



2007 Fall Issue

Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection, P.O. Box 8911, Madison, WI 53708-8911

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Letter from the Secretary: Rod Nilsestuen

Never before has it been so critical that farmers and processors anticipate change in order to stay competitive. Agriculture and food is the state's third largest sector, generating \$51.5 billion a year in economic activity. Dairy is its centerpiece, generating \$39,000 a minute.

Governor Doyle's plan to create jobs helped frame a historic, bi-partisan effort to re-vitalize dairy and the future of farming not seen in this state for more than a century. As a result:

- o Our dairy entrepreneurs have made \$500 million in private investment to expand and modernize their operations and milk production is up.
- o We've slowed the loss of dairy farms – rate dropped by 2/3
- o Dairy processors have invested \$200 million to expand and modernize, opening 23 new dairy plants and expanding 45 more.
- o Specialty cheese grew 7 percent. Wisconsin now produces more than 600 styles of cheese – more than any other state or nation.
- o Organic farming has increased by more than 90 percent in the last five years and Wisconsin leads the nation in organic dairy and meat.
- o Cranberries, our number one fruit crop, lead the nation.
- o Agricultural exports grew 26 percent compared to two years ago and if trends continue will grow another 26 percent by year's end.
- o Ethanol production has grown from zero to more than 270 million gallons annual capacity in just five years and will double by year's end.

There is still much to be done. We must slow the loss of farmland, increase our energy independence, reduce health care costs and see that farmers have an opportunity to own a piece of the action along the supply chain – whether that means investing in a bio-refinery or marketing directly to consumers. And we must see that our award-winning meat processors can expand their sales across state borders.

These goals are important because agriculture is our heritage. It is also our future.



"Thistles" By David M. Lenz

Herd Based Diagnostic Program

Dr. John Marks

The Rural Electric Power Services (REPS) program veterinarians respond to farmers' requests for assistance with dairy herd health and production concerns which may include poor milk quality, low milk production and, occasionally, behavioral problems. Diagnosis of the cause of the concerns is the primary function of the REPS veterinarians. An analysis of 121 investigations performed by REPS veterinarians over a 3 year period indicates that, of these farms, less than 5% of the farmers used their local veterinarian for diagnostic support for the issue of concern that they identified when the farmer called upon the REPS program for assistance.

In a study conducted by the USDA, 78% of dairy producers indicated that the local veterinarian was very important as a source of information for making animal health care decisions. The local veterinarian is by far the most influential and trusted source of information for the dairy producer. Because of the producers' confidence in their relationship with the local veterinarian, the REPS veterinarians are in the process of establishing a new approach to address health and production issues that may be affecting the dairy herd.

Herd based diagnostics is a novel approach whereby the overall health of the herd is assessed rather than just the individual cow. This approach allows us to make a determination of the prevalence of disease(s) on a farm by sampling an appropriate number of clinically "normal" cows and performing laboratory tests to identify cows that may have sub clinical or unobserved disease. This diagnostic method can be used for an array of common problems found in dairy cows such as: ketosis, rumen acidosis, milk fever and some other nutritional deficiencies. Also, investigation of milk quality problems such as high somatic cell counts and clinical mastitis can be more accurately assessed if the whole herd can be evaluated. Selecting the proper cows to sample, timing of sampling and tests to perform will follow established criteria to provide us with a picture of the herd's status on specific problems that is both statistically valid and relevant to the farmer's concerns.

The REPS veterinarians will form a diagnostic team with the local veterinarian to further assist the farmer toward a solution for their herd health and production concerns. By establishing this collaborative team approach there are numerous benefits that the dairy producer and local veterinarian will realize:

- o Trust building through team building.
- o Enhanced follow through of diagnostics.
- o Enhanced follow up on recommendations.
- o Stimulus for increased implementation of effective diagnostic approaches throughout the local veterinarian's client base.
- o Leverage the expertise of the local veterinarian to serve as an educator for the dairy industry.

In order to participate in the Herd Based Diagnostic program (HBD), the farmer must directly request assistance from either the Farm Center or one of the REPS veterinarians. After consultation with the farmer, the REPS veterinarian will request consultation with the farmer's veterinarian. If both the producer and veterinarian agree to participate, the standardized protocols, lab forms and, in some cases, test equipment will be provided to the local veterinarian. REPS veterinarians will be available for either consultation or to conduct additional testing on the farm as needed. Currently there is funding available to pay for the local veterinarians' services and all laboratory fees.

The overall mission of the herd based diagnostic program is to effect a positive change on the dairy farm by fostering a team-based approach with the local veterinarian and the producer. Whether facing a crisis of low milk production, high cow losses or less than desirable milk quality, diagnostic teams can create a positive environment to support the achievement of the dairy producer's goals as well as enhancing the image of the dairy industry.



So You Want to Write A Business Plan?

Carl Rainey



Not everyone who starts or expands a business needs to write a business plan, yet it does help to have one. I have seen and read about many businesses that have succeeded based upon ideas and execution and many of these have written business plans to help them succeed. But it wasn't the plan that drove success; it was the execution of the idea that generated the success.

Business plans do have an impact, but the impact is based upon the critical thinking that helps create a business plan. From conducting research, meeting potential customers, putting the ideas to paper, to showing someone else these ideas, a business plan has value. The idea behind the sharing of the plan with others is the implied obligation to execute the strategy. So business plans do have a vital part to play in the success of a business, so let's discuss what a business plan is to remove some of the mystery.

Business plans are simply a story about the idea and why the idea can succeed as a viable business venture. This story addresses market issues, strategies to employ, the team involved, and a set of financial projections to show the financial impact of the idea. A sample outline of this story may contain:

- o Executive Summary – Up to three page summary of the entire plan providing brief information about the business, products or services, the market, the business's competitive advantage, the team, expected financial outcome, and the funding request or need.
- o Company Description – The business legal structure, location, products/service offering along with future offerings.
- o Market Analysis – A description of the targeted market, the space the business will compete within the market, and the customers wanting what you have to offer.
- o Marketing and Sales Strategies – What is the plan to get customers to purchase the offering? What are the distribution, promotion, marketing, and sales strategies to employ in the competitive marketplace?
- o Organization – Who are the key players to execute the strategies discussed above and why them? What gaps exist within the team and how will they be resolved?
- o Financials – Contains the income statement, cash flow statement, and the balance sheet.

There are many tools in the marketplace to help people write business plans. From books (Anatomy of a Business Plan), software (Business Plan Pro), Web sites (aboutbusinessplans.net/sbinformation.about.com), to consultants and grants, help is within easy reach. No matter how the plan is written, it should be clear, focused, and realistic. The plan will be your calling card as you seek partners, capital, or trade terms as you put the plan in action. So, what are you waiting for? Let's get started.

World Dairy Expo 2007 – “Bright Lights, Big Show”

World Dairy Expo takes place October 2-6. A brilliant place to exchange ideas, a dazzling display of dairy cattle and the brightest showcase of dairy technology, products and services geared to today's dairy producer.

It's the place for world-class competition among the country's top dairy breeders, with seven national and international breed shows, the Kingsmill Farm II International Futurity and six breed sales held on the grounds. It is also home to national and international judging and skills contests at the 4-H, FFA, Intercollegiate and Post-Secondary level.

Add more than 1,500 exhibit booths, and World Dairy Expo is the destination of choice this October. Last year, 65,563 visitors from 80 countries attended the show. For more information, contact World Dairy Expo at 608-224-6455, via email at wde@wdexpo.com or go online at www.worlddairyexpo.com

The 60th Alice in Dairyland: Jill Makovec



For over 100 years, my family has been involved in agriculture. Whether it was making cheddar cheese at my Grandpa Delp's cheese factory, Rocky Point, or milking cows at my Grandpa Makovec's dairy farm, many of my family members have been impacted by agriculture. In fact, it was my experiences on the farm and love of the industry that led me to become the 60th Alice in Dairyland.

During my short time as Alice, I have not only increased my knowledge of the dairy industry here in Wisconsin, but also have learned about many other facets of our signature industry. From cherries and honey to mink and kidney beans, Wisconsin farms produce several high-quality products that are known throughout the state, nation and world. Learning

about the diversity, abundance and importance of Wisconsin agriculture has been the highlight of my year as Alice.

My Alice travels have taken me to several Wisconsin farms – from the berry farms in Bayfield to the fields in northwest Wisconsin and from the cherry orchards in Door County to the dairy farms in southern Wisconsin. Along the way, several people have asked where my journey will lead after my year as Alice. That question is easy to answer. Ever since I was young, I knew that one day I wanted to return to my family's century farm. The only question was what I wanted to do when I got there.

Serving as Alice in Dairyland has helped me answer that question. Since I have learned so much as Alice, I do not want to lose that knowledge after my year is done. Instead, I want to continue sharing the impact and diversity of Wisconsin agriculture with others long after my year is complete. Therefore, I still want to return to the family farm with plans to start an agritourism center and specialty cheese store. This way I can remain in agriculture, share my love and increased knowledge of the industry and modernize our farm.

In addition, I encourage each of you to explore innovative ideas for your farms and opportunities to share the story of agriculture in your communities. For 60 years, it has been Alice's goal to inform others of agriculture's importance to our economy, but one person can't tell this story alone. It requires all of us working together to help others understand just how much agriculture has meant to our state's heritage and how much it will mean to a successful future!

The Wisconsin Farm Center advises farmers with agricultural losses due to flood damage to report them as the first step in securing disaster assistance for the state. Losses to agriculture buildings, equipment, crops, livestock, fences, service roads, washed out culverts, field gullies and other damage should be reported to both the county Farm Service Agency and the county emergency management office.

The information provided to the FSA lays the groundwork for future agricultural disaster declarations for federal loans. The information provided to the emergency management center will help determine if the state is eligible for a broader Presidential disaster declaration.

"At this point, we are just collecting information to determine if the state is eligible for assistance," said Paul Dietmann, Farm Center director. "This is not an application for aid."

Call the Farm Center Hotline at 1-800-942-2474 if you need help with a phone number or contact. The Farm Center can also provide counseling for financial and emotional issues and help put you in touch with other resources.

Report Your Flood Damages

Wisconsin Farm Technology Days



Wisconsin's Premier Agricultural Technology Exposition

Ag Innovations for Future Generations
Green County
September 18 - 20, 2007

Blumer Family
Plain View Stock Farm, Inc.
W1202 State Highway 59
Albany, Wisconsin

Wisconsin Farm Technology Days is the state's largest outdoor agricultural show, with a history dating back to 1954. The annual three-day event showcases the latest improvements in production agriculture, including practical applications of recent research findings and technological developments.

Corn harvesting demonstrations will take place during the show. Observe the latest in new technology and equipment for harvesting dry grain, corn silage, and high moisture corn. Tillage and corn stalk handling equipment demonstrations will also be conducted.

More than 600 commercial vendors will be located on 60 acres designated as "tent city." Products and services to be showcased include farm buildings, new facility inputs, equipment and supplies, feed and grain, supplies for animal health and nutrition, fertilizer, breeding programs, farm toys, and much more.

There will also be a variety of educational tents with their own programs and related exhibits. The Family Living Tent features speakers, entertainment and an opportunity to learn about the host family. The Youth Tent involves local 4-H and FFA organizations, and offers activities and learning events for tomorrow's agriculturists.

University of Wisconsin-Extension plays an active role in the Farm Technology Days event, along with various local, state, and federal government agencies involved in agriculture. Experts will be on hand to answer a wide variety of visitors' questions ranging from weed control to nutrient management regulations.

Goat Dairy Tours

In conjunction with Farm Technology Days at Albany, there will be an opportunity to tour various goat dairies nearby at Brodhead and Monroe. Each farm will welcome visitors during a 2-hour block of time starting at 11 a.m. and ending at 3 p.m. only on Wednesday, September 19, 2007.

Visitors will need to provide their own transportation to the farms. Maps and directions, along with farm histories, will be available in the Pavilion at either the UW-Extension or Farm Center booths or you may contact 608-224-5121, e-mail jeanne.meier@wisconsin.gov for more information. UW-Extension will also have a display of goat dairy equipment in the Pavilion.



WI Farm Center

By Heidi Clausen
Regional Editor
The Country Today

Changes are under way at the Wisconsin Farm Center to make services more relevant to the needs of farmers across the state. The Madison-based center is shifting the focus of its Farm and Rural Services Bureau from disaster response to more hazard mitigation. It is 'backing up a step' to help farmers avoid crisis in the first place, said director Paul Dietmann.

Mr. Dietmann, who came to the job in April after 11 years with UW-Extension, presented a new vision for the farm center, at the Aug. 15 Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection board meeting.

Created during the 1980s farm crisis, the center continues to operate a crisis hot line and offer advice and counseling services to farmers in need. But the volume of crisis calls is down a third to two-thirds from what it used to be, Mr. Dietmann said.

The center has a much lower profile than it did 10 or 20 years ago. Many people don't know the service still exists or have never heard of it, he said. The center is refocusing its mission to be of better service to the changing agriculture industry. 'More farmers are in chronic crisis versus acute crisis,' Mr. Dietmann said.

The purpose of the Farm and Rural Services Bureau is to help producers navigate their farming life cycle, from beginning to end and through all the changes in between. But the idea is not to keep farmers from making mistakes altogether, Mr. Dietmann said. 'People can learn from mistakes, but we don't want them to go down the drain because of them,' he said.

The biggest changes are taking place in two core programs — Farm Link, which matches beginning farmers with those looking to exit the business, and Rural Electric Power Services, which typically has assisted farmers with stray-voltage issues. A new Farm Link director will be hired sometime this fall, Mr. Dietmann said.

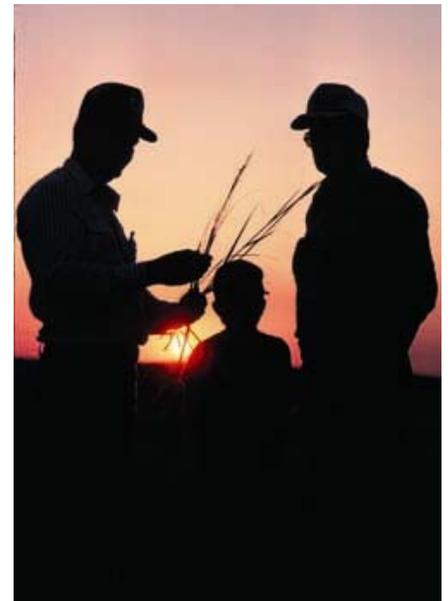
Other changes in that area include providing more business planning and mentoring for new farmers, better helping retiring farmers share their assets and knowledge with newcomers, partnering more with other agencies and technical colleges, and increasing availability of loans and tax credits to new farmers.

New materials for beginning farmers are being developed, such as a 'How to Buy Dairy Cows' brochure and the statewide launch of Marathon County's www.ucanfarm.org Web site. Mr. Dietmann said Farm Link is not just for dairy farmers — it's also useful for other livestock producers, second-career or retirement farmers, and minority farmers.

In light of the high price of land, he's trying to get beginning farmers to think of leasing as more of an option. 'Most farmers have no interest in selling their farms,' but might be open to a leasing arrangement, he said. About a year ago, a new whole-herd diagnostic tool was added within the center's Rural Electric Power Services. Local veterinarians help farmers find performance-robbing health issues in their herd. Mr. Dietmann said he hopes more farmers will use this service.

Other Wisconsin Farm Center services include farm mediation and arbitration, farmers' assistance and hot line, and a client assistance program for farmers and nonfarmers.

Heidi Clausen may be reached at clausen@amerytel.net.



Support Your Community

By Amy Bruner

Sign Up For 'Wisconsin Eat Local Challenge' Spend 10 percent of your food budget on local food for 10 days

A statewide coalition of farmers and grassroots organizations launched a grassroots project to increase the sales of local food. The Wisconsin "Eat Local" Challenge encourages consumers to spend 10 percent of their food budget on local food for ten days, September 14 – 23.

The Eat Local Challenge aims to raise awareness about the advantages of local food, including quality, freshness and variety. The goal is to create an annual event that will grow. Information gained from the challenge will help local food growers and sellers better serve consumers.

To participate in the challenge, please pledge your support by:

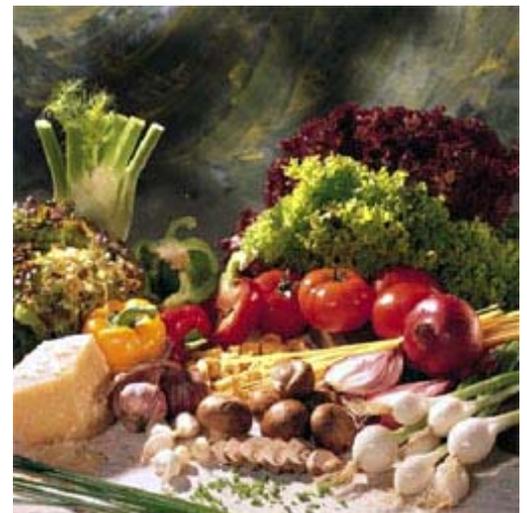
- 1 – Signing up online www.cias.wisc.edu/eatlocal.
- 2 – Downloading the form to track your local food spending.
- 3 – Sharing your results through the local food survey.

The results of the challenge will be reported at the 2nd Annual Wisconsin Local Food Summit and the 10th Annual Midwest Value Added Conference, January 24-25 in Eau Claire, WI.

Consumer interest in local food continues to grow and Wisconsin is in a position to take advantage of the trend. The state ranks third in the nation for number of farmers' markets, behind California and New York; boasts numerous CSA's, or community supported agriculture farms; and enjoys a growing number of restaurants, grocers and businesses active in providing local foods.

The Wisconsin "Eat Local" campaign is sponsored by a statewide collaboration of educators, farmers and public and private agencies including the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection; the University of Wisconsin, Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems; Michael Fields Agricultural Institute; the Northwestern Wisconsin Regional Food Network; REAP Food Group; Sustain Dane; UW River Falls College of Agriculture Food and Environmental Sciences; UW Stevens Point, GEM Center; and others.

For more information, contact Amy Bruner, 608-224-5017; amy.bruner@wisconsin.gov.



Resources For Flood Victims

Flooding struck Wisconsin Aug. 18-19, leaving in its wake damaged homes and businesses; pets and livestock that are lost, injured or killed; damaged and destroyed crops; and people wondering how to face it all.

Here are some resources from the DATCP website for victims of the flooding and those helping them:

[Reporting agricultural losses](#)

[Updates on the flood situation](#)

[Food safety](#)

[Hiring contractors](#)

[Pets and livestock](#)

[Wells](#)

[Emotional health issues](#)

[Donating to victims](#)

[Replacing culverts, bridges and roads on private land](#)

[Buying and selling corn and forage](#)

[Dairy plants](#)

[Milk disposal](#)

[Carcass disposal](#)

[Manure storage](#)

[Pesticide cleanup after a flood](#)

Vaccination After Flooding

By Jeffrey Swenson

It would be an understatement to say this summer has been one of extremes for Wisconsin farmers – some have seen dry, drought stricken pastures and others are still dealing with devastating levels of rainfall. Extreme weather brings additional challenges to keeping calves healthy for beef cow/calf producers.

For cow/calf producers and dairy producers who raise young stock on pasture in areas seeing heavy rainfall the past few weeks, vaccination protocols may need to be modified, especially if pastures have been flooded and are silt covered. Blackleg spores live in the soil and the chances of exposure increase after flooding.



Passive immunity from colostrum persists until four to six months of age. Most calfhood vaccines recommend waiting until six months of age because passive immunity can interfere with immunizations and neutralize the vaccine. If your calves are over four months of age and your pastures have been flooded, vaccinating for blackleg is recommended, however. If blackleg is viewed as a major threat (if blackleg has appeared in the herd in the past) a producer can vaccinate young calves (1-2 mos.) and then revaccinate monthly until calves are four months old. Doing this will actively immunize calves with lower resistance and will not stimulate immunity in calves with higher resistance until their antibody levels begin to drop.

Cattle that are gaining weight rapidly between six months and two years of age are most susceptible to blackleg. The disease is not transmitted from sick animals to healthy animals by mere contact, but instead by spores in the soil. Early symptoms include lameness, loss of appetite, rapid breathing and a high fever. 7-way vaccines which protect against *Clostridium chauveoi* (blackleg) are recommended.

Upcoming Events

September 6 Dairy Goat Field Day

Robin Trott farm, Bruce, WI
Contact Jeanne Meier 608-224-5121

Sept. 18-20 Farm Technology Days

Green county <http://www.greenfarmtech.com/>

Sept. 28-30 World Beef Expo

<http://www.worldbeefexpo.com/home/>
WI State Fairgrounds, West Allis, WI

October 2-6 World Dairy Expo

<http://www.worlddairyexpo.com/gen.home.cfm>
Alliant Energy Center, Madison

October 15 On Farm Dairy Goat Field Day

Dodge County, Zimmerman Farm
Contact Jeanne Meier 608-224-5121

November 3 Annual Caprine Field Day

UW Research Station, Arlington

Sept. 14 - 3rd Annual Goat Producers Seminar

Richland County Fairgrounds

Sept. 19 Tour of Dairy Goat Farm

Green County-See article above

Sept. 29 Dr. Temple Grandin, World Beef Expo

WI State Fairgrounds, West Allis, WI
<http://www.worldbeefexpo.com/home/>

October 10 Dairy Goat Field Day

Gene Zimmerman farm, Dodge County

October 17 Seminar-Dairy Goat Farming-Lender training

Randolph, WI Municipal Building

November 15 On Farm Dairy Goat Field Day

Arlington Research Station, 10:00am – 4:00 pm
Contact Jeanne Meier 608-224-5121

September

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October

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November

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