

CUSTOMNews

Representing Custom Farming in Wisconsin | SUMMER 2021



Jesse Dvorachek from Dvorachek Farm and Industry captured an incredible sunset this spring. Please submit your photos to WCO.

Good truck, trailer maintenance helps prevent accidents on the road

By Mary Hookham for WCO



Fred Whitford

Many truck drivers experience complications, and even accidents, if they don't complete a list of safety protocols before hitting the pavement. This is the only way to ensure trailers won't disengage and go rogue to cause accidents.

"You can't plan for everything but you can do your best," said Fred Whitford, clinical engagement professor in botany and plant pathology at Purdue University

Driving down the road pulling a trailer appears simple at first glance. But doing so safely is actually quite an accomplishment.

and director of the college's pesticide programs.

Whitford said forty percent of truck drivers lose trailers. Careful planning, thorough vehicle maintenance, driver state of mind and insurance coverage are just some of the issues to consider when dealing with truck-and-trailer accidents on the road. Truck drivers can diminish doubt about who is responsible when an accident occurs if they've meticulously planned for several possible scenarios.

"There is always a question of who is responsible, and there are two sides to every story," Whitford said.

Using couplers and cross chains are some of the easiest and best ways to prevent trailer disengagement. When

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UPCOMING DATES:

WCO Mini-grant program
Accepted on a rolling basis

Forage Symposium
February 21-23, 2022
Chula Vista, Wisconsin Dells

CONTACT WCO:

execdir@wiscustomoperators.org
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From the President's Cab

By Raymond Liska



Greetings to all of you, outstanding in your fields! It is great to see the amazing custom ag fleet going full throttle throughout

the Midwest and beyond. I feel an immense sense of pride watching our crews undertaking what has been and will be another triumphant season. Yes, there will be challenges, but we will always get the job done one way or another.

Keeping up with tradition, I feel it is appropriate to open the discussion with the timeless topic that still finds its way to the forefront of conversation, the weather. Weather here in the driftless region, like much of the surrounding areas, has once again proven it writes the rules. Seeing record breaking temperatures and dry conditions very early in the season gave our manure haulers a great opportunity to make applications in a timely manner without issue, and maybe even get some time off for a beautiful Easter Sunday. Following just two snows on the robin's tail, planting commenced in full swing with mellow soil conditions providing excellent seed to soil contact. After a great emergence and first crop about to roll, the words no farmer wants to hear until late fall was uttered, 'frost warning.' Everyone held their breath while the cold air settled into the valleys, but the crop proved to be resilient to the harsh nights

with minimum damage and only a small amount of replanting needed. While the cold snap brought unwanted suppression of the grain crops, it also provided a little extra time for the silage harvesting crews to fine tune and prepare for what ended up being an abundant first cutting. Without any rain in sight, choppers hit the ground running, load after load tallied for the largest silage production states in the country.

Then, we were hit with extremely hot and dry conditions and there wasn't much rest for the massive network of operators, truck drivers, mechanics, parts specialists, etc. Windrows dried as fast as they hit the ground on many afternoons, giving opportunity for balers to help speed up the harvest. As we wrapped up, we all watched and waited patiently for the rains to bless the ground, but many clouds came and went, and the dry conditions pushed crops into a state of stress as the sprayers and applicators did their work. Finally, nearing the end of June, we saw those million-dollar rains fall from the sky, however they are much more like billion dollar rains in this day and age.

Now, with the second cutting in the rear view, the stress of the drought accelerated the maturity and crews were once again back in full swing taking advantage of the sunlight, and maybe stopping just for a moment to enjoy the fireworks.

Hot, dry conditions and stress are

trigger words for many of us. The imminent risk of fires has been a line on the chalk board of days some of us wish we could repeat. Earlier this year, through virtual learning, many WCO members were able to hear from experts on crisis/accident management. Many issues were discussed and some of them are hard to fathom, but we must always put our best effort forward to first prevent and hopefully avoid crisis issues.

A key takeaway - and one that I can speak to from personal experience - before an investigator even asks what happened they will likely ask for maintenance records. Having matching maintenance records on file and in machines, along with third party certification could be valuable in handling any issues.

I always say I have the most fun job in the world, just don't ask me when everything is going wrong, but if everyone makes it home safe it's a good day. If you or anyone on your crew ever needs help dealing with the stress that comes inevitably with this job, WCO and its members can help. Through our vast network of professionals and people who have been through the same things, we are well-equipped with valued information and resources to support our fellow operators. As always have a safe and happy season, and may God be with you on your journey. 🇺🇸

- Ray



Trucks, trailers (continued from p. 1)

the tongue comes down and chains are hanging but not crossed, the tongue hits the pavement. If the chains are crossed, it creates a cradle for the tongue, preventing it from hitting the pavement.

Truck maintenance is one key to success on the road. Whitford advises truck drivers to have knowledge of the vehicle they drive and its service record. Keeping brakes in good condition should be a priority for any driver as well as tracking number of hours drivers work and knowing that number before stepping into a vehicle. Maintaining posted speed limits, or going slower if needed, is important. Drivers using medication should be well aware of the effects of those medications and their side effects before driving.

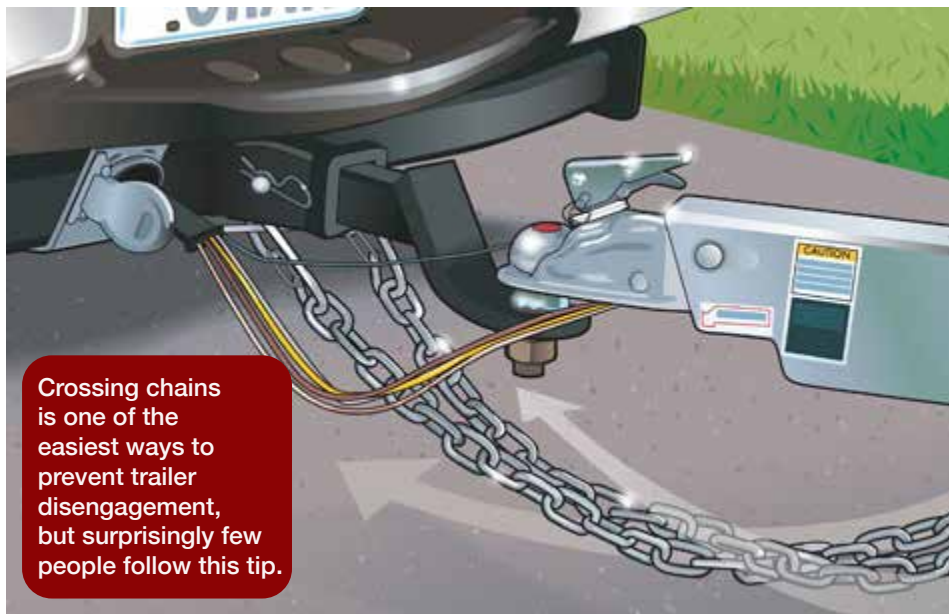
"Get your employees to tell you when trucks have problems, then you make the decision from there as to when that has to be fixed," he said.

In some accidents, drug and alcohol tests are done to help determine who was responsible. Perhaps a driver caused an accident by being intoxicated but tests need to be done to establish those facts before anybody can lay blame.

"Look at the facts of the accident," Whitford said. "Take pictures, use drones."

Whitford also recommends taking at least one vehicle in the fleet to a third party for annual inspections. This shows companies have nothing to hide when it comes to vehicle maintenance and care, he said.

Keeping detailed maintenance files in each vehicle about that vehicle and trailers associated with it is crucial. This helps vehicle owners, all drivers and anybody involved in accidents informed



about that specific vehicle and trailer.

"Write everything down no matter how big or small," Whitford said. "This is a critical piece in investigations."

All equipment needs slow-moving signs that are very clear, easy to read and not faded. These need to be attached to implements where drivers behind can easily see them.

"Don't just assume it's ok to have it only on the tractor because in most cases, the implement blocks the sign," he said.

Whitford suggests truck owners and drivers should learn their insurance policies intimately. This includes knowing the covered travel radius and what will happen if drivers go beyond the radius. Looking seriously at the cost of insurance can save plenty of trouble in the future, he said.

"The bottom line is that this

is serious business," Whitford said. "[The consequences of] accidents last a long time, so we all need to do these safety things and put out good trucks with good drivers." 🇺🇸

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Issues to watch

Biennial state budget: On July 8, Gov. Tony Evers signed the state's \$87.5 billion 2021-23 biennial budget into law.

The budget largely represents what was originally passed by the Joint Committee on Finance in June including several key provisions that impact farmers and rural residents.

Highlights include:

Department of Agriculture Trade and Consumer Protection

- \$2 million in funding for DATCP producer-led watershed grants
- \$5 million over five years for promotion of agricultural exports program

- \$400,000 in funding for a newly created meat processor grant program
- Funding and position authorization for four additional state meat inspectors
- \$400,000 in funding for dairy processor grants
- Farmer mental health funding of \$100,000 per year
- Maintain funding for agriculture non-point program

Department of Transportation

- \$100 million in Local Roads Improvement Program funding for local government projects

UW System

- Nearly \$10 million to renovate and add space to the Barron Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory
- \$2 million to fund UW state agriculture specialist positions
- Maintain funding for Dairy Innovation Hub at \$7.8 million each year

Department of Natural Resources

- \$2 million in funding for well compensation and abandonment grants
- Maintain funding for agriculture non-point program

Public Service Commission

- \$129 million for rural broadband

Continued on p. 5

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Continued from p. 4

Truth in labeling legislation: In late June, the state Assembly passed bills 73, 74 and 75, which are aimed at prohibiting the use of dairy and meat labels on imitation food products. The bills now wait for a full Senate vote and then signature by Gov. Evers this fall.

Assembly Bills 73 and 74 would prohibit the labeling of food as milk or as a dairy product or ingredient if the food is not derived from the milk of a cow or other hooved mammal. AB75 would prohibit the labeling of food as meat if the food is not derived from the flesh of an animal, fish, mollusk or insect.

These bills also align with existing but currently unenforced U.S. Food and Drug Administration regulations. The implementation of these labeling provisions will go into effect once other states adopt similar food labeling legislation.

Now that the budget process is complete, WCO is hopeful that we can revisit some of our long-standing issues with the legislature that have been on hold due to the pandemic. 🇺🇸



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Welcome back to Forage Symposium

By Maria Woldt for WCO



Maria Woldt

February just wasn't the same this year without our annual trip to Chula Vista in Wisconsin Dells.

Midwest Forage Association did an excellent job facilitating a virtual conference with educational topics and even a trade show, and we all agree, it's not the same as being together in person.

We are excited to host the 2022 Forage Symposium in person, February 21-23 again at Chula Vista Resort. The event follows President's Day weekend which seems to be popular as many kids are off school, and attendees bring their families to enjoy the

waterpark.

The WCO Education Committee works all year on topics for the Symposium. They gather feedback from members, pay close attention to emerging trends and attend other industry events for speaker ideas.

Even though we are eight months from the event, WCO has most of our topics chosen – including two high impact keynotes for the whole group to enjoy – not just those in the “WCO room”. After taking a year off, the WCO board felt strongly that they wanted to invest in excellent speakers for Symposium, even if it required additional budget.

On Tuesday of Symposium, we will continue with our “forage harvesting around the country/world” theme with a team of

Continued on p. 7

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Shannon McKain will deliver our morning keynote on Wednesday, Feb. 23 at the 2022 Forage Symposium.

Continued from p. 6

women from the Pacific Northwest. Macey Wessels and Shelly Boshart Davis own and operate Boshart Trucking, a trucking and custom baling business, which bales hay and straw on more than 20,000 acres in Tangent, Ore. The women also manage two related businesses - BOSSCO Trading, shipping straw to global customers and PressCo, a straw pressing facility.

Macey and Shelly manage between 40 and 80 employees depending on the time of year, logistics, equipment (they run Krone balers) sales, marketing and all the other details that come with selling product to countries like Japan, South Korea, Russia and the United Arab Emirates to name a few. Shelly is also an Oregon State Representative.

In addition to their keynote, Macey and Shelly will give a smaller related talk in the WCO room later Tuesday to go into greater detail about equipment and business practices.

To compliment our equipment and custom farming topics, we are excited to bring a new type of speaker to the event on Wednesday morning. Shannon McKain is a nationally recognized keynote speaker, business coach and former NFL cheerleader. Shannon trains business leaders and employees on topics like workplace culture, bridging the generational divide, growing yourself as a leader and emotional intelligence.

Shannon has traveled the country and world sharing her message, and she has previously been featured at the US Custom Harvesters convention. Shannon will give a smaller, related breakout talk in the WCO room after her keynote later on Wednesday.

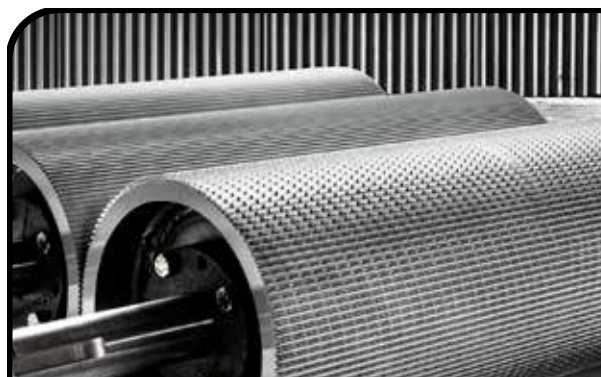


Macey Wessels and Shelly Boshart Davis own and operate Boshart Trucking in Tangent, Ore. Photo by Angie Grace Photography

Other WCO topics this year at Symposium include trucks vs tracks, compaction, new equipment, transfer from dump carts to semit-trucks, and a research roundtable featuring research projects at UW-Madison and UW-Platteville, supported by WCO – just to name a few.

More information will roll out in the coming months, and registration will open in November, so watch your mail and email. We can't wait to see all of you in February for these and other exciting speakers.

As a plug for our education committee, if you know of a topic or speaker that you think we should consider, email Maria Woldt at execdir@wiscustomoperators.org.



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Membership incentive program

Don't forget - WCO has a membership incentive program! If you sign up a new member you receive \$25 towards your 2022 membership. Sponsors can participate also. Simply list your company name on the "referred by" line and earn money towards your 2021 membership or sponsorship.

Incentive not to exceed cost of membership or sponsorship. Help WCO grow our membership base!

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WCO honors additional scholarship winner, selects first mini-grant recipient

By WCO

The WCO board feels strongly that supporting the custom farming community and allied agriculture partners is a good use of WCO's membership and sponsorship dollars. To this end, WCO gives scholarships to 3-4 students every year and recently created a minigrant program.

Additional scholarship winner



Luke Trustem

WCO recently awarded two scholarships to students pursuing further education. The WCO scholarship and awards committee selected one additional student for our 2020 scholarship cohort.

These students were selected based on leadership, civic engagement, academics and volunteer activities related to agriculture. Students also submitted

essays detailing their educational and vocational plans for the future. Scholarship winners are required to have ties to the WCO – either as a member, relative of a member or employee of a member. Students received a \$1,000 or \$1,500 scholarship.

Luke Trustem is a family member and employee of WCO member Larson Acres. Like so many students during the pandemic, Luke chose to defer his college enrollment until there was more certainty around in person instruction.

Luke began his freshman year at UW-Platteville this past January and had a great first semester. He is studying dairy science and agriculture business. Upon graduation, Luke plans to become a dairy nutritionist and ultimately return to the family farm to apply his skills and passion for dairy cattle.

Inaugural mini-grant recipient



WCO's mini-grant program provides smaller, more flexible awards to assist with important projects or programs that will benefit custom farming and the ag community as a whole.

Applications are accepted on a rolling basis. Awards range from \$500-\$5,000.

Our first recipient is the Calumet County Ag Stewardship Alliance, a farmer-led group focused on growing concerns about water quality in Calumet County along with surrounding areas of northeastern Wisconsin.

The group will use WCO's grant funds to conduct on-farm field trials and host a field day featuring conservation farming techniques and manure application innovation. 🇺🇸

Please send your photos to WCO

Photos featured in the *Custom News* are taken by staff or submitted by members and sponsors. We are always looking for high quality images of custom farmers in action. We do our best to feature multiple brands of equipment and diverse custom farming practices.

Please e-mail your high-resolution images (1MB or larger) to execdir@wiscustomoperators.org and we will be sure to feature you on our social media channels and in our publications. Thank you in advance!



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***“ Safety is serious business.
The consequences of
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so we all need to prioritize
safety and put out good
trucks with good drivers. ”***

-Fred Whitford, Feature article on p. 1

To complete your no fee IoH/Ag CMV permit applications
(Required as of January 1, 2015), go to
wisconsin.gov and search “no fee ag permits”

Questions about IoH definitions and rules? Go to
wiscustomoperators.org/resources