

Professional Brief

Rhonda R. Gildersleeve

Application for Professor

Department of Agriculture & Life Sciences

University of Wisconsin – Extension

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I. PERSONAL INFORMATION

Name: Rhonda R. Gildersleeve

Formal Education: Ph.D., Texas A&M University, Soil & Crops Sciences, 1987
M.S., University of Florida, Agronomy, 1982
B.S. Agriculture, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, 1980

Extension Employment: Extension Grazing Research Specialist, University of Wisconsin Extension, Ag & Natural Resources Program Area (ANRE), November 2008 – Present
Agriculture Agent, University of Wisconsin Extension, Iowa County, October 1999 – October 2008
Livestock/Natural Resources Farm Advisor, University of California Cooperative Extension, Inyo & Mono Counties, October 1988 – September 1999

Extension Rank: Associate Professor: July 1, 2000 to Present
Assistant Professor: Oct. 1, 1999 – June 30, 2000

Current Position Description: (Exhibit 1)

II. PROFESSIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS**The University****University Service**

	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Date</u>
UW-Extension		
Search and Screen Committee ANRE Program Director	Member	2007
UWEX Department of Agriculture and Life Sciences		
Non-Tenured Faculty Support	Mentor	2004 – Present
Southern District	Liaison	2002– 2005
Nominations Committee	Member	2002 – 2005
UWEX Agriculture and Natural Resources Extension		
Statewide Beef Extension Team	Co-Leader	2012 – Present
Livestock Team	Member	2000 – Present
	Co-Chair	2002- 2003, 2009 – Present
Team Forage	Member	2000 – Present
Grazing Workgroup	Co-Chair	2010 – Present
UW-Madison College of Agriculture and Life Sciences (CALS)		
Agricultural Research Service		
Search and Screen Committee Lancaster Assistant Superintendent	Member	2013
LARS Research Programs Review	Member	2004
Department of Animal Sciences		
Beef Specialist Tenure Mentor Team	Member	2009 – 2012
Beef Specialist Candidate Public Presentations	Site Host	2009, 2000
Extension Visions Committee	Member	2008
WI School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers		
Advisory Board	Member	2011 - Present
Strategic Planning and Review Team	Member	2005

The Profession

<u>Organizations</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Year(s)</u>
US Department of Agriculture		
National Institute of Food and Agriculture, Organic Research & Extension Initiative (OREI) Grant Review	Panel Member	2010, 2011
WI Association of County Agricultural Agents (WACAA)	Member	2000 – 2008
WACAA Board	Member	2001 – 2004
WACAA Board	Secretary	2002 – 2004
WACAA Public Relations Committee	Chair	2001 – 2003
WI Association of Extension Professionals		
Planning Committee, Posters/Exhibits	Co-Chair	2003
National Association of County Agricultural Agents (NACAA)	Member	2000 – 2008
NACAA National Convention Finance Committee	Member	2001 – 2003
NACAA National Convention Annual Banquet	Vice Chair	2002 – 2003

The Community

<u>Organizations</u>	<u>Activity</u>	<u>Year(s)</u>
Midwest Forage Association Forage Focus newsletter	Grazing Editor	2013 - Present
World Dairy Expo Grazing Seminars Committee	Member	2009 – Present
WI Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative (GLCI) Board	Advisor	2008 – Present
WI Department of Ag, Trade & Consumer Protection		
Grow WI Grazing Initiative Interagency Committee	Member	2011 – 2012
Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems (CIAS) Blue Skies, Greener Pastures Initiative		
Steering Committee	Member	2010 - 2012
GrassWorks, Inc. Board (grazing producer organization)	Advisor	2008 – 2011
Iowa County Clean Sweep Committee	Member	2000 – 2008
Iowa County CAC/FAC Committee	Member	2000 – 2008
Iowa County Master Gardener Association	Advisor	2000 – 2008
Southwest WI Dairy Modernization Task Force	Member	2004 - 2008
WI Cattlemen's Association Conference Planning Committees	Advisor	2004 – 2007
<i>Heart of the Farm</i> Steering Committee	Member	2001 - 2005
Wisconsin Farm Technology Days (Richland County)		
Education Committee	Member	2001 – 2002
Nutrient Management and Conservation Tent	Co-Chair	2001 – 2002
UW Platteville Pioneer Farm Research Design Committee	Member	2000 – 2001
Livestock Subcommittee	Chair	2001

III. MAJOR PROGRAM: Profitable Pasture-based Dairy & Livestock Production Systems**Situation Statement:**

Wisconsin has a strong heritage of pasture-based dairy and livestock production that continues to the present day. Advances in electric fencing technology and use of managed grazing systems have resulted in more intensive use of pastures. Wisconsin farms utilizing managed grazing systems continue to increase across Wisconsin. Over 11,000 Wisconsin farms currently utilize rotational and managed grazing systems for their dairy and livestock operations (2007 US Ag Census). Pasture-based production systems have recently been integrated into farm management requirements for certified organic dairy and livestock operations (USDA, National Organic Program, 2010). Wisconsin ranks first in the USA for both organic dairy and livestock farms and for pasture acres on those farms (WI Ag Statistics Service, 2011). Pasture-based systems also increase production diversity across the farm landscape that drives Wisconsin agriculture.

In 2006, the grazing industry began formal conversations with Cooperative Extension administration regarding the need for an Extension grazing specialist, providing extensive input into a proposed position description. I was appointed in that capacity in November 2008 after serving as Iowa County Agriculture Agent for 9 years. Statewide grazing needs have been refined since 2008 with a broad scale industry needs' assessment—the 'Blue Skies, Greener Pastures' (BSGS) statewide listening sessions coordinated by CIAS (Exhibit 2a), and a follow up interagency response ('Grow Wisconsin Grazing Initiative', Exhibit 2b), which clarified interagency efforts to address core industry needs identified by BSGS. I was an active Extension representative in both efforts and have utilized the many opportunities to listen to producers during the process as the foundational needs assessment for my statewide Extension program.

As a specialist, my educational focus has shifted somewhat compared to my two previous county-based Extension positions. Although the needs of Wisconsin producers for sound, research-based information is still the "bottom-line" focus of my Extension work, a primary line of communication now is most often initiated through the local Extension office, NRCS, other agency or allied industry partners that also do grazing work in the state. I've consistently received questions, requests for presentations, and other forms of specialist assistance from 30 – 40 counties around Wisconsin during the past 5 years. Most often, I am pleased to note, the initial contacts come from county Extension colleagues.

Opportunities for research on pasture-based production systems are many in Wisconsin, and we have an enthusiastic clientele base that needs solid science for their industry. A primary focus during the past 4 years has been a project that I initiated in collaboration with Extension Dairy Management Specialist Victor Cabrera to look at pasture supplementation strategies and whole farm management decisions on grazing and organic dairy farms. This effort is supported by an Organic Research & Extension Initiative (OREI) grant from USDA.

Objectives:

1. Wisconsin dairy and livestock producers will increase their knowledge and management skills of pastures with regard to pasture agronomy, grazing animal nutrition, soil fertility/nutrient cycling and use of pasture legumes.
2. County-based Extension colleagues, government agency partners, and allied agriculture industry interests will have a) better access to research-based information on pasture-based dairy and livestock production systems to assist them in advising producers and landowners, and b) improve their understanding of pasture agronomy, grazing animal nutrition, soil fertility and other factors in pasture-based production systems in Wisconsin.

Teaching Methods Used:

- A. **Group Contacts through Educational Events** include presentations at meetings, workshops, field days, pasture walks and other venues (for a detailed list of presentations, please see Exhibit 3). An example is included (Exhibit 4) with a 2013 presentation and meeting evaluation information that was provided to me by the host agent.
- B. **Multiplier Contacts** include Extension agents, Technical College farm instructors, LWCD & NRCS staff, RC&D and other WI agency grazing specialists/consultants, Extension Specialist colleagues at Wisconsin and other universities, and agriculture industry contacts.
- C. **Media Contacts** include news releases, interviews and questions from radio/TV/print media contacts, and columns or articles in various print media such as *WI Agriculturalist*.

D. Website efforts include:

- Extension FYI site: Grazing Resources and Research, <http://uwex.edu/fyi/grazes>
- Contributions to Team Forage, <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/crops/uwforage/uwforage.htm> and Wisconsin Beef Information Center, <http://uwex.edu/fyi/wbic>

Table 1. Summary of Major Outreach Methods

Year	Meetings, Workshops & Field Days ^A		Individual Consultations via Farm Calls, Office Visits, Telephone, Email	
	Number of Presentations	Educational Contacts	Producers	Ag Industry/ Agency Partners ^B
2013	19	603	30	89
2012	25	738	51	98
2011	23	520	35	77
2010	18	599	41	49
2009	22	659	67	40
2006 – 2008	53*	846	651	195

***Note: Presentations for this major program were counted from tenure– 2008, however, program educational contacts and consultations numbers for the earliest time period were only available from 2006 – 2008.**

E. Educational and research publications that have been developed since tenure are listed in Exhibit 5.**Program Support and Recognition:****A. Awards and Recognition**

- Peggy Compton and **Rhonda Gildersleeve**, Quality of Communication Team Award for *Managing Pastures for Water Quality: Understanding Riparian Areas and Managing Pastures for Water Quality: Strategies for Seasonal Livestock Use*, WI Extension Environmental and Community Development Association (2012). These publications are provided in Exhibit 6.
- Melvin R. George, et al., Award of Excellence (State Programs), in recognition of the *California Rangeland Watershed Program*, Western Extension Directors' Association (2012). **Note:** I was recognized as part of the original team of UC Cooperative Extension Farm Advisors who helped develop and implement this program, which began in the early 1990s and presently continues to assist California ranchers with development of rangeland water quality stewardship plans, which are similar to nutrient management plans. Although this project is not a part of my current Extension program, the effort was a component of my Wisconsin tenure application, and those experiences also provided inspiration in development of the two riparian management publications that Peggy Compton and I wrote. Finally, it was a nice surprise to be recognized with my California colleagues for our collective efforts so many years after my contributions to a program that remains among my personally most satisfying efforts.
- Grains Team and Team Forage, Team Workgroup Leadership & Responsiveness Award, UWEX Agriculture & Natural Resources Extension (2012)
- Peggy Compton, Jerry Doll, and **Rhonda Gildersleeve**, Quality of Communication Award for *The Dirty Dozen and Beyond: Identifying and Managing 25 Pasture Weeds of Wisconsin*, WI Extension Environmental and Community Development Association (2006)

- B. Grants and Partnership Agreements Awarded:** Over \$800,000 in grants and partnership agreements have been secured to support my Extension programs in pasture-based dairy and livestock production systems since tenure in 2000 and are summarized in Exhibit 7.

Results, Evaluation and Discussion:

- Objective 1:** Wisconsin dairy and livestock producers will increase their knowledge and management skills of pastures with regard to pasture agronomy, grazing animal nutrition, soil fertility/nutrient cycling and use of pasture legumes.

Since tenure, nearly 4,000 producers, students, agency/industry partners, and others interested in pasture-based dairy and livestock production systems have attended meetings, workshops and other events and received information from my presentations. Nearly 900 producers have received additional information and resources from direct requests and farm visits, and over 500 Extension, agency, and industry partners received information and resources for their work through direct requests (Table 1).

- Objective 2:** County-based Extension colleagues, government agency partners, and allied agriculture industry interests will have a) better access to research-based information on pasture-based dairy and livestock production systems to assist them in advising producers and landowners, and b) improve their understanding of pasture agronomy, grazing animal nutrition, soil fertility and other factors in pasture-based production systems in Wisconsin.

Opportunities for providing assistance and increasing understanding and response capacity of Extension county colleagues, agency and ag industry partners occur through in-service training, mentoring, and consultation on various aspects of pasture-based production systems have been on-going since tenure. I have been a coordinator, collaborator and/or presenter at a number of in-service opportunities, including the Team Forage Grazing Teaching & Technology Conference, a current interagency SARE-sponsored Professional Development grant on grazing education, assistance with NRCS-sponsored agency training programs, and the Wisconsin Grazing School, which serves both producers and agency staff.

Implications:

Programming on pasture-based production systems must address a wide range of not only agronomic-related topics, but also various species-specific aspects of dairy and livestock husbandry and production. Ultimately, research-based information needs to answer the question(s) that producers ask in order to make sound farm management decisions that improve their farm's profitability and sustainability. Evaluations indicate further potential to develop additional efforts to address the many needs effectively and a necessity to remain responsive with current research-based information as agricultural situations change.

IV. MAJOR TEACHING EVENT – Team Forage Grazing Teaching & Technology Conference (GTTC)

- A. Program and Clientele:** Extension colleagues, government agency and allied industry partners who work with farmers utilizing pasture-based dairy and livestock production systems.
- B. Objectives:** The biennial conference was identified as an opportunity to provide professional development for Extension educators, agency and industry partners who work with graziers through Team Forage that is focused on presentation of current UW research findings related to pasture-based dairy and livestock systems.

- C. **Materials and Methods Used:** As Team Forage grazing workgroup co-chairs, Dennis Cosgrove and I collaborated on developing the one day conference/tour format. Dennis hosted the first conference at UW-River Falls in August 2010. In 2012, I coordinated and hosted the second GTTC at the US Dairy Forage Research Center, rural Prairie du Sac. Agendas for the 2010 and 2012 conferences are provided in Exhibit 8. In preparation for the conference, a request is put out to all UW researchers and Extension colleagues to identify potential speakers and topics. In 2012, I collated a conference proceedings' with summaries of each presentation, which was provided to participants as well as posted to the UW Extension FYI Grazing Resources & Research website. As Extension Grazing Specialist, I also made a presentation on a current topic of interest. A copy of my 2012 presentation is provided in Exhibit 9.
- D. **Evaluation:** The initial GTTC held in 2010 had 18 participants in addition to presenters. An evaluation of the program was not conducted. In 2012, the GTTC program had 55 participants and an evaluation was conducted (Exhibit 10). The overall program was ranked very highly in value and the individual presentations ranked well in attaining the goal of providing current research results that participants felt they would be able to use when educating producers.
- V. **MAJOR RESEARCH EFFORT: Strategies of Pasture Supplementation on Organic and Conventional Grazing Dairies: Assessment of Economic, Production, and Environmental Outcomes (OREI study)**
- A. **Research Question:** What are the farm level factors contributing to feeding strategies and farm management decisions on organic and comparable conventional or dairy grazing farms and the subsequent economic, production and environmental outcomes. A project overview is provided in Exhibit 11 that I developed in 2011 for preliminary outreach efforts as we initiated the grant and a poster that I presented at the 2011 USDA Organic Farming Research Conference and Project Directors' meeting in Washington DC (Exhibit 12).
- B. **Materials and Methods:** An intensive (48 pages) on-farm survey instrument developed by the project team was used to collect 2010 farm year data from a total of 130 organic, conventional and non-organic grazing farms from January 2011 through January 2012. The project's graduate students conducted most of the farm interviews with our guidance.
- C. **Results and Discussion:** To date, data analysis has utilized clustering methods to identify major strategies related to feeding strategies and farm management decisions and their impacts on income over feed costs (IFOC), greenhouse gas emissions, and nutrient management. The data analysis is ongoing at the present time.
- D. **Publications and Follow-Up:** Project overviews and preliminary results have been presented at the USDA Organic Farming Research Conference, Upper Midwest Grazing Conference, Team Forage Grazing Teaching & Technology Conference, World Dairy Expo Grazing Seminars and GrassWorks Conference. The graduate students (Claudia Hardie and Marion Dutreuil) have also presented their work at national Dairy Science meetings. As Claudia and Marion finish their projects, journal articles are being prepared for submission to scientific journals. I will be leading the final effort to develop a number of Extension materials and distribute the results during 2014 as we finish out this project. Presentations made for this project is also included in Exhibit 4.

VI. PROFESSIONAL IMPROVEMENT

A. Participation

Event	Sponsor	Date
ANRE Annual Conference, Specialist Updates & various Program Teams' In-service Meetings	Extension	1999 – 2013
Forage/Grazing Teaching & Technology Conferences	Team Forage	2003 – 2013
WI Grazing Conference	GrassWorks, Inc.	2002 – 2013
Grazing Educator PD Programs	SARE (WI interagency grant)	2011 – 2013
World Dairy Expo Grazing Seminars	Extension, DATCP, NRCS, USDFRC	2009 – 2013
Upper Midwest Organic Farm Conference	MOSES	2008 – 2013
e-Organic, RMA, SARE Webinars	Extension	2005 - 2013
Organic Farming Systems Research Conference	USDA (Washington, DC)	2011
Grass-fed Beef Meeting	Iowa Forage & Grassland Council	2009
Grassland Birds Workshop	DNR & NRCS	2008
National Grass-Fed Beef Conference	Extension, NRCS (Harrisburg, PA)	2007

B. Five Year Professional Improvement Plan

My five year professional improvement plan will include continued participation in Extension and industry field days and conferences to keep current on relevant research, Extension, and industry information resources. I would also like to focus on improving my capacity to utilize various information technology formats for efficient and effective development and delivery of pastures/forages information and resources to clientele. From a research aspect, I would like to update my understanding and skills in use of statistical analysis programs to support research project efforts.

VII. PLANS AND REPORTS

- A. Annual Reviews for 2013, 2012, 2011 (separate file)
- B. Four Year Plan of Work (Exhibit 13)
- C. Recent Tenured Faculty Review, Impact Report(s), and Success Stories (Exhibit 14)

Supportive Materials

Exhibit

1. **Position Description**
2. **Needs Assessment Documents**
 - a. *Growing Wisconsin's Grazing Future: Results of the Blue Skies, Greener Pastures Consultation Process*
 - b. *Grow Wisconsin Grazing Initiative Final Recommendations*
3. **Relevant Educational Presentations and Events, 2000 – 2013.**
4. **Example of Recent Presentation & Evaluation Results: *Finding Enough Forage in 2013: Post-Drought, Central Wisconsin area meeting, Marshfield, April 26, 2013.***
5. **Educational and Research Publications, 2000 – 2013.**
6. **Extension Publications Examples:**
 - a. *Managing Pastures for Water Quality: Understanding Riparian Areas*
 - b. *Managing Pastures for Water Quality: Strategies for Seasonal Livestock Use*
7. **Grant and Partnership Agreements, 2000 – 2013.**
8. **Agendas for 2010 and 2012 Team Forage Grazing Teaching & Technology Conferences (GTTC) held at UW-River Falls and US Dairy Forage Research Center, respectively.**
9. **Presentation by Rhonda Gildersleeve at 2012 GTTC, *Stocker Gains at Two Stocking Rates***
10. **Evaluation of 2012 GTTC**
11. **Overview of OREI project**
12. **Poster presented at 2011 Organic Farming Research Conference, Washington, D.C.**
13. **Plan of Work, 2009 – 2013**
14. **(a) Most Recent Tenured Faculty Review and (b) 2013, 2012, 2011 Impact Reports and Success Stories**