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My name is Paul Dietmann and I am very excited to be taking on the role of Director of the Farm and Rural Services Bureau in the Division of Agricultural Development at DATCP.

Prior to joining the team at DATCP I spent almost eleven years with the University of Wisconsin-Extension, serving as the Sauk County Agriculture Agent. My areas of specialization with UW-Extension included farm financial management and business planning, small-scale and alternative agriculture, and value-added marketing.

In addition to my duties as county ag agent, I was one of the founders and co-leader of the UW-Extension Emerging Agricultural Markets (EAM) Team, served on the board of the WI Association of County Agricultural Agents, UW-Baraboo Community Advisory Board, WI Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) Council, and several other boards and committees.

The most rewarding aspect of being a county agriculture agent was visiting farms to help people develop financial plans for significant changes in their farm operations, whether it was modernizing a dairy operation or transferring a farm to the next generation. The ability to help facilitate this important work on a statewide basis is what most appealed to me about the position in the Farm and Rural Services Bureau.

On a more personal note, my wife Julie and I live in Prairie du Sac and have three children: Elise, age five; James, age 3; and John, who will be one year old in June. Julie is a CPA and is Director of Finance for an engineering firm in Sauk City. I should confess that I am originally from south of the border, Illinois, but moved to Wisconsin in 1987. So, even though I wasn't born in the state, I got here as soon as I could.

During my time with UW-Extension, I had opportunities to work on numerous projects with members of the staff of the Division of Ag Development, and developed a tremendous amount of respect for them and the quality of work they do. I'm proud to be part of such an illustrious group.



## Growing Wisconsin Livestock Industry

Jeff Swenson

I began my position at the Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection in late November last year. As an Economic Development Consultant concentrating on the livestock sector, I am involved with identifying opportunities for growth in Wisconsin meat animal production and meat processing industries. My goal is to develop sustainable market outlets for Wisconsin raised livestock.

Wisconsin, long known as "America's Dairyland," also has a long and distinguished history of livestock and meat production. For instance...did you know the first bull test in the United States began in Wisconsin? It's true. The practice of beef breeders bringing bulls to a central location in the fall, and feeding them identical rations through the winter to measure rate of gain and performance was first done in The Dairy State. The Wisconsin Beef Improvement Association's Bull Test is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2007.



Through progressive thinking and an eye toward the future, Wisconsin has made a reputation as a national leader in livestock. Our States 250,000 beef cows ranks 31<sup>st</sup> in the nation. "Thirty-first?" you ask. "That's no match when compared to our number two ranking in dairy cows!" But wait, there's more to the story - Wisconsin ranks 12<sup>th</sup> in cattle on feed (the number of cattle being fed for market). Many of the cattle on feed are Holstein steers, making the beef and dairy industries here intertwined. Both industries rely on each other to remain viable in Wisconsin like very few other states.

Wisconsin's total number of cattle attracted a thriving meat packing industry years ago, and it's still going strong today. After all, it is no

coincidence that Wisconsin's professional football team is called the Packers. Wisconsin ranks 11<sup>th</sup> in the nation in red meat production, red meat being beef, pork, veal, lamb and mutton. Wisconsin and the other top ten states combined account for over 81% of all red meat produced in the United States. When cattle are considered alone, Wisconsin ranks number 5<sup>th</sup> for cattle processing and 3<sup>rd</sup> for calf processing.

Wisconsin is ranked 18<sup>th</sup> nationally in hog and pig production. The number of hogs being raised in Wisconsin in 2007 and 2008 is anticipated to increase for the first time in 20 years. Our sheep and lamb production ranks 19<sup>th</sup> nationally.

As you can see, the Wisconsin Livestock Industry is diverse and varied, providing opportunities for new marketing strategies and value added meat products.

If you, or someone you know, are considering a transition from dairy to meat animal production or are contemplating starting a livestock enterprise, give Farm Center a call. The staff can provide you with valuable information and help during the transition process.

Jeff Swenson, Economic Development Consultant, Livestock Sector Specialist

WI Dept. Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection

PO Box 8911

Madison, WI 53708

608-224-5082

[jeffrey.swenson@datcp.state.wi.us](mailto:jeffrey.swenson@datcp.state.wi.us)

**Grazing  
Programs at  
DATCP  
Laura Paine**

Pasture-based forage production systems continue to grow in popularity among dairy and livestock farmers in Wisconsin. We estimate that approximately 23% of dairy farmers use management intensive grazing for their milking herds, while nearly half of all new dairy start ups are entering the industry using this low-cost approach.

These systems, which employ the simple concept of utilizing the animals to do most of the work (harvesting feed and spreading manure), have been shown to be economically competitive with conventional confinement systems. Although milk production per cow is often somewhat lower, many grazing farms average more than twice as much net farm income per cow than conventional farms.



Wisconsin's dairy industry was founded on small family dairy farms and, while we no longer can claim the #1 spot in milk production, we still have nearly twice as many dairy farms as the next highest state, Pennsylvania. Managed grazing is a system that can help keep those family dairy farms financially sound while addressing increasingly stringent environmental performance standards. It is a flexible system that can fit with almost any existing operation. It's a win-win option for many farmers.

Pasture-based dairy and livestock production also represents a potential marketing opportunity for Wisconsin farmers. Not only can we reduce cost of production compared to conventional systems, but we can potentially capture a premium in the marketplace for so called 'grass-fed' products. This niche is a rapidly growing market, with consumers viewing grass-fed products as being more environmentally friendly and healthier.

The goals for our new grazing program here at DATCP are to support farmers wishing to convert to a pasture-based system and to help build markets for grass-based products. One current project involves working with UW Extension specialists and Wisconsin Master Cheese-makers to investigate flavor chemistry qualities of grass-fed milk for artisan cheeses. A newly started project involves working with beef producers to establish protocols and an organization for marketing grass-fed beef. For more information on these projects or other issues involving grazing, contact Laura Paine, DATCP Grazing & Organic Agriculture Specialist, at 608-224-5120 or [laura.paine@datcp.state.wi.us](mailto:laura.paine@datcp.state.wi.us)

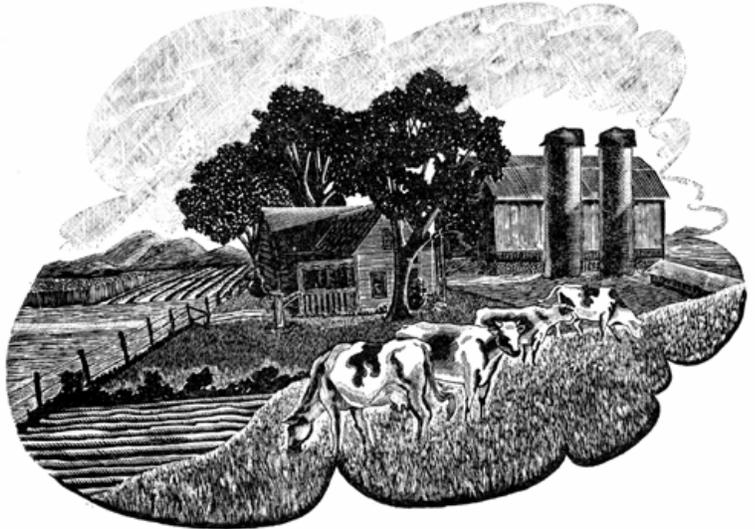
Further information on grazing can be found at:  
<http://www.uwrf.edu/grazing/>

For a listing of events in and around Wisconsin:  
<http://www.grassworks.org/calendar.htm>

## Farm Transition Workshops held again this winter

According to Daphne Newman Stassin, Coordinator of a Dairy Industry Revitalization Grant, workshops on "Farm Transition, Retirement and Estate Planning for Farm Businesses" were held for a second year. Last year six workshops were held at technical colleges in southern Wisconsin, and during March 2007, three workshops were held at Northeast Wisconsin Technical College, Western Technical College, and Wisconsin Indianhead Technical College in northern and central Wisconsin.

The program included presentations from local experts on "getting started: issues specific to farmers; communication as the first step toward planning or decision-making; the legal side of estate and retirement planning; what farmers need to know about taxes in setting up LLC's, farm succession, and retirement planning; financial planning and options for farmers," and one workshop included a panel of beginning and older farmers relating their experiences-both positive and negative. The workshops serve as an introduction to the topics, and also as a way of encouraging producers to take the first steps toward planning for their future and the future of their children.



The most unique workshop of the past two years was at Western Tech, which was held simultaneously at four campuses via the college distance learning system. This was the first time that their Farm Business and Production Management program had held a multi-campus presentation. The workshop participants felt part of a larger group (52 attended the workshop), yet each campus group was small enough to foster individuals sharing their experiences with their peers. Most participants' evaluations suggested that this form of presentation was extremely beneficial, and would attend another.

Although the workshops were geared towards dairy producers, other types of producers attended (including beef and crop farmers and an apple farmer), because all types of intergenerational family farms tend to experience similar situations and dilemmas. Numerous couples attended as well as children and parents. The workshops were action-oriented, and participants will be contacted six months from now and asked what they have done or plan to do regarding their farm transition, estate or retirement planning.

The following publications relating to these workshops are available at DATCP's website:

[Farm Transfers in Wisconsin: A Guide for Wisconsin Farmers](#) - 90 page PDF (649 KB)

[Retirement and Estate Planning Guide](#) - 85 page PDF

[Legal Guide for Wisconsin Farmers](#) - 55 page PDF

## Upcoming Events

### Health Care Reform Panels

**April 18** Time: 8-10 am  
Kenosha, Gateway Tech College  
Sponsored by: Gateway, Kenosha Co. LTC Workforce Project

**April 19** Time: 6-8 pm  
Peshtigo (venue TBD)  
Sponsored by: Wisconsin Council of Churches

**April 21** Time: 9-11 am  
Combined Locks, Christ the King Church, 601 S Washington Street  
Sponsored by: Wisconsin Council of Churches, ESTHER

**April 21** Time: 12:30-2:30 pm  
Neenah, First Presbyterian Church, 200 Church Street  
Sponsored by: Wisconsin Council of Churches, ESTHER

**April 21** Time: 3:30-5:30 pm  
Oshkosh, St. Paul UCC, 1250 Leonard Point Road  
Sponsored by: Wisconsin Council of Churches, ESTHER



Photo courtesy of Nicole Breunig

**April 24** Time: 7-9 pm  
Milwaukee, Congregation Emanu-El B'ne Jeshurun, 2020 W. Brown Deer Rd.  
Sponsored by: Interfaith Conference

**April 26** Time: 7-9 pm  
River Falls, 1<sup>st</sup> Congregational UCC  
Sponsored by: Wisconsin Council of Churches,

**April 26** Time: 7-9 pm  
Lodi, venue TBD  
Sponsored by: Wisconsin Council of Churches and Lodi Ministerial Association

**May 3** Time: 7-9 pm  
Brookfield, Unitarian Universalist Church West, 13001 W. North Ave  
Sponsored by: Interfaith Conference

**May 8** Time: 7-9 pm  
Milwaukee area  
Sponsored by: Interfaith Conference

**May 14 & 15**  
Future of Farming & Rural Life in Wisconsin Conference held at the Monona Terrace  
<http://www.wisconsinacademy.org/idea>



Photo courtesy of Nicole Breunig

[Click here for a listing of Farmers' Health Cooperative of Wisconsin town hall informational meetings](#)

March						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

April						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
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8	9	10	11	12	13	14
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29	30					

May						
SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
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