

Greg Blonde

UW-Extension
Department of Agriculture & Life Sciences

2017-18 Post-Tenure Review

November 28, 2017

Position: Agriculture Agent
Waupaca County
1984 ó Present

Rank: Professor
2003 - Present

I. Major Program Development, Implementation and Impact

Dairy & Farm Business Management

Situation #1: Dairy remains the leading farm enterprise in Waupaca County accounting for two-thirds of all farm sales. In 2013 dairy feed inventories were extremely low as a result of wide spread alfalfa winter kill and record high commodity prices that shifted corn harvest the previous fall from less silage to more grain. Strong grain prices and low forage inventories also pushed baled hay prices to record highs. Moreover, dairy farms were just beginning to recover from severe financial stress brought on by historic low milk prices only a few years earlier leaving many producers and professionals wondering how to address high priced feed that was in short supply.

Response: Blonde worked with Extension colleagues in Northeast and Central WI to help plan, promote and host a program called "Meeting Tomorrow's Feeding Challenges Today". The program was offered at five locations, including Waupaca County. Blonde developed and presented a fact sheet "What's Standing Hay Really Worth".

Outcome & Impact: Evaluations from the Waupaca County location (29) showed a 15-30% increase in knowledge about alternative forage and feeding options. Several consultants, including four other county Extension agents, requested additional copies of the pricing standing hay fact sheet for distribution. This regional UWEX team effort was also selected as one of the featured scholarship presentations during the ANRE annual conference in October 2013.

Situation #2: The 2012 federal farm bill that was finally announced in the early spring of 2014 including a completely new dairy farm support program different than anything USDA has ever offered in the past.

Response: Blonde helped coordinate, promote and evaluate a statewide UWEX Dairy Team effort that provided local outreach programming at nineteen locations across the state giving WI dairy farmers and professionals the opportunity to learn more about the new USDA Dairy Margin Protection Program. He also worked with the local FSA Director to provide additional follow-up instruction and support.

Outcome & Impact: 1,052 people from 45 counties attended at least one training site. Based on the statewide pre-post program evaluation using a rating scale of 1=low, 5-high (N=310), knowledge and understanding about the new USDA DMPP program increased significantly: How DMPP works +106%; Coverage levels +91%; Fees/Program Cost +101%; Support Material/Decision Tools +141%. Overall, eighty-five percent of respondents rated the program as excellent (48%) or good (37%). This statewide UWEX Dairy Team effort also helped build and maintain strong working relationships with local Ag professionals and FSA partners.

In Waupaca County, a follow-up group training session, as well as individual farm consultations resulted in a majority (105) of all Waupaca County dairy farms (175) enrolling in DMPP with nearly two-thirds (61%) buying additional coverage above the minimum \$4.00/cwt margin coverage level.

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Situation #3: Strong interest in the 2013 pricing standing hay fact sheet was followed by delayed planting in 2014 and the likelihood of an immature wet corn crop that fall. Moreover, UWEX administration had recently provided all Extension employees with mobile Android (Nexus) tablets and were encouraging use of mobile technology with local programs.

Response: Blonde worked with a local computer programmer to develop a mobile application for Android phones and tablets helping growers, as well as colleagues and other Ag professionals, determine an equivalent value for wet shell corn. The pricing wet corn app allows users to compare the value of dry shell corn using a link to current local elevator bid prices then calculating and displaying the equivalent wet price in both price per ton and price per bushel. Additional features for evaluating the added cost of drying and/or shelling were also included, as well the option for emailing the results directly to others.

Outcome & Impact: The pricing wet corn mobile app was downloaded over 300 times from the Google Play Store in the fall of 2014. Today, more than 700 users have downloaded the app and was the inspiration for developing and releasing two additional mobile apps in 2015-16.

Situation #4: Following development of the pricing standing hay fact sheet and the release of a mobile app for pricing wet corn, Extension colleagues and other local Ag professionals were asking if the pricing standing hay worksheet could also be made into an application for mobile devices. Each year, an estimated 2.5 million acres of hay and haylage are harvested throughout WI. Baled hay alone accounts for \$80 to \$100 million in direct sales across this state. In Waupaca County, nearly a third of all cropland is used for hay or haylage. In addition, as farm size continues to grow, buying and selling standing hay seems to occur as much if not more often today between rural land owners and neighboring farms. However, without an established commodity market like corn or soybeans, determining the market value of hay is much more challenging, especially if not unharvested and still standing in the field.

Response: During the winter/spring of 2014-15, Blonde develop a second mobile Android app for pricing standing hay. This app was designed to be more educational by incorporating other USDA and UWEX resources including monthly on-line hay market reports, NCR 547 Alfalfa Management Guide, as well as the 2013 WI Custom Rate Guide. Users enter projected hay yield, cutting schedule and harvest costs to calculate a standing value per acre.

Outcome & Impact: Feature stories about the app were published or aired in several statewide, regional and national Ag media outlets. A presentation / demonstration was given at the UWEX Farm Management Update for Ag Professionals in May of 2015. Post-program evaluations showed the presentation was both relevant (73%) and useful (76%). Google Play Store analytics documented more than 800 users by the end of 2015. Today, the number of users has more than doubled to over 1,750 with a 33% retention rate.

Situation #5: The impact of large farm equipment on local roads and highways continues to be a concern for farmers, rural residents and local elected officials. Farmers need good roads to access fields, storage areas and processing facilities. Local officials know agriculture is important to the local economy, but public safety and limited road budgets make it very difficult to satisfy these competing needs. In addition, a new state law (WI Act 377) into effect in 2015.

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Response: Blonde worked with the Waupaca County Highway Commissioner and several key Ag related town board members to develop and present educational outreach for farmers, custom operators and local elected officials. Over several years, six individual and four regional town hall meetings were held in Waupaca County. Topics include: new research showing the impact of modern farm equipment on road surfaces and sub-surfaces; areal maps showing current land use and traffic patterns to help local elected officials better evaluate where the town/county might want to consider investing in future road improvement projects; ideas for improving communication between local farms and town/county officials, especially during heavy hauling periods (planting, harvesting and manure spreading); temporary one-way traffic on select roads as an option to improve public safety and minimize pavement and shoulder damage; expand and co-locate field driveways, and more durable road designs near critical areas including designated roads, field access point and key roadway intersections.

Outcome & Impact: More than 200 farmers and local elected officials attend one or more of the local outreach programs leading to more than 100 Ag related IoH weight limit permits issued in Waupaca County since 2015. Feedback during the outreach effort in Waupaca County was also used to modify the state law by clarifying the definition of Category B IoH equipment to include, and therefore exempt from new weight limits, tractor mounted forage mowers. According to statewide Extension Safety specialist Cheryl Skjolaas, Waupaca County is one of the most engaged counties in WI regarding IoH outreach and education, and set a great example for other counties to follow.

Situation #6: Following the success and growing interest with the wet corn and standing hay pricing app, Blonde worked with UWEX colleague Ryan Sterry to convert and supplement a 2007 spreadsheet Sterry developed to help both buyers and sellers determine a reasonable price range for standing corn silage.

Response: Blonde teamed up with Sterry in 2016 to develop a free Android app for pricing standing corn silage. Like the spreadsheet, the mobile app uses research based information to calculate a floor price for the seller and ceiling price for the buyer, but with additional links on how to estimate corn silage yield, access to current hay market reports, as well as the current WI Custom Rate Guide.

Outcome & Impact: More than 800 users have downloaded the app in just over twelve months with 58% retention. Program evaluations following the UWEX Farm Management Update for Ag Professionals in September, 2016 indicated the Pricing Corn Silage App presentation was clear and understandable (4.3 of 5; n=34) and significantly increased knowledge on how to use the corn silage pricing app (+83%; n=25). One lender wrote "I plan to reference the silage pricing app when making loan decisions and consulting with borrowers". In addition, a survey of UWEX colleagues and local Ag professionals in 2017 found one or more of the apps developed since 2014 (Pricing Wet Corn, Pricing Standing Hay and Pricing Standing Corn Silage) "provided helpful recommendations to their farm clients" (100%, n=12); "provided mobile access to market information" (63%, n=8); and, "increased their knowledge or understanding of pricing standing crops" (50%, n=6).

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Situation #7: Cow Comfort and animal wellbeing continued to be popular issues for the dairy industry, especially following the release of a December 2013 under-cover video showing employees from a Brown County dairy farm abusing the cows. Record milk prices shortly after that incident also had many dairy farms looking to upgrade or improve their facilities.

Response: Blonde help plan and facilitate the annual UWEX Midwest Dairy & Beef Husbandry Conference held in the northeast WI in 2013 and 2015. Specifically in 2015, Blonde worked with DPI to help target vocational Ag students and teachers as a primary audience. In addition, the local annual Cow College program featured topics and farm tours on modern housing and handling facilities. In 2015, Blonde also worked with a local veterinarian, who chairs the WVMA large animal wellbeing committee, to write an article on managing down cows. In 2017, Blonde worked with colleagues on a hoof health project, including development of fact sheets.

Outcome / Impact: Over 400 people attended the UWEX Husbandry Conferences in 2013 and 2015 with written evaluations (n=74) showing knowledge and/or understanding had increased by a +20% overall. More importantly, of the more than 300 people who attending the conference in 2015, more than one-third (120) were vocational High School or technical college Ag students and instructors participating for their first time.

The two page bilingual (English/Spanish) article on how to properly handle down cows was published in the UWE statewide El Campenaro (Dairy Partner) bimonthly newsletter reaching over 400 dairy farms across the state, including more than 25 in Waupaca County that employ Hispanic workers.

The 2016 Cow College program featuring Dr. Gordy Jones dairy cow comfort and management presentation was recorded locally, then presented by WI Public Television as part their "University Place" series. In 2017, Blonde published an article (Hoof Health and Housing) on the UWEX Dairy Team Resource website as part of a project with colleagues in northeast WI.

Agronomy / Soil & Water Conservation

Situation: Improving forage quality, production and management practices continues to be a key factor in the success of individual dairy farms. Forage crops account for nearly half (48%) of all cropland in Waupaca county, primarily alfalfa (67%) and corn silage (33%). A new local watershed project recently received federal funding to help protect Bear Lake and the Lower Little Wolf River in the heart of Waupaca County farm country by improving soil health. The Waupaca County Forage Council remains a primary avenue for local UW-Extension forage and soil/water conservation outreach efforts.

Response: Each year Blonde helps coordinate, collect and share information through the local Forage Council annual first crop alfalfa PEAQ monitoring and corn silage moisture testing programs to help to help dairy producers increase forage quality, as well as farm profitability. As a follow up to previous work with fungicides for corn silage, new multi-year field research project began to evaluate the use of foliar fungicides as a tool for improving alfalfa yield and/or forage quality in conjunction with new UWEX Plant Pathologist, Damon Smith with funding through the Midwest Forage Associating (MFA). In addition, Blonde helps plan and present the Waupaca County Forage Council annual winter meeting and coordinates at least one summer/fall field day focused on improved soil/water/crop management practices.

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Outcome / Impact: Annual alfalfa (PEAQ) and corn silage (dry down) results are now shared directly with local Forage Council members through email and Facebook group postings. Video of field events, including soil health demonstration projects, were recorded and posted on the Waupaca County UWEX Ag website, as well as the UW Crop Manager website. The expanded programming and outreach efforts has attracted new interest and support for the Waupaca County Forage Council. Scholarships (\$500) are now provided each year for one or two local youth who have successfully finished their first year of post-secondary education/training in an Ag related field. The Waupaca County Forage Council remains one of the largest WI affiliates of the Midwest Forage Association.

Results from the multi-year, multi-location alfalfa fungicide research project, including both irrigated and non-irrigated alfalfa fields, found a slight yield increase that often (<10%) was not enough to offset the added product and application costs. The results were released in a new UW-Extension publication A4090 "Using Fungicides on Alfalfa For Dairy Production in Wisconsin" and made available through the Learning Store in 2015. Results have also been shared with colleagues through UWEX Forage Team meetings and UWEX Pest Management Update meetings reaching more than 600 crop consultants statewide. A local dairy farmer and cooperator in the field research project said this new information saves him at least \$5000 each year, not counting labor savings, by not applying fungicide to alfalfa.

II. Educational Activities and Teaching Events

Dairy & Farm Business Management

- Annual Cow College Program & Farm Tour
- Annual Farm Management Update for Ag Professionals
- Annual Leadership Waupaca County
- Annual Farm Calls
- SARA Ag Grant & Financial Options Program (2017)
- Farm Succession Webinar Series (2016-17)
- App Development for Pricing Wet Corn, Standing Hay & Corn Silage (2014-17)
- Cattle Feeders Seminar (2014-17)
- CAFO Annual Update (2014-17)
- Ag Plastic Recycling (2016)
- German Dairy Farm Tour Group (2015)
- Farm Family Health & Business Management Seminar (2014)
- Dairy Margin Protection Program (2014)
- WI Dairy & Beef Industry Animal Husbandry Conf (2013 & 2015)
- Preserving & Protecting Local Roads (2013-15)
- UWEX Meeting Tomorrows Feeding Challenges Today (2013)
- UWEX Dairy Repro Meeting (2013)

Agronomy / Soil & Water Conservation

- Annual First Crop Alfalfa & Corn Silage Moisture Monitoring Programs
- Annual Forage Council Winter Meeting & Summer/Fall Field Days
- Master Gardener General Training (2015 & 2017)
- Strategies for Dealing with Low Grain Prices (2015)
- ARC-PLC Programs (2015)
- Manure Applicator Spill Response Training (2015)
- LWCA Statewide Summer Field Day (2013)

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III. Applied Research

- Evaluation of Forage Sorghum Management and Use for Dairy Heifer Diets in Central WI (2017 local project collaborator; Matt Akin, principal investigator)
- UWEX/WPA PRRS/PEDv (2017 local coordinator Waupaca, Waushara & Portage Co)
- UWEX Dairy Team, Replacement Herd Intuitive Cost of Production Assessment Update (2017 local project collaborator; Matt Akin, principal investigator)
- USDA Alternative Dairy Marketing System Simulation Demonstration Project (2016 local project coordinator; Mark Stephenson, principal investigator)
- UWEX Soil Microbe / Crop Residue / Manure Decomposition Multi-County Field Study (2016 local project collaborator; Jamie Patton, principal investigator)
- UWEX A4090 "Using Fungicides on Alfalfa for Dairy Production in WI" (2013-15 local project collaborator/co-author; Damon Smith, principal investigator / primary author)
- UWEX Foliar Fungicide Alfalfa Field Research (2013-2015 project collaborator; Damon Smith, principal investigators)

III. Publications

- "What's Standing Alfalfa Worth?" (annual factsheet / news release sent to colleagues). **(Exhibit 1)**
- "Hoof Health & Housing" WI Agriculturist (Feb 2017); UWEX Dairy Team factsheet (May 2016) & website (Oct 2016). **(Exhibit 2)**
- "Corn Silage Pricing App" developed by Greg Blonde & Ryan Sterry (coding by Ian Grasshof); published on Google Play Store as free Android mobile application (Aug 2016). **(Exhibit 3)**
- "Cover Crop / Rain Simulator" videos, Waupaca UWEX / ICM websites (Oct 2016).
- "Cow College: Achieving Excellence on Your Dairy" WI Public Television University Place; Intro by Greg Blonde, presentation by Dr. Gordie Jones, DVM (Jan 2016).
- "Producer Profile" Midwest Forage Association Forage Focus magazine (May 2016).
- "Fungicide Use of Alfalfa in WI: What Four Years of Research Has Taught Us" Midwest Forage Association Forage Focus magazine co-author (Jan 2016).
- "Supporting Each Other in Difficult Times" UWEX ANRE e-Newsletter (Jan 2016).
- "Handling Down Cows" UWEX Dairy Partner/*El Compañero* Statewide Newsletter by Greg Blonde & Dr. Bob Leder, DVM (Nov/Dec 2015); UWEX Dairy Team website (Feb 2016). **(Exhibit 4)**
- "Pricing Standing Hay App" developed by Greg Blonde (coding by Ian Grasshof); published on Google Play Store as free Android mobile application (April 2015).
- "Using Fungicide on Alfalfa for Dairy Production in WI" UWEX A4090 (April 2015). **(Exhibit 5)**
- "Pricing Wet Corn App" developed by Greg Blonde (coding by Ian Grasshof); published on Google Play Store as free Android mobile application (Sept 2014).
- "Waupaca County UWEX Ag/Agribusiness Quarterly Newsletter" (2013-present)
- "Waupaca County Board of Supervisors Quarterly Report" (2013-present).

IV. Contributions to the University / Profession

- Ag & Natural Resource Ag Institute Director Search & Screen Committee (2017)
- Ag & Natural Resource Associate Dean Search & Screen Committee Co-Chair (2017)
- Department of Ag & Life Sciences, Chair (2011- 2017)
- County Office Faculty Governance Unit, Chair (2013-present)
- Waupaca County Board of Supervisors Annual Tour (2013-present)

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IV. Contributions to the University / Profession *(continued)*

- UWEX Dairy, Forage & Farm Management Team Member (2013-present)
- WACEC Northcentral Region Innovative Grant Presentations (2013; 2016)
- Host Presentation for UWEX Chancellor County Visit (2015)
- CEAC & Statewide UWEX Resource Management Team (2013-2016)
- Rural Health Initiative Ex-Officio Board Member (2013-2015)
- Economics of Modern Agriculture, Local Civic Group Presentations (2014)

V. Administration of Educational / Research Programs

- UWEX Civil Rights Review (2016)
- Alfalfa PEAQ / Corn Silage Moisture Monitoring Programs (2013 - present)
- Waupaca County Forage Council / Scholarship Programs (2013 - present)
- Waupaca County Master Gardener Trainer/Advisor/Scholarship Program (2013 - present)
- Annual Pesticide Applicator Training (2013-present)
- Youth Livestock/Dairy Project Advisor/County Fair Coordinator (2013 - present)
- MAQA / Market Animal Project Sale Advisor (2013-present)
- Waupaca County Local Emergency Response Planning Committee (2013-present)
- Waupaca County FSA / NRCS Advisor (2013-present)

VI. Continued Professional Development

- UWEX/UW-Madison Biological Systems Engineering ðBoot Campö (Nov 2017)
- UWEX Civil Rights Training Module 101 (May 2017)
- UWEX Preventing Harassment & Sexual Violence On-Line Training (Mar 2017)
- UWEX Northcentral Region All Colleague Conference, Minocqua (2014-17)
- UWEX Cover crop Training, Marshfield (Oct 2016)
- UWEX Access for Persons w/ Disabilities, Madison (June 2016)
- UWEX Multicultural Awareness Training, Madison (May 2016)
- UWEX Alfalfa Seminar, Arlington (May 2016)
- NRCS Cover Crop Training, Wrightstown (Apr 2016)
- UWEX Digital Dermatitis Training, Appleton (Apr 2016)
- UWEX ANRE Annual Conference, WI Dells (2013-2016)
- UWEX All Colleague Conference, Madison (Nov 2015)
- UWEX Farm Financial Analysis Training, Stevens Point (Oct 2015)
- UWEX WI Act 377/IOH Training, Arlington (Aug 2014)
- FARM Program Certification Training, Wausau (July 2014)
- UW Mandatory Child Abuse Reporter On-Line Training (May 2014)
- UWEX County Leadership Team Conference, WI Dells (Apr 2014)
- UWEX Dairy & Forage Team In-services, WI Dells/Marshfield (2013-present)
- UWEX Pest Management Update, Kimberly/Marshfield (2013-present)
- UWEX Soil/Water/Nutrient Management Update, Shawano (2013-present)
- UWEX Employment Law to Ensure Workplace Nondiscrimination, CEAC (Oct 2013)
- UWEX Emotional Intelligence Training, CEAC (Apr 2013)
- JACEP Annual Conference (2013-2017)

VII. Awards

- UWEX JACEP Team Award for Hispanic/Latino Outreach (Apr 2017)
- WACAA / NACAA 3rd place Communications Award (Apr 2017)
- WACAA / NACAA 2nd place Communications Award (Apr 2016)
- WACAA / NACAA Distinguished Service Award (Apr/July 2015)
- UWEX ANRE Team Award - WI Dairy & Beef Wellbeing Conference (Oct 2014)
- Faculty Annual Review Meritorious Performance (2013-2016)

VIII. Professional Development Plans

- **Self-directed Professional Development Activities**
 - í JACEP / WACAA / NACAA Annual Meeting
 - í WI Crop Manager Conference
 - í PDPW Annual Meeting

- **Institution and Program Area Professional Development**
 - í UWEX All Faculty/Staff Conferences
 - í UWEX Ag & Natural Resource Department Conferences
 - í UWEX Webinar design & delivery
 - í YouTube Educational Video design & publication

- **Program Specific Professional Development...**
 - í UWEX Pesticide Applicator & Agronomy Annuals Update Meetings
 - í UWEX Soil & Water / Nutrient Management Annual Meeting
 - í UWEX Master Gardener / Horticulture Team WISLINE Updates
 - í UWEX Dairy/Forage Team In-service Trainings
 - í UWEX Farm Management Team Updates
 - í other related professional development opportunities as needed