

Agricultural Newsletter

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



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Inside this Issue

- 1 Sheep Dairying, Anyone?
- 2 Milk prices continue to set records
- 2 Ashland's July 10 field day has been cancelled
- 3 Effect of alfalfa quality on milk production and profitability
- 3 49th Annual Spooner Sheep Day to be held August 25
- 4 Foot & Mouth Disease update
- 4 2001 research at the Spooner Ag Research Station
- 5 Farm safety tips for families
- 5 What level of risk are you willing to take?
- 5 This quarter's events schedule
- 6 American beef is safe for consumers and meat industry
- 7 Estimating the weight of forage on a forage wagon
- 7 What can be done with all of those downed trees?

Sheep Dairying, Anyone?

The history of sheep dairying and cheese production in the United States is relatively recent. Most sheep cheese in this country is manufactured, in small quantities, in farmstead plants. Much of this production takes place in Vermont and Wisconsin. Sheep milk cheese has been highly prized in Europe for centuries and is widely imported into the United States accounting for almost all of the market. Most readers will be most familiar with Roquefort, an identity-preserved French blue cheese, popular in cooking or as a table cheese. But there are many others, including Manchego, Ossau-Iraty, Pecorino Romano and traditional feta.

The United States is now on the map as a source for high quality sheep milk cheese. In Wisconsin, the American Cheese Society as 'best of show' in their 1998 competition, recognized Mary Falk who farms near Grantsburg and has a small artisanal cheese plant on her farm. Her *Trade Lake cheeses* are served in some of the best restaurants in America. This year, at the 2001 United States Championship of Cheese Making, held in Madison, Old Chatham Shepherding Company in New York won best of show and probably won more awards, in more different categories, than any other cheese makers. The Wisconsin Sheep Dairy Coop has a long-term relationship supplying sheep milk to Old Chatham and has proven to be a reliable supplier, to some extent the only commercial-scale supplier, of very high-quality sheep milk in the United States. Cheese plants in Wisconsin buying sheep milk from the Wisconsin Sheep Dairy Coop are Wisconsin Pride-Carr Valley in Mauston, Montchevre-Betin in Belmont and Bass Lake Cheese factory in Somerset. Many others contacted the Coop for the possibility of buying milk.

Over the past few years, with financial support from the Wisconsin Departments of Agriculture and Commerce, the cooperative has successfully diversified by adding sheep-milk cheese production. Due to the value of the milk, sheep cheese is always going to be very expensive. The Wisconsin Sheep Dairy Coop has learned from the marketplace that producing average quality cheese will not build a sustainable market for our products. In competing with European imports, it is incumbent upon us to create world-class cheeses if we are to succeed.

Some countries in Europe actually produce more fine cheese from sheep and goat milk than from the milk of cows. This incredibly rich, flavorful milk is the start for what many consider to be the finest cheeses in the world.

The cooperative has begun an aggressive campaign to recruit additional farmers. Most existing co-op members have had a long-term interest in lamb and wool production and at some point in time diversified into milking. Now, the cooperative is receiving additional interest from cow dairy producers who look at sheep milk production as a way to diversify and remain at a family-scale of operation. In some cases, new perspective members have already exited the cow dairy business and have a set of existing buildings and the infrastructure to now milk sheep.

(Continued on Page 2)

(Cont.)

“Just like farmers who milk cows, the common denominator for our members is a strong affection for the animals and desire to operate a successful livestock enterprise,” according to Yves Berger, the University of Wisconsin-Madison sheep-dairy specialist based in Spooner. “After seven years of development in genetics and animal husbandry practices, our young sheep dairy industry here in Wisconsin is beginning to come of age,” said Berger. A native of France, Berger has been helping sheep producers in this country improve their flocks as director of the sheep program at the University of Wisconsin’s experimental station in Spooner. There, as many as 300 sheep are milked daily during the season. The Spooner Ag Research Station is a member of the Wisconsin Sheep dairy Coop with Berger serving as vice-president.

Berger and others in this country have worked hard to obtain superior genetics from Europe to improve breeding pro-



grams in the United States. This has resulted in tremendous increases in milk production and profitability for Wisconsin farmers.

Farmers who are interested in investigating the options of sheep dairy production on their farms are encouraged to contact the Wisconsin Sheep Dairy Cooperative at 715-877-2845 or ccsheep@aol.com or Yves Berger at 715-635-3735 or yumberger@facstaff.wisc.edu

Milk prices continue to set records

*Bill Saumer
Area Agricultural Agent
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties*

I have talked about dairy farm profitability and how farmers can determine and obtain their own profitable milk prices. The strategies we have discussed in the past have been working out for many producers already and there are still opportunities that will be available in the coming weeks for dairymen to lock in on excellent milk prices for the coming year.

Wisconsin farmers should have received an average May price of \$15.60 per cwt. for their milk. This is an increase of \$1.30 from April 2001. This also is a record for the month of May for Wisconsin and \$4.40 above May 2000. In case you happened to forget, last year we also set record all-time lows, so my predictions of the roller coaster ride of milk prices with higher highs and lower lows was correct.

Even with international trade beginning to open up again with imported milk products on the increase, our milk prices are still dependent on our milk production. With lower milk production per cow we will continue to see favorable or above average milk prices. Many area farmers are currently facing challenging situations in harvesting top quality alfalfa, and if this continues in the next couple months, milk production per cow will also suffer, which will affect milk prices well into next year. However, these numbers can easily be offset by increases in milk production in other dairy states, which we have witnessed in recent years.

The bottom line is that producers can not count on favorable prices to continue into and through next year. All indications are that the roller coaster milk price ride we are on will be around for some time. Therefore, it is imperative that producers take advantage of any marketing opportunities for the next few months and into next year with a certain percentage of their milk production.

If you have any questions about these opportunities or you want to know what might be an excellent price for your operation, give me a call and I will try to answer all of your questions.

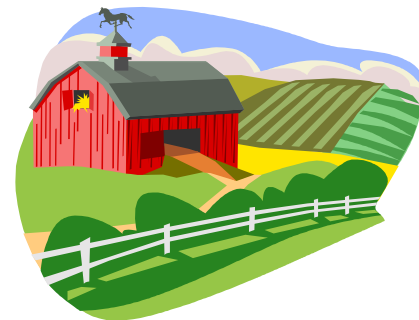
Ashland’s July 10 field day has been canceled

*Mike Mlynarek
Superintendent
Ashland Ag Research Station*

The Field Day scheduled for July 10 at the Ashland Research Station has been canceled. Unfortunately, I will be unable to host this event because I’ll be having foot surgery in late June. I appreciate past support and look forward to future opportunities to conduct similar programs.

The field day was going to highlight canola production. Canola stands are quite thin at the Station this year. Torrential rains shortly after seeding caused severe soil crusting and poor crop emergence. Canola emergence can be a problem on soils that are prone to crusting. Rotary hoeing is not an option for breaking the crust, since canola is seeded shallow, roughly 1/2 inch deep.

Despite this, canola does show promise. Excellent yields have been obtained at the Ashland Station, with 2,632 lbs/a from a 10-acre production field last year. Our top research plot entry yielded 3,345 lbs/a in 2000. The region’s climate is quite suitable for canola. Soils which are prone to crusting or drought, may need to be avoided, however.



Effect of alfalfa quality on milk production and profitability

Bill Saumer

Area Agricultural Agent

Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties

It is critically important to feed top quality forages for profitable livestock production and even more so for milk production. I am writing this article in the middle of June and there are still many fields that have not been planted yet due to the extremely wet conditions. Any late planted corn to be harvested for corn silage will still produce the tonnage, but the energy in the feed will be greatly reduced. Alfalfa hay and haylage harvesting has been very challenging and even though most farmers know when to cut the hay to get the highest feed value, continuous rain prevents them from doing so. Alfalfa plants themselves mature at a fast rate, especially with adequate moisture and warmer temperatures. Often times farmers have no choice and have to feed the forages they harvest even if they are of poor quality. This leads to many problems down the road besides lost milk production. As the quality of forages decrease, so does the availability of vitamins, minerals and other nutrients. Challenges with herd health, breeding problems, milk butterfat and protein scores, and body condition are the result of lower quality forages. A farmer would be far better off if he/she would get rid of all of the poorer feeds and replace them with later cuttings or purchased feeds. Unfortunately, when there are a lot of poor quality feeds around, good quality feeds can be expensive and maybe not be economically feasible for the farmer to purchase.

The highest quality forages and especially alfalfa offer the most available nutrients to livestock when the relative feed value (RFV) is over 150. As many producers already know, in order to feed forages that are in this category it takes good management throughout cutting, harvesting, storage and feeding. Most dairy and alfalfa producers

also raise other crops and often times they concentrate their efforts on getting those seeds in the ground before cutting any alfalfa. This year we have had an overlap of planting and haying and most producers have not harvested their first cutting when they should have or wanted to. Hopefully by the time this newsletter gets to you, the weather will have straightened out and farmers are again able to harvest top quality alfalfa and hay.

I have already mentioned that benefits are lost as the plants become more mature and these benefits ultimately mean dollars. Initially the dairy farmer sees the better milk production when using quality forages. Many producers gauge their success by looking at their production or bulk tank average. This is important, but there are other benefits with high quality alfalfa. Reduced out of pocket costs for feed ingredients affect the bottom line for farmers. If a producer has lower RFV alfalfa, he/she will have to try to make up for the reduced availability of nutrients by supplementing the feeds. These supplements can be costly and no matter how good they are, they can never make up for the losses in the poorer quality forages.

Herd health can also be affected adversely by lower quality forages. Often times lower body scores and poor reproductive performance are experienced with low RFV forages. None of this should be news to anyone, but I wanted to emphasize the importance of feeding the best quality alfalfa possible and that begins with the timing of the first cutting. As the plants mature, the RFV drops rapidly and the producer ends up with poor lab test scores and reduced dairy profits. There are also reductions in RFV that occur during harvesting and storage as well. Those can be topics for later discussions, but are also very important for profitable management and production. Alfalfa scissor cut research has shown repeatedly that forage quality drops rapidly as the plants mature and that a farmer has to cut the alfalfa at 30-40 points higher RFV to end up with a final feed where he/she wants it. We have also been looking at using the Predictive Equation for Alfalfa Quality (PEAQ)

method of determining plant quality and RFV. Most of the results were very positive as to the accuracy of measuring the plants prior to cutting and there are PEAQ sticks available for sale at many extension offices for around \$10. This is a very minimal investment when one considers the thousands of dollars of increased feed value and potential dairy profitability.

If you do not obtain a PEAQ stick, be sure to cut your alfalfa at the right height during the vegetative or bud stage. Once you see blossoms, the plant has already gone downhill and many benefits are lost. These losses dairy producers can not afford. If you have any questions about forages, dairy management or anything else, please do not hesitate to give me a call. Be sure to have a safe and productive harvesting season!

49th Annual Spooner Sheep Day to be held

Yves Berger

Superintendent

Spooner Ag Research Station

On Saturday, August 25, 2001, the Spooner Ag Research Station will host the 49th Annual Spooner Sheep Day.

The morning session starts with registration at 8:30 a.m. in the Station auditorium. After registration and a short introduction, different specialists will present the results of new research in the sheep industry and topics relevant to the everyday operation of a sheep farm.

Whole lamb on the spit is offered as the main course for lunch.

Afternoon seminars held at the sheep barn are more hands-on related. Advanced sheep farmers and beginners alike will receive useful information to bring back home.

The public is welcome to attend. Even if you are not in the sheep business, please feel free to come and learn about the raising of sheep and tour our facilities at the Spooner Ag Research Station. Registration is free; however, a fee of \$5.00 is charged for lunch.

Foot & Mouth Disease Update:

What is Wisconsin's approach if an outbreak occurs?

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

By now, we all have heard all about Foot and Mouth Disease. However, here are a few facts about the disease for review. FMD is a highly contagious disease of all cloven hoofed animals. The first signs of infection are blisters in the mouth, on feet and teats. Much sticky and foamy saliva is produced and cattle are lame. Feed intake and milk production also drop.

FMD can be confused with other diseases, as a result, laboratory tests must be done. People cannot get FMD; however, they can easily spread this disease. The disease is a virus that survives in lymph nodes, bone marrow, and destroyed muscle tissue even after rigor mortis sets in. If a suspected case of FMD occurs in Wisconsin, the Department of Agriculture or the USDA Veterinary Service would first be notified.

- Then a state or federal veterinarian will take samples from the animals and the farm will be quarantined.
- Within one to five days, the results of the tests are known.
- If the test is positive, a state of emergency is declared.
- A field operations center is established near the farm.
- The area is quarantined. The size of the quarantine area depends upon the weather conditions and number of farms. (The computer software used to track nuclear disasters will be used to tract FMD also).
- The movement of animals and products will be prevented, people movement will also be limited in the quarantine area.

- The infected herd will be killed and burned or buried.
- All herds and flocks in the area will be inspected. If positive, they will also be slaughtered.
- The infection source will be determined and the animal movements before infection will be investigated for follow-up.
- Indemnity payments to owners will be determined.
- After no new cases occur, the cleanup and disinfection of the farm will begin. No animals can be brought back on the farm for six months.

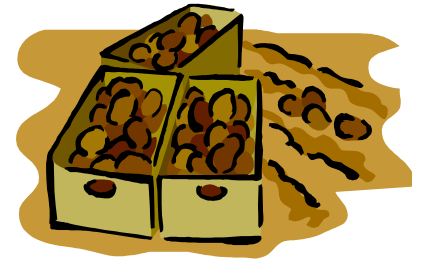
2001 Research at Spooner Ag Research Station

Mike Bertram
Asst. Superintendent
Spooner Ag Research Station

Research activities continue to be busy this summer at the Spooner Ag Research Station. Twenty-one field and forage crop experiments are currently under way. On the forage side, an alfalfa variety trial seeded in 2000 is being harvested for data. Twenty varieties are included. Other alfalfa studies include an assessment of sulfur-containing phosphorus fertilizers and a study to test the interaction of soil pH and varying potassium levels on alfalfa yield and cation content. A new annual ryegrass trial was also planted, which will evaluate 13 promising varieties.

Three corn hybrid evaluation trials were planted in May. They each contain the same 54 hybrids, which range from about 75 to 90 days relative maturity. They are planted on irrigated sandy loam, dryland sandy loam, and dryland silt loam. A soybean evaluation contains 32 varieties. Seven of these are conventional and 25 are Roundup Ready varieties. Small grains work also continues. Thirty-four oats varieties are also being evaluated along with eight barley varieties.

Potato research at the station has increased this year to reach a total of five experiments. One experiment evaluates 27 Russet varieties for yield and tuber quality. Another studies the effect of fungicide seedpiece



treatments on potato health and yield. A herbicide evaluation tests twelve herbicide treatments on potatoes. A new experiment evaluates the effect of different starter fertilizers with different micronutrients on potato yield and quality. A breeding nursery has also been implemented for the development of new commercial potato varieties. Our summer potato tour will be August 23.

The hybrid poplar demonstration continues as the trees put on more height and girth. A field day is planned for July 21. Many new shrubs and vegetables have been planted in the demonstration garden. We are participating in a tomato-breeding program to develop a new short season paste tomato. The shrub rose evaluation also is continuing. They are being rated for ornamental value, pest resistance, and cold hardiness. The twilight garden tour is on August 30.

Several warm-season grass studies are underway. A new experiment tests the adaptation of six switchgrass varieties. Continuing experiments include a variety trial with Indiangrass, switchgrass, big and little bluestem, and sideoats grama. A big bluestem evaluation also continues from previous years. A 2-acre native prairie is being established by the NRCS to use for demonstration and educational purposes. Native species of more than 30 grasses, flowers, and forbs were included.

It should be an exciting summer with the variety of field experiments being conducted at the Spooner Ag Research Station. Look for research results to start appearing on the web page in fall.

Farm safety tips for families

*John Markus
Area Agricultural Agent
Bayfield & Ashland Counties*

Recently 12 youth from Ashland, Bayfield and Iron counties became certified to operate farm machinery on public roads by successfully completing a Farm Tractor and Machinery Safety course conducted by the Bayfield County Extension office.

During this 24 hours of instruction students viewed videos showing the results of farm accidents. Most accidents can be prevented. Many accidents involve young children.

Adults must remember that:

- Young children are not responsible for their own safety.
- You cannot do farm work and supervise a young child at the same time.
- Young children do not belong at the farm work site.

What can farm parents do?

- Investigate all options that would enable you to keep young children away from the work site. Could you leave them with a neighbor, a friend, or another responsible adult?
- Clearly think out your priorities. How much risk are you willing to take when it comes to your children's safety.

Discuss these issues with all family members. If there is disagreement, consider talking to your pastor, county Extension agent, health care provider, neighbor, friend, or other trusted community member in an effort to come up with a solution.



What level of risk are you willing to take?

*Kevin Schoessow
Area Agricultural Agent
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties*

By now many of you reading this newsletter have read, heard, and seen pictures of the devastating tornado that ripped its way through Burnett and Washburn Counties on the early evening of June 18, 2001. For some the tornado and its destruction left unforgettable personal loss and tragedy. As part of the USDA disaster assessment team, I witnessed much of the destruction of the storm first hand. It was rather disturbing as we drove through township after township and documented the impact this storm had on local farmers. It was by far the largest loss and damage of property that I have seen in my life.

After the initial shock of surviving the tornado people began their own personal assessment of damage to their property. It's a very painful process. Most people had some type of insurance to help cover their losses, but was it enough? While nobody anticipates an F3 or F4 category tornado to destroy your farm, there is still a chance that it can happen. What risk are you willing to take?

In light of this disaster, now may be a good time to reevaluate your risk management strategies. What dollar loss can you take? Are all your buildings insured? Are they insured at replacement cost? What about livestock? Is personal property covered? At what level? How about liability? Income continuation? Disability? Crop damage? The phrase "Fully Insured" comes to mind. The cost of providing this risk management can be rather expensive in the short term, but in the event of such a disaster as a tornado it may well be worth the cost.

This Quarter's Events

July 8, 9, 10, 2001, Burnett County Disaster Business & Home Expo. 10 a.m. - 8 p.m., Siren School, Siren. For more information, call Sheldon Johnson at 715-635-2197, NWRPC.

July 16, 2001, Ag Clean Sweep. Winter-County Hwy. Shop; Exeland-Hwy. Shop; Stone Lake-Town Hall.

July 21, 2001, Hybrid Poplar Field Day, 1 p.m., Spooner Ag Research Station.

July 26-29, 2001, Washburn County Junior Fair, Spooner.

August 2-5, 2001, Sawyer County Fair, Hayward.

August 4, 2001, Ag Clean Sweep. Washburn-County Highway Shop; Iron River-School.

August 9, 2001, Ag Clean Sweep. Mellen-City Garage; Butternut-School.

August 11, 2001, Ag Clean Sweep. Hayward-County Highway Shop.

August 9-12, 2001, Bayfield County Fair, Iron River.

August 18, 2001, Ag Clean Sweep, Siren-County Highway Shop.

August 23, 2001, Potato Tour, 10 a.m. Spooner Ag Research Station.

August 23-26, 2001, Ashland County Fair, Marengo.

August 23-26, 2001, Burnett County Fair, Grantsburg.

August 25, 2001, 49th Annual Spooner Sheep Day, Spooner Ag Research Station.

August 30, 2001, Twilight Garden Tour, Spooner Ag Research Station, 5:30 p.m. - dusk.

September 8, 2001, Ag Clean Sweep. Spooner-HHW Storage Site

American beef is safe for consumers & meat industry workers

*John Markus
Area Agricultural Agent
Bayfield & Ashland Counties*

Is American beef safe to eat? **Yes, when it is properly handled and prepared, American beef is safe to eat**, according to the Institute of Food Technologists (IFT).

Concerns about "Mad Cow Disease" have frightened some consumers away from eating beef, but University of Wisconsin-Extension specialists Barbara Ingham and Dennis Buege report that the risk in the U.S. is very low because of the safeguards that have been put in place.

Active monitoring has shown that the infectious agent responsible for Mad Cow Disease, also known as BSE, has not been identified in American cattle or the U.S. food supply. In fact, importing live animals and animal products from countries with BSE, particularly the United Kingdom, has been banned. The USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service says no beef has been imported from the U.K. since 1985.

Based on its active surveillance since 1990, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reports "it is extremely unlikely that BSE would be a food borne hazard in this country."

Why the concern? And what is Mad Cow Disease? The term is used to describe BSE, or Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy, a progressive neurological disorder of cattle. The disease originated in the United Kingdom where ruminants and other animals ate rendered livestock carcasses, including sheep infected with a brain disease call scrapie, as a protein-rich nutritional supplement.

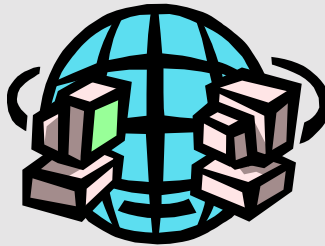
The BSE agent is harbored in an animal's brain and spinal cord tissue. Apparently by surviving a new rendering process, in-

fectured tissue made its way into animal feeds. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the BSE agent is highly stable, resisting freezing, drying, and heating at normal cooking temperatures, even those used for pasteurization and sterilization. Milk and milk products and animal muscle tissue do not harbor BSE and are considered safe.

BSE is related to other TSEs (Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathies) found in species such as mink, elk and deer, as well as scrapie in sheep and goats. The disease has been linked in the U.K. to approximately 85 cases of a new type of Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) in younger people, described as a "new variant" or nvCJD.

Although, according to the CDC, there has been no incidence of nvCJD in the U.S., the disease has raised alarm because there is no treatment and it is always fatal. The original strain of CJD occurs sporadically worldwide at a rate of one per million people, almost exclusively in older people.

We're on the Web!



You may find this newsletter, our gardener's newsletter, and additional information on our upcoming events by visiting the websites of the **Spoooner Agricultural Research Station:**

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/sars/index.htm>

and the **Ashland Agricultural Research Station:**

<http://www.uwex.edu/ces/aars/>

Reported BSE cases peaked in cattle in the U.K. in 1993. It has been declining steadily since then. A ban on the use of ruminant proteins in animal feed, as well as a preemptive slaughter in 1989, destroying nearly 4.5 million cattle, helped slow the spread of BSE.

The U.K. also banned the export of food and food products containing beef to other countries. BSE has been found in cattle in 12 European countries, with the U.K., Ireland, Portugal, Switzerland and France most affected by the outbreak.

In the U.S., there is a USDA ban on importing live cattle or other ruminants and meat products from BSE infected countries, which now includes all of Europe. The FDA has requested that products from cattle originating from countries with BSE not be used to make products intended for humans or animals (this includes dietary supplements, cosmetics, drugs, biological drugs and medical devices).

Products not regulated by the FDA, including dietary supplements, are under scrutiny to determine their safety. The FDA also banned feeding animal derived protein to ruminant animals. This ban requires compliance of the feed company.

No significant relationship has been found to date between BSE and meat handling occupations, such as butchering or rendering, according to UW-Extension meat specialist Dennis Buege.

This past January, 1,222 head of cattle in Texas were mistakenly given feed containing protein derived from other cattle. Although the risk amounted to roughly ¼ ounce of infected feed per animal, Purina Mills voluntarily recalled the feed and the feed and animals were destroyed.

Ingham and Buege both emphasize that this situation highlights the fact that producers, feed manufacturers and feed mill workers, meat industry workers and government regulators are taking no chances in keeping the U.S. food supply safe for consumers.

For more information about BSE, see the World Health Organization web site at <http://www.who.int/inf-fs/en/fact113.html>.

Estimating the weight of forage in a forage wagon

Kevin Schoessow
Area Agricultural Agent
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties

A question we often get this time of year is helping farmers determine the weight of forage in a forage wagon. This question usually arises when farmers are trying get an estimate of yield or if they are selling or purchasing hay from a neighbor's field. Since most farmers do not have a drive-over scale available on their farms, the weight of forage must be determined. While estimates are no substitute for the accuracy of a drive over scale they can be helpful. To estimate the weight of forage in a wagon the following factors must be known: The volume of forage in the wagon, the silage density, and the dry matter content of the forage.

Of these factors the silage density is perhaps the most difficult to determine. Research from the Marshfield Ag Research station determined that over all species and cuttings, the density of forage in a wagon was 5.0 pounds of dry forage per cubic foot (lbs DM/ft³). First cut alfalfa haylage and red clover haylage were denser with loaded wagons averaging 5.6 lbs DM/ft³. Grass forages were less dense and averaged 4.6 lbs DM/ft³.

Using this information let's calculate the forage weight in a wagon measuring 8-ft wide by 16-ft long and having an average fill depth of 6-ft. In addition, this example will assume an average forage density of 5.0 lbs DM/ft³ and a forage dry matter of 40%.

Step 1. Calculate the volume of forage in a forage box.

$$8 \text{ ft wide} \times 16 \text{ ft long} \times 6 \text{ ft high} = 768 \text{ ft}^3$$

Step 2. Calculate the dry weight of forage in a forage wagon.

$$5.0 \text{ lbs DM/ft}^3 \times 768 \text{ ft}^3 = 3,840 \text{ lbs. dry forage} \div 2000 \text{ lbs/ton} = 1.9 \text{ tons dry forage}$$

Step 3. Calculate the wet weight of forage in a forage wagon.

$$3,840 \text{ lbs dry forage} \div 0.40 \%DM = 9,600 \text{ lbs wet forage} \div 2000 \text{ lbs/ton} = 4.8 \text{ tons wet forage}$$

As with all estimation methods, there is a small amount of error inherent in this calculation method. In this study, the average density was measured as 5.0 lbs DM/ft³. The standard deviation of forage density in this study was 0.8 lbs. This means that the actual forage density for all species ranged from 4.2 lbs DM/ft³ to 5.8 lbs DM/ft³. In the example, the true weight of dry forage in the wagon ranges from 3,225 to 4,450 lbs.

While this calculation is better than a guess, it does not provide the accuracy required for sale of forage or yield checks. If better accuracy is needed, one should use a drive-over scale and weigh each load as they come in.

What can be done with all of those downed trees?

Bill Saumer
Area Agricultural Agent
Burnett, Sawyer, & Washburn Counties

I hope all of you made it through the "Big Storm" and several other storms that went through the area so far already this summer. Many people are wondering what they can do to help salvage some of the approximate 11,000 acres of timber that was storm damaged, mostly from the big tornado and associated winds. Cleanup of the branches is important not only to make yards passable and appealing, but to prevent some tree diseases from breaking out. There is also a lot of excellent fire wood for the people that burn wood to heat their homes and shops, but the biggest value is in the salvageable saw timber. If you are not an experienced woodsman or logger, be sure to get help and answers to your questions from the DNR or other professional foresters who know what they are talking about and also will not take advantage of the situation and rip you off.

DNR foresters have been working hard help landowners and will continue to do so. Do not hesitate to give them a call with your questions, but there are others that help out too. NRCS has funding available through a Forestry Incentive Program that will help cover the costs of salvaging the timber for the landowner. Give Tom Fredrickson a call at (715)-635-2451 to find out more about this and other helpful programs.

Our own Extension offices can also provide technical advice or at least refer you to the people or department that matches your situation. We have already experienced a wide range of calls; remember, your concerns and questions are why we are here.

If you want to use your computer to get more information, here are several links that might help you.

DNR foresters by county: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/ftax/COUNTY.HTM>

DNR (Private) Cooperating Foresters: <http://www.dnr.state.wi.us/org/land/forestry/Private/Assist/forestdir01.pdf>

Again, a professional forester will be a landowner's first defense in ensuring a good deal and a proper harvest. The following publications may also be useful to landowners:

Hiring a Consulting Forester: <http://forest.wisc.edu/extension/publications/75.pdf>

Marketing Timber From the Private Woodland: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/naturalresources/DD2723.html>

There are also copies of "How to Choose a Quality Logger" that can be picked up at your local Extension office.

Mark G. Rickenbach is an Extension Specialist in forestry and is also an excellent source for further information. He can be reached at:

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AGRICULTURAL NEWSLETTER

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