

We could use a drink

The rains have been very spotty. Hopefully, by writing about it, things will change and the rains will start. It is amazing how good the crops look today (August 1), although it may be too late for some crops on lighter soils.

Here at our place (if you look on a map we are right at the point of the notch in the northeast corner of Olmsted County) we have had about 1.7 inches of rain in July, 4.4 inches in June, 4.1 inches in May and 2.63 inches in April for a total of around 12.8 inches. Obviously, this is not enough for these 90 degree days. If you go a few miles east of here, they got some good rains and everything looks great.



CNH Capital Coupons

I mentioned in the last update that CNH Capital had been a major sponsor of our farm management conference this past June in Rochester. They sent me some coupons that they want me to pass on to you. I have several of each and if they work for you that would be great. There are three different offers:

1. You can get a .5% rate reduction on the loan for a piece of new or used equipment purchased from a Case IH dealership.
2. You can get a 10% discount on a Case IH protection plan.
3. You can get \$75 credit and no payments, no interest for 90 days on the CNH Capital commercial revolving account on a single purchase of \$750 or more of Case IH parts and related services. **All of this expires on September 30, 2007.**

Corn and Soybean Marketing

Despite some setbacks it looks like no one is ready to throw in the towel on a bull market at this point. Recent rains in the breadbasket have been hard on the markets. Pressure on basis continues to be a big question mark. What will happen to basis? What will happen when the bins are full this fall? Has enough on-farm storage been added to capture (and maybe enhance) a narrowing basis? Everything changes. It will be interesting to watch this develop. See Dr. Michael Swanson's recent corn analysis in the [attached pdf file](#).

Forage Concerns

The lack of rain could put some pressure on hay supplies. The University Extension service has information at www.extension.umn.edu/administrative/diasasterresponse/wi_drought.htm. You can also look at general forage information at www.extension.umn.edu/forages.

Farm Management Conference Presentations

If you would like to see the presentations from the National Farm Management Conference, go to <http://www.agrisk.umn.edu/> and then click on the "National Farm Mgt. Conference, Triennial Conference, 2007 Proceedings" button. You can download or open any of the pdf files you find there.

Agronomy Workshop Warning

Put **Wednesday, November 28** on your calendar for our annual Agronomy Workshop at Digger's in Kasson.



Tour Summary

The dairy tour around Plainview and Altura last week was a real eye-opener. Each dairy was an excellent example of problem-solving through the use of technology and developing new management skills. I think we could apply these lessons to any of our enterprises.

I was impressed by the use of sand bedding, the sand separating lanes and how they relate to cow comfort. I thought of how, using traditional methods, we would try to keep the amount of bedding we used to a minimum to save costs. In these situations where up to 80% of the sand is recovered to be used again, that is not such a concern. The sand can be loaded into the freestalls to make sure that the cows are comfortable. The cows are comfortable on sand and the abrasive action of sand actually works to keep them clean.

Another dairy was using automated calf feeders for milk replacer. Even though the unit had been in use for only two weeks and was overstocked by fifty percent, the owner thought it was working great. There were 35 heifer calves in the pen we saw served by one automatic milk replacer feeding machine. Only one calf was on its feet when our tour group entered the barn. None of the others got up. They just slept right through our tour. It was calf

comfort heaven. When they get hungry, they eat if the machine says they should. All milk replacer is mixed just before it is fed. Every calf gets the amount of milk replacer it needs for its age. No, this is not economically feasible for every herd, but it does help us learn something about calf comfort.

Two of the dairies had solved breeding problems using two different methods. One used electronic activity monitors to tell when each cow came into heat. The computer tracked each cow's activity daily and when activity increased markedly, the herdsman knew when to have the cow bred. The other herd was on a drug program that synchronized all breeding activity. Both herds had achieved their initial goal within a year of starting the program. Although the technology was purchased to help accomplish these goals, it would not have been possible without the managers and workers concentrating on the task at hand.

These lessons from dairy carry over to every other enterprise. It is the attention to detail and the ability to get done what has to be done every day that pushes an operation closer to peak efficiency and profitability. Zeroing in on those critical activities should be the manager's focus every day.

"\$Quality Count\$" Field Day - August 15

A "\$Quality Count\$" Field Day for dairy producers will be held on Wednesday, August 15, 10:00 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. at Heim Acres (Bruce & Jodi Heim) near Lewiston. (From the I-90 Lewiston exit, go south on County Rd 29 for ½ mile, which angles right in a SW direction for 1 ¼ mi to Fremont. Drive on County Rd 6 for about 1 mile, farm on south side of road).

"\$Quality Count\$" is a program of the University of Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Agriculture and dairy industry partners designed to help producers lower their somatic cell count and, thereby, realize greater profits from their dairy enterprises.

No pre-registration for the field day is required. The cost will be \$5.00 per person to cover handout materials and plastic boots. No lunch is involved.

Presenters include Dr. Jeff Reneau, U of MN Animal Scientist for Dairy Management; Dr. Ralph Farnsworth, U of MN Professor, College of Vet Medicine/Laboratory for Udder Health; Neil Broadwater, U of MN Regional Extension Educator-Dairy; Bob Finnesgard, Fieldman,

AMPI; and the host farm family. The 152 cow Heim herd had a 2006 SCC average of 115,000. This June the SCC was 98,000. They have a 136 free-stall, drive through barn and a double 6 step-up parlor. Udders are flamed 4x/year. Sand is used for bedding placed on a ¾" mat. The event is sponsored by University of Minnesota Extension with support from SE MN Dairy Initiatives. For further information, contact Neil Broadwater at the Extension Regional Center in Rochester at 507-536-6300.

Income Tax Considerations

Many of you have done your marketing and are now considering how much of this money to take this year. It will take some planning. We can do that planning prior to or soon after harvest. Let me know when you have your records up to date and want to know where you stand.

Stay cool. Talk to you soon.
Wayne
507-251-1937





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