



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
OUTAGAMIE COUNTY
WINNEBAGO COUNTY

Agriculture Report

Winter 2026

Greetings Producers,

As you get older, time seems to pass more quickly. I used to remember individual days, weeks or months, however, now it seems my construct of time is limited to the four seasons... winter, spring, summer, and fall. Admittedly, even those are becoming harder to distinguish. Most farmers or agricultural professionals I've spoken with this past year didn't seem to recall any time or moments during the growing season to pause, catch their breath, or just reflect on what one had already accomplished during 2025.

I decided to try to solve this mystery by asking A.I. (artificial intelligence) about my change in perception of time. The verbatim response is below...

"Yes, time seems to speed up as you get older due to fewer novel experiences, increased routine, and how the brain processes memories and information, making each year feel like a smaller fraction of your life, even though actual clock time doesn't change. Childhood feels long because it's filled with "firsts" and rich, detailed memories, while adult life's predictability creates compressed, less distinct memories, making years feel shorter in retrospect."

Ok... that seems like a plausible explanation, from a computer. As we get older, yes, we develop routines as opposed to when we were younger and experiencing a larger number of daily events that may have been new or novel. Point well taken, however, maybe we can turn this into a positive. Everything, and I mean everything, in agriculture is cyclical. Like each of you, I have spent my entire life directly connected to and serving production agriculture, giving all of us front row seats to experience these ups and downs firsthand. Maybe we can use that to our benefit.

I think it is safe to say agriculture has been dealing with more challenges lately. However, if we consider this in the context of A.I.'s response to my original observation, none of this is new or novel to us. With age, comes wisdom. Been there, done that... or more appropriately, successfully navigated and survived it. Understanding and accepting what you can control and not control is going to be one of the most important aspects of mitigating risk in 2026.

The UW Crop Enterprise Budget Tool can be used to help you identify what inputs/portions of your crop enterprise budgets may need to be adjusted to accommodate the potential revenue each acre may yield in 2026. The excel spreadsheet version of this tool is available at: <https://outagamie.extension.wisc.edu/crop-enterprise-budget-tool/>. However, a print copy of a corn budget has been included in this mailing for those who still prefer hard copies to work from when calculating costs and returns. Knowing your cost of production is going to be critical to identifying when markets offer an opportunity to sell in 2026. Land lease agreements will be discussed at the Outagamie Forage Council annual meeting February 12.

Stephanie Bowers, Regional Dairy Educator, has included a heifer raising survey in this newsletter to help collect data to establish the cost of production for those replacements on farms across WI.

There are multiple professional development meetings and activities available to you and members of your family in the coming months. We hope you will take advantage of the opportunities provided and reach out to Stephanie or me if we can ever be of assistance.

Agriculturally,

Kevin Jarek

Regional Crops and Soils Educator
Outagamie and Winnebago Counties

3365 W Brewster St, Appleton, WI 54914
920-832-5121 | outagamie.extension.wisc.edu

Upcoming Events

January

- 15 Beef Roundup Webinar Series | 7:00 - 8:00 pm
- 20 Badger Dairy Insight Webinar Series | 11:00 am - 12:00 pm
- 22 Pesticide Applicator Training | Winnebago County Extension Office | 8:30 am - 3:30 pm
- 27 Wisconsin Agriculture Outlook Forum | Madison | 9:00 am - 5:00 pm
- 27 CAFO Update | Tundra Lodge, 865 Lombardi Ave, Green Bay | 12:00 - 4:00 pm
- 28 CAFO Update | Korneli's on the Avenue, 605 Fond du Lac Ave, Fond du Lac | 12:00 - 4:00 pm
- 29 CAFO Update | Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center, 7001 Gass Lake Rd, Manitowoc | 8:00 am - 12:00 pm
- 29-30 Corn Soy Expo | Kalahari Conference Center, Wisconsin Dells | <https://cornsoyexpo.org/>

February

- 4 Fox-Wolf Farmer Roundtable | Van Abel's of Hollandtown, Kaukauna | 9:30 am - 4:00 pm
- 5 Fox-Wolf Farmer Roundtable | Brighton Acres, Oshkosh | 9:30 am - 4:00 pm
- 5 Focus on Forage | Presented via Zoom | 12:30 - 1:30 pm
- 5 Cultivating Your Farm's Future | Presented via Zoom | 6:30 - 8:00 pm
- 12 Cultivating Your Farm's Future | Presented via Zoom | 6:30 - 8:00 pm
- 12 Focus on Forage | Presented via Zoom | 12:30 - 1:30 pm
- 12 Forage Council Annual Meeting | Buzz's Pub and Grill | 9:30 am - 4:00 pm
- 16-18 Midwest Forage Association Symposium | Chula Vista, Wisconsin Dells | <https://www.midwestforage.org/>
- 17 Badger Dairy Insight Webinar Series | 11:00 am - 12:00 pm
- 19 Cultivating Your Farm's Future | Presented via Zoom | 6:30 - 8:00 pm
- 19 Beef Roundup Webinar Series | 7:00 - 8:00 pm
- 19 CAFO Update | Virtual | 8:00 am - 12:00 pm
- 19 Focus on Forage | Presented via Zoom | 12:30 - 1:30 pm
- 26 Cultivating Your Farm's Future | Presented via Zoom | 6:30 - 8:00 pm
- 26 Focus on Forage | Presented via Zoom | 12:30 - 1:30 pm
- 26 Pesticide Applicator Training | Outagamie County Extension Office | 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

March

- 2 Nitrogen Optimization Pilot Program (NOPP) Sharing Event - TBD
- 3-4 Fox-Wolf Watershed Conference | Lambeau Field, Green Bay | <https://fwwa.org/watershed-conference>
- 6 VITAL Program | Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center, Manitowoc | 9:30 am - 3:00 pm
- 10-11 Custom Applicator Training | Fox Valley Tech, Appleton | 8:00 am - 4:30 pm
- 17 Badger Dairy Insight Webinar Series | 11:00 am - 12:00 pm
- 19 Cultivating Your Farm's Future (optional planning session) | Presented via Zoom | 6:30 - 8:00 pm
- 19 Beef Roundup Webinar Series | 7:00 - 8:00 pm

Upcoming Events

Beef Roundup Series

January 15, February 19, March 19 | 7:00 - 8:00 pm

January 15: Unlocking the Full Potential of Growth Enhancing Technologies

February 19: Asian Longhorned Tick Updates

March 19: Key Considerations for Rebuilding Your Cow Herd

Learn more and register:

<https://livestock.extension.wisc.edu/2025/11/12/beef-roundup-webinar-series-begins-in-december/>

Badger Dairy Insight

January 20, February 17, March 17 | 11:00 am - 12:00 pm

Badger Dairy Insight is a webinar series to provide the latest research-based dairy information to improve animal welfare, breeding and genetic selection, automation and modernization, and nutritional decisions for producers, dairy workers and managers, ag professionals, and educators.



January 20: From Field to Feed: What We Know about High Oleic Soybeans

February 17: A Clearer Picture: Using Ultrasound to Detect Respiratory Issues in Calves

March 17: Virtual Fence Meets Pasture Nutrition for Maximum Productivity

More details and registration: <https://dairy.extension.wisc.edu/badger-dairy-insight/>

2026 Wisconsin Agricultural Outlook Forum

January 27, UW-Madison Union South Varsity Hall, Madison | 9:00 am - 5:00 pm

The Wisconsin Agricultural Outlook Forum is the state's premier event for understanding the trends, challenges, and opportunities shaping Wisconsin agriculture and agribusiness. Hosted annually by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Renk Agribusiness Institute, the Forum brings together agribusiness leaders, policymakers, researchers, and producer-supporting organizations to explore timely issues, share insights, and shape the future of Wisconsin agriculture.

The event focuses on the outlook for Wisconsin agricultural industries (dairy, corn and soybeans, livestock and meat), and the Wisconsin farm economy. The 2026 Wisconsin Agricultural Outlook Forum will explore these issues by focusing on the Wisconsin Experience in Agriculture and Trade. Some measures show that Wisconsin seems to be bucking these national trends. Is this view accurate? Will this trend continue? Which agricultural sectors are struggling in the state? Which are thriving? What factors drives these different experiences with current trade issues in Wisconsin?

Learn more and register: <https://renk.aae.wisc.edu/2026-wisconsin-agricultural-outlook-forum/>

Upcoming Events

2025 Corn Hybrid and Soybean Trial Results

2025 Corn Hybrid Trials:

<https://badgercropnetwork.com/wisconsin-corn-hybrid-performance-trials-2025/>

2025 Soybean Variety Trial Results:

<https://badgercropnetwork.com/2025-wisconsin-soybean-performance-trials/>

Pesticide Applicator Training

January 22 | Extension Winnebago County | 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

February 26 | Extension Outagamie County | 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

Extension Outagamie and Winnebago counties will be hosting one on-site session for Pesticide Applicator Training for General Farming that will include the exam after the training.

1. You will need to purchase a copy of the Wisconsin Pesticide Applicator Training Manual (\$43) available from the UW PAT store website at <https://patstore.wisc.edu/secure/collection/private/17>. Those who wish to purchase materials via mail order form can contact the Extension Office at 920-832-1859 or Amy.Beck@wisc.edu for a copy of the form.

2. After purchasing the manual, you must register for the training session you would like to attend for an additional \$10 at <https://patstore.wisc.edu/secure/collection/private/45>. You must bring the manual with you as it will be needed during the exam, and it also contains your receipt, which admits you to the testing session. Do not detach receipt before the testing session.

Space is limited to 20 people in Outagamie, and 40 people in Winnebago, per session and online registration must be completed ahead of time. Please arrive at 8:15 am (15 minutes before the scheduled time) to get signed in, receive instructions, etc. Training begins promptly at 8:30 am.

The training manual is more in-depth than required for certification, but past experiences have shown that individuals who have reviewed the manual in a conscientious manner prior to taking the evaluation had a higher success rate than those who did not. You will find the manual to be an excellent reference for information on pest management principles that you may need in the future.

Also remember to bring a pocket calculator, proof of identification, (driver's license or photo ID) and social security number. Cell phones must be turned off during testing.

If you have any questions, please contact the Extension office in Outagamie County at 920-832-1859, or Winnebago County at 920-232-1970.

Upcoming Events

Additional Pesticide Training Options

Option 1: Self-Study (must have 70% pass grade) Testing times and locations TBD

Purchase the manual, study on your own and take the test. Visit the UW PAT Program website to find out which counties are providing tests. Tests are by appointment only.

Option 2: Online Self-Paced training (50% pass grade)

If applicators would like to attend an online training, registration is on the UW PAT Store. You must purchase a manual and show the proctor the course completion confirmation email coded as "attended a training."

Option 3: In-Person Training with Exam (50% pass grade)

If applicators would like to attend an in-person training, those are also conducted by the UW PAT Program. Registration is on the UW PAT Store.

Option 4: Testing with Pearson VUE (must have 70% pass grade)

Farmers can take the test with the private testing company Pearson VUE.

- Purchase a training manual at the PAT Store <https://patstore.wisc.edu/secure/collection/private/17>.
- Pearson VUE provides your test results right after the exam and your certification will be sent to you via email within 3 business days.
- The exam costs \$45.
- You need a score of 70% or greater to pass. Attending a training does not reduce the passing score.
- A copy of your manual will be embedded in the on-screen test. Pearson VUE does not allow printed manuals to be used while testing.

If you have questions about your certification status/when your license expires, please visit:

<http://www.kellysolutions.com/WI/Applicators/index.asp>

2026 Annual CAFO Update Meeting

These update meetings are for WPDES permitted CAFO owners, managers, key farm staff, nutrient management plan writers, engineers, agency staff and consultants to get key updates related to CAFO policies. Register at least 1 week prior to your selected meeting date to guarantee lunch.

January 27 - Noon - 4 PM - Tundra Lodge, Green Bay

January 28 - Noon - 4 PM - Korneli's on the Avenue, Fond du Lac

January 29 - 8 AM - Noon - Farm WI Discovery Center, Manitowoc

February 19 - 8 AM - Noon - Virtual (fees/registration still applies)

More information and registration: <https://brown.extension.wisc.edu/agriculture/cafo-2026/>

Wisconsin Corn Soy Expo

January 29 - 30 | Kalahari Conference Center, Wisconsin Dells

The Wisconsin Corn•Soy Expo is Wisconsin's premier grower event with more than 1,200 corn and soybean growers and pork producers attending.

Learn more and register: <https://cornsoyexpo.org/>

Upcoming Events

Cultivating Your Farm's Future

February 5, 12, 19, 26, optional action planning session March 19 | 6:30 – 8:00 PM

How will your farm operate in the future when the owner retires or is gone?

Are you currently working with another generation who may be questioning their role in the future of the farm business or are you yourself questioning your current role?

This program will help you with those questions.

Topics covered:

- Communication preferences and how to talk about the farm's future
- Common tensions around farm succession
- Inheritance distributions – Is equal fair?
- Financials for farm succession
- Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats – SWOT analysis
- Estate planning including probate & estate tax
- Wills, trusts, & business entities
- Setting goals and action steps

More information including how to register:

<https://farms.extension.wisc.edu/programs/cultivating-your-farms-future/>

Focus on Forage

February 5, 12, 19, 26



Focus on Forage is a FREE, 4-part webinar series highlighting research-based information and farmer strategies to optimize forage yield, quality, and profitability in Wisconsin. Webinar speakers include forage industry experts, UW-Madison Specialists, and Extension Educators. Certified Crop Advisor CEUs and ARPAS credits are available for each webinar. Webinars take place online via Zoom from 12:30 – 1:30 pm. Registration is free but required.

Learn more and register: <https://cropsandsoils.extension.wisc.edu/focus-on-forage/>

Farmer Roundtable Meeting

February 4 | Van Abel's Hollandtown, Kaukauna | 9:30 am - 4:00 pm

February 5 | Brighton Acres, Oshkosh | 9:30 am - 4:00 pm

The Farmer Roundtables are regional events that bring together farmers, landowners, conservation staff, and agronomists from across the Fox-Wolf Basin to share ideas and learn about soil health and conservation. Attendees hear from local and national soil health leaders.

Unsure of which event to attend? Pick the one that is located nearest to you! Each event will offer the same agenda, including matching keynote speakers, Lightning Talk topics, and Networking Happy Hour.

Learn more including how to register: <https://fwwa.org/farmer-roundtable/>

Upcoming Events

Midwest Forage Association Symposium

February 16 - 18 | Chula Vista, Wisconsin Dells

Discover the latest breakthroughs in forage research and connect with leading experts at the 2026 Midwest Forage Symposium—an event designed to inspire, educate, and elevate your operation. Join hundreds of producers, agronomists, and industry innovators for hands-on learning, cutting-edge sessions, and unmatched networking opportunities.

Learn more and register: <https://midwestforage.org/2026%20Symposium%20Registration%20Booklet.pdf>



Milk Quality from the Udder World

Trainer Certification Program

A program that builds confident, effective trainers who can lead their teams to apply best practices. Participants learn how to explain the why behind each step of the milking routine, coach teams to work consistently, and develop the skills needed to prevent mastitis and produce high-quality milk.

- **Feb 18, 2026 (English)**
- **Feb 19, 2026 (Spanish)**

Kewaunee County Fairgrounds
Luxemburg, WI

Questions?

Contact Aerica Bjurstrom

📞 (920) 388-7138

➤ Aerica.Bjurstrom@wisc.edu



Learn more & Register

go.wisc.edu/MQUWevents



SCAN ME

Fox-Wolf Annual Watershed Conference

March 3 - 4 | Lambeau Field, Green Bay

Session topics include:

- Regulation & Guidance – Updates from WDNR
- Green Infrastructure
- Dissolved Phosphorus Capture
- Watershed Recovery – outside the MS4
- Recycling & Reuse in Stormwater
- Community Engagement
- and more!

Learn more and register: <https://fwwa.org/watershed-conference/>

Upcoming Events



Growing leaders. Growing dairy.

VITAL

Valuably Informed Thriving Agriculture Leader

A day to learn, network, and grow for dairy & industry peers

Farm Wisconsin Discovery Center, Manitowoc, WI

Friday, March 6, 2026

To register and see the full agenda, scan the QR code

SCAN ME

Know someone who should join us? Refer a friend and get entered into our giveaway!

Custom Applicator Program

March 10 - 11 | Fox Valley Tech, Appleton | 8:00 am - 4:30 pm

This program is designed to provide hands on training and classroom instruction to new applicators.

Investment: WABA Members: \$1000 (this event is for WABA members ONLY)
*\$10 of the registration fee will go to WABA's Scholarship Program

Deadline to register: March 3

Register: <https://secure.wiagribusiness.org/np/clients/wiagribusiness/event.jsp?event=429>



"Ewe Got This"

Lambing Basics Workshop

Focused on sheep, but goat producers are also welcome to participate.

Register at:

Cost
\$40



[https://go.wisc.edu/
lambing](https://go.wisc.edu/lambing)

Register by March 13th



Extension
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
Extension and Outreach

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Division of Extension provides equal opportunities in programming in compliance with state and federal law. You may request an interpreter, materials in an alternative language and/or format, and/or other services to make this event more accessible. Contact us at heather.schlesser@wisc.edu or 715-261-1239. Make your request by March 6th, 2026. There is no added cost for these services.

March 27th

8:30 AM - 5:00 PM

**164475 Granite Rd.
Wausau, WI 54403**

To enter the building,
please use the main
entrance Door # 1

Presenters

Carolyn Ihde

Small Ruminant, UW-Madison Extension
and Iowa State Extension

Kelly Froehlich

American Sheep Industry Association

Join us for this comprehensive workshop discussing the lambing process and essential care for ewes and lambs. Topics include:

- Biosecurity
- Lambing time nutrition
- Ewe and lamb health
- Lambing kit supplies
- The phases of lambing
- Lamb processing and bottle lambs
- Record keeping
- Practice with a realistic lambing simulator



Young & Emerging
ENTREPRENEURS
EMPOWERING THE FUTURE
THROUGH EDUCATION & DISCOVERY

Thanks to generous support from the American Sheep Industry Association, hands-on activities include a realistic lambing simulator.

Contact:

📞 715-261-1239

✉️ Heather.schlesser@wisc.edu

Outagamie Forage Council and Midwest Forage Association

2026 Annual Meeting & Educational Program

Buzz's Pub/Grill – W2116 County Rd S, Freedom, WI 54130



Thursday, February 12, 2026

9:30 A.M. Registration 10:00 A.M. Meeting



9:30 A.M.	Registration
10:00 A.M.	Welcome - Matt Van Wychen, President, OFC and Kevin Jarek, Advisor
10:10 A.M.	Nitrogen Credits from Berseem Clover Cover Crops in Northeast Wisconsin <i>Chris Bandura, Conservation Cropping Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison Division of Extension</i>
10:55 A.M.	Update on Ongoing 2026 Forage Council Research and Demonstration Projects <i>Kevin Jarek, Crops & Soils, UW-Madison Division of Extension - Outagamie/Winnebago</i>
11:40 A.M.	Lunch and Outagamie Forage Council Youth Scholarship Presentation
12:30 P.M.	Evaluating Your Current Cropland Leasing Agreements – What You Need to Know <i>Kelly T. Wilfert, J.D., Farm Law Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison Division of Extension</i>
1:30 P.M.	Midwest Forage Association 2026 Program Update <i>Chelsea Russell, Local Council Director, Midwest Forage Association</i>
1:45 P.M.	Annual Business Meeting - Matt Van Wychen, President, Outagamie Forage Council
2:00 P.M.	Auction Fundraiser with Refreshments
3:30 P.M.	Directors' Reorganization Meeting <i>2026 Outagamie County Forage Council Executive Board</i>



2026 Outagamie County Forage Council Registration Form

Please fill out a separate form for each person (may combine payment on one check).

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ Zip: _____

Business/Organization _____ E-mail _____

Registration & Membership Payment Choices-Please Read Carefully

<input type="checkbox"/> Midwest Forage Association & Outagamie Forage Council Membership & Lunch	@ \$85.00 = \$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Outagamie Forage Council Membership & Lunch	@ \$55.00 = \$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Midwest Forage Association & Outagamie Forage Council Membership (Not Attending)	@ \$55.00 = \$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Outagamie Forage Council Membership (Not Attending)	@ \$25.00 = \$ _____
<input type="checkbox"/> MFA members who renewed in December (\$55 already paid to MFA) only need to buy lunch	@ \$30.00 = \$ _____

TOTAL AMOUNT ENCLOSED

\$ _____

CHECK PAYABLE TO: OUTAGAMIE FORAGE COUNCIL

PLEASE RETURN BY: MONDAY, FEB. 9, 2026 TO: **Extension Outagamie County
Attn: Forage Council
3365 W Brewster Street
Appleton, WI 54914**

I hope this correspondence finds you well and in good spirits as we begin 2026. While dairy and beef provided manageable returns in 2025, our grain commodities did not. Unfortunately, milk has been moving downward the past several months and the cost of replacements for both dairy and beef is challenging. Farmers and agricultural professionals will need all the tools and resources available in 2026 to evaluate what adjustments can further be made to address already existing tight profit margins this upcoming growing season.

Chris Bandura, Conservation Cropping Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison Division of Extension will share results from the Northeast WI Leguminous Nitrogen (N) Berseem Clover Cover Crop Plot research project. Five sites, including two in Outagamie County (Dorow Farm and Van Wychen Farms), were planted with Berseem Clover as a cover crop following wheat in 2024. We planted corn in spring 2025 on those sites and harvested grain in the fall. Chris will share the results from all five of the sites and answer the question **"How much N did we capture from those leguminous cover crops?"**

Kelly Wilfert, J.D., Farm Law Outreach Specialist, UW-Madison Division of Extension, will discuss Evaluating Cropland Leasing Agreements. Kelly will begin by addressing the anatomy of an effective cropland lease agreement and identify some best management practices to consider. A discussion of potential blind spots and items that people miss, or forget to include, will also be shared. Additionally, there is still cropland being rented annually under verbal arrangements. Kelly will discuss what both parties involved need to be aware of under these circumstances. **Don't miss your opportunity to learn how to improve your current cropland lease agreements, and get your questions answered.**

Kevin Jarek, Regional Crops & Soils Educator, UW-Madison Division of Extension will share information from the 2025 cereal rye variety plots hosted at Sunny Daze Dairy. We will answer the question **"How much does the cereal rye variety you plant in the fall impact your profitability in the spring?"** Additionally, Kevin will also provide an update on the ongoing OFC research and demonstration projects as we head into the 2026 growing season.

As has been the case every year, we will recognize our Forage Council Youth Scholarship winner, this year's PaceSetter Award recipient, and our Outstanding Member. We'll also get an update from Chelsea Russell, Local Council Director, Midwest Forage Association (MFA), conduct our Annual Business Meeting, and conclude with the auction fundraiser that helps support the numerous on-farm activities and educational outreach programs the Outagamie Forage Council conducts to help the farmers and agricultural professionals we serve.

Continuing Education Credits will be available for CCA's **All of us know more than some of us... plan to attend now!**

Looking forward to seeing you all on Thursday, February 12, 2026 at Buzz's Pub/Grill in Freedom!!!!!!

Kevin Jarek

Kevin Jarek

Advisor, Outagamie Forage Council

Wisconsin

[Home](#) / [Wisconsin](#)

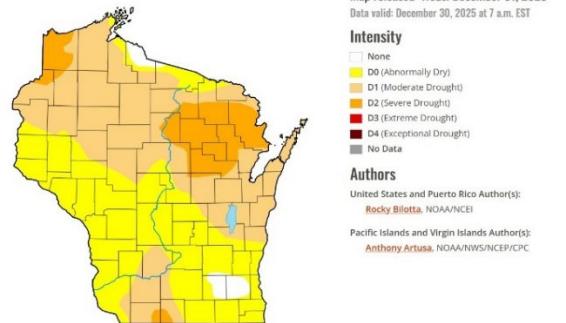
Map released: Weds. December 31, 2025
Data valid: December 30, 2025 at 7 a.m. EST

Intensity

None
D0 (Abnormally Dry)
D1 (Moderate Drought)
D2 (Severe Drought)
D3 (Extreme Drought)
D4 (Exceptional Drought)
No Data

Authors

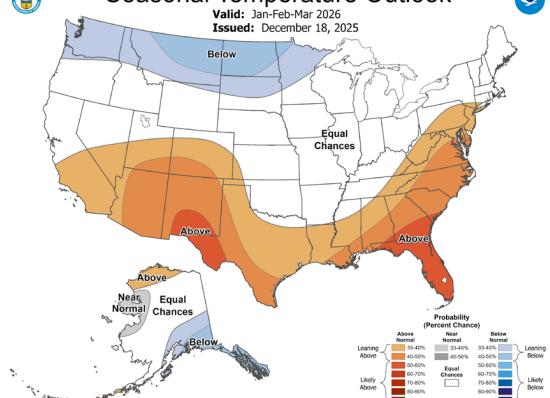
United States and Puerto Rico Author(s):
Rocky Bilotta, NOAA/NCEI
Pacific Islands and Virgin Islands Author(s):
Anthony Artusa, NOAA/NESDIS/NCEP/CPC



Seasonal Temperature Outlook

Valid: Jan-Feb-Mar 2026

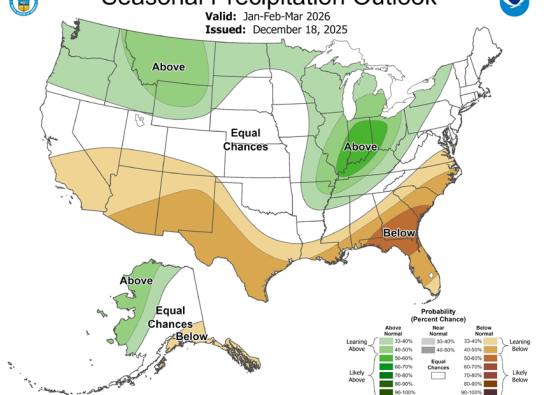
Issued: December 18, 2025



Seasonal Precipitation Outlook

Valid: Jan-Feb-Mar 2026

Issued: December 18, 2025



Dairy

Heifer Survey

This UW-Madison Division of Extension survey collects real farm data to better understand the true cost of raising replacements and support informed decision-making. Your participation strengthens statewide benchmarks and helps build an accurate economic picture that benefits individual farms and the broader dairy community.

<http://go.wisc.edu/dairysurvey26>



The questionnaire takes about 20 minutes to complete. Once submitted, you will receive an analysis of your average cost per animal. After the initial data collection period (estimated April 1), you will also receive a summary showing how your farm compares with other Wisconsin and Midwest operations—useful information for evaluating labor, nutrition, facilities, culling, custom-raising decisions, and overall replacement strategy.

Your participation also helps Extension develop stronger, data-driven tools and benchmarks for producers statewide.

Information to gather before we meet:

- Labor costs (owner and employees)
- Death loss percentages
- Feed costs
- Bedding costs
- Veterinary costs
- Health product costs
- Fuel and electricity
- Housing costs
- Equipment costs
- Custom-raising costs (if applicable)

If you would like to schedule a time to complete the survey together, please contact Stephanie Bowers at stephanie.bowers@wisc.edu or 920-470-0531.

Grazing and Virtual Fencing on Dairy Farms

Much research is taking place on how heifer grazing can fit into the modern dairy farm. Virtual fencing is also becoming more popular. This presentation will cover what you need to know to incorporate virtual fencing into an operation.

Highlights

- Grazing systems are being integrated into modern dairy farms for improved animal welfare.
- Virtual fencing technology allows farmers to set boundaries via mobile apps, reducing the need for physical fences.
- Research shows that pasture-raised heifers produce more milk compared to those in confinement.
- Pasture systems can reduce the carbon footprint and use less feed, land, and water.
- Ongoing trials are examining the economic viability of grazing systems in dairy production.
- Virtual fencing is gaining traction with small ruminants, helping manage invasive species effectively.
- Animal health monitoring is improving through advancements in collar technology.

Watch here: <https://dairy.extension.wisc.edu/articles/grazing-and-virtual-fencing-on-dairy-farms/>

Crops & Soils

Hay Market Report

Most Current report as of December 23, 2025

All data have been compiled by Melissa Ohlrich, Crops and Soils Educator for Clark and Marathon counties. Prices are reported for alfalfa hay and grass hay. Alfalfa hay includes pure alfalfa and alfalfa/grass mix.

All values are compiled from public and private quality tested sales through Wisconsin and the Midwest and reported on the first and third weeks of each month. All prices are reported on an as-fed basis, and not on a dry matter basis.

Where there is only an average price listed, no minimum or maximum prices were reported for that category. Average, minimum, and maximum prices in this report are the mean of all average, minimum and maximum prices reported from other sales in the Midwest. Thus, occasionally the "average" in this report will fall outside of the minimum and maximum range.

The Hay Market Report can be found at <https://cropsandsoils.extension.wisc.edu/>.

Hay Grade	Bale Type	-----Price (\$/ton)-----		
		Average	Minimum	Maximum
Alfalfa				
Prime (>151 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	\$310.00	\$231.00	\$347.00
	Large Square	\$159.00	\$96.00	\$141.00
	Large Round	\$122.00	\$106.00	\$123.00
Grade 1 (125-150 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	\$154.00		
	Large Square	\$143.00	\$120.00	\$125.00
	Large Round	\$94.00	\$91.00	\$113.00
Grade 2 (103-124 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square			
	Large Square	\$109.00		
	Large Round	\$75.00		
Grass				
Prime (>151 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	\$136.00		
	Large Square	\$105.00	\$115.00	\$125.00
	Large Round	\$114.00	\$106.00	\$142.00
Grade 1 (125-150 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	\$93.00		
	Large Square			
	Large Round	\$82.00	\$65.00	\$79.00
Grade 2 (103-124 RFV/RFQ)	Small Square	\$122.00	\$118.00	\$125.00
	Large Square			
	Large Round	\$58.00	\$49.00	\$59.00

Crops & Soils

Corn Enterprise Budget

Enter your numbers and information in blue cells
Green Cells are calculated values

Crop Description		2026 Corn Grain					
Revenue							
Grain							
	Bu / acre	\$ / bu	Total / acre				
Grain	178	\$ 4.00	\$ 712.00				
Misc. Income (i.e. bedding, others)			\$ -				
Total Revenue per Acre			\$ 712.00				
Expenses							
Fertilizer							
<i>Fertilizer applied on a pounds of product per acre basis</i>							
	lb / gal	gal / acre	\$ / ton	\$ / acre			
Liquid Starter	11.65	5	\$ 710.00	\$ 20.68			
	lb product / acre		\$ / ton	\$ / acre			
Dry Starter			\$ 670.00	\$ -			
Bulk Blend			\$ -	\$ -			
Bulk Blend			\$ -	\$ -			
			\$ -	\$ -			
<i>Fertilizer applied on a pounds of nutrient per acre not accounted for above</i>							
Nitrogen fertilizer		lb N / acre	\$ / lb N	\$ / acre			
Urea		140	\$ 0.65	\$ 91.00			
28%			\$ -	\$ -			
32%			\$ -	\$ -			
Anhydrous			\$ -	\$ -			
N Stabilizer / Extender			\$ -	\$ -			
lb N from Phos products used below*			\$ -	\$ -			
Phosphorus		lbs P2O5	\$ / lb P2O5				
		45	\$ 0.81	\$ 36.45			
Potassium		lbs K2O	\$ / lb K2O				
		50	\$ 0.38	\$ 19.00			
Manure			\$ -	\$ -			
Other			\$ -	\$ -			
			\$ -	\$ -			
Custom hired fertilizer applications		# passes	\$ / pass				
Broadcast N, P & K		2	\$ 9.00	\$ 18.00			
Sidedress N			\$ -	\$ -			
			\$ -	\$ -			
Years to pro-rate		tons / acre	\$ / ton	\$ / acre			
Ag Lime	1	0.0	\$ -	\$ -			
			\$ / acre				
Ag Lime Application (if custom hired and not part of ag lime cost)		\$ -	\$ -				
			\$ / acre				
Total Fertilizer Including Hired Application Costs per Acre				\$ 185.13			
Seed Costs							
	seeds / acre	\$ / 80k kernels	\$ / acre				
Corn Seed	35,000	\$ 275.00	\$ 120.31				
	lb / acre	\$ / lb	\$ / acre				

Crops & Soils

	lb / acre	\$ / lb	\$ / acre
Cover Crop Seed	25.0	\$ 1.60	\$ 40.00
	bu / acre	\$ / lb	\$ / acre
Cover Crop Seed			\$ -
Total Seed Cost per Acre			\$ 160.31
Pesticides			
<i>Weed Control</i>	\$ / acre		
Burndown Herbicide Product			
Application Cost*			
Pre-plant Herbicide Product			
Application Cost*			
Post Herbicide Product Pass 1			\$36.00
Application Cost*			\$11.00
Post Herbicide Product Pass 2			
Application Cost*			
<i>Fungicide Application</i>			
Fungicide Product Pass 1			
Application Cost*			
Fungicide Product Pass 2			
Application Cost*			
<i>Insect Control</i>			
Insecticide Product			
Application Cost*			
Seed treatment			
Soil applied			
Total Pesticide and Custom Application Cost per Acre			\$ 47.00
Irrigation			
	# inches applied	\$ / inch	\$ / acre
Annual overhead cost per acre			
Direct cost per acre inch applied	0	5.50	\$ -
Total Irrigation per Acre			\$ -
Other Expenses			
			\$ / acre
Land Rent / Ownership Cost			\$ 190.00
Crop Insurance			\$ 30.00
Crop Scouting			\$ -
Nutrient Management (annual cost / acre)			\$ -
Soil testing cost per acre per year			\$ 2.50
Total other Expenses per Acre			\$ 222.50
Total Direct Production Inputs per Acre			\$ 614.94
Field Operations			
Preharvest Field Operations	passes / acre	\$ / pass	\$ / acre
Chisel plow	1	\$ 22.75	\$ 22.75
Field cultivator	1	\$ 18.50	\$ 18.50
Planter	1	\$ 26.00	\$ 26.00
No-Till Planter	0	\$ 28.50	\$ -
		\$ -	\$ -
Plant cover crop	1	\$ 18.00	\$ 18.00
		\$ -	\$ -
		\$ -	\$ -
		\$ -	\$ -
		\$ -	\$ -
Total Preharvest Field Operations per Acre			\$ 85.25

Crops & Soils

Harvest Field Operations

	passes / acre	\$ / pass	\$ / acre
Combine	1	\$ 43.00	\$ 43.00
Grain Cart	0	\$ -	\$ -
Hauling to farm	0	\$ -	\$ -
		\$ -	\$ -
		\$ -	\$ -
		\$ -	\$ -
		\$ -	\$ -
Total Harvest Field Operations per Acre			\$ 43.00

Hauling

	bu / load	miles hauled	\$ / mile	\$ / acre
to point of sale	900	25	6.50	\$ 32.14
	450			\$ -
Total Post Harvest Operations per Acre Including Hauling				
				\$ 75.14

Drying and Storage

	points to dry	cost / point / bu	\$ / acre
Drying	6	\$ 0.06	\$ 64.08
% crop stored	# of mos	cost / bu / mo	\$ / acre
Storage	100%	\$ 0.05	53.40

Hired Labor not Accounted for Elsewhere

	hr / acre	\$ / hr	\$ / acre
Labor	1.5	\$ 25.00	\$ 37.50

Interest rate of operating loan per acre	7.25%	\$ 30.70
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Management at 5% of gross revenue

\$ 35.60

Total Expense / Acre

\$ 996.61

Net Return / Acre

\$ (284.61)

Cost per Bushel (Breakeven)

\$ 5.60

Net Return per Acre

Price and Yield Sensitivity Analysis						
Yield Change						
Yield	bu/acre					
+20%	214	-\$313	-\$228	-\$142	-\$57	\$29
+10%	196	-\$370	-\$292	-\$213	-\$135	-\$57
	178	-\$427	-\$356	-\$285	-\$213	-\$142
-10%	160	-\$484	-\$420	-\$356	-\$292	-\$228
-20%	142	-\$541	-\$484	-\$427	-\$370	-\$313
Price per Bushel		\$3.20	\$3.60	\$4.00	\$4.40	\$4.80
Price Change		-20%	-10%		+10%	+20%

Crops & Soils

Corn Enterprise Budget

Enter your numbers and information in blue cells

Green Cells are calculated values

Crop Description

Revenue

Grain

Misc. Income (i.e. bedding, others)

Total Revenue per Acre (_____ Bu x \$ _____ / Bu) + Misc. Income =

Expenses

Fertilizer

Fertilizer applied on a pounds of product per acre basis

Liquid Starter

gal / acre X \$ / gal = \$ / acre

Dry Starter
Bulk Blend
Bulk Blend

lb product / acre X \$ / ton = \$ / acre

Fertilizer applied on a pounds of nutrient per acre not accounted for above

Nitrogen fertilizer

Urea
28%
32%
Anhydrous
N Stabilizer / Extender

lb N / acre X \$ / lb N = \$ / acre

lb N from Phos products used below*

Phosphorus

lbs P2O5 X \$ / lb P2O5 =

Potassium

lbs K2O X \$ / lb K2O =

Manure

\$ -

Custom hired fertilizer applications

passes X \$ / pass =

Ag Lime (prorated) X (tons / acre

X \$ / ton)

+ Spreading \$)

= \$ / acre

% / year (4 yrs = 25%)

\$ -

\$ -

\$ -

Crops & Soils

Total Fertilizer Including Hired Application Costs per Acre		\$	-
2+3+4+5+6+7+8+9=10			

Seed Costs

	seeds / acre X	\$ / 80k kernels =	\$ / acre
Corn Seed	\$ -	\$ -	
	lb / acre X	\$ / lb =	\$ / acre
Cover Crop Seed			
	bu / acre X	\$ / bu =	\$ / acre
Cover Crop Seed			
Total Seed Cost per Acre	11+12+13=14		\$ -

Pesticides

Weed Control

Burndown Herbicide Product	\$ -
Application Cost*	\$ -
Pre-plant Herbicide Product	\$ -
Application Cost*	\$ -
Post Herbicide Product Pass 1	\$ -
Application Cost*	\$ -
Post Herbicide Product Pass 2	\$ -
Application Cost*	\$ -

Fungicide Application

Fungicide Product Pass 1	\$ -
Application Cost*	\$ -
Fungicide Product Pass 2	\$ -
Application Cost*	\$ -

Insect Control

Insecticide Product	\$ -
Application Cost*	\$ -
Seed treatment	\$ -
Soil applied	\$ -
Total Pesticide and Custom Application Cost per Acre	\$ -

Irrigation

Annual overhead cost per acre	\$ / acre
# inches applied X \$ / inch = \$ / acre	
Direct cost per acre inch applied	\$ -
Total Irrigation per Acre	\$ -

Other Expenses

Land Rent / Ownership Cost	\$ -
Crop Insurance	\$ -
Crop Scouting	\$ -
Nutrient Management Plan (annual cost / acre)	\$ -
Soil testing cost per acre per year	\$ -
Total other Expenses per Acre	\$ -

Total Direct Production Inputs per Acre	10+14+15+18+19=20	\$ -
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Field Operations

Preharvest Field Operations	passes / acre X \$ / pass = \$ / acre
-----------------------------	---------------------------------------

Crops & Soils

Chisel plow	\$ -	\$ -
Field cultivator	\$ -	\$ -
Planter	\$ -	\$ -
No Till Planter	\$ -	\$ -
Plant cover crop	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -
	\$ -	\$ -
Total Preharvest Field Operations per Acre	\$ -	\$ -

Harvest Field Operations	passes / acre	X	\$ / pass	=	\$ / acre
Combine			\$ -	\$ -	
Grain Cart			\$ -	\$ -	
Hauling to farm			\$ -	\$ -	
				\$ -	
				\$ -	
				\$ -	
				\$ -	
Total Harvest Field Operations per Acre				\$ -	

Drying and Storage		points to dry X	cost / point / bu =	\$ / acre
Drying			\$ -	\$ -
	bu/acre stored	X (# of mos	X cost / bu / mo) =	\$ / acre
Storage			\$ -	
Hired Labor not Accounted for Elsewhere		hr / acre	X \$ / hr =	\$ / acre
Labor			\$ -	\$ -

	% interest rate	X loan amt /acre	=\$/acre
Interest cost of operating loan per acre			\$ -

Mgt rate %	X	Total Revenue/Acre (Line 1.) =
Management Expense		\$ -

Total Expense / Acre 20+24+25+26+27+28+29=30 \$ -

Net Return / Acre	(Total Revenue - Total Expense) =	Net Return/ac
	1-30=31	\$ -

Cost per Bushel (Break-even)	Total expense	/	Total Revenue	=	Cost/bu
				\$	-



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
OUTAGAMIE COUNTY

Winter 2026

Ag Newsletter
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Appleton, WI 54914



Extension

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
OUTAGAMIE COUNTY

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