Gabe Brown highlights 2014 Great Lakes Forage & Grazing Conference March 6 at MSU
Rancher, cash crop no tiller and the leading farm authority on multi-specie cover crops to build better soils, Gabe Brown will be the key note speaker at the Great Lakes Forage & Grazing Conference to be held on March 6 on the Campus of Michigan State University.

Brown is a pioneer in diverse cover cropping, having used no-till techniques for two decades. Brown, along with his wife, Shelly, and son, Paul, own and operate a diversified farm and ranch near Bismarck, N.D. His family ranch encompasses 5,400 acres, all managed sustainably and with the goal of building ideal soil health conditions. The Browns use a pesticide-free cover and companion crop system that allows them to reduce their use of commercial fertilizer by over 90 percent and the use of herbicides by over 75 percent as well as increase production and profitability in an environment that averages only 21 inches of rainfall annually during the growing season.

The Browns holistically integrate their grazing and no-till cropping system, which includes multi-species cover crops, grain crops of corn, soybeans, wheat and sunflowers with beef cows, stocker cattle and broiler chickens. Brown utilizes the over 1,000 head of cattle to graze the cover crop rotations each year to improve soil biology, water and nutrient holding capacity, and over-all productivity.

He is a highly sought after speaker that audiences find very enlightening and thought provoking. He speaks at a multitude of winter conferences as well as many summer field days across the North American Continent. To read more on Gabe Brown go to the Brown Ranch web site at http://brownsranch.us/ For complete details on conference registration and all the other great topics that will be addressed at this year’s conference see the details inside this newsletter.

Jerry Lindquist,
MSU Extension Grazing Educator
Great Lakes Grazing Newsletter

Registration Information:

MFC Members: $40.00 __________  Non-members: $50.00 __________

Total Enclosed $ __________

Pre-registration closes February 28, 2014

Day of conference registration (9:00-10:00 AM) ADD $5.00 for late registration (lunch not guaranteed)

(Please print) Your

Name: ________________________________________________________________

Address: ______________________________________________________________

Telephone number: ______________________________  County: ________________

E-mail: ________________________________________________________________

Return this form and check made out to Michigan Forage Council

Mail to: Osceola County MSUE, Attn: Tonia Hartline, 301 West Upton Ave, Reed City, MI 49677.
The Winter of 2014 – A Memorable One With Lingering Impact on Hay Prices, Cow Re-breeding & Potentially Weak Calf Syndrome

Jerry Lindquist, Michigan State University Extension

The winter of 2014 started early, and at least through February, has been consistently cold with a lot of snow. This winter has been one to remember and will have an impact on cattle and other livestock farms even after the snow is gone. Farms last fall were hoping to graze stockpiled pasture forages and corn stubble fields into the new year. But the arrival of snow in early December across much of Michigan forced them to bring the cows home early. Some farms that were hoping to harvest corn stalk bales for feed also were not able to because of the late maturing corn crop and the early December snows.

The colder than normal temperatures this winter has also led to increased hay consumption. Studies show that ruminant animals will increase forage consumption from 5 – 15% when air temps drop below 20 degrees Fahrenheit. They do this to metabolize more feed into energy to regulate their body temperature. The lower the air temperature drops the more they will consume up to a maximum point of around 15% above normal. Many farms now will be monitoring feed inventories and animal body conditions closely as they progress through the rest of the winter and will be hoping for an early spring thaw. If winter lingers, it could lead to a late round of hay buying as livestock owners stretch feed supplies to get to green grass.

Lower quality hays that are most economical for beef cattle are starting to creep upward in price as their supplies get tighter. It is now hard to find these types of hay for less than $130/ton.

This increased feed consumption can also lead to more calving difficulties as the increased consumption provides more total nutrients to the cow and her growing fetus. Births weights tend to be larger in cold winters like this one. Herds that may be pushing the envelope a little too much on calf birth weights should be prepared for a few more challenges in this calving season.

Also based on feed testing conducted by the MSU Extension Beef Team and on reports of some weak calf issues last year, herd managers need to be watching ration protein levels as they enter the final trimester of a cow’s pregnancy this year. The drought of 2012 forced farms to feed lower quality more economical roughages like corn stalks and straw. But some herds, as calving approached, were running very low on hay and did not follow the recommendation to feed a higher portion of hay within 60 days of calving. As a result, crude protein levels to the cow were below 7% and some calves were weak at birth leading to scour and death loss. Feed testing done this year on 1st cutting hays that have a high percentage of grass are revealing that the protein levels are lower than normal. Hays that tested 12 - 13% CP in other years are testing only around 9% this year. We believe it is because the abundant rainfall in mid-June last summer accelerated hay growth and delayed it’s harvest. This led to an over-mature hay that is lower in digestibility and lower in crude protein. Herds that are feeding a low quality corn stalk or straw as a portion of the cow diet this year, even if they had no problems last year, need to be aware that their hay may not be as good and thus their overall diet may be too low in protein. Best advice is to pull a feed test on the hay to know where the protein level is at. Research at the University of Idaho found that protein deficient cows did not pass colostrum antibodies on to their calves leading to weak, sick calves. Based on this research the National Research Council today says cows under 3 ½ years of age that are still growing while in gestation need a crude protein level of 10% or higher. Mature cows four years of age and older only need a 7% level. These levels of course go up once the cow freshens and starts producing milk.

Producers are encouraged not to run out and buy a ton of soybean meal or lick tubs if they don’t know where they are at on feed nutrient levels. Spend $25 on a hay feed test if you are concerned before you spend $500 on supplement that you may not need. Cattle prices are good and we can profit from them if we manage and adjust to the conditions, even a winter like this one.
Frost Seeding Annual (Italian) Ryegrass Gaining in Popularity

Jerry Lindquist, Michigan State University Extension

March is the month for frostseeding in Michigan. Frostseeding is the low cost method of broadcasting seed on top of a pasture sod in late winter and allowing the frost heaving action of soils to incorporate the seed into the soil. Frost-seeding works best on clay and loam soils and especially on soils where the existing forage stand is thin or has been weakened with over-grazing and/or dry weather the previous year. On well managed, thick sods however frost seeding is often not highly effective as soil to seed contact is hard to obtain and the competition from the healthy sod is just too great.

Frost seeding works best with red or white clover and can work with Birdsfoot trefoil as these legumes germinate and survive in cold spring environments. There are many good reasons to want to add a legume to a grass pasture stand and for these reasons legumes are the most common forage seed that is frost seeded. But some grasses can be frost seeded with success and one that is gaining consideration in frost seeding is Annual Italian Ryegrass.

Ryegrasses are some of the most nutritious grasses of all the cool season grasses and livestock do readily consume them. In the ryegrass family there are perennial varieties, annual varieties, and the intermediary Italian varieties that last through one winter. They all respond well to good soil fertility, especially nitrogen. They are heavily used in Europe with the moderate winter weather conditions experienced there. In the Mid-Western United States the perennials can suffer from winter kill, especially when snow cover disappears in mid-winter and temperatures fall. However some good graziers in Michigan successfully graze perennial ryegrass year after year.

But others seeking the nutritious quality of ryegrass but not liking it risk of winter kill have resorted to frostseeding or overseeding Italian ryegrass each year. When frostseeded in March/April the Italian ryegrasses will stay in a high quality vegetative stage of growth during the growing season and not go to seed until the next spring. At about 1/3 the cost of perennial ryegrass seed ($1/lb vs. $3/lb) these producers feel they can keep the cost comparable to the cost of perennial ryegrass that might last for three years. Even with the annual spreading cost figured in they estimate it is about the same, and they feel they have better uniform yields because new seed is germinating each spring no matter what the winter weather was like.

Recommendations are to spread 10 – 15 lbs/acre of Italian ryegrass seed on pastures with existing sod. Frostseeding in late March or over-seeding in April also can work well on heavy use areas where livestock have destroyed the sod and soil is exposed. In these locations where most of the existing forage is gone, 15 – 25 lbs/acre of seed is recommended and drilling the seed with a no till drill can return better establishment results. If excess manure and wasted feed is on the surface tillage may be necessary to gain proper soil to seed contact.

Studies on frost seeding Italian ryegrass in Wisconsin in the mid-1990s by Casler and Rand revealed highly variable results across 30 varieties. Ground cover provided by the ryegrass in October was from 5 – 81%; winter survival to the next June attributed to ryegrass was 5 – 90% and the average mean yield of the ryegrass was 2.8 tons/acre. Thus if going through the effort of spreading, purchase the best varieties available for hardiness and establishment vigor to increase your chance of success.
2014 Michigan
Bull Breeding Soundness Exam Clinics

The MSU Beef Extension Team will once again be organizing regional Bull Breeding Soundness Exam Clinics. Last year, the program tested over 300 bulls for 110 different operations. By identifying these potential male fertility problems, producers were able to reduce the risk of a less than optimum breeding season. The MSUE Beef Team encourages you to have BSE conducted on your breeding bulls every year. Contact your veterinarian or take advantage of the following Breeding Soundness Exam Clinics organized by MSUE. Cost is $55 per bull when done at one of the MSUE clinics. To schedule an appointment at one of these BSE clinics, please call the appropriate contact person as soon as possible. All Clinics start at 9:00 AM. In addition, the MSU College of Veterinary Medicine regularly schedules in house appointments for BSE’s. To schedule an appointment contact the MSU CVM Large Animal Clinic at 517-353-9710.

Location: Gary Voogt Farm, 2831 Hayes St, Marne MI
Date: Friday, March 14th, 2014
Contact: Kevin Gould @ 616-527-5357 or Gary Voogt @ 616-677-3680

Location: Matt Miller Farm, 2685 E. Bellvue Rd, Charlotte MI
Date: Friday, March 28th, 2014
Contact: Beedle Lake Veterinary Clinic @ 269-441-9233

Location: Derry Breault Beef Farm, 868 Hoffman Road, Gladwin MI
Date: Friday, April 11th, 2014
Contact: Kable Thurlow @ 989-426-7741

Location: MSU Lake City Experiment Station, 5401 W. Jennings Road, Lake City MI
Date: Thursday, April 17th, 2014
Contact: Kable Thurlow @ 989-426-7741 or Doug Carmichael @ 231-839-4608

Location: Kevin Wernnette, 9144 50TH AVE, Remus MI
Date: Saturday, April 19th, 2014
Contact: Kevin Gould @ 616-527-5357 or Dr. Todd Miller @ 231-832-3680

Location: Upper Peninsula of Michigan
Date: April 21-25th, 2014
Contact: Frank Wardynski @ 906-884-4386

Location: Chuck Preston Farm, 4780 County Line Road, Prescott MI
Date: Saturday, April 26th, 2014
Contact: Phil Durst @ 989-387-5346 or Chuck Preston @ 989-873-4164

Location: Apple Hill Angus Farm, 1591 S. King Rd., Harrisville MI
Date: Saturday, May 10, 2014
Contact: Phil Durst @ 989-387-5346 or John MacMaster @ 989-736-6020
RESTRICTED USE PESTICIDE REVIEW AND EXAM

WHEN:  Monday, March 10, 2014

9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. - Pesticide Update & Exam Review offered by MSU Extension (pesticide re-certification credits have been requested)

1:00 p.m. - Restricted Use Pesticide Exam offered by Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development

WHERE:  Wexford County MSU Extension, 401 N. Lake St., Cadillac, MI.  49601

The review is for those wishing to receive final training before the exam or for those wishing to receive pesticide re-certification credits (credits have been requested for this event). You do not have to attend the review to take the exam. The exam is for those wishing to become certified to purchase restricted use pesticides. Exam participants are encouraged to read and study the National Pesticide Applicator Certification Core Manual before taking the exam. Copies may be ordered from the MSU Extension Bookstore (http://www.bookstore.msue.msu.edu/) or by calling 517-353-6740. Many county MSU Extension offices also have copies available.

For the exam: You must bring a photo ID (driver’s license).

  - Bring a #2 pencil and an ink pen.
  - Bring your registration paperwork received in the mail from Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) if renewing.
  - Make check/money orders payable to “State of Michigan”. Cash or credit/debit cards are not accepted.
  - If retaking an exam that you failed you must bring receipt of payment from the previous exam session.
  - Calculators if needed will be available from the exam proctor. Personal calculators or cell phone calculators are not allowed.

Cost:  Review - $10/person payable at the door to MSU (cash or check); Exam -$50 for private applicators (farmers); $75 for commercial applicators (cash is not accepted).

Registration:  Please register for these two events by either:

1.) Contacting Jerry Lindquist 231-832-6139 or at lindquis@anr.msu.edu or Jill O’Donnell 231-779-9480 or at odonne10@anr.msu.edu

2.) You may register on-line for the exam at www.michigan.gov/pestexam

Exams are also offered at various times and locations around the State and on a frequent basis at MDARD Regional locations. For the complete list of exams go to www.michigan.gov/pestexam.

Accommodations for persons with disabilities may be requested by contacting Jill O’Donnell at 231-779-9480 by February 24, 2014 to make arrangements. Requests received after this date will be fulfilled when possible.
AGRICULTURE LABOR AND FARM SAFETY

WHEN: Wednesday, March 19, 2014 – 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

WHERE: Wexford County MSU Extension, 401 N. Lake St., Cadillac

Understanding agricultural labor issues and complying with farm labor laws have become increasingly more difficult due to the changes in the laws and the numbers of issues facing farm employers. The 2014 Ag Labor meeting will assist you, the ag employer, in understanding issues impacting you and your employees. There will be an update on labor regulations that impact farms. The afternoon program will feature “Updating Farm Safety Plans and Training Series: Promoting a Safety and Health Management System for Agriculture.”

The program will feature speakers from MSU Extension, Michigan Workforce Development Agency, Immigration and Citizenship Enforcement, and Michigan Farm Bureau.

Registration: Details are available in the registration brochure included in this newsletter. A similar program will be offered in Bad Axe on March 12 and in Shepherd on March 13.

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The Affordable Care Act

Workshop

Registration Fee: $10.00 per participant

NEW! REGISTER ONLINE

http://events.anr.msu.edu/ACAWexford/

SPACE IS LIMITED

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Affordable Care Act

Workshop

Meeting Location
Wexford County MSU Extension
401 N. Lake Street #400
Cadillac, MI 49601

Date
Friday, March 28, 2014

Time
9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

For program information, call Jill O’Donnell at 231-779-9480
For online registration questions, call 616-994-4540

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Michigan State University | Extension

Affordable Care Act

Workshop

Meeting Location
Wexford County MSU Extension
401 N. Lake Street #400
Cadillac, MI 49601

Date
Friday, March 28, 2014

Time
9:30 a.m.—12:30 p.m.

NEW! Register Online at:
http://events.anr.msu.edu/ACAWexford/
**Affordable Care Act Workshop**

**Presenters**
Dr. David B. Schweikhardt, MSU Extension Specialist and Professor  
Dr. Adam J. Kantrovich, MSU Extension Farm Management Educator

**Introduction**
The workshop will cover the Affordable Care Act and how it affects farms, small businesses and individuals. The Affordable Care Act is far-reaching legislation that covers every business, industry and individual. There are no “loop-holes” that provide any type of exemption. There are many layers to the Affordable Care Act, this will be a broad overview of the basics within the three hour presentation. This presentation will include a hands-on activity to help participants determine whether they need to comply with the ACA.

**Agenda**
Welcome & Introductions  
General Rules of the ACA  
Rules of Employer Shared Responsibility (ESR) Mandate  
Rules for Counting Employees under (ESR)  
Rules for Small Business Health Care Tax Credit  
Rules for Health Insurance Market Place (Exchange) and Shop for Employers  
Rules of Individual Shared Responsibility Mandate  
Employer Requirements for 2013 to 2015  
Closing Thoughts

**Registration Fee:** $10.00 per person  
This covers handouts and materials.

**Register online at:** [http://events.anr.msu.edu/ACA_Wexford/](http://events.anr.msu.edu/ACA_Wexford/)

**Mail In Registration**
Participant Name(s): (please print):
1) __________________________  
2) __________________________  
3) __________________________

Business Name & Address:
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

g ____________________________ ____________________________
Email: ____________________________ Phone: ____________________________

To register by mail, send in registration and payment to:
MSU ANR Events Services  
Justin S. Morrill Hall of Agriculture  
446 West Circle Drive, Room 11  
East Lansing, MI  48824-1039

Make Check Payable to **Michigan State University**
Please RSVP as soon as possible, SPACE IS LIMITED

**Wexford County**
**Affordable Care Act Workshop**
**Cost:** $10.00 per person
Includes all materials and refreshments

**Register online at:**
[http://events.anr.msu.edu/ACA_Wexford/](http://events.anr.msu.edu/ACA_Wexford/)

Or

**Mail In Registration**
Participant Name(s): (please print):
1) __________________________  
2) __________________________  
3) __________________________

Business Name & Address:
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________

g ____________________________ ____________________________
Email: ____________________________ Phone: ____________________________

To register by mail, send in registration and payment to:
MSU ANR Events Services  
Justin S. Morrill Hall of Agriculture  
446 W. Circle Drive, Room 11  
East Lansing, MI  48824

Make Check Payable to **Michigan State University**
MDARD pesticide applicator recertification credits now available online

Pesticide applicators in Michigan can now keep their certifications current with minimal investment in time and travel.
James DeDecker, Michigan State University Extension

In Michigan, those who wish to purchase or apply Restricted Use Pesticides (RUPs) must pass an exam to become a certified pesticide applicator. Once achieved, individual certifications are valid for a period of three years, at which point the applicator can retake the appropriate exams to maintain their status. Certified applicators can also elect to avoid reexamination and instead renew their certification by accumulating educational recertification credits during the three-year-certification period. Private applicators must secure 16 private core credits while commercial applicators need eight commercial core credits and eight additional credits for each category they are certified in (e.g., field crops, turf, etc.).

Traditionally, credits have only been offered to those attending in-person educational programs related to pest management, commonly held by Michigan State University Extension or industry representatives. Recently, however, credit offerings have expanded to include live and recorded online educational content. One example of these new online credit opportunities is the MSU Integrated Pest Management Academy Webinars catalog. This series of eight, half-hour, recorded online programs have been approved for a total of four MDARD recertification credits. Applicators can view these programs at any time, at their own pace, and claim one credit for every two webinars completed.

Live online programs are also being approved to offer recertification credits. This includes the upcoming 2014 MSU Extension Field Crops Webinar Series. On Monday evenings from Feb. 24 through March 31, MSU field crop specialists will address key production points for the coming growing season in a condensed virtual format. These live webinar programs will run from 7-8 p.m. EST and can be viewed independently at no cost online over a high-speed Internet connection. One MDARD pesticide recertification credit will be available through each event for application to the Private Core, Commercial Core or Field Crops categories.

For those that prefer to get out of the house or wish to avoid the computer, both of the online programs highlighted above are based on content from traditional, in-person programs available in coming weeks. The IPM Academy is a two-day workshop held annually in late winter. It is designed to prepare growers, consultants and public sector employees to implement an integrated and informed approach to pest management. The Field Crops Webinar Series is based on a statewide series of Field Crops IPM meetings also offered each winter.

An updated listing of all programs approved for MDARD pesticide applicator recertification credits can be viewed online. It is not clear at this point what the future of online recertification credits will look like for Michigan pesticide applicators. Is online learning as valuable for applicators as traditional, in-person meetings? Could there be a limit imposed on the number or percent of credits earned remotely? As an educator, I certainly agree that it is easier to identify and engage a distracted student when they are physically present. Yet in today’s world, nothing beats the convenience and low cost of online programs.

Any questions regarding the MDARD pesticide applicator certification process can be directed to Faye Burns at 517-373-9752.

This article was published by Michigan State University Extension. For more information, visit http://www.msue.msu.edu. To contact an expert in your area, visit http://expert.msue.msu.edu, or call 888-MSUE4MI (888-678-3464).
Upcoming Breeding Stock Sales

- **March 1, 2014**
  MCA-MSU Bull Evaluation Program Open House
  Crystal, MI

- **March 8, 2014**
  [Great Lakes Beef Connection Sale](#), Clare, MI.

- **March 15, 2014**
  MCA-MSU Bull Evaluation Program Sale
  Crystal, MI

- **April 4-5, 2014**
  [Michigan Beef Expo](#)