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If you will need any type of accommodation or assistance as you attend any Extension sponsored event, please contact the host county or Scott at the Marinette County office at least two days prior to the event. All requests will be confidential.

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Corn Silage Sampling, 2021 Newsletter

Per normal, there is a lot of variability out there this year, but corn is generally doing pretty well and we are setting up to have good quality corn silage. Of course, we cannot feed high quality corn silage if we do not harvest at the appropriate whole plant moisture for our storage structures - so please make sure you utilize opportunities to sample your fields. The Extension sponsored silage sampling events are back to more normal situations this year - with five collection sites in our two counties. See all the details on page 4.

Another newsletter will be coming to you in a few weeks with dates of a few field day events to showcase local research plots. I also hope to schedule a pasture walk or two on local farms, and we may have a few other events in our area. Make sure to review procedures with personnel as we enter silage harvest season and do our best to have a safe and productive silage and late alfalfa harvest season.

Scott Reuss

Table of Contents:

Page 2	Dairy Price Situation & Analysis
Page 3	Fall Alfalfa Assessment; Winter Wheat establishment; Buying/Selling Crops producer to producer
Page 4	Corn Silage Sampling Dates, protocols, etc..

Upcoming Events

Wednesdays Sept. 1, 8, 15, and 22 Corn Silage Moisture Sampling Collection days - see page 4 for locations and times.

Wed., Sept. 29 Field Day at Mahoney Farms - part of Green Bay West Shores Demonstration Farm Network - see details in next newsletter

Unique innovations in manure management: 2021 North American Manure Expo August 25-26th Come join us for the 2021 North American Manure Expo. Registration is free for this virtual event hosted from Listowel, Ontario.

Although a virtual event, there is a lot to see. Equipment demonstrations, farm tours, informative sessions highlighting current research, and practical in-field tips around manure and organic amendments are scheduled during the two-day event (but available to view until the end of the year). Topics include:

Determining the Real Cost of Handling Manure; Application Innovations;

On-the-Go Tracking of Applied Nutrients

Compaction – Assessing and Fixing the Problem

Managing Manure to Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Phosphorus and Manure – is 4R enough to reduce P impact from manure?

Maximizing Growing Season and In-crop Manure Application Using Draghose

Tiny Bubbles Make Me Happy – Tour - Aeration systems in liquid manure

Solid Innovations – Thinking Outside the Box

Registration is free. Register today at www.manureexpo.ca

Dairy Situation and Outlook, August 19, 2021

By Bob Cropp, Professor Emeritus
University of Wisconsin Cooperative Extension
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Milk prices will trend lower in August. The August Class III price may end up near \$16.00. The Class III price has been declining since May when it was \$18.96. Lower cheese and dry whey prices brought the Class III price down. Cheddar barrels and 40-pound block cheese were on the decline since mid-July. By early August barrels had declined to \$1.3075 per pound and 40-blocks to \$1.6350. Dry whey was as high as \$0.70 per pound in May and as low as \$0.475 early August, taking off about \$1 from Class III price. Prices in recent trades have been moving up and down but are now higher than early August. Today barrels were \$1.5050 per pound, blocks \$1.73 and dry whey \$0.52.

Compared to a year ago second quarter American cheese sales were 10.8% higher and other cheese was 5.4% higher. However, June fluid milk sales were 6.7% below a year ago. There is a concern that COVID case increases and reinstated mask mandates or other restrictions will impact eating out and attending public events. That could hurt butter and cheese sales. But schools are planning in person learning, which will be positive for fluid milk and dairy product sales.

Dairy exports continue to support milk prices. Exports for June compared to a year ago were 7% higher for nonfat dry milk/skim milk powder, 16% for whey products, 67% for butter, but cheese exports were 13% lower. Cheese exports through June were still 2% higher. The volume of exports through June were 13% higher and exports could end the year at a record high. U.S. butter, cheese and nonfat dry milk/skim milk powder prices remain substantially lower than foreign export prices. Also, milk production in Europe and New Zealand, two major exporters maybe no more than 1% higher than a year ago. Port congestion has and may continue to limit some exports.

Milk prices will get some support from government purchases. USDA has announced the purchase of cheese and fluid milk products for delivery the last three months of this year. This will be in addition to USDA's normal purchases of dairy products for school lunches and other food programs. Also, it has been announced that the SNAP program will be increased by 25% which could increase fluid milk and cheese sales.

How milk prices finish out the year and go into next year will depend upon the sale of dairy products, level of exports and the level of milk production. The growth in milk production needs to slow to support higher milk prices. USDA estimates July milk production to be 2.0% higher than a year ago. This is a lot of milk considering August milk production a year ago was up 1.9%. After increasing each month since July of 2020 cow numbers have declined two consecutive months with June down 6,000 and July 3,000. Adverse weather has slowed milk per cow. Compared to July a year ago milk per cow was up just 0.7%. Weather impacted milk per cow in California, Idaho and New Mexico where each state experienced 0.7% less milk per cow. California had the same number of cows resulting in 0.7% less milk, Idaho had 9,000 more cows resulting in just 0.8% more milk and New Mexico had 5,000 fewer cows resulting in 2.3% less milk. Milk production for the other top five states were: Wisconsin +4.6%, New York +2.8% and Texas +7.2%. Wisconsin had 21,000 more cows and milk per cow was up 2.9%. New York had added 4,000 cows and Texas 35,000 cows.

Strong milk production occurred some other states. The increase in milk production and the number of additional cows were South Dakota 17% with 21,000 cows, Indiana 5.7% with 9,000 cows, Michigan 4.3% with 17,000 cows, Iowa 4.3% with 10,000 cows, and Minnesota 4.2% with 17,000 cows.

With lower milk prices and higher feed costs milk production is likely to slow for the remainder of 2021 and into next year. August 3rd USDA Drought Monitor had drought affecting 47% of the cow inventory, 64% of the alfalfa hay acreage, and 37% of the corn production. With feed supplies tighter feed prices are going to be higher this fall and winter which will likely impact milk per cow and cow numbers as more lower producing cows are culled from the herd.

As of now it seems reasonable that Class III could be in the \$17's by September and for the rest of the year with low \$18's not ruled out for November and December. Class III futures currently reach a high of \$17.50 in November. USDA lowered its price forecast and has Class III averaging just \$16.55 for the year compared to \$18.16 last year.

Crop Management Notes

Fall Alfalfa/Perennial Forages Management Considerations

September is the time to analyze your alfalfa (and mixed perennial forages) fields and formulate plans for the rest of this year and going into next year. There were some marginal fields kept for 2021 that definitely need analysis and decision making. First question you need to answer is regarding stand density. Alfalfa needs at least 55 stems per sq. ft. consistently throughout the field to maximize yield potential. 40 to 55 stems per sq. ft. can often be justifiably maintained, as long as the consistency is good or you have some other forage species in there, as well. If less density than this, you need to either supplement the stand or rotate.

The other big question is how much forage do you need? Have you conducted a good feed quantity assessment for your operation, preferably with your nutritionist? If you need higher quality alfalfa, fall harvests are a strong option, but you do need to keep some harvesting recommendations in mind.

1. Try not to harvest alfalfa between about Sept. 10 and 30. In our area, that is the most dangerous time frame for alfalfa, as it is still too warm for it to go dormant, but too cool for it to have enough growth capacity to fully recharge roots/crowns after a harvest event.
2. For stands you really want to have survive winter, try to harvest before Sept. 10. This allows for sufficient regrowth to help keep snow cover on the field and minimize winter hardiness risk.
3. If harvesting in October, maximum yield is going to be achieved by cutting a couple days prior to a killing frost. Of course, this requires either believing weather forecasts or being your own best prognosticator. The big point here is that quality and yield are maximized if you are able to cut while it is still alive and growing. If cutting after a freeze, try to do so as soon after the event as you can.

Winter Wheat Establishment Recommendations - paraphrased from Dr. Shawn Conley

1. Variety Selection Matters. Use data, especially the 2021 WI Winter Wheat Performance Test data, at: https://coolbean.info/wp-content/uploads/sites/3/2021/07/A3868_WisconsinWinterWheatTrials_2021_final.pdf
2. Plant new, good quality seed. Saving seed is usually not the best approach for either yield or diseases.
3. Fungicide seed treatments are recommended.
4. Plant between 1 and 1.5 inches deep, regardless of planting date.
5. Plant between September 20 and October 10 for optimum yield potential. Later planting can work, but is riskier, and you have to make sure about your crop insurance coverage.
6. Target seeding rate is 1.75 mil seeds per acre until Oct. 1. As planting date gets later, optimum seeding rate increases, due to reduced fall growth and tillering.
7. Crop rotation matters. Just think of diseases and the moist conditions of the last few years.

Selling/Buying Crops with other Producers

If you are considering either selling or buying corn for dry grain or for high moisture, corn silage, corn snaplage, hay, haylage, straw, or any other crop sales situation, there are a few things to keep in mind as you are getting ready for the transaction. I do need to say that I am a proponent of such sales, as it helps keep both farms involved in the transaction profitable, as long as things are done well.

Of course, first you need to find a willing partner. Especially for forages, neighbors are the place to start, as transportation logistics limit distances which buyers are usually willing to work around. Let extension agents, nutritionists, crop insurance personnel, feed mills, agronomists, etc... know that you have crops which you would be willing to sell to get the word out. There are also opportunities to do newspaper ads, use commercial internet sites, or the state-wide farmertofarmer.extension.wisc.edu web site. Finding a partner and giving yourselves time to work out details makes everything simpler in the long run and can hopefully prevent misunderstandings caused by time crunches and the stress of harvest season.

Figure out sales contract points ahead of time. Making a handshake deal and saying 'We'll figure it out after the fact.' might work for some situations, but it also creates many opportunities for problems. Make up a (simple) written contract. Include data points such as how it is being sold, price per unit, who is doing what regarding harvest operations, date ranges, payment methodology, etc... You don't need to hire a lawyer to get this done, but getting a second opinion from someone (Extension, agronomist, nutritionist) is probably well worth it. Pricing starts with current hay/straw prices and current grain prices, but there are other quality/quantity factors that you need to take into account. Call me and I will gladly help you think through possibilities, assist with contract wording, and can also do yield estimates.

Corn Silage Moisture Monitoring for 2021

Sponsored by Marinette and Oconto County offices of UW-Madison, Division of Extension. Moisture analysis conducted free of charge for farms from the two counties. The sampling dates we are having this year are meant to coincide with the observation that most corn tasseled between July 19 and 30. For most on-farm silage storage situations, corn silage is at optimum harvest moisture approximately 50 days after the corn tassels, although soil moisture can change that up to 1 week.

2021 Sampling Dates will be Wednesdays, September 1st, 8th, 15th, and 22nd at these 5 sites:

Crivitz Feed Mill from 8:30 to 9:30; 504 Wilbert St., Crivitz, just south of Cty. Hwy. W.

Fendryk Farms from 9:45 to 10:30; in front of freestall, just south of Cty. Hwy. P on 25th Rd.

Kuchta Farms from 11 a.m. to Noon; W6586 Cty. Hwy. M – use east driveway.

Peterson's Dairy from 12:30 to 1:30 p.m.; 6336 Goatsville Road – in front of freestall at SE corner.

Blaser Farms from 1:45 to 2:30 p.m.; 9267 Hwy. 22 – in front of shop, use drive by house.

These opportunities are meant to be a chance to get your silage, snaplage, or early HMC samples tested in a relatively convenient manner. Also take advantage of other opportunities that you may have through your agronomist, nutritionist, or by conducting your own sampling and testing. If doing the testing on the farm, just make sure you take the time to calibrate your methodology and to do the methods properly.

Collecting a Good Sample Sample collection is very important to getting good test results. The first step to collecting a good sample is to think about all the different fields and/or varieties that you want tested. Each variety will mature and dry-down differently, and there are always differences from field to field, so plan on sampling most of the fields that you are thinking about ensiling this year. When collecting the actual sample plants, collect your sample according to the variability in the field. If the field is pretty consistent, collect at least five plants in a W-shaped pattern from the area being sampled. If the field is variable, collect more plants and collect at least one or two from each size of plants found in the field. Wrap the plant stems in wet paper and bring all your separate samples to the collection site nearest you. If in doubt, collect a few more plants for each given sample, or collect more than one sample according to field variability, whether it be soil type, variety, or whatever else. Lastly, collect them as soon as possible before you leave for the collection site. Call Scott's cell phone at 715-701-0966 if you are running behind so that we can wait for you or arrange a meeting point.

Storage considerations for corn silage High-quality corn silage can be produced in many different types of storage structures. However, each structure type - bunker silo, silage bag, upright silo, or silage pile - needs to have the corn silage at a certain range of whole-plant moisture to achieve the best possible results. The recommendation is to hit the following ranges:

Silo Type	Recommended Moisture %
Upright	60-65
Upright, oxygen-limiting	50-60
Horizontal silos	65-70
Silage bags and piles	60-70

Packing Capacity – When packing silage into a bunker silo, you must have enough packing weight to adequately handle the forage coming into the bunker. If you do not pack adequately, you will lose dry matter and forage quality. A quick rule-of-thumb is that you need about 800 lbs of weight per delivered wet ton per hour. For example, 80 tons delivered per hour requires 64,000 lbs of packing capacity. Stated Simply: Pack or Lose! If you do not take the time to pack correctly, you will have lost 2 to 5 times as much silage to spoilage as you should. So do your best by: 1. Use the heaviest tractors you can. Total weight has shown to be more important than per tire weight. 2. Unload the silage in thinner layers. This will allow each layer to be more properly packed. 3. If feasible, slow down your delivery rates. The single most important variable to final silage density in a significant study a few years ago was delivery rate. If the rate was less than 60 ton/hour, the final density was sufficient, if more than that, the density decreased.

NOTE: Watch for the next newsletter, coming out in mid September, to see about possible add-on silage sampling opportunities at field day events.