results of Alfalfa Establishment with Ryegrass - 1997, 1998 Spooner Ag Research Station

Treatment	Herbicide	Dry Wt. lbs./acre		Total Yield	Plant Stand Plants/4 sq. ft.
		1997 Yield	1998 Yield		
1. Alfalfa	Persuit	2969 ab	8544 ab	11513 ab	26 ab
2. Oat, bay	Poast	3885 a	8622 ab	12507 a	25 ab
3. Surrey 20	Poast	2942 ab	8715 ab	11657 ab	29 a
4. Surrey 40	Poast	3147 ab	9078 a	12225 a	25 ab
5. Tetrone 20	Poast	2103 b	8607 ab	10710 ab	30 a
6. Tetrone 40	Poast	2128 b	8541 ab	10669 ab	30 a
7. Surrey 20	None	3510 a	8007 abc	11517 ab	27 ab
8. Surrey 40	None	3192 ab	7023 abc	10215 ab	22 ab
9. Tetrone 20	None	2769 ab	6777 bc	9546 ab	15 ab
10. Tetrone 40	None	2813 ab	6414 c	9227 b	14 b
11. Oats, bay	None	3300 ab	8493 ab	11793ab	25 ab
12. Mean		2978	8074	11052	24

Numbers followed by the same letter are not significantly different at the 0.05 level of probability. (Bonferoni)

Results from this irrigated trial are shown in the preceding table. Most of the seeding attempts were successful. Tetrone annual ryegrass is very competitive in the seeding year and tends to capture all available territory in the sward for itself. If left unchecked for the season as in treatments 9 and 10, it limits alfalfa establishment due to crowding effects. This is revealed in second year yields and in spring 1998 alfalfa plant stands. In those treatments in which tetrone was killed by herbicide after first harvest in 1997, alfalfa establishment was successful, producing almost one ton more of forage in 1998 than where it wasn't killed. Alfalfa stands after killing tetrone after first harvest were also high.

As far as seeding rates affect stands and yields, in all cases it was shown that the lower ryegrass seeding rate (20 seeds/sq. ft. or 4 lbs/a) provided for higher alfalfa stands than did the 40 seeds/sq.ft. rate. Lower seeding rates produced higher forage yields in three out of four cases as alfalfa stands tend to be higher where the lower seeding rate was used. The vigorous seedling habit of ryegrass provides too much competition for alfalfa.

Using a herbicide (Poast) to eliminate ryegrass competition tended to lower first year yields for both varieties and seeding rates. However, second year yields for the herbicide treatments out yielded there no herbicide counterparts by about a ton, which made total yields favor the herbicide treatments. The seeding method in which oat companion crop was harvested prior to maturity, after which regrowth was killed, produced highest yields for the two years. This treatment yielded more than where oats were allowed to mature to grain. Plant stands for both of these treatments were equal at 25 per 4 square feet. Future yields would be expected to be equal.

Treatment (1) using direct seeded alfalfa plus herbicide without any companion crop also resulted in a successful stand. Plant stands and yields were not significantly higher than any other treatment; however, forage quality should be very good.

Researcher Wiersma did a very good job in designing this trial. It answers lots of questions about various ways of alfalfa establishment. Dan will have this forage analyzed for nutrient content so that pounds of milk per acre can be calculated.

Direct Marketing of Meat

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

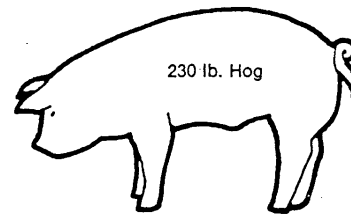
With livestock prices at their current level, it is becoming more and more important for producers to gain access to profitable markets and customers. One way of doing this is through Direct Marketing. This concept is not a new idea by any means. Farmers have been selling farm fresh produce to rural and urban neighbors for generations. However, the number of producers marketing and selling directly to consumers has declined rapidly over the years. As a result, farmers often feel they have little or no control over the prices they receive for their products. While there is no silver bullet to increasing farm prices, farmers do have options to add value to what they produce, and it turn receive better prices for their products.

The direct sale of meat products to consumers might be one of those options. By assuming some of the marketing roles involved in transforming the live animal on the farm to retail products ready for consumers' freezers, extra income can be generated for the farmer, and a wholesome, safe food product can be delivered to the consumer at a possible cost savings. Other important advantages to the consumer are:

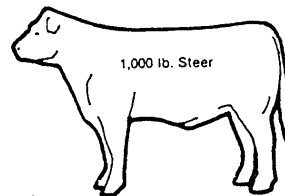
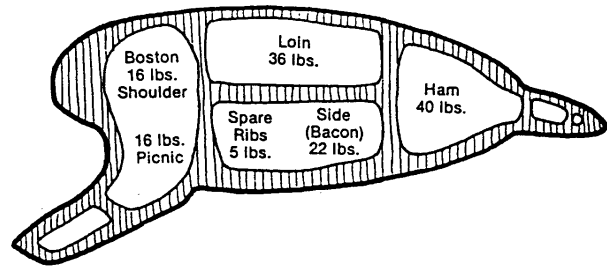
- 1) Freshness of product
- 2) Convenience of an in-home meat supply
- 3) Knowledge of source of product
- 4) Desired quality (reduced fat, consistency, favorable production practices)

Although a direct marketing approach can result in increased profits, it also carries added responsibility and the potential for some headaches. Major considerations include:

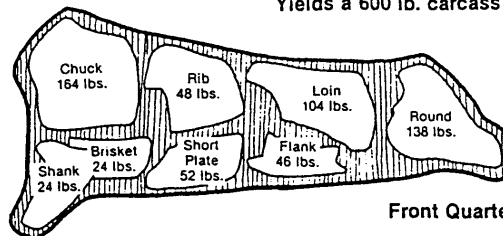
- 1) Producing a high quality/safe product which satisfies customer desires.
- 2) Having an adequate base of potential customers



Yields a 166 lb. carcass (72% of live weight)



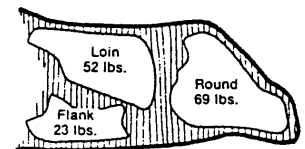
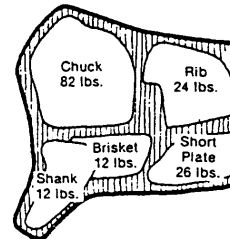
Yields a 600 lb. carcass (60% of live wt.)



Front Quarter: 156 lbs.

Hindquarter: 144 lbs.

Yields:
2 Front Quarters (52%)
2 Hindquarters (48%)



- 3) Evaluating competition
- 4) Having a good working relationship with local processors and inspectors (for meat or processed food sales)
- 5) Coordinating transactions between farm and customer
- 6) Determining price
- 7) Collecting the money
- 8) Making good on unacceptable product

To be successful, a producer must give careful attention to these and other considerations involved with this type of marketing. It is also important to remember that directing marketing products will attract certain customers and be ignored by others. The farmer marketer needs to think like a consumer and recognize the many product choices available and how to attract customers to choose his product. For more information, contact Kevin Schoessow at 1-800-528-1914 or 635-3506.

News from the Spooner Ag Research Station

*Robert Rand
Superintendent
Spooner Ag Research Station*

New Project for 1999

Professor Michael Casler, UW Department of Agronomy, will be harvesting a switchgrass variety trial that was seeded at the Spooner Station in 1998. Switchgrass contains fibers of very good quality that have potential in the paper and clothing industry. One harvest will be made per season. This is part of a multi-state test to find alternative fiber sources.

Invitation

The Spooner Ag Research Station extends an invitation to all farmers to stop in during the growing season. It's an opportunity to obtain first hand knowledge of the various cropping systems that are employed with the many crops grown here. Tours can be arranged by calling 715-635-3735.

Sustainable Woods Cooperative

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

Farmers and landowners interested in getting a higher per acre return on their woodlands and doing it with sustainable harvesting practices may be interested in what 130 wood landowners in southern Wisconsin have done. They have formed Wisconsin's first Sustainable Woods Cooperative. The cooperative allows timber owners to process their own wood products and gain added value, while at the same time assuring good forest management. **Trial sale of kiln-dried lumber harvested through the Sustainable Woods Cooperative are currently selling for up to ten times the original stumpage value of the trees. The landowner's net income is nearly doubled and the money stays in the local economy.**

University of Wisconsin-Extension Presents:

Northern Wisconsin Beef Day

Northern Wisconsin beef producers are invited to attend this day-long beef management workshop to learn more about recent research that has been undertaken by the University of Wisconsin to improve the profitability of beef producers.

The \$5.00 fee includes morning refreshments and educational materials. Pre-registration is encouraged. Please call 1-800-528-1914 or 635-3506 to pre-register.

Agenda

Saturday, March 20, 1999

UW Spooner Agricultural Research Station

9:45 a.m. Registration and coffee

10:15 a.m. **Raising Holstein Steers**
Mike Siemens, UW Beef Specialist

The Economics of Beef Production
Dick Vathauer, UW Extension Livestock Specialist

Noon Lunch - Bring your own brown bag or go into town for a bite.

12:30 p.m. **General Herd Health Recommendations Including Reproduction**
Dr. Harry Momont, UW School of Veterinary Medicine

Cost Effective Housing for Starting Beef Calves
Tom Cadwallader, UW Area Agricultural Agent

2:00 p.m. Adjourn - Have a safe trip home.

By combining resources small woodland owners can market truckload quantities. Logs are sorted at the cooperative's log sort yard. Low-grade wood is sold to the best available market (firewood, pallets, pulp, etc.). Higher-grade lumber enters the cooperative's manufacturing operation for solar kiln drying and value added processing (flooring, millwork, architectural-grade lumber, etc.).

To learn more about opportunities for woodland owners to form a forestry cooperative and the costs and benefits to the coop and

its members, an informational meeting is being planned for Saturday, March 20, 1999. It will take place at Noon at Karabalis Restaurant in Hayward. This meeting is sponsored by the Northwest Chapter of the Woodlands Association and the Institute for Agriculture Trade Policy. For more information, contact Bob Olson, Northwest Wisconsin Woodlands Association at 715-634-2305, or Jim Birkemeier, Sustainable Woods Cooperative, at 608-588-7342 or on the Internet at www.execpc.com/timbergreen.

AGRICULTURAL NEWSLETTER

PRODUCED BY
THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN EXTENSION
AND
COLLEGE OF AG AND LIFE SCIENCES

BURNETT • SAWYER • WASHBURN COUNTIES

RUSSELL KIECKER, AREA AGRICULTURAL AGENT 635-3506
KEVIN SCHOESSOW, AREA AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AGENT 635-3506
BOB RAND, SPOONER AG RESEARCH STATION SUPERINTENDENT 635-3735
YVES BERGER, SPOONER AG RESEARCH STATION SHEEP RESEARCHER 635-3735

PHONE: 1-800-528-1914, 715-635-3506, or 715-635-3735

ASHLAND • BAYFIELD • DOUGLAS • IRON COUNTIES

JOHN MARKUS, AREA AGRICULTURAL AGENT 373-6104
MIKE MLYNAREK, ASHLAND AG RESEARCH STATION SUPERINTENDENT 682-7268
TOM SYVERUD, EXTENSION AND OUTREACH EDUCATOR 682-7268

PHONE: 715-682-7268, or 715-373-6104

APRIL • MAY • JUNE 1999 VOL. 5, ISSUE 2

*University of Wisconsin, United States Department of Agriculture and Wisconsin Counties Cooperating.
UW-Extension provides equal opportunity in employment and programming. Including Title IX and ADA requirements.*

*If you have any special needs or require special accommodations, please write to UWEX Area Agricultural Agent, Spooner Ag Research Station,
W6646 Highway 70, Spooner, WI 54801 or UWEX Area Agricultural Agent, Ashland Ag Research Station, Rt.3 Box 423, Ashland, WI 54806.*



UWEX Area Agricultural Agents
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties
Spooner Agricultural Research Station
W6646 Highway 70
Spooner, WI 54801

BULK MAIL
US POSTAGE &
FEES PAID
USDA
PERMIT NO. G268