

# Jackson & Trempealeau County Agricultural News



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Livestock Program Area would appreciate beef producer input to shape future beef programming. An anonymous survey was developed (links below) to gather this input - it is 13 questions long and has a mix of multiple choice and short-response question so we can learn more about Wisconsin beef producers along with future industry challenges and opportunities. [https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_8hWjWNpvNuAZ3Yq](https://uwmadison.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8hWjWNpvNuAZ3Yq)

## DROUGHT STRESSED CORN

As I am writing this, the weather is extremely dry. I am assuming it remains dry. Hopefully, I am wrong. If I am correct in my assumption, we need to have a plan for utilizing drought stressed corn. There are some things we need to consider before pulling the trigger to chop corn for silage.

Pollination is susceptible to environmental stress, particularly heat and drought. Silk elongation is dependent on plant water potential, or water pressure in the plant. As water becomes less available to the plant, silk elongation slows, or stops. Silks need to be available when pollen is shed as pollen is viable for only a few hours after it is released from the tassels. Pollen can be desiccated by high heat and low humidity and made sterile. Silks may resume growth later in the season if rain or irrigation occurs. If silks are not contacted by pollen, the silk will continue to grow and will hang out of the ear tip by several inches.

Pollination is the most important thing to consider when deciding how to utilize drought stressed corn and when to harvest. If pollination was not successful, harvest whenever you want or when the crop reaches the desired moisture for ensiling. Allowing corn to stand too long in the field after it is dead will result in leaf loss. If rain occurs after unsuccessful pollination, the plant will accumulate sugar in the leaf and stalk as photosynthesis continues. Photosynthate, the product of photosynthesis, flows from source (leaves) to sink (ears or growing tissue). If the plant is mature and no ear is present to fill, the sugars will accumulate in the leaf and stalk until the system is clogged with sugars. This is what occurs in a sweet corn patch after you pick the ears. The plants will turn purple, similar to leaves turning color in the fall. If pollination was partially successful, it is best to let the corn continue to fill the ears. Filling 20 bushels per acre will accumulate more yield than harvesting prior to grain fill. A 20 bushel grain yield will increase dry matter yield by about 1,000 pounds per acre.

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To determine if pollination was successful, harvest several ear shoots from several areas of the field three to five days after pollination is complete. Turn the ears upside down and carefully peel husks off one at a time from the bottom of the cobs. Silks will detach from kernels that were successfully pollinated. Silks will remain attached to kernels that did not pollinate. The following photo shows an ear that did not pollinate very well.



*Photo Courtesy Pioneer Hybrid*

Nitrate poisoning can be an issue in drought stressed grass crops that received high rates of nitrogen, regardless of the type of nitrogen product used. Nitrates accumulate when rain occurs, causing plants to take in nitrogen. If the plants are mature or growth is reduced, or harvest occurs five days or less after the rain event, high nitrate levels can occur in the harvested crop. The lower portion of the stalk tends to accumulate most of the nitrate. Leaving a higher stubble can reduce the amount of nitrate harvested in the feed. Fermenting will reduce the amount of nitrate in the feed. Risk of nitrate poisoning is highest in green chop corn. Allow corn to ferment for at least three weeks prior to feeding. It is always best to test drought stressed corn silage for nitrate concentration prior to feeding. High nitrate corn will increase the production of silo gas. Horizontal storage poses less threat from silo gas to people, but conditions can still exist where toxic concentrations can still occur so use caution.

Herbicides used and pre-harvest interval must be observed before corn can be harvested for corn silage. Always refer to the label of products used before harvesting corn for silage or green feed. Table 2.4 in A3646, Pest Management in Wisconsin Field Crops, can be used as a guide. Publication A3646 can be found here. <https://cdn.shopify.com/s/files/1/0145/8808/4272/files/A3646-2020.pdf> Remember, the label attached to the product you applied is the authority, regardless of what a table tells you.

### Corn and soybean disease prediction tools

There are smartphone apps that help predict the probability of white mold in soybean and tar spot in corn. The apps are free to download and easy to use. Go to your app store and download the apps. Of course, nothing replaces scouting.

## F A R M

When bad things happen, or things that were not planned happen, stress can build up in our lives. There is a lot of advice out there about how to cope with and deal with stress. Farming is a unique business because it is difficult to separate the farm business from personal life and we often use our occupation as our identification. FARM can be used as a guide to help us through tough times. In this article, FARM stands for forgive, accept, regroup, and move ahead.

**Forgive.** Forgiving is a concept that is thrown around a lot but is often misunderstood. Forgiving does not mean forgetting. Forgiving does not require an apology from the person that wronged us. The decision to forgive is entirely in our power. Forgiving someone or forgiving ourselves takes back the power from the person or event that wronged us. We do not need to tell the person being forgiven that we forgive them. Many times, the person that wronged us is unaware we feel slighted and telling them we forgive them could start the situation over again.

We hold on to bitterness and wait for the opportunity to pay back the wrong. Bitterness can sap our strength and steal our joy, preventing us from enjoying life's pleasures.

Forgiving ourselves can be more important and liberating than forgiving others. I believe that if you have not experienced regret you either lived a short life or you never took any chances. We have all experienced would have, could have, should have moments in life. Decisions we make with the information and situation at hand are easily looked back on with all-knowing eyes and dissected over and over again. Forgiving ourselves for those decisions is important and frees our time and energy moving forward.

**Accept** that a decision made by you or others or an event did not work out for the best. When bad things happen we go through a range of emotion. We may be in denial and continue in our normal routine for a period of time. Bargaining is an activity we can engage in when things go badly. We may say to ourselves "if I work harder and do more myself my finances will improve."

Maybe a drought dried up your crops or a business partner embezzled money, causing your business to fail. Accepting does not mean you like or condone what happened. Accepting simply means you acknowledge the situation, it is part of your life, and you will deal with the situation. In the case of a crime such as embezzlement, accepting does not mean you do not prosecute or sue the person. In the case of drought, accepting means you are free to pursue purchasing feed for livestock or adjusting livestock numbers to a level you can feed. Accepting means denial and bargaining are over and now you will take action.

**Regroup** is an action item. How do we go on from here? What does our life and business look like after this situation occurred? Different is not good or bad. Different is different and it is up to us to make it better or to see the good in our new situation. Regrouping can mean relying on your support network, whether that is your family, friends, church, or all of these groups. People that have strong support networks get through tough situations better than those that go alone. Regrouping may involve a new support group or moving to a new community. Whatever the situation requires, regrouping is an important step.

**Move ahead** may look different to different people in different situations. For some people and some situations, moving ahead may be as simple as breathing in and out. Focus on something that brings you joy. Maybe a vacation spot or fishing hole brings you peace and joy just by thinking of the spot. For others, moving ahead may be a detailed plan of action with a time line spelled out to realign their life and business. A plan to move ahead may be very simple to start with, gain momentum as time and efforts pass, and become such a part of life that you no longer recognize it as a move ahead plan.

As life happens, we may move in and out of the FARM acronym several times. Forgiving and moving on is not linear and we may dig up past situations several times over the course of a day, month, or lifetime. That is alright, what is not alright is allowing a situation to steal our joy and define our life and future. Moving along the FARM acronym gets easier the more times we use it. Go out on your porch tonight and listen to the frogs and crickets and experience the simple joy of life. Breathe in and breathe out. Life is good.

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) can provide assistance through the Farm Center for financial counseling and mental health counseling vouchers. Contact information is below.

### **Wisconsin Farm Center**

2811 Agriculture Dr.

P.O. Box 8911

Madison, WI 53708-8911

Phone: 1-800-942-2474

Fax: (608) 224-5107

## **Kaitlyn O'Connor - Horticulture Educator**

Kaitlyn O'Connor is the new Horticulture Educator at the UW-Madison Division of Extension in Jackson and Trempealeau Counties. As a part-time staff member, O'Connor will be providing horticulture education to citizens of both counties but her primary office is in Black River Falls. She is available on Wednesdays and Thursdays and can be contacted via email at [kaitlyn.oconnor@wisc.edu](mailto:kaitlyn.oconnor@wisc.edu) or reached by phone at 715-538-3189. Her work will focus on home gardeners and specialty farmers growing fruit and vegetable crops.

O'Connor joins the Division of Extension from her current position as the Education and Outreach Specialist at Prairie Moon Nursery in Winona, Minnesota. She has traveled around the Upper Midwest to give public presentations on seed starting, native garden design, pollinators, and the importance of ecological restoration. She has been a speaker at the Wisconsin Public Television Madison Garden Expo, the MOSES Organic Farming Conference, and multiple Master Gardener groups in Wisconsin and Minnesota. She was also featured in the environmental documentary "Decoding the Driftless" now airing on Public Television.

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## **Japanese Beetles**

It's mid-summer in Wisconsin, and that means the Japanese Beetles are out in full force! Have you noticed any in your farm or garden? These brownish-green, iridescent beetles can wreak havoc on fruits, vegetables, and ornamental plants. Large populations can skeletonize leaves quickly, so it's important to manage insect populations to keep your plants healthy.

Although Japanese Beetles can be tough to control, there are a number of options to help reduce their populations. This time of year, when the adult beetles are flying around, home gardeners are encouraged to hand-pick them off plants and put into a bucket of soapy water. In a market garden or orchard, hand-picking may not be feasible. In that case, insecticides may need to be used.

*Bacillus thuringiensis galleria* (Btg) is a bio-insecticide which can help protect foliage from adult Japanese beetles. It can be found in the product beetleGONE!, which is approved for organic production. Btg has a broad label and can be used on a wide range of vegetables and fruits. Organic insecticides containing azadirachtin or pyrethrins can also be sprayed on vegetable and berry crops in the late evening once pollinator activity subsides. Repeat insecticide applications as needed according to the product label until the beetle activity subsides for the season. Typically, beetles will be active for 6-8 weeks during July and August. Be sure to carefully read the insecticide product label for its instruction, post-harvest interval period, and safety precautions.

Pheromone lure traps are another method for controlling Japanese beetle populations, but they are not recommended by UW Extension. Such traps can indeed capture large numbers of Japanese beetles, but attract many more to the general area which can result in additional damage.

For more information, check out <https://hort.extension.wisc.edu/articles/how-to-deal-with-japanese-beetle/>

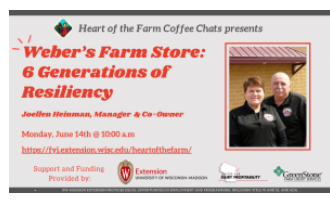


## Badger Crop Connect

Timely crop production information every second and fourth Wednesday. To register go to: [https://uwmadison.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJckcuCqrDwsE9ltoVqOlfTMBE\\_bScM\\_Lac7](https://uwmadison.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJckcuCqrDwsE9ltoVqOlfTMBE_bScM_Lac7)

**Organic Crop Production Field Day**, Thursday, August 5. Dave and Will Peasley farm, N7277 US Highway 12, Black River Falls, WI. Lunch served at 12:00, 1:00 Erin Silva will present information about weed control in corn and alfalfa establishment. Presentations during lunch hour.

## Coffee Chat



- **August 9, 2021, Dinner Conversations**

Now more than ever, it is important to focus on eating together as a family. Research has shown us how important family meals are and there are significant studies that reinforce the benefits of mealtimes together. They also foster emotional balance by increasing things like self-esteem, a sense of wellbeing, and stronger family relationships. Join us as we discuss ideas for starting dinner conversations that nourish the spirit, brain, and health of everyone at the table. Speakers: Nancy Vance and Jackie Carattini, Human Development and Relationship Educators, UW-Madison Division of Extension

**Registration:** <https://forms.gle/uWg2aKdYW2Aqj3J99>

### Planning Committee:

Jackie Carattini, Karen Dickrell, Sarah Grotjan, Jackie McCarville, Bill Halfman, Joy Kirkpatrick, Dan Marzu, Ashley Olson, Steph Plaster, Lyssa Seefeld,, Heather Schlessler, Ryan Sterry, Sandy Stuttgen, Leigh Presely, Trisha Wagner, Nancy Vance, Jenny Vanderlin, Jim Versweyveld, Alana Voss, Amanda Young, Lori Zierl.

The Heart of the Farm 'Coffee Chat' series is supported and funded by Center for Dairy Profitability, UW-Madison, Division of Extension and partially funded by a Green Stone Farm Credit.

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