



Ag News Information & Resources

April 2023

Fayette County ISU Extension & Outreach

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<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/fayette/>

Extension Links

Ag Decision Maker
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/>

Beef Center
<http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/>

Dairy Team
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/dairyteam/>

ISU Nutrient Reduction Strategies
<http://www.nutrientstrategy.iastate.edu/>

Iowa State Research Farms
<http://farms.ag.iastate.edu/farms>

Iowa Water Quality Initiative
<http://www.cleanwateriowa.org/>

Manure Management
<http://www.agronext.iastate.edu/mmag/>

Pesticide Management
<http://www.extension.iastate.edu/pepm/>

Pork Center
<http://www.ipic.iastate.edu/>

New Custom Rate Results Released for Iowa

Contact: Alejandro Plastina, Extension Economist/Asst. Prof. in Economics, 515-294-6160, plastina@iastate.edu and Ann Johanns, Dept. of Economics, 515-337-2766, aholste@iastate.edu

Many Iowa farmers hire some custom machine work in their farm business or perform custom work for others. Others rent machinery or perform other services.

In order to help producers and custom operators examine the market, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach publishes the Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey <https://go.iastate.edu/5CKGAI>.

This year's survey, published in March, includes 94 responses and 2,621 custom rates for tasks related to tillage, planting and seeding, spraying, harvesting, farm labor and more. Additions to the survey for 2023 include ground (broadcast) spraying with a self-propelled, tall-crop sprayer and liquid fertilizer high clearance application with drop hose and Y spray nozzle.

Most custom rates saw an increase of 10-15%. Custom planting ranges from \$12.50 to \$45 per acre, depending on the type of planter and setup. Combining corn shows an average of \$41.30 per acre and combining soybeans averages \$39.90 per acre, an increase of 12.4% and 10.7%, respectively. Click on this link <https://go.iastate.edu/GTQZYD> for historical prices for select operations. This year's publication as well as previous reports can be found on the Ag Decision Maker website <https://go.iastate.edu/T3WIRM>

The survey may lag increases in diesel prices and other inputs that change more frequently. This means that for custom farming practices that involve these inputs, the cost may be even higher. The current survey assumed diesel prices would be \$3.39 a gallon in 2023, based on forecasts from the U.S. Energy Information Administration.

The information in the survey is meant to be a starting point for farmers and agribusiness to engage in conversations and negotiations. The survey is not meant to set the rate for a particular practice or operator. This is an opinion survey and represents the responses of participants.

This survey is only possible with the participation of Iowa farmers, custom operators and farm managers. To join the survey list for 2024, email the survey authors. For more information, Plastina can be reached at 515-294-6160 or plastina@iastate.edu, and Ann Johanns can be reached at 515-337-2766 or aholste@iastate.edu.

Live-Streamed & In-Person Continuing Instruction Courses for Spring 2023

Contact: Kathleen Wilson, Pesticide Safety Education Program, 563-382-2949, jbentley@iastate.edu

The Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Pesticide Safety Education Program will be hosting live-streamed Private and Commercial Continuing Instruction Courses (P-CIC & C-CIC) online training this spring as an additional opportunity for private and commercial pesticide applicators to be trained. Attendees will need a computer and a good internet connection to participate in the programs. Applicators can register by going to the Extension Store (<https://store.extension.iastate.edu>) and searching for "Live Streamed".

Live-Streamed Commercial Pesticide Applicator Continuing Instruction Courses:

Private Continuing Instruction Courses

April 4, 9-11:30 a.m.

Commercial Continuing Instruction Courses

Ornamental and Turfgrass Applicators, Categories 3O, 3T, and 3OT

April 18, 9-11:30 a.m.

In-Person Commercial Pesticide Applicator Continuing Instruction Courses:

Private Continuing Instruction Courses

April 13, 9:30 am, Fayette County Extension Office, Fayette (video)

Women Managing Farmland Webinar Series Continues April 12

Contact: Women in Ag Newsletter, isuwomeninag@iastate.edu

A new bi-monthly webinar series addresses several topics women farmland owners are interested in. The series debuted Feb. 8 and the recording is available. Click on this link <https://vimeo.com/797781943> to view the recorded program.

Melissa O'Rourke, ISU Farm and Agribusiness Management Specialist, presented the first webinar on the **Importance of Using a Written Lease**. When agreements are in writing, the parties are much more likely to cover all the provisions intended, from the financial terms to respective duties of the parties.

The series of webinars continues April 12 with **Building Your Professional Team** <https://go.iastate.edu/PBHY5U>. Kitt Tovar-Jensen, staff attorney at ISU's Center for Agricultural Law and Taxation, focuses on areas of agricultural law including farm succession planning, environmental and natural resource law, regulatory law, and farm policy.

Learn more <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/info/meetings.html>

Spring Forestry Field Day Set for May 16

Mark your calendar now for the Spring Forestry Field Day set for May 16 from 9:30 am to 3:15 pm at Volga River Recreation Area near Fayette. Topics include: Rare/Endangered Species—Bats & Bees, Diagnosing Forest Health Issues, Cost Share Program Updates, Forest Bird Habitat Management, Beyond Oaks Value of Native Species, and Volga State Park Highlights. Contact the Extension Office at 563-425-3331 to register.

Fact Sheet Aids Producers in Using New Pork Industry Sustainability Tool

Contact: Mark Storlie, Extension Swine Specialist, 563-425-3331, mstorlie@iastate.edu

Pork producers play a fundamental role in environmental stewardship as they continue to prioritize sustainable production practices. Iowa State University animal science graduate research assistant Erika Johnson said continuous improvement in this area requires strengthening the understanding of the relationship between the environment and production practices. "Our recent pork industry sustainability tool, the wean-to-finish pork sustainability calculator, was developed for producers," she said. "They can use their own data to understand how specific improvements in finishing, such as increased feed efficiency and reduced mortality, can influence the environmental footprint of the pig and barn." You can download the calculator <https://go.iastate.edu/YQWEXS> at no charge from the IPIC website.

A new fact sheet, evaluating Production Metrics in Relation to Sustainability in a Wean-to-Finish Barn, was created as a reference for those using the calculator. It helps explain why the calculator was developed and how the information from calculator inputs can be used. It describes sources of greenhouse gas production and includes sensitivity analyses of carbon dioxide equivalents by mortality, feed efficiency, and feed type.

Garland Dahlke, research scientist for Iowa Beef Center; Lance Baumgard, animal science professor; and Jason Ross, animal science professor and department chair for animal science, all at Iowa State University; are the other authors of this fact sheet <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/16718> IPIC 203, available from the ISU extension store as a free download.

Rural Iowa Report Shows Large Farms Continue to Grow as Small Farms Decrease

Contacts: David Peters, Sociology, 515-294-6303, dpeters@iastate.edu

A recent farm trends publication from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach discusses changing farm trends between 2011 and 2021, including farm sizes, production values, net incomes and debt.

In *Rural Iowa at a Glance, Farm Trends (2022 Edition)*, David Peters, professor and extension rural sociologist at Iowa State University, shares data that shows the way agriculture in the state is shifting.

One aspect of farming that has seen a great deal of change is farm size. In the past 10 years, the number of large commercial farms has doubled, while the number of small farms has decreased by 27%. Small farms have also seen sizable reductions in sales and acres farmed, with sales dropping by 59% and acres farmed dropping by 47%.

The drop in farm sales and acres farmed is tied to the fact that 68% of farms in Iowa are now operated by people who do not make the majority of their income through farming. Many small farms are operated by people who have a non-farm income or are retired, and the farm primarily serves as a place to live rather than work.

"As the numbers demonstrate, farming can be incredibly variable," said Peters. "We also have a severe labor shortage in the non-farm economy, so workers in rural Iowa have options. People can choose the farm life, which involves a huge capital investment and a lot of volatility, or they can choose an off-farm job, which offers a much more stable income. For many, having an off-farm job while maintaining a small farm provides the best of both worlds."

Rise in farm incomes — According to Peters, the data also reflects a sharp and somewhat unexpected rise in net farm incomes between 2020 and 2021. Net farm incomes increased across all farm commodities in Iowa, as well as all farm sizes and classes. This increase in net farm income allowed many farms to pay down debts, especially small and midsized farms, which saw high levels of debt utilization between 2016 and 2020.

"I was surprised by how much net farm incomes grew," said Peters. "I knew that farm incomes would rise, however, with many government support payments for COVID and trade disputes ending in 2021, I did not expect to see commodity prices rise by as much as they did to offset those supports."

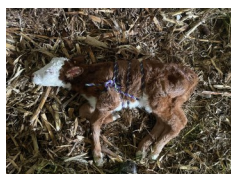
Commodity differences — While there was a net increase in farm incomes across all commodities, some commodities saw greater increases than others. Corn and soybean farms have seen steadily growing incomes, with net farm incomes doubling since 2011. Hog farms have also seen steady growth, but net farm income was still 21% lower in 2021 than in 2011. Poultry has been much more variable, as although net farm income has grown by 200% since 2011, poultry farms saw a large dip in income between 2013-14 due to salmonella and bird flu outbreaks. One area of concern for Peters was the cattle sector. "Incomes in the cattle industry have not increased in the same way other commodities have increased, and many cattle farms haven't been able to pay down debt as a result," he added.

Peters also noted that the dairy industry has seen sharp decreases in number of farms as well as acres farmed since 2011, which is another concern. "Our dairy sector in Iowa was small to begin with but has really gone into decline in terms of numbers," he said. "The dairy industry has a long history in the state, but the trends that I am seeing indicate that this decline may unfortunately continue."

The full report is available on the Iowa State University Extension Store <https://store.extension.iastate.edu/product/16638>

Try the Madigan Squeeze

Contact: Denise Schwab, Extension Beef Specialist, 319-472-4739, dschwab@iastate.edu and Patrick Wall, Extension Beef Specialist, 641-842-2014, patwall@iastate.edu



It's peak calving season for many producers across the Midwest which may mean long exhausting and occasionally frustrating hours of trying to save every calf. Iowa State University extension beef specialist Patrick Wall said a simple technique might help some newborns that struggle to nurse or appear to have little will to live. "The 'Madigan Squeeze' technique was first developed in horses for use in what's often called, 'dummy foal syndrome,'" he said. "This method also was found to be effective in cattle, often referred to as 'weak calf syndrome.'"

The logic behind the method is to reset the natural function of the calf's brain at birth by mirroring the pressure felt during the birthing process. To implement the Madigan Squeeze follow these steps in order:

1. Wrap a soft rope in 3-4 concentric loops around the calf's chest and rib cage. A rope halter works great for this.
2. Gently pull and tighten the rope to create pressure around the ribs. The calf should lie down and enter a relaxed, sleep-like state with slowed breathing.
3. Maintain this position for 20-30 minutes.
4. Remove the rope and assist the calf in standing.

How and why the technique is effective is not totally understood, but it seems to be most effective when there are sources of trauma or deficiency at birth, such as dystocia, leptospirosis, selenium, hypothermia, etc. The Madigan Squeeze can be tried more than once on the same calf, and there's no harm to the calf even if the treatment is unsuccessful. Even better, there are no needles, drugs, esophageal tubes or hand-nursing a cow involved. See [more information regarding the Madigan Squeeze](https://go.iastate.edu/GDKNOX) <https://go.iastate.edu/GDKNOX>

Prepare Your Garden Tools for Spring

Contact: Aaron Steil, *Consumer Horticulture Specialist*, 515-294-8953, aisteil@iastate.edu

With spring around the corner, now is the time to clean up the garden shed and prepare tools and supplies for the gardening season. In this article, horticulturists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach offer information on how to clean, sanitize, sharpen and prepare your garden tools for spring.

How do I clean and prepare my garden tools?

Proper care of garden tools and equipment prolongs their life, prevents costly repairs and improves their performance. Remove caked-on soil from shovels, spades, hoes and rakes with a wire brush or stiff putty knife. Wash the tools with a strong stream of water, then dry. Wipe the metal surfaces with an oily rag or spray with WD-40 to help prevent corrosion. Sand rough wooden handles, then wipe with linseed oil to prevent drying and cracking.

Over time, cultivation tools like hoes, shovels and spades get nicked and damaged by stones and soil. Sharpening the blades of cultivation tools will make them easier and safer to use. To sharpen cultivation tools, start by securing the tool by the handle in a bench vise with the front side facing up. Using a metal file, sharpen the edge by

pushing the file away from you across the blade. Hold the file at the same angle during the entire process, using the existing beveled angle at the tool's edge as a guide. Work slowly and evenly so that a shine appears about one-quarter-inch back from the blade's edge along the entire edge. Then turn the tool over and remove any burrs from the underside of the blade edge by lightly pushing the metal file away from you with the same smooth and even motion as before. Depending on the amount of use, most cultivation tools only need sharpening once a year.

How do I prepare my lawn mower for spring?

Spring is the best time to service the engine and sharpen the blades to ensure the mower runs smoothly and cleanly cuts the lawn. Start by checking the oil. Some mowers benefit from changing the oil once a year. Others only require the oil to be topped off in the spring. Check your owner's manual and follow those instructions to check or change the oil. Check all filters, including the air, oil and fuel filters, and clean or replace them as needed. Ideally, the fuel tank was drained or run dry in the fall, but if it wasn't, it is important to remove the old fuel and replace it with new before starting up the mower for the first time in spring. Check and replace the spark plug every one to three years. A fresh spark

plug will allow the engine to run better and start up easier.

Take the opportunity to sharpen the blades and clean the mower deck while the fuel tank is empty. Dull mower blades make the engine work harder and tear or rip grass blades rather than cleanly slicing them. The ragged edge of a grass leaf cut with a dull mower blade will turn brown and allow some disease pathogens to infect the leaf more easily. To remove the blade, wear heavy leather gloves, disconnect the spark plug (or remove the battery on an electric mower), and jam in a short 2x4 to keep the blade from turning. Loosen the bolt at the center of the blade using a socket wrench. It may take some leverage to get it loose! Once removed, you can sharpen the blades yourself or take them to a hardware store or outdoor equipment retailer for sharpening. While the blade is out, this is also the perfect time to clean the mower deck. Use a strong stream of water and a putty knife to remove built-up debris from the underside of the deck and wash or blow leaves and grass from all the other areas of the mower.

For information on how to clean and sanitize plant containers for reuse and sanitizing pruners to prevent the spread of disease read the complete article [here](https://go.iastate.edu/FKNEBO)

<https://go.iastate.edu/FKNEBO>

Upcoming Events

Apr 3 — A Journey Through Parkinson's, 4-5 pm, Extension Office

Apr 10 — A Journey Through Parkinson's, 4-5 pm, Extension Office

Apr 13 — Private Pesticide Training (Video), 9:30 am, Extension Office

Apr 15 — Cover Kids Day, 9 am—3 pm, Opera House, Fayette

Apr 16-22 — Extension Week

Apr 17 — A Journey Through Parkinson's, 4-5 pm, Extension Office

Apr 18 — Extension Council, 7:30 pm, Extension Office

Apr 22 — Babysitting Basics, 9 am—2 pm, RAMS Center, Oelwein

Apr 26 — IDALS Testing, 9 am—3 pm, Extension Office

Jason Henderson to Lead Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Programs



Jason Henderson has been appointed vice president of Iowa State University's Extension and Outreach programs.

Henderson, who currently serves as director of extension and senior associate dean for faculty development in the Purdue University College of Agriculture, as well as

assistant vice provost for engagement, will join Iowa State on April 3, 2023. He succeeds John Lawrence, who announced his plans to retire in spring 2023.

"Jason Henderson brings a wealth of experience to Iowa State University, both as an agricultural economist and an academic leader," said President Wendy Wintersteen. "He was raised on a family dairy farm near Arlington, Iowa. He understands the needs of Iowa's rural communities and the critical role extension and outreach plays in their vitality and success."