



## FIELD&FEEDLOT a monthly agriculture publication for Northwest Iowa

### January 2023

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#### Online References

##### Ag Decision Maker

[www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/)

##### Iowa Beef Center

[www.iowabeefcenter.org](http://www.iowabeefcenter.org)

##### Manure Management Action Group

[www.agronext.iastate.edu](http://www.agronext.iastate.edu)

##### Iowa Pork Industry Center

[www.ipic.iastate.edu/](http://www.ipic.iastate.edu/)

##### ISU Extension Dairy Team

[www.extension.iastate.edu/dairyteam](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/dairyteam)

##### Locate a County Office

<https://www.extension.iastate.edu/countyservices/>

#### Numbers to Know

AnswerLine 800-262-3804

Beginning Farmer Center 877-BFC-1999

Iowa 2-1-1 211

Iowa Concern 800-447-1985

Iowa Healthy Families 800-369-2229

Teen Line 800-443-8336

### Crop Advantage Series and Planter University

*Gentry Sorenson, Field Agronomist*

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There are several events coming up that I wanted to share with readers.

First, the **Crop Advantage Series** is coming up in January. The Crop Advantage Series provides a solid foundation of current research-based crop production information to producers, crop advisors and retailers to enable them to make smart, informed decisions for their operation.

Local dates and locations are as follows

- January 3 - Sheldon (Northwest Iowa Community College, Building A)
- January 4 - Storm Lake (Buena Vista University, Siebens Forum)
- January 10 - Okoboji (Arrowood Resort and Conference Center)
- January 24 - Le Mars (Le Mars Convention Center)

Program topics vary by location and are selected for the region of the meeting. Keynote speakers are scheduled for the morning session. In the afternoon breakout sessions, attendees choose from one of three options to tailor to their operation.

Early registration for each location is \$75. Late registration made less than seven days prior to the meeting, or on-site, is \$100. Registration includes lunch, private pesticide applicator recertification and CCA credits. Registration and additional information are available at [www.aep.iastate.edu/cas](http://www.aep.iastate.edu/cas). If you have any questions regarding registration, please contact me (Gentry Sorenson) or Leah Ten Napel, the local ISU Extension and Outreach Field Agronomists. We look forward to seeing you at the Crop Advantage Series!

The second series returning for the 2023 growing season is **Planter University**. This event will be held on February 6 at the Northwest Research and Demonstration Farm near Sutherland from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Planter University provides farmers and equipment or precision ag dealers knowledge and understanding of planter functions and the agronomic implications associated with planting. Hands-on demonstrations will be led by ISU's Digital Agriculture personnel in small groups, enabling attendees to view planter parts as well as demo stands at the session. Most important, attendees will be able to interact and ask valuable questions related to the equipment.

The registration deadline for Planter University is January 30. In its inaugural year last year, Planter University sold out, so I would recommend preregistering for this event as soon as you can. More information for Planter University can be found at <https://www.aep.iastate.edu/planter/index.html>. Cost for this event is \$85 and includes lunch, reference material, a seed depth tool and a closing wheel hold up bracket.

## California Proposition 12: What Does It Mean for Iowa Swine Producers?

*Dave Stender, Swine Specialist*  
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A proposition that passed in California a few years back has raised concerns from northwest Iowa swine producers. The new [California Proposition 12] law requires more space for sow gestation and severely limits the use of individual sow housing. Currently, the Supreme Court is deciding if the California mandate is constitutional, and producers are waiting for the decision.

Most local operations have not made changes for various reasons. Producers that have been raising swine for decades remember the issues with pen gestation. They have seen sows attack each other in pens during mixing and feeding events and are reluctant to return to that. Others have already implemented pen gestation yet remain non-compliant for various reasons. The management process of the breeding system can be difficult to change and requires a steep learning curve. As always, there are tradeoffs between production systems. Both the pen gestation and the individual sow housing systems have merits and drawbacks. Local producers would like to have a say in how they raise pork for consumption. Some would pick group-housing, while others insist that individual sow protection has merits.

There has been some remodeling by producers to become compliant with Prop-12 standards, but this has happened mainly with facilities that were scheduled for remodel. Some of these operations have made their operations compliant; however, the amount of remodeling locally has been slow because most small operations were burdened financially during the COVID-19 harvest plant slowdown, especially those that lacked a packer marketing contract.

It is very difficult to make the required financial investments to become Prop-12 compliant with current financial conditions. Furthermore, it has been impossible for producers to obtain advanced marketing contracts that covered the cost of becoming compliant. A couple other things that have hindered the pace of remodeling for Prop-12 is the increased expense of building materials and the scarcity of labor. Without trained labor, it becomes more difficult to remodel and learn new systems.

If Prop-12 becomes law, there will likely be less pork available to California and more pork available to the rest of the country. Less product eligible for California will likely increase pork prices in that state, conversely excess pork in non-California states will likely decrease prices and income for pork producers that have not made Prop-12 remodel investments. I believe Prop-12 will likely cause a two-tiered market, with higher-priced meat going to California due to scarcity of compliant pork, and lower-priced meat for other states due to the sudden excess supply. This would not be good for most local producers in the short run.

## Important Dates for Beef Producers and Agri-Business Professionals

*Beth Doran, Beef Specialist*  
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**January 17** - Feedlot Forum 2023 returns to the Terrace View Event Center in Sioux Center. This year's program features ways to add income to the feedlot enterprise and cutting-edge technology from 21 sponsors.

Topics, speakers, and their affiliations include:

- **Characterizations of Corn Grain Harvested as High Moisture in the Upper Midwest** – Zach Smith, SDSU
- **2022 Silage and Earlage Laboratory Analysis and Reimplant Label Update** – Wes Gentry, Midwest PMS LLC
- **Cows, Carbon Credits, and Compost: Converting Manure to a Currency Creator** – Dan Andersen, ISU
- **Cattle Market Outlook** – Caitlyn Grudzinski, Commodity and Ingredient Hedging

Registration, which is \$25 per adult and \$10 per student, is due January 10. Payment may be made online with a credit card or mailed to ISU Extension and Outreach Sioux County, 400 Central Ave. NW, Suite 700, Orange City, IA 51041. For more info, contact Beth Doran at 712-737-4230, email [doranb@iastate.edu](mailto:doranb@iastate.edu) or visit <https://www.extension.iastate.edu/sioux/feedlot-forum>.

**January 30** – USDA reminds ranchers and livestock producers they may be eligible for financial assistance through the Livestock Forage Disaster Program (LFP). This program addresses 2022 grazing losses due to a qualifying drought. USDA also has an Emergency Livestock Assistance Program (ELAP) that provides compensation for above normal expenses (due to drought) in transporting water and feed to livestock and above normal costs in hauling livestock to forage or other grazing acres. The deadline to apply to LFP and ELAP assistance is Jan. 30, 2023. Contact your local Farm Service Agency to determine your eligibility and to file an application.

**Farm Income Tax Filing** – The Internal Revenue Service reminds farmers in regions forced to sell livestock because of drought conditions that they may have more time to replace their livestock and defer tax on any gains from the forced sales. Work closely with your tax accountant to determine if this applies to your cattle enterprise.

## Consider Native Deciduous Trees and Shrubs for Windbreaks

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### Iowa’s windbreaks have lost functionality.

Windbreaks are critical farm infrastructure, providing Iowa producers with crop yield increases, livestock protection and gains, reduced soil erosion, diversified income sources, energy savings, wildlife habitat, recreation, and aesthetics (Photo 1). As I travel the state, however, I frequently observe windbreaks with a complete loss of functionality. This large-scale loss is the result of many factors, including windbreak age, lack of proper maintenance, and impacts from extreme storm events and drought. At the core, these issues are exasperated by our historic reliance on a limited number of conifer species. Many windbreaks I’ve observed with near-zero functionality are comprised of a single, non-native, conifer species (e.g., blue spruce). We all know that native tree species perform best in Iowa’s variable climate. However, Iowa only has a handful of native conifers, and northwest Iowa has only one – eastern redcedar. In contrast, Iowa does have an extensive assemblage of native deciduous trees and shrubs – a large enough list to cover all of Iowa’s sites and geographic regions. To maximize windbreak functionality and longevity, it’s time we do away with our overwhelming reliance on conifers and start considering deciduous trees and shrubs for Iowa windbreaks!

### Why deciduous?

The year-round foliage and upright form of conifers make them nearly unbeatable for wind velocity reduction and privacy. Considering this, native (e.g., eastern redcedar) and non-native but hardy (e.g., Norway spruce) conifers should remain as significant components of our windbreaks. However, with diversity being the key to windbreak resiliency, functionality, and longevity, being open to deciduous trees and shrubs greatly increases our species selection options on a wide range of soils, sites, and geographic locations – areas where conifers have historically struggled. Wet, dry, clayey, sandy, and everything in between – there’s a list of native deciduous trees and shrubs that will work nicely on your site.

Deciduous trees can deliver on winter wind velocity reduction, it just takes more of them. In general, it would take approximately five rows of leaf-droppers to match the wind protection provided by a single row of conifers. For faster protection, you may plant stock at a tighter spacing. However, you must be diligent to thin at the appropriate time (when crowns begin to touch) to ensure long-term vigor. In addition, it may be valuable to consider trees that exhibit some degree of marcescence – also known as winter leaf retention (Photo 2). While not as dense as conifer foliage, the retained leaves do add winter wind reduction value, privacy, beautification, and wildlife benefits. Notably species that exhibit marcescence include oaks, ironwood, and witch hazel.

Incorporation of a diversity of native deciduous species also provides a multitude of compound benefits to Iowa’s farmers – notably, potential for income diversification and wildlife and pollinator habitat. In an example from Polk County (Photo 3), a rotational grazing operation used a solely-deciduous windbreak to protect a livestock winter feeding area. As added benefits, the producer plans to sustainably harvest sawtimber, fence posts, fuelwood, and nuts from this planting. Addition of shrubs on the windward and leeward side of windbreaks may aid in wind lift, as well as provide diverse structure (e.g., smaller, multi-stem) that may be utilized by a wide range of wildlife species. Selecting a range of shrubs (and trees for that matter) that bloom at different times will act to extend the availability of critical fuel for pollinators throughout the growing season. Not to mention delicious edible fruits for you!

### Resources and Next Steps

Selecting the right deciduous tree and shrub species to match your site conditions AND achieve your windbreak functionality goals is an important decision. Your first stop should be your county USDA Service Center. From there, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff will work with you to design your windbreak and select the appropriate species to achieve your goals. Private forestry consultants may also be able to assist in this matter. Check out the [ISU Natural Resource Stewardship Contacts webpage](https://naturalresources.extension.iastate.edu/contacts) (<https://naturalresources.extension.iastate.edu/contacts>) to find professionals that serve your county.

For a chance to learn more on windbreaks, in an in-field setting, check out the Windbreak School (WBS) program – hosted by Iowa State University Extension, the Iowa Department of Natural Resources, and NRCS. Check the [ISU Extension Forestry “Upcoming Events” webpage](https://naturalresources.extension.iastate.edu/events) (<https://naturalresources.extension.iastate.edu/events>) frequently for program dates and locations (note, WBS often occurs in late summer, to allow for ample time to plan and prepare for spring plantings). So, let’s start moving away from our conifer reliance, and start appreciating deciduous species for the diverse benefits they may provide to Iowa’s farmers!