



State of Wisconsin
Governor Scott Walker

Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection
Ben Brancel, Secretary

Wisconsin Organic Advisory Council
9:45 am to 3:00 pm
Monday October 29, 2012
WI Department of Agriculture
Board Room, Room 106

DRAFT notes

Present: Council members Rebecca Goodman, Craig Dunnum, Mike Schulist, Jerry McGeorge, Ken Seguine, Harriet Behar, Jennifer Casey, Steve Walker, Bill Stoneman, Christine Mason, and Alfrid Krusenbaum. Interagency team members Pat Murphy, Laurie Makos, Kevin Shelley, Duane Klein, Laura Paine, and Erin Silva.

The Council was called to order at 10:10 am.

Agenda review: Harriet requested that the Council add to the priorities discussion the subject of the DATCP budget and the fate of ADD and Buy Local grants.

Minutes approval: Jennifer moved to approve the minutes, Rebecca seconded. Motion carried.

Review and set future meeting dates: January 7th and March 18th were approved for future Council meetings.

Council reorganization (review co-chairs and other 'executive committee' roles and make sure everyone's ok in those roles for another year, or request new volunteers)

Jerry and Harriet described the responsibilities of the role of co-chair and encouraged other council members to consider stepping up to the role of co-chair. Both are willing to continue, but Jerry especially is interested in being replaced if not this year, definitely next year. Rebecca nominated Jennifer. Jennifer will think about it.

Christine described the role of the Secretary, including participating in Executive Committee meetings and alternating with Laura in taking notes at the meetings. Ken expressed interest in stepping into that role.

The Council decided to wait until the January meeting to make any changes.

Update on Council priorities for 2012 and planning for 2013 (farm bill, GMO, food safety law)

A new issue (suggested by Harriet):

Harriet reported that an editorial by Jim Massey in the Country Today quoted Margaret Krome that the state is developing a rainy day fund, goal is to have \$100 million. Margaret has recommended that they use some of the 'excess funds' that would be going into that fund to refund the grant programs for another year.

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Laura reported that Secretary Brancel's 2014-2015 proposed budget deletes the Buy Local and Ag Development and Diversification grant programs permanently. They are currently simply zeroed out, but this would delete the enabling legislation, so the programs could not be restored if funding were available in the future. The grazing grant program that Laura runs is funded through a different source of money and was also eliminated.

Discussion was held regarding whether the council should weigh in on these changes. There was a consensus that the Council should express their concern about the loss of these programs which are not strictly focused on organics, but have funded a number of organic projects and generally support local food and sustainable agriculture.

There would be three opportunities to provide input into the budget process. The first would be providing input to Secretary Brancel as he develops the budget. The window of opportunity for that has passed. The second is as the Governor is putting the agency budgets together into a budget package. The third is providing input to legislators as they respond to and vote on the Governor's budget.

Laura will determine what the timeline is for budget development and get back to the council. We need to wait until after the election, as there may be changes in the Senate and Assembly. It is likely that it will be at least January before the legislature starts working on the budget.

Duane suggested that the council go to Secretary Brancel to express their support for the program. Even though he has already submitted his budget, sitting down with the Secretary and sharing the Council's priorities would be a positive step.

Harriet will talk to Margaret Krome to get more details about Margaret's suggestion that funds be taken from the 'rainy day fund' to use for grant programs. Jerry and Harriet will meet and develop a letter or identify a time to meet with Ben and communicate the council's views.

Updates on where the Council's 2012 priorities, what have we accomplished, do we want to continue working on these issues, which topics will spill over into next year, etc.

Farm Bill

Harriet gave an update on the Farm Bill: The 2008 Farm Bill expired on September 30, 2012. Rep. Kantor, majority whip said that the Congress may take up the farm bill in a lame duck session later this fall. Harriet stated that several programs are gone as a result: e.g. the Organic Certification Cost-share program, the Value Added Producer Grant program. Some other programs (like EQIP) have line items in the USDA budget. These continue to be funded via continuing resolutions.

GMOs

Discussion was held on the status of the GMO issue. California has a GMO labeling referendum on the ballot for the November election (Proposition 37). Consumer surveys suggest that the ballot initiative could be approved, but many companies are investing a lot of funds in advertising against the initiative. The initiative would cost food companies a lot of money because they would have to have separate labeling for California. The companies are suggesting to consumers that passing the referendum would increase food prices.

Question on where the Roundup Ready alfalfa issue is. Kevin reported that roundup ready alfalfa seed was commercially available this spring in Wisconsin. The latest research is focused on genetically engineering soybeans to be tolerant to 2,4-D. They are also genetically modifying corn to be more tolerant of 2,4-D.

Bill observed that another issue on the horizon is that many genetic engineering efforts in the pipeline are not related to pesticides, such as drought tolerance, etc. These are not regulated by EPA, only by USDA, so they will come under less scrutiny and may be approved more quickly.

The USDA Advisory Committee on Biotechnology & 21st Century Agriculture has completed a draft report. According to Harriet, it has come up with a proposal that organic farmers go to neighbors to request that they modify planting dates, etc. to reduce the risk of cross-pollination. They could also buy crop insurance to protect from contamination. Here is a link to the report:

<http://www.usda.gov/wps/portal/usda/usdahome?contentidonly=true&contentid=AC21Main.xml>

Food safety law

There is no update on rule development for the Federal Food Safety Law. Bill reported that he recently read that any 'food facility' will be required to register with the federal government.

Harriet brought up some negative press that the organic industry received recently. There was a study from Stanford University (<http://med.stanford.edu/ism/2012/september/organic.html>) and the American Association of Pediatrics (<http://news.consumerreports.org/health/2012/10/american-academy-of-pediatrics-weighs-in-on-organic-food-for-kids.html>) had recently published studies comparing organic food and conventional food. The AAP study stated that organic produce is better for children because of reduced pesticide exposure, but many media outlets highlighted the fact that it also said that they found no difference between organic and conventional milk.

Potential new topics: Keeping organic acres in the face of high conventional prices.

Discussion was held regarding the loss of organic acres. The Council talked about CRP acres coming out of the program and being available for organic production. Laura described a project she is working on to keep CRP fields under grass by connecting landowners with livestock producers. The Grazing Broker project will create a brokering role to help connect landowners with likeminded livestock producers.

Laurie said that the FSA can release the names of landowners who have CRP although an open records request must be filed. She said that CRP program allows haying or grazing every three years. Organic farmers could develop relationships with CRP owners and annually harvest one-third of an acreage. This could allow them to transition to organic crops eventually when the acreage comes out of CRP.

Providing input to the NOSB on changes in NOP standards—no discussion.

National Ag Statistics Service newly released organic production survey

Audra Hubbell, WI Ag Statistics Service

Audra explained that this was intended to be a census, rather than a survey. A census is sent out to all organic farmers. A survey is a 'sample' of the entire population. This census went out to 1193 farms in Wisconsin and 76.7% responded. This accounts for the difference in the number of farms listed (~800) compared to the number we have on our lists (~1200). Harriet told the group that this survey was initiated to provide data for crop insurance. It was done by the National Agricultural Statistics Service in cooperation with the Risk Management Agency. Therefore it focused a lot on yields and sales of crops, dairy, etc. Harriet pointed out that it's important to generate strong data on organic crop yields, sales values, etc. because most of the farm programs are shifting toward crop insurance based subsidies. If the value of organic crops is substantiated, it is more likely that organic crops will be valued properly for insurance purposes.

Audra will have copies of the full report as well as 2 to 4 page fact sheets summarizing Wisconsin information within the next month or two. Council members can contact Laura if they'd like copies. Below is a summary of some of the material in the survey.

Background

- Census of all known USDA certified organic producers
- Collected data for 2011 calendar year
- Mailed in December 2011, follow-up through August 2012.
- Nationwide 12,746 surveys were mailed.
- In Wisconsin 1,193 surveys were mailed.
- Wisconsin remains second in the nation in numbers of organic farms after California.

Wisconsin had

- 163 farms growing organic vegetables (Ranks #2),
- 1,785 harvested acres, and
- \$9,619,864 of sales

Wisconsin had

- 735 farms growing organic field crops (Ranks #1),
- 110,253 harvested acres (Ranks #1), and
- \$15,843,362 of sales (Ranks #12)

Organic Milk

State	# of Farms	Peak Inventory
California	73	33,813
Texas	8	28,217
Wisconsin	399	24,858
New York	241	18,747
Oregon	43	17,864
United States	1848	213,376

Organic Livestock

Livestock	# of Farms	Rank	Peak Inventory	Rank
Beef cows	64	1	2666	4
Other cattle and calves	444	1	21,494	2
Hogs and pigs	18	1	1477	2
Sheep and lambs	4	4	357	3
Goats and kids	5	4	178	8

Agency reports from NRCS, FSA, UW CALS and UW Extension, WEDC, DATCP, WI Technical Colleges, DNR

DATCP Report to the Organic Advisory Council, October 29, 2012

Agricultural Resource Management

Duane Klein, ARM: 608-224-4520, Duane.Klein@Wisconsin.gov

Driftwatch

We have been promoting the Driftwatch program to organic producers via emails and mailings. The number of organic producers to sign up and their acreage have both doubled since we began

promoting the program. This sounds good, but still only represents about 40 producers/7,000 acres. We have also created a short YouTube video to promote the Driftwatch program: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nKLmmEvfOTc&feature=plcp> Please share this video link with others within your memberships and producer groups.

Other Videos

We also created these short YouTube videos (which can be accessed at the DATCP YouTube site or through the DATCP Newscenter):

Pesticide Worker Protection Standard - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iL9Sa0CqgCY&feature=plcp>

Groundwater - http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xB6i_QPpraw&feature=plcp

Pesticides in the Home - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c4Z6CYM0plo&feature=plcp>

Pesticide Drift - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wRlyKqNV4yE&feature=plcp>

Requirements for a Lawn Care Business - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-7-Sn5mV4T8&feature=plcp>

Fertilizer License and Label Requirements -
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=77Xtrllpwc4&feature=plcp>

How to Choose a Lawn Care Service - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DxLA12jmY7Y&feature=plcp>

Farmland Preservation, Agricultural Enterprise Areas (AEAs), Purchase of Agricultural Conservation Easements (PACE)

- After conducting a listening session in August to secure input on the proposed rule, DATCP is preparing a draft of ATCP 49, which will interpret and clarify provisions of the farmland preservation law related to farmland preservation planning, zoning, and agreements.
- DATCP is accepting petitions for 2013 designation of Agricultural Enterprise Areas through March 23, 2013. Petition materials are available from this web site: http://datcp.wi.gov/Environment/Working_Lands_Initiative/AEA/Petition_Materials/index.aspx

ATCP 50 – Soil and Water Resource Management Program

DATCP continues to draft the ATCP 50 rule revision and supporting documents, the primary focus of which is implementation of the new and modified performance standards adopted by DNR in 2011. To view the scope statement that defines what DATCP can do to revise the rule, click on the PDF document entitled “Statement of Scope” at this website:

<https://health.wisconsin.gov/admrules/public/Rmo?nRmold=11844>

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

DATCP staff is evaluating the possible consequences for CREP and other federal programs supported by our agency in the event of Congressional inaction regarding the Farm Bill. We are hopeful that Congress will pass a Farm Bill after the November, 2012 elections with provisions for CREP.

Agricultural Development Division

Laura Paine, DAD: 608-224-5120/Laura.paine@wi.gov

- **Consumer’s Guide to Organic Food.** Project is completed. We have submitted our final report.
 - The publications have been posted on our website in a low resolution and a high resolution format. (http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Organic_Farming/Organic_Consumer_Guide/index.aspx) and we have a supply of hard copies for distribution.

- In the last year of the project, we focused on outreach and evaluation.
- Outreach activities:
 - We printed and distributed a total of 1000 booklets, 1000 bookmarks, 1000 rack cards, 1500 bookmarks, and 500 magnets.
 - We updated the organic farmer and processor directory and printed 300 copies.
 - Displays and booths at the Organic Farming Conference in February, the Fair Share CSA Open House, the Kickapoo Country Fair, and the Milwaukee Eat Local Resource Fair. Margaret Bert Mittelstadt also put the materials out in displays at Outpost Natural Foods.
- Evaluation
 - We've had over 1800 hits on the materials on the DATCP website
 - Consumer evaluations suggest that readers of the publications gained significant knowledge of organic food and farming. In terms of overall awareness and understanding, 34% reported extensive knowledge after reading the publications compared to 17% before. Only 10% reported moderate to very low knowledge after reading it compared to 39% before.
 - Of seven farmers who tested the materials over the summer, two stated the materials were very helpful and two said they were somewhat helpful in differentiating their products from other farmers' market vendors.
- **The 2012 Organic Certification Cost Share program** has been ongoing since July. Application packets were mailed to more than 1500 certified farms and processors in Wisconsin.
 - The deadline for application is October 31, although we have plenty of funds and we should be able to continue reimbursing applicants through November as we have in previous years.
 - We have received an amendment to our contract with NOP providing us with an additional \$165,000 as we did last year.
 - To date, we have received 460 applications. Reimbursements have averaged \$827. A total of \$380,462 has been paid out.
 - Of the applications received to date, 173 have been able to take advantage of the multiple categories provision that allows us to reimburse for more than one 'category' of certification (crops, livestock, processing, or wild gathering).
 - Application forms are posted on the DATCP website:
http://datcp.wi.gov/Farms/Organic_Farming/Cost_Share_Program/index.aspx

Duane asked the Council how we can increase the number of organic farmers registering their farms on the Driftwatch site. DATCP mailed out a post card describing the program to all certified organic farms in Wisconsin in July along with the Organic Cost share application packet. Only 40 organic farms are signed up to date.

Council members suggested that DATCP have a live Driftwatch signup computer at the Organic Farming Conference. We can do this at the DATCP booth.

Farm Service Agency Report **Laurie Makos**

Since the 2012 Food, Farm and Jobs Act has not been finalized, FSA has several programs and issues that remain unresolved. The Milk Income Loss Contract Program (MILC), which has benefited many of our Wisconsin dairy farmers, has ended. At this time, there is no Federal program to assist dairy

farmers during times when the prices they receive for their product are low. The Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) is not able to accept any new contracts into the program after October 1, 2012. Primarily this impacts the continuous CRP areas and special targeted program areas (SAFE areas). Future regular CRP sign up programs will not be able to be held until legislative action is taken. Adjusted Gross Income Limitations (AGI - which applies to some specific programs) is no longer in place after October 1, 2012. In addition, there are no 2012 direct disaster assistance programs for livestock or crops available at this time.

FSA farm loans continue to be available. The farm loans offered by FSA provide significant funding for producers with a variety of operations including dairy, beef, grain and forage crops, various organic operations, fruit and vegetable growers, fish, and others. Interest in the loan programs continues to grow as farmers have increased financial challenges with their operations. Funding for many types of farm loans is available. FSA loans to beginning farmers, young entrepreneurs (youth loans), and loans to socially disadvantaged producers (women or members of minority groups) allow people who otherwise couldn't qualify for typical commercial loans to get a start or continue farming. FSA is known as the lender of first opportunity to assist people who typically can't get agricultural loans.

FSA has been working to assist farmers in our area who are suffering losses because of the weather conditions this year. The release of CRP land for emergency haying and grazing helped many farmers in the state to access additional feed sources during a time when forage production was drastically reduced by the dry weather. Thirty-two Wisconsin counties have been given Federal drought designations for disaster purposes so far. This allows the farmers in those counties (as well as counties contiguous to them who meet the eligibility criteria) to apply for EM loans. EM loans are low interest loans made to assist qualifying farmers. Currently, FSA is reviewing apple production in 2012 and the impact of the spring frosts on the crop. This may lead to disaster assistance eligibility for those producers.

FSA has Non-Insured Assistance Program (NAP) insurance available to help producers who typically aren't covered by Federal Crop Insurance Programs. NAP coverage is available for crops like apples, strawberries, pears, tomatoes, peppers, squash, watermelon, sweet corn, and other fruit and vegetable crops. In addition there are honey, sod, ginseng, maple syrup, and other insurable items that are eligible for insurance. Deadlines for application vary depending on the type of coverage.

Throughout the state, the County Committee (COC) elections are being held this fall. FSA has a proud and long tradition of involving farmer elected representatives in FSA program administration, appeal hearings, and outreach activities. A great deal of interest has been shown in the 2012 COC elections.

Upcoming Deadlines and Dates to Remember:

- November 1: Deadline to submit any milk pound information to FSA under existing MILC contracts
Deadline to make any share or other changes to existing MILC contracts
- November 5: County Committee (COC) ballots will be mailed to eligible producers
- November 12: Veteran's Day, FSA Offices Closed
- November 15: Deadline for producers of APH/Insured Perennial Forage or Fall Seeded Small Grain Crops to File an FSA Acreage Report
- November 20: Deadline to obtain 2013 NAP coverage for perennial crops (such as apples, pears, blueberries, strawberries, grapes, honey, maple sap, asparagus & other perennial fruits)
- November 22: Thanksgiving Day, FSA Offices Closed
- November 30: Deadline to remove livestock from approved CRP emergency grazed acres. Deadline to report the number of livestock and the number of acres grazed under the CRP emergency grazing program
- December 3: Final date to submit the County Committee election ballots to FSA offices

December 25: Christmas Day, FSA Offices Closed
January 1: New Year's Day, FSA Offices Closed
January 2: Honey acreage reporting deadline
January 15: Perennial fruit and vegetable crops final date to file an acreage report to FSA offices
January 21: Martin Luther King Jr Birthday observed, FSA Offices Closed

For further information, contact your local FSA Office or visit the website at <http://fsa.usda.gov/wi>

Laurie also shared that the lack of a Farm Bill impacts their programs very strongly. They cannot wright any CRP contracts and there are no 2012 disaster programs. They are getting a lot of calls on this.

FSA is switching to electronic versions of their newsletter. No more paper copies through the mail, so there will be no mailed notifications of deadlines for programs.

Laurie suggested that the organic farmer directory include emails and websites.

NRCS Report Pat Murphy

Pat reported that EQIP has topped \$26 million, the largest amount ever. Wisconsin has competed well in the specific initiatives they've been doing like high tunnels and organic transition. Congress went ahead and authorized CSP and EQIP for 2013, so NRCS can go ahead and continue sign up farmers. Unfortunately, the caps on income eligibility went away when the farm bill ended, so anyone, no matter how big they are now eligible. The other thing that happened with the Farm Bill going out, conservation compliance has come back into existence. Farmers that drained wetlands, etc. are going to have trouble receiving benefits.

State Conservationist Pat Leavenworth has retired as of October 31. Colleen Oestrich is the interim State Conservationist. They expect to have a new State Conservationist appointed by January. We could consider inviting him or her to our January or March meeting.

Program Funding and Signups in 2011 and 2012 to date

Program		FY11	FY12*
EQIP Environmental Quality Incentives Program	FA (\$)	\$17.3 million*	\$26.0 million*
	# Contracts	968	1575*
	Acres	95,619	140,000*
CSP Conservation Stewardship Program	FA (\$)	\$4,273,955	\$3,060,432
	New Contracts	590	477
	Acres	254,665	162,394
WRP Wetlands Reserve Program	FA (\$)	\$8.3 million	\$8.2 million *
	# Easements	19	
	Acres	1942	
WHIP Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program	FA (\$)	\$273,000	\$23,989
	# Contracts	30	2
FRPP Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program	FA (\$)	\$754,000	\$665,000 *
	# Easements	3 (pending)	
	Acres	523	

*includes all initiatives and special funding; estimates for FY12

Farm Bill and FY2013 Budget and Programs

At this time, neither a new Farm Bill nor the 2013 budget have passed Congress. We anticipate that NRCS will be operating under a continuing resolution, perhaps through March 2013. Pending additional legislation or national direction, we expect to proceed with conservation program application and ranking for FY13. Preparations are underway for FY13 Environmental Quality Incentives Program, Conservation Stewardship Program and initiatives sign-ups.

Sec. Vilsack visits Wisconsin

USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack is visiting Wisconsin Oct. 1-2. Monday he will tour the USDA Forest Products Lab in Madison, and Tuesday, he will host a Town Hall Meeting at the World Dairy Expo.

Wisconsin State Conservationist Retires

Pat Leavenworth, NRCS State Conservationist for Wisconsin is retiring Oct. 31, 2012. Pat has led NRCS in Wisconsin for 18 years, since 1994, through three farm bills and major growth in federal conservation programs. An Acting State Conservationist will be appointed to serve in the interim until a new State Conservationist is named.

Drought Response

The extended and widespread drought this summer in southern Wisconsin caused major crop and forage losses for Wisconsin farmers. NRCS is working to adjust program contracts, apply waivers and modifications in light of the weather-related hardships. Our staff are working with farmers to provide guidance on repairing practices, re-seeding, and modifying contracts.

Some of the steps NRCS is taking:

- Initiate compliance plan variances and waivers to accommodate change in rotations or tillage due to weather Reschedule new practices and construction starts
- Forages –Work with CRP and other landowners who are planning to graze or hay program acreage
- Securing additional funding to repair damaged or failed practices in EQIP
- Through EQIP, NRCS made available up to \$400,000 to establish cover crops, such as rye, oats, millet, or other cover crops that protect against erosion and may provide forage for livestock. Over 19,000 acres will be established in cover crops this fall as a result of the special sign-up.

Cover Crops for Erosion Control and Forage in Drought-affected Counties

Landscape Initiatives

NRCS is targeting conservation assistance to critical resources through a number of landscape scale initiatives. In Wisconsin, the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative and the Mississippi River Basin Healthy Watershed Initiative are allowing NRCS and partners to focus staff and financial assistance on water quality issues in selected watersheds. Over \$3 million in financial assistance was obligated in the lower Fox River Watershed as part of special Phosphorus Reduction Pilot Project. Wisconsin and neighboring states also proposed a national Driftless Area Landscape Conservation Initiative (DALCI) for erosion control and wildlife habitat that was funded as a Wisconsin initiative in FY12 for \$1.2 million.

Soil Health Initiative

The Soil Health Initiative is partnership effort to focus attention on improving soil health through sound field conservation practices. Soil can be managed to its maximum potential through a system of conservation practices, including never-till, cover crops, advanced nutrient and pest management, and buffers and drainage systems where appropriate. This approach results in healthy soil that reduces erosion, requires less nutrient inputs, manages the effects of flood and drought, and reduces nutrient and sediment loading to streams and rivers. An NRCS Team has been launched to begin laying the groundwork for a collaborative Soil Health Initiative in Wisconsin.

UW CALS

Erin Silva

1. UW is organizing several winter conference events of interest to organic:
 - a. Wisconsin Fresh Fruit and Vegetable Conference (Jan 21-22): Vegetable sessions will include info on organics. Discussions are occurring with Atina Diffiey/FamilyFarmed.org to hold post-harvest session on Jan. 22.
 - b. Southern WI Organic and Fresh Market Vegetable Conference (Jan 31, Madison, WI): Agenda being finalized.
 - c. Crop Management Conference (Jan 17): Will include an organic no-till session.

2. Syllabi/schedules are being finalized for new courses by Jed Colquhoun and Erin Silva, along with Amy Charkowski, Mike Bell, AJ Bussan, and Steve Ventura, received a "Sustainability Initiatives in Research and Education" grant to accomplish the following goals:
 - a. 3-credit, production focused organic ag course in Spring 2013; "Organic and Urban Agriculture"
 - b. Seminar series titled "A Growing Dilemma: the Future of Food" in Spring 2013: Will be held on Tuesday evenings
 - c. To be planned: a hands-on internship program in organic vegetable and crop production (as a corollary to the spring course) in Summer 2013;
 - d. Facilitate a broader campus-wide discussion on the development of a sustainable ag/food systems curriculum that will include organic agriculture.

3. A strategic planning exercise is underway at CALS. Updates will be given as to how the ag community might be involved.

UW Extension

Kevin Shelley

Several new specialist positions have been added in Extension. A dairy animal health and wellbeing specialist just got hired in the Dairy Science Department. There is also a Soil and Water Conservation extension specialist replacing Dick Wolkowski. A third position recently filled is the Extension field crops plant pathologist (Dr. Damon Smith). His specialty is disease resistance in soybean varieties.

Extension is also focusing on refilling county extension ag agent positions. Kevin encourages the organic community to communicate with their local agents, to make sure Extension knows you're out there and keeps organic issues on the radar screen.

Extension has spent the last year dealing with extreme weather events. We've had flooding in the north in early summer, drought the rest of the season throughout the state. Education programs include resources for emergency feed and forage.

Kevin reported that there have been a growing number of '569' reports, anonymous whistle blower complaints about farmers not in conservation compliance. There have been an increasing number of these—some are neighbors harassing other neighbors, especially absentee landowners. Pierce County had 30 complaints this year.

There are increasing reports of from around the state regarding corn root worm resistance to BT corn varieties.

There is also more interest in cover crops. There are some issues that have come up with cover crops being planted after crops sprayed with herbicides. Often the cover crop is covered under 'other crops' on the herbicide label and there can be an 18 or 24 month planting interval on some of them. These crops would be off label if they are used for animal feed.

Wisconsin DNR Report to the Organic Advisory Council

October 29, 2012

Erin Craine

Message from Erin:

I have accepted another position within the agency and will not be able to attend next Monday's meeting. I was planning on sending you a short update on the invasives rule and the endangered and threatened species list. I will remind Al Shea that they will need to find a new representative. Thanks and although I was only involved with your council for a short period of time, I enjoyed learning about the issues. Erin

Report:

Endangered Species Rule revision:

The first list of Wisconsin endangered and threatened (E/T) species was developed in 1972 following enactment of Wisconsin's Endangered Species Law. The list was created to restrict the taking, possession or marketing of species threatened with extinction from the state. Since 1972, the list has been revised 10 times, most recently in 2011, when four cave bats were added. However, because changes in a species status typically occur more frequently, these changes are reflected in the Natural Heritage Working List which is dynamic and is updated as new information becomes available. The annual process of updating the Working List provides the primary triggers that initiate a comprehensive assessment of a species and can result in revisions to the official list of endangered and threatened species.

The DNR's Endangered Resources Program policy recommends that the E/T list should be reviewed at every five years or earlier, as needed, based on changes in species population condition. The "as needed" triggers include recovery goals met, immediate need for protection or significant new data on a single species or group of species. Additionally, according to Wisconsin law, "Any 3 persons may petition the department to review the status of any listed or unlisted wild animal or wild plant." The program has undertaken a list review and revision which has resulted in 16 species being recommended for delisting and eight species for listing (<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/endangeredresources/etlist.html>).

Invasives Rule Revision:

The Wisconsin Invasive Species Council met on 10/22/2012 and voted on the Species Assessment Group recommendations that will be passed on as advisory to DNR as staff draft changes to NR40. The future timeline for the rule revisions is as follows:

- Present – December 2012 – DNR staff are drafting NR 40 language changes and preparing the species lists for changes to the regulated species.
- January - March 2013 – DNR staff in cooperation with the Council will host informal discussions on the proposed NR 40 revisions at locations around the state to discuss the proposed changes.
- March 2013 - DNR staff to finalize rule language and draft the Economic Impact Analysis which will be distributed for comment.

- April - June 2013 – Solicit comment on the Economic Impact Analysis and present the draft to the Natural Resources Board.
- August – October 2013 - Hold official public hearings on the Economic Impact Analysis
- March – November 2014 – Rule approved by the Natural Resources Board, DNR Secretary, Governor and Legislature. Final target for publication is November 2014.

Laura reported that Carla Wright suggested that the OAC work with DNR to get them to avoid planting GMOs on DNR properties. Jerry suggested that they could farm them organically.

Old business

Overview of organic prices (Mike Schulist and others)

Mike reported that there is still some price gouging, both in conventional and organic commodities. There is some organic hay available from western Minnesota. Barley is scarce in WI. Some dairy farmers are culling herds.

Clear hilum food grade soybeans sold for \$31.75. Feed grade beans are running in the \$27.50 range. Mike tries to sell his members' grain to WI mills so it can help other farmers.

Jerry reported that Organic Valley increased their milk price \$3 per hundredweight this year to help address the increase in feed cost. Poultry producers are hurting because they buy most of their grain and feed.

Altfred observed that forage is a huge issue this year with the drought. Many dairy farmers are learning to live without much, if any, grain, but forage is the big shortage.

There was discussion that, if we hadn't had this drought, the price of conventional corn would have dropped this year.

Christine reported that Standard Process had 800 local visitors at their open house this summer. Their crops looked better than a lot of the neighboring farms and it was noticed by the visitors. Their soils seemed to hold more moisture allowing the crops to do a little better.

Erin stated that the organic crops at Arlington did very well—180 bu. for organic corn. They didn't see much difference between the organic fields and conventional ones, but Arlington soils are so good, it's hard to see any differences.

We're not seeing many consumer price hikes yet, but this will probably happen next spring when the feed runs out and the stored grain etc. runs out.

Altfred announced that the 2012 Biodynamic Conference will be in Madison on November 12-13 (<https://www.biodynamics.com/conference>).

The meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm.