

# AG

ISU Extension & Outreach

Washington County

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# newsletter

April 2013

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED DROUGHT QUESTIONS

Iowa State University Extension & Outreach maintains a "frequently asked questions" web site for property owners, farmers and families to visit.

The information can be found at :

[www.extension.iastate.edu/content/drought-faq](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/content/drought-faq)

*The fees for service will be used to off-set direct expenses and to support the County Extension ANR Program."*

... and justice for all

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## LAST CHANCE PRIVATE PESTICIDE APPLICATOR TRAINING

The last chance for farmers to attend private pesticide applicator training locally will be April 12-15 at the Washington, Iowa, Johnson and Keokuk County Extension Office in Region 15. The cost of the training is \$20. Pre-registration is not required but applicators are encouraged to contact the Extension Office. Pesticide applicators who wish to recertify by training and not by exam must attend a continuing instruction course each year. There is also the option of taking an exam to recertify. Training dates, times and locations are as follows:

- Iowa County Extension, 223 W Welsh St., Williamsburg April 12 @ 12:00PM and April 15, 2013 @ 9:00AM
  - Johnson County Extension, 3109 Old HWY 218 S, Iowa City April 12 @ 9 AM
  - Washington County Extension, 2223 250<sup>th</sup> St., Washington April 15 @ 1:30 PM
  - Keokuk County Extension, 400 220<sup>th</sup> St.-Suite A, Sigourney April 15 @ 9 AM
- Washington County Extension is now a field test site for those needing to take pesticide applicator tests. The next test will be offered on April 12, from 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. All tests are available at this site and will be given on a first-come, first-serve basis. Tests are administered by the Iowa Department of Ag and Land Stewardship.

## 2013 IOWA FARM CUSTOM RATE SURVEY FOLLOWS RECENT TREND

The 2013 Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey followed the recent trend of small, but consistent increases in rates each year. Most operations showed increases of three to five percent over the average rates in the 2012 survey.

"There are many reasons why the rate charged," Edwards said. "These include the timeliness with which operations are performed, quality and special features of the machine, operator skill, size and shape of fields, number of acres contracted and the condition of the crop for harvesting. The availability of custom operators in a given area will also affect rates." Several new operations and services were included in the 2013 survey, including vertical tillage, providing a seed tender, soybean combining with a draper head and mowing lawns.

The Ag Decision Maker offers a Decision Tool to help custom operators and other farmers estimate their own costs for specific machinery operations. The Machinery Cost Calculator can be found under Crops, then Machinery in the Ag Decision Maker table of contents. [www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/)

The 2013 Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey can be downloaded from the Ag Decision Maker website, [www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/), as Information File A3-10, Iowa Farm Custom Rate Survey [www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/crops/pdf/a3-10.pdf](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/agdm/crops/pdf/a3-10.pdf) Print copies will be available at county extension offices.

## BULL SELECTION CLINIC CAN HELP PRODUCERS MAKE DECISIONS

AMES, Iowa — Understanding and using some simple tools can help cattle producers make the right selection for new herd bulls during upcoming bull sales. Denise Schwab, Iowa State University Extension and Outreach beef specialist, said that's why a bull selection clinic is scheduled prior to the bull sale held by Iowa Cattlemen's Association later this spring. There's no cost to attend and no preregistration necessary at any of the locations.

"Sorting through performance measures and expected progeny differences doesn't have to be a chore or a mystery," Schwab said. "ISU Iowa Beef Center staff members have scheduled the two-hour clinics so attendees can go to the bull sale immediately following the session and use the information from the clinic."

### Clinic date, time and locations

*Friday, May 3, 4 p.m. Tama Livestock Auction, Tama (open heifers that have been evaluated also will be on this sale)*

Schwab said Iowa Beef Center staff will break down the process of bull selection into simple steps and assist those attending with interpreting the EPD numbers in the catalog. "We can help you evaluate your cow herd and determine the economically relevant traits that you want to emphasize," she said. "With that information, you can use the index EPDs and visually appraise the bulls to identify some options that will help you get the most benefit from your cow herd." For more information on the bull clinics, contact your extension beef specialist.

The sale will feature spring and fall bulls that have been through ICA's Bull Evaluation Program, according to ICA seed-stock manager Kellie Carolan. She said bulls that go through this 112-day test are evaluated for growth, carcass traits, yearling weight, disposition and scrotal circumference, and are some of the breed's best pedigrees for calving ease, performance and carcass merit. To learn more about ICA's Bull & Heifer Program, including a listing of bulls that will be offered at each of the 2013 sales, go to <http://www.iacattlemen.org/bullheifer.aspx>. This page also has a link to the 2013 reports and catalogs by location.

## PLANTING BARE-ROOT TREES

AMES, Iowa – Bare-root plants begin their life growing in a nursery field and are harvested in the fall, when all of the soil is shaken from their roots. Because they do not have a soil ball they are considerably lighter, less expensive to ship and therefore cost less than balled and burlapped or container-grown plants. Retailers prefer to sell them before they break bud and produce leaves – which comes very early in the growing season (March and April). But early is not always better as horticulturists with Iowa State University Extension and Outreach explain. To have additional plant and garden questions answered, contact the ISU Hortline at 515-294-3108 or [hortline@iastate.edu](mailto:hortline@iastate.edu).

**What are the advantages and disadvantages of bare-root trees and shrubs?** As the name suggests, bare-root trees and shrubs have no soil around their roots. Bare-root nursery stock is dug in late fall, placed in cold storage, then shipped to garden centers or gardeners in early spring. Bare-root trees and shrubs should be dormant upon receipt of shipment or purchase. Disadvantages of bare-root trees and shrubs are the length of the planting season and size. Bare-root plant material should be planted in early spring before it begins to leaf out. Bare-root deciduous trees are generally available up to 8 feet in height. Evergreens are usually less than 2 feet tall. Bare-root trees and shrubs, however, are the most economical type of nursery stock. They are usually the best choice when purchasing large quantities of trees and shrubs for windbreaks or hedges.

**When should bare-root trees be planted?** Bare-root trees and shrubs must be planted in early spring before growth begins. If rainy weather or other circumstances prevent planting within a few days of purchase, store bare-root material in a cool location, such as a garage or root cellar, until planting is possible.

**What is the proper way to plant a bare-root tree?** Prior to planting, soak the tree's roots in a bucket of water for one to two hours. Also, prune off damaged or broken roots. When ready to plant, dig a hole that is 2 to 2.5 times wider than the spread of the tree's root system. The depth of the hole should be equal to the distance from the tree's trunk flare to the bottom of its roots. The trunk flare is the point where the trunk begins to spread out as it meets the roots. Build a cone-shaped mound of soil in the center of the hole. Place the tree on top of the mound. The trunk flare should be even with the surrounding soil surface. Spread the roots evenly over the mound. Then begin backfilling with the original soil. As you backfill, firm the soil in the hole with your hands. Place soil to the trunk flare. Finally, water the tree thoroughly. Many shade and fruit trees are propagated by grafting. The graft union is located near the base of the tree's trunk and is denoted by a bulge or crook in the trunk. The graft union is typically 1 to 3 inches above the trunk flare. When planting bare-root trees, be careful not to confuse the graft union with the trunk flare.

## EVALUATE FORAGE STANDS FOR WINTER INJURY By Stephen K. Barnhart, Dept. of Agronomy

Winter-dormant perennial forage plants remain dormant as long as temperatures in the ‘crown’ area, or upper few inches of the soil, remain between about 0 and 35 degrees F. Snow cover and residual vegetative cover help to insulate the soil and stabilize soil and crown temperatures. Under ideal conditions, as spring temperatures warm through March, the plants ‘break dormancy’ and regrow normally into the spring. Winter injury and winter kill can occur under several conditions: if there is no snow cover and crown temperatures go much below 0 degrees F; when mid-winter ‘warm spells’ cause the plants to ‘break dormancy’ early and are then more susceptible to late-winter cold crown temperatures; and, when plants are submerged in frozen, ponded water in low-lying areas during the winter. This winter, the crown temperatures have likely not been cold enough for direct cold injury, even without snow cover. While day temperatures have been warmer than normal for short periods through February and early March, night temperatures have, hopefully, been cold enough to prevent the plants from breaking dormancy. A significant concern are the localized, frozen, ponded areas. How well did they handle this winter? It is time to go find out.



### Stand evaluation

When evaluating alfalfa in late winter for winter injury, consider both the number of plants per square foot and, for alfalfa, the age of the stand. Crown and root diseases also have a major effect on stand reduction of legumes, so plants should be checked for dead, dying or diseased crown and root tissue. Winter-injured plants may survive satisfactorily, but are often slow to recover in spring, so a quick decision to destroy a winter injured stand is not recommended. Wait until the spring regrowth is about 3 to 4 inches high. Select random stand count sites. Check at least one 1-square-foot site for every 5 to 10 acres. Dig up all of the plants in the 1-square-foot area. Inspect for new growth and the crown and buds to determine if the tissue is still alive. Then count the number of live plants per square foot. Use Table 1 to begin your rating of the stand. Next, split the taproots and evaluate their general health. The core of a healthy taproot is firm and creamy white. Damaged or dying taproots are yellowish brown to chocolate brown in color and watery or dry and fibrous in texture. Only healthy plants will contribute significantly to yield, so if the taproots are more than 50 percent diseased, reduce your initial stand count accordingly.

**Table 1. Age of stand and rating of winter survival.**

	Good	Marginal*	Consider Reseeding
	<b>Plants per square foot</b>		
Year after seeding	+12	8 to 12	Less than 8
2	+8	5 to 6	Less than 5
3**	+6	4 to 5	Less than 4
4 and older**	+4	3 to 4	Less than 3

\* Healthy alfalfa plants in thin stands often produce more individual stems per plant and compensate some in yield potential.

\*\* If 50 percent or more of the plants have crown or root rot, consider reseeding.

## EASTERN IOWA FORAGE PRICES

These are hay prices paid at auction in recent weeks. Much of the price information is obtained from USDA Hay Market News. Personal contacts of local Iowa hay auctions secured price information for these market outlets. Auctions were chosen to reflect prices across Iowa. No endorsement of the listed auctions is intended.

**Keosauqua (SE IA) Sat 11:30A** Alfalfa & Mixed Lg/Gr: SmSq \$5.50-7.50/bale Grass : SmSq \$3.50-5.75/bale; LgRd \$80-105/bale Straw: SmSq \$2.00-3.25/bale; LgSq \$25-37/bale Cornstalks: (LgRd \$27-32/bale Jan) CRP: LgRd \$45-65/bale

**Kalona Auction (SE IA) Thursdays 11:00 AM** Alfalfa: SmSq \$5.00-7.50/bale; LgSq \$60-140/B; LgRd \$75-210/B Mixed Leg/Gr : SmSq \$4.75-6.75/B; LgSq \$115-122.50/b; LgRd \$185/bale Grass: SmSq \$3.75-5.75/bale; LgSq \$80-115/bale; LgRd \$35-110/bale Straw: SmSq \$1.50-3.50/B; (LgSq \$29-31/b Jan) Cornstalks: LgSq \$26/bale; LgRd \$42.50-50/bale Soybean ‘straw’: LgSq \$24-41/bale; LgRd \$ 32.50-42.50/bale

**Yoder Auction (Frytown)** Alfalfa: SmSq \$5.50/-6.90/B; LgSq \$85-102.50/b Mixed Leg/Gr : LgRd \$127.50-207.50/bale Grass: SmSq \$5.10-6.60/b ; LgSq \$70-87.50/b; LgRd \$105-145/bale Straw: SmSq \$3.20-4.20/bale; ( LgSq \$30-62.50/b; LgRd \$30/bale Jan) Cornstalks: LgRd \$40-45/b Soybean ‘straw’: LgRd \$35-42.50/bal CRP: (LgRd \$65-97.50/b Jan)

## HOW DO WE ESTIMATE N CARRYOVER FOR 2013?

Prepared by Jim Fawcett, ISU Extension Field Agronomist, with information supplied by John Sawyer, ISU Extension Agronomist – Soil Fertility March, 2013

The drought of 2012 has likely increased the carryover of nitrate-nitrogen (nitrate-N) into the 2013 season. In addition to less N being used by last year's crop, the reduced rainfall in 2012 resulted in less nitrate leaving the soil through leaching and de-nitrification. Although it is common for about 50 pounds per acre of nitrate-N to carryover from one season to the next, soil samples pulled in the fall of 2012 indicate we will likely have fields with more than 100 pounds per acre of carryover nitrate-N into the spring of 2013. *We can take advantage of this carryover N by pulling soil samples this spring to estimate carryover N and reduce spring N rates accordingly for the 2013 corn crop. Failure to do so may result in increased nitrate losses into water systems in 2013 and future years.* To estimate nitrate-N carryover:

1. Pull 1-foot soil samples to at least a 2-foot depth (0-1 foot & 1-2 foot) before the spring N is applied. A 3 foot depth is preferable. Pull 15-30 cores per sample on an area of no more than 10 to 20 acres. Mix thoroughly and send a subsample (standard soil sample size) to the lab to test for nitrate. Multiple samples per field should be collected.
2. Take the soil test result (ppm nitrate-N) times 4 to calculate pounds per acre of N.
3. Add up the N in each foot and subtract the "normal" carryover N (40 pounds per acre for 2 foot depth and 50 pounds per acre for 3 foot depth).
4. Subtract the carryover N from your usual N rate.

Regardless of lab results, apply no less than 50 pounds per acre if no N has been applied, to account for field variability.

### Example for Estimating Carryover Nitrate-N for 2-Foot Sampling Depth

Assume no N has been applied for 2013 season and 150 pounds per acre is the usual N rate.

Assume lab results of 10 ppm nitrate-N for 0-1 foot and 15 ppm nitrate-N for 1-2 foot.

**150 lb N/A – [(10 ppmX4) + (15 ppmX4) – 40 lb N/A] = recommended rate of 90 lb N/A for 2013 corn**

**150 – [(40+60) – 40] = 90 lb N/A**

If there is excess spring rainfall, the carryover N available for the 2013 season will be reduced.

## REGISTRATION NOW OPEN FOR IOWA SWINE DAY 2013

AMES, Iowa -- Building on its successful return to Iowa State University last year, the 2013 version of Iowa Swine Day has a new format and plenty of information for pork industry members. Professor of animal science John Patience said registration for the Thursday, June 27 event is now open.

“Those who register by the early deadline of June 14 will pay \$60 – that’s \$20 off the full registration fee – and students of any age can attend for just \$25,” Patience said. “The fee includes lunch, refreshment breaks and a copy of the conference notebook.” The day begins with registration at 7:30 a.m. and the welcome at 9 a.m. The morning plenary session features four speakers in Benton Auditorium. Following lunch, attendees will choose from 14 breakout sessions organized into three concurrent tracks: sustaining the global competitiveness of the American pork industry, utilizing human resources most effectively in pork production and what’s new at Iowa State University. The day’s activities will conclude about 5:15 p.m. The Iowa Swine Day program agenda, links to registration forms and sponsor list are available on the event website, [www.aep.iastate.edu/iowaswineday/](http://www.aep.iastate.edu/iowaswineday/).

Patience, who co-chairs the event with Ken Stalder and Butch Baker of the Iowa Pork Industry Center, said the planning group has worked diligently to learn about information needs and how best to address those needs through the program, which is set in the Scheman Building at the Iowa State Center in Ames. Patience said. “Session topics include employee engagement, global success in swine production, success with group housing of sows, effects of heat stress on pig productivity and understanding the impact of the replacement gilt on system health.” The program has been approved by the Iowa Board of Veterinary Medicine for two scientific credits and four management credits.

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## NEW COURSE HELPS FARM WOMEN MANAGE FOR TODAY AND TOMORROW

Creating a transition plan to make sure a farm continues as a productive, agricultural business can be challenging. Farm women can learn how to plan a successful farm transition through a five-session course offered by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach. The "Managing for Today and Tomorrow," program, a new Annie's Project course, is being offered on Monday nights starting April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2013 through May 6<sup>th</sup> at Kinze Manufacturing in Williamsburg.

Farm women will learn about business, estate, retirement and succession planning from ISU Extension and Outreach specialists and area professionals. Besides brief presentations, there will be discussions based on participant questions and follow-up activities for family members to complete at home. "Understanding the concepts behind estate and succession planning is a critical first step in developing a plan to transition the family farm to the next generation," said Erin Herbold-Swalwell, an attorney with Beving, Swanson, and Forrest, P.C., whom has been a guest speaker for the course.

Annie's Project, an agricultural risk management education program for women, has successfully reached more than 8,000 farm and ranch women in 30 states. "This new program emphasizes the role women play in helping transition farms from one generation to the next," said Bob Wells, Annie's Project National Co-Director and Field Ag Economist for ISU Extension and Outreach. "Managing for Today and Tomorrow will empower women to take ownership of the future of their farms," said Wells.

Angie Loew, Farm Credit Services of America financial officer in Carroll, Iowa, was a member of the curriculum development team and has been a presenter for the course. "Working with farm women for 25 years and being involved with Annie's Project, I've seen the benefits of this curriculum first-hand," said Angie Loew, financial officer, Farm Credit Services of America. "Women want to strengthen their role in agriculture and learn the skills necessary for successful farm transitions." Farm Credit Services of America is a statewide sponsor of Annie's Project and Managing for Today and Tomorrow courses.

Managing for Today and Tomorrow meets from 6 to 9 p.m. on Mondays, April 8<sup>th</sup>, April 15<sup>th</sup>, April 22<sup>nd</sup>, April 29<sup>th</sup>, and May 6<sup>th</sup> at the Kinze Manufacturing, 2171 M Avenue, Williamsburg, Iowa. The cost is \$75 per person, which includes a 300-page workbook with fact sheets, hands-on activities and presentations. Refreshments will be served prior to class start time. Course size is limited, and registration is due by April 5<sup>th</sup>.

For more information contact Catherine Lents at the Poweshiek County Extension Office at 641-623-5188 or [clents@iastate.edu](mailto:clents@iastate.edu) or Bob Wells, at the Mahaska County Extension office at 641-673-5841 or [wellsjb@iastate.edu](mailto:wellsjb@iastate.edu). Farm women may also register with [xpoweshiek@iastate.edu](mailto:xpoweshiek@iastate.edu) or online at <https://www.ucs.iastate.edu/mnet/annie/quickregister.html>.

Managing for Today and Tomorrow is supported by the Beginning Farmer and Rancher Development Program of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA, Grant # 2011-49400-30584. More information can be found on the Annie's Project website at [www.extension.iastate.edu/annie](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/annie).

# IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY

## Extension and Outreach

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## CONTRACT GRAZING FACT SHEET SERIES NOW AVAILABLE

AMES, Iowa -- A new four-part series of fact sheets on contract grazing for cattle is now available on the Iowa Beef Center (IBC) website. The resource was developed by a specialized working group within the Green Lands, Blue Water project, including two Iowa State University specialists. Joe Sellers, ISU Extension and Outreach beef specialist, and Andy Larson, small farms specialist with ISU Extension and Outreach, worked with project members from Wisconsin and Minnesota to identify needs and information for those who graze cattle. "Our group has been working on the fact sheets as a source of assistance to graziers and cattle owners who use custom grazing in their management schemes," Sellers said. "As cow numbers increase and available pasture acres decrease, we want people to recognize and learn more about options for their operations."



One such option is the development of working partnerships with other producers to access pasture through contract grazing. Each fact sheet focuses on one topic related to contract grazing: contract grazing basics, evaluating land suitability, rental and lease agreements, and contract grazing rates. The fact sheets can be viewed, download and printed at no cost from these links:

The Basics of Contract Grazing [www.iowabeefcenter.org/information/ContractGrazing1Basics.pdf](http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/information/ContractGrazing1Basics.pdf)

Evaluating Land Suitability for Grazing Cattle [www.iowabeefcenter.org/information/ContractGrazing2LandEval.pdf](http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/information/ContractGrazing2LandEval.pdf)

Pasture Rental and Lease Agreements [www.iowabeefcenter.org/information/ContractGrazing3Leases.pdf](http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/information/ContractGrazing3Leases.pdf)

Rates Charged for Contract Grazing Arrangements [www.iowabeefcenter.org/information/ContractGrazing4Rates.pdf](http://www.iowabeefcenter.org/information/ContractGrazing4Rates.pdf)

This resource can be used to supplement existing grazing-related information on the IBC website, specifically under "[Cattle Grazing Survey 2007](#)."

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