

January 2017



# From Field to Barn

### UW-Extension Fond du Lac County

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Requests for reasonable accommodations for disabilities or limitations should be made prior to the date of the program or activity for which it is needed. Please do so as early as possible prior to the program or activity so that proper arrangements can be made.

## Five Myths Surrounding the VFD

With a new year, comes the implementation of the Veterinary Feed Directive. The FDA moved to strengthen the VFD in an effort to promote judicious use of antibiotics in food animals and more specifically places restrictions on livestock usages of antibiotics also used in human medicine. As of January 1, producers must obtain an authorization or “directive” to purchase medically important (critical to treating human diseases) antibiotics which are administered to food animals through feed and drinking water. Chris Richards, Oklahoma State University Extension Specialist, debunks five myths associated with the VFD:

- **Myth 1: Feed antibiotics will not be available to producers for livestock.** Antibiotics will be available for treatment, prevention and control of disease, but through an established veterinarian-client-patient-relationship.
- **Myth 2: A VFD is required to feed any antibiotic.** A VFD is required to feed an antibiotic that is considered medically important (8 classes of antibiotics). The feeding of ionophores, coccidiostat, dewormers, etc. will not require a VFD unless fed with an antibiotic that requires a VFD.
- **Myth 3: My feed dealer will not be able to have my feed until I provide a VFD.** A dealer can make and store feed that contains antibiotics. A dealer must have a valid VFD to sell that feed to a producer.
- **Myth 4: This is going to require a lot of paperwork.** For most operations, attaching the VFD to the feed bill and keeping it with pertinent records will be acceptable documentation. Discuss with your veterinarian if they have suggested methods to help you record and maintain the records.
- **Myth 5: Many animals will not have feed antibiotics available to them.** Feed antibiotics have always required being fed strictly by label and not even vets could use them “off-label”. This continues to be the case.

For more information on the VFD, please visit [www.fda.gov](http://www.fda.gov) or contact your farm’s veterinarian.

Source: Adapted from Wisconsin Beef Information Center

Leilana McKindra, Agricultural Communications Services Specialist, Oklahoma State University

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# Managing Dairy Heifers During the Winter Months

Attention to dairy heifer management is important for maintaining growth rates, minimizing health problems, and optimizing current and future profitability of the dairy farm.

## Housing for Dairy Heifers

Housing of dairy heifers during the winter is critical. The housing system should allow for adequate air exchange without becoming drafty and yet protect the heifers from the extremes of the environmental elements. Oftentimes, respiratory problems increase in calves and heifers in the winter because the housing allows inadequate or excessive air exchange. Continuously monitor the breathing and coughing of the heifers. Accepting as normal that only a few heifers are coughing is not justification for avoiding facility modifications. If these health problems occurred last winter, facility modifications should be occurring now. Heifers housed outdoors need to have access to either natural or constructed windbreaks. Water sources need to be evaluated now for continuous availability of water and for minimizing a slippery surface around the water supply.

## Feeding Programs Post-weaning

Farmers need to be careful that the long-term advantage of good growth rates in pre-weaned calves is not lost by how the weaned heifers are managed. Heifers will usually eat about 2.5% of body weight, so an adequate supply of high-quality forages needs to be in storage at this time. If forage supplies are limited, rations may need to be altered to stretch the forage supply.

Overfeeding corn silage can lead to over-conditioned heifers, which results in increased feed costs and increased risk for metabolic disease and dystocia at


calving. If diets are fed with a high proportion of corn silage, the amount of the diet fed needs to be restricted to control energy intake.

Heifers need to average about 1.7 lb/day of growth for large breed calves or 1.3 lb/day for small breed calves to reach the desired breeding size at 13 months of age. The goal is for heifers to calve at 22 to 24 months of age at about 90% of their mature weight (1,300 and 900 lb for large and small breeds at calving, including the weight of calf). The management of the heifers during the winter months will be important in achieving these goals.

## Evaluate Numbers of Heifers Raised

Now is the time to evaluate the number of heifers on the farm. With improved management and use of sexed semen, many farms are holding large inventories of heifers on the farm, sometimes 125% or greater of the number of cows. At a 30% to 35% cull rate, only about 85 heifers per 100 cows should be held on the farm. With high feed costs and limited forage in many situations, now is the time to sell excess heifers.

## Summary

Management and housing strategies need to be in place to reduce the maintenance energy requirement of calves during the winter by providing ample clean, dry bedding; windbreaks; and other improvements to the housing to lessen the cold stress without going overboard to increase the risk of respiratory problems. Feeding of the calves and heifers during winter needs to be changed to provide adequate energy for continued growth rates achieved during other times of the year. 

*Source: Maurice L. Eastridge,  
Professor and Extension Dairy Specialist  
The Ohio State University*



## Winter Weather: No Wonderland for Alfalfa

Recent winter weather may make you ask, “Will freezing temperatures and ice harm my alfalfa?” “What about the lack of snow cover and above normal temperatures in January?”

Unavoidable winter cold injury can occur on any dormant plant in the field. Fluctuating soil temperatures, for example, exert upward pressure on alfalfa plants and can cause their crown and root systems to be lifted or heaved out of the soil. These freezing and thawing cycles cause mechanical injury to the plant’s root system which not only stresses the plant, but also makes their roots vulnerable to dehydration from sun and wind exposure, and predisposes them to insects and disease.

Unseasonably warm or fluctuating air temperatures can also cause alfalfa buds and leaves to break dormancy making them prone to freeze damage with subsequent cold temperatures. Air temperatures less than 15° F can damage alfalfa crowns even when plants are well hardened off because water in the plant’s cells freeze and rupture, causing cell death.

While you have no control over the weather, some factors such as variety selection and cultural practices are within your control. Fall growth and dormancy play a major role in an alfalfa variety’s winter hardiness. Cultivars having low top growth in the fall tend to have better winter survival. Choose to plant hardy varieties adapted to your area with good fall dormancy and winter survival. According to Dr. Dan Undersander, 30-years of data illustrates that the relationship between fall dormancy and winter survival for northern alfalfa varieties has shifted. Fall dormancy is rated on a 1 to 11 scale, where ratings of 1 or 2 equal very winter hardy, and ratings of 10 or 11 equal no cold weather survival. Previously, alfalfa varieties needed a fall dormancy rating of 2, in order for that plant to adequately survive the winter. Now, data shows that varieties with ratings of 4 or 5 can be grown with little difference in winter survival from varieties with ratings of 2.


Fall dormancy, winter survival, and disease ratings for many alfalfa varieties in Wisconsin are available on the University of Wisconsin Variety Testing website at <http://fyi.uwex.edu/forage/alfalfa-trial-results-2016/>. Select

“click here for MARKETER(s).” The National Alfalfa and Forage Alliance also has a 2017 Alfalfa Variety Ratings booklet, that provides winter survival, fall dormancy, and pest resistance ratings for alfalfa varieties. Look online at [www.alfalfa.org/varietyLeaflet.php](http://www.alfalfa.org/varietyLeaflet.php).

Winter injury from cold temperatures is less likely when good cultural practices are followed that promote healthy plant growth. Alfalfa plants and root systems are healthier when they receive proper amounts of fertilizer based on a soil test; when they are cut properly to allow carbohydrate levels in roots to accumulate in the fall; and when they are hardened off properly.

Reducing the risk of winter injury to alfalfa can be accomplished by avoiding planting in high-risk areas, choosing hardy and adapted cultivars, using good cultural practices, and by implementing management techniques that improve snow cover. Snow cover is actually beneficial to alfalfa for preventing winter injury caused by low temperatures and heaving. Snow often insulates plants protecting them from desiccating winds and low temperatures. Management techniques that trap snow include alternating strips of alfalfa with grass or some other stubble, cutting the last harvest at different heights, allowing some fall regrowth, or planting alfalfa mixed with grasses.

The best advice for now, however, is wait and see. Observe which fields will need spring scouting to access any damage that may have occurred and to determine whether plants will outgrow injury.

For more information please contact UW-Extension Crops & Soils Area Agent Dr. Loretta Ortiz-Ribbing at 920-929-3171 or [loretta.ortizRibbing@uwex.edu](mailto:loretta.ortizRibbing@uwex.edu). 



## Farmers Needed: Find Out How You Can Help With Soil & Water Health

You will not want to miss this opportunity. The Dodge County Healthy Soil-Healthy Water Workshop is a farmer to farmer hosted event featuring nationally-known soil health and cover crops spokesperson, Ray Archuleta, as well as three panels of local farmers sharing their farm success stories using cover crops, no-till and strip till, and specific manure and nutrient management practices. The workshop is on Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at the Juneau Community Center located at 500 Lincoln Drive, Juneau, WI. To accommodate farm schedules registration will remain open from 8:30 a.m. until noon. While the program begins at 9:00 a.m., the keynote speakers will not begin until 10:30 a.m. (See enclosed flyer).

Why are soil health and water quality important for your farm’s future? Come hear Ray Archuleta, aka “the Soil Guy,” explain how healthy soil plus healthy water equal more profits. Also speaking with Ray will be Justin Morris, a Regional Soil Health Specialist in the new Soil Health Division of NRCS, and Pennsylvania farmer Jim Harbach who milks 1000 cows, operates a methane digester, and farms 2200 no-till acres.


Local farmers want your assistance starting a farmer lead group for the Rock River Watershed similar to Yahara Pride or Farmers for the Upper Sugar River. Come listen

and learn from 9 local producers who will share their farm success stories using cover crops, no-till and strip tillage, and how their manure and nutrient management practices improve soil health and water quality. The cover crop panel will feature Tony Peirick, Dale Macheel, Steve Smits, and Damon Reabe. Ricky Kratz, Jonathon Gibbs, and Ryan Nell will speak on the no-till/strip till panel, and manure and nutrient management panelists are John Koepke, Kevin Roche, and Jordan Crave.

Together these dynamic speakers and local farmers will share their passion about soil health and water quality.

Seating for this event is limited to 200 and farmers have preference. Reserve your seat today. Your registration form and fee are required to reserve your seat. February 1, 2017 is the registration deadline. For a meeting registration form and other meeting information visit the Dodge County UW-Extension Ag webpage at: <http://dodge.uwex.edu/agriculture-calendar/>

Depending on seating available any registrations after this date will be charged a late fee.

For more information please call the Dodge County UW-Extension office at 920-386-3790. 

## Upper Midwest Hay Price Report-as of January 9

Hay Grade	Bale type	Price (\$/ton)		
		Average	Minimum	Maximum
Prime (> 151 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	\$238.00	\$170.00	\$300.00
	Large Square	\$113.00	\$103.00	\$185.00
	Large Round	\$84.00	\$103.00	\$135.00
Grade 1 (125 to 150 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	\$119.00	\$105.00	\$135.00
	Large Square	\$128.00	\$100.00	\$150.00
	Large Round	\$82.00	\$70.00	\$115.00
Grade 2 (103 to 124 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	No Reported Sales		
	Large Square	\$80.00	\$50.00	\$103.00
	Large Round	\$70.00	\$50.00	\$100.00
Grade 3 (87 to 102 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	No Reported Sales		
	Large Square	\$68.00	\$63.00	\$73.00
	Large Round	\$53.00	\$33.00	\$75.00

## Mark Your Calendars for Up Coming Agricultural Events

### January 2017

~~26 Th Dodge Fondy Corn Growers Meeting, (\*\*Cancelled/Rescheduled for February 23.)~~

31 Tu Pesticide Applicator Safety Training in Spanish, 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m., UW-Extension Fond du Lac County

### February 2017

1 W Annual CAFO Meeting, 12 noon - 3:30 p.m., UW-Extension Fond du Lac County

1 W Private Pesticide Applicator Training, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., UW-Extension Dodge County, Juneau

7 Tu Enhancing Your Agronomic Systems Workshop, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., UW-Fond du Lac, (See flyer.)

8 W Healthy Soil-Healthy Water Workshop, 8:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., Juneau Community Center, Cost: \$10

9 Th Follow-Up at the Farm Shop, with Ray Archuleta at Condon Farm in Dodge County, (By invitation only.)

10 F Dodge County Forage Council Winter Meeting & Forage Contest, UW-Extension Dodge County, Juneau

13 M Private Pesticide Applicator Training, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., UW-Extension Fond du Lac County

15 W Employer of Choice Agriculture Human Resource Meeting, 12 noon - 3:30 p.m., UW-Extension Fond du Lac Co.

21 Tu Nutrient Management Farmer Training (Refresher), 1:00p.m. - 3:00 p.m., UW-Extension Dodge County

21 Tu Raising Quality Dairy Steers, 6:00 pm, Chissy's Pub & Grill, Waldo

21-23 Midwest Manure Summit, ([www.midwestmanure.org](http://www.midwestmanure.org)) Radisson Hotel, Green Bay

23 Th Dodge Fondy Corn Grower's Meeting, Noon, Pizza Ranch, Waupun

27 M Hoard's Dairy Judging Night, 7:00 p.m., UW-Extension Fond du Lac County

28 Tu Market Livestock Orientation Meeting. 7:30 p.m., UW-Extension Fond du Lac County

### March 2017

1 W Wisconsin State Fair Century & Sesquicentennial Farm Award Applications Due

2 Th Private Pesticide Applicator Training, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., UW-Extension Fond du Lac County

3 F WI Dairy & Beef Cattle Well-Being Conference, 9:00 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Country Aire, Stratford, (See flyer.)

4 Sa Fond du Lac County ACs "Ag Showcase", 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Fond du Lac County Fairgrounds

8 W Raising Quality Dairy Heifers, 10 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Liberty Hall, Kimberly

9 Th Employer of Choice Agriculture Human Resource Meeting, 12 noon - 3:30 p.m., UW-Extension Fond du Lac Co

9 Th Private Pesticide Applicator Training, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., UW-Extension Dodge County, Juneau

10-11 Wisconsin's Ag Women's Summit, Madison Marriott West, Middleton

15-16 PDPW Annual Conference & Business Meeting, Alliant Energy Center,  
Madison

18 Sa Master Gardener's Day in the Garden, 8:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m., UW-Fond du Lac

21 Tu Employer of Choice Agriculture Human Resource Meeting, 12 noon -  
3:30 p.m., UW-Extension Fond du Lac County

24 Th Heart of the Farm Women's Conference, 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.,  
Millhome Supper Club, Kiel

28-29 WPS Farm Show, EAA Grounds, Oshkosh



**For additional dates and information, visit <http://fyi.uwex.edu/fdlag/calendar>**



Fond du Lac County

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## Tractor Rollbar Rebates Available!

Tractor overturns are the leading cause of farm-related deaths. That's why it's so important that each tractor have a rollover protective structure (ROPS).

The Wisconsin ROPS Rebate Program reimburses owners up to 70 percent (maximum of \$865) toward the total cost of purchasing, shipping and installing individual ROPS. Wisconsin tractor owners can apply for a ROPS via the hotline, 1-877-767-7748 (1-877-ROPSR4U), or the Web site, [www.ropsr4u.com](http://www.ropsr4u.com).

A ROPS, when used with a seatbelt, is 99 percent effective in preventing injury or death in the event of an overturn. More than half the tractors in Wisconsin do not have this protection.

The program is run by the National Farm Medicine Center at Marshfield Clinic Research Foundation, and is made possible through philanthropic support from the Auction of Champions. More than 180 ROPS have been installed since 2013. For more information call Dr. Barbara Marlenga at the National Farm Medicine Center, 715-389-1519, or refer to the [media kit](#) for pdf ads, videos and more.



Visit us on the web at <http://fyi.uwex.edu/fdlag/>