

## Annual Symposium Discusses KP Scores, Mowers, Forage Boxes, Safety

**W**isconsin Custom Operator sessions at the annual symposium in January examined kernel processing, safety, financial and health-care issues, proposed roadway regulations (see story below) and other concerns.

They were held at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells, jointly with sessions offered by the Midwest Forage Association (MFA) and Professional Nutrient Applicators Association of Wisconsin.

For \$15, members can buy proceedings of many of the talks by contacting MFA at 651-484-3888. Here's a short synopsis of a few presentations.

**Processing corn silage** properly has become more challenging as chopper sizes increase. And getting forage length with well-processed kernels isn't easy,

said Chris Wacek-Driver, forage program manager with VitaPlus.

Custom operators, producers, nutritionists, agronomists and herd managers need to "be on the team" and use the same language to get optimal kernel processing.

She told how nutritionists measure kernel processing using a corn silage processing score system as well as explained two visual, in-field processing tests that can be utilized.

**Bunker density** improvements were "modest" in a University of Wisconsin (UW) study of the Impact Silage Packer, by Agromatic, Inc., Fond du Lac, WI. So said Brian Holmes, recently retired University of Wisconsin ag engineer.

The packer, which consists of concrete-filled wheels with a bracket on top to hold chained-on concrete

blocks weighing about 2,500 lbs each, improved density by 0.8 lb dry matter per cubic foot, he said.

*(Continued on page 3)*



## Wisconsin Legislators Tackle New Ag Road-Use Law

Reprinted from *Hay & Forage Grower*

**A** new law governing the operation of farm equipment on public roads was moving toward final approval by the Wisconsin State Legislature early this month.

The law is expected to serve as a blueprint for other states considering similar legislation.

Changes are needed, because the existing Implements of Husbandry (IoH) law was enacted when farm equipment was much smaller, says Dick Kraus, an Elkhart Lake, WI, custom forage harvester. The rules have been mostly ignored by farmers and law enforcement entities, but "due to shrinking local budgets, increasing costs for road repair and more awareness by all parties involved, they may be enforced more aggressively," Kraus warns.

A bill passed by the state senate and modified by the assembly on March 21 represents a compromise that will enable farmers and custom operators to do their jobs while preventing excessive damage to roads, Kraus believes.

"There are things that are going to be hard for us to live with," he says. "Yet it offers allowances and exemptions for people with large equipment that did not exist before the new legislation."

The bill would increase the axle weight limit from 20,000 to 23,000 lbs, and total gross vehicle weight from 80,000 to 92,000 lbs. Certain implements, including self-propelled forage harvesters, would be exempt from the axle-weight limit on county and township roads. Local governments could override the exemption, but would be required to issue no-fee permits for operating that equipment and provide approved routes if the applied-for routes aren't acceptable.

Kraus worries that the permitting process could be "very cumbersome, scary and tedious." Farmers know which roads they'll be using and can apply for permits early in the year, and so do most custom operators.

"But all of a sudden one of our long-term customers gets a chance to rent a farm four miles in the other direction," he

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## 2 Meet Kathy Vander Kinter: WCO Elects First Female President

**K**athy Vander Kinter has been elected president of Wisconsin Custom Operators, Inc. (WCO). She is the first female president in the history of the organization.

Vander Kinter is employed by Vander Kinter Farms, LLC, a custom harvesting and manure hauling business in Green Bay owned by her husband, Luke, and extended family members.

“I am honored to have been elected president and look forward to serving the members of the WCO. As an organization, we have exciting new programs under way, and recently hired our first executive director. We are also closely following and keeping mem-

bers informed about issues that effect their businesses,” says Vander Kinter.

Vander Kinter previously served as WCO’s secretary-treasurer and currently represents the North Region on the board of directors. She was elected to the WCO board in 2011. A graduate of Fox Valley Technical College, Kathy and her husband have three children.

WCO held its annual meeting and co-hosted the annual symposium with the Midwest Forage Association and Professional Nutrient Applicators Association of Wisconsin at the Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Cole Olson, co-owner of Diversified Farms, Ltd, Alma, was elected vice president

and Troy Meyer, Meyer Manufacturing in Dorchester, was elected as secretary-treasurer.

Three directors were elected to the organization’s board of directors, including Isaac Lemmenes, Waupun, who will serve his first term. Retiring board member and immediate past president Robert Hoerth, Chilton, was honored for his service to WCO.



### From the President’s Perspective: Implements Of Husbandry Bill Passes

By Kathy Vander Kinter

Whether you have been in favor, against or a neutral bystander on the Implements of Husbandry issues over the last few years, there is no doubt it has been a hot topic for all of us wherever we have gone in the past three months.

In January I visited our state capital in Madison along with Dick Kraus and Roy Lemmenes. What we did not anticipate is being asked to testify, or in my terms, “inform” legislators how we as individual custom operators thought the proposed bill could be improved or what our personal harvesting operations entailed.

My experience that day opened my eyes to government more than ever before. We really do have a say in what happens in our state. Our senators and representatives are just like you and me – very down-to-earth people – and do value our opinions. We may not always get the exact outcome that we want, but, all in all, they are very willing to compromise to benefit both sides on an issue.

As a member of U.S. Custom Harvesters, Inc. (USCHI), I would like to thank that organization for all it has done for Wisconsin agriculture. USCHI hired a lobbyist and has been extremely involved financially and as a voice for what the future holds for us here and in all the other states watching Wisconsin’s outcome.

I would also like to thank our involved members, sponsors, extension and university personnel and customers. Whether you called your legislators, attended a town hall meeting or have been on an IoH committee, know that your voice has made a difference. I encourage you to stay involved; we’re in the home stretch.

As this moves forward, we will need to be educators of this new law. It will benefit us all if we work to inform our townspeople and general public. As with any law, there may be some language in it that we can work to improve, so keep the numbers handy to contact representatives.

### Spotlight On New Board Member

My name is Isaac Lemmenes of Lemmenes Custom Farms, LLC, Waupun. I joined the partnership with my two brothers and father (Roy) eight years ago and am amazed by the changes in our industry during my short tenure. Our business focuses on custom manure application and forage harvesting.



During my time with the business, I have managed the expansion of our fabrication-manufacturing capabilities. Building new equipment to better our operation and the industry as a whole has become my passion! I recently married my beautiful wife Nicki. We are enjoying all life has to offer as newlyweds, including our honeymoon, house renovations and keeping up with our puppy, Gates.

I am very honored to follow in my father’s footsteps as a WCO board member. Thank you for the opportunity to be involved and serve.

### 2014 WCO Board Of Directors

**President** – Kathy Vander Kinter, kvanderkinter@gmail.com  
**Vice President** – Cole Olson, cole.olson@plantpioneer.com  
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**Honorary Rep.** – Kevin Shinnars, UW-Madison, kjshinne@wisc.edu  
**Director At Large** – Dick Kraus, kcfhllp@gmail.com  
**Executive Director** – Maria McGinnis, execdir@wiscustomoperators.org

## Symposium Coverage *(from page 1)*

**Major manufacturers** of mowers explained their latest models in several product sessions. One presenter suggested several factors that change cutting quality. They are ground contours, ground speed, mower type, operator skill level and crop conditions.

He advised potential buyers to ask themselves several questions:

- Can your current mower adapt and float to follow the changing terrain?
- How fast can your mower travel and still float?
- Is your operator qualified to run it and does he know what adjustments to make for varying crop conditions?

**Ways to manage** ag emergencies was one of two ses-

sions on safety from Dave Hill, director of Penn State University's Managing Ag Emergencies program. In the second session, he told what to watch for in "invisible dangers," including hazardous gasses.

**Manufacturers** of forage transport systems told custom operators what they should consider before choosing the size, style and number of boxes.

They should think about: chopper size/horsepower, crop yield, storage system style and/or packing capacity, the fill style, unload style and/or time, box capacity, travel speed and distance, field size, cycle time and their longest hauls.

**Shredlage rolls**, which shred rather than cut corn silage, were discussed by a panel of operators with questions from the audience on machinery wear, premium payments, etc.

## Road-Use Law *(from page 1)*

says. "Then we may have to scramble to get last-minute permits on those roads."

"The bill delays enforcement for violations of width, length or weight by state patrol or Department of Transportation inspectors until Jan. 15, 2015, so there's some time to get it worked out," points out Cheryl Skjolaas, University of Wisconsin Extension ag safety specialist.

It also redefines Implements of Husbandry and states that a single IoH can be up to 60' long. There is no height limitation, and IoH more than 15' wide wouldn't need overwidth permits, but would be subject to additional lighting and marking requirements.

The legislation is based on recommendations from a study group representing the state transportation and ag departments, farm organizations, equipment manufacturers and other entities. Members met frequently for more than a year, says Kraus, who represented Wisconsin Custom Operators. At public meetings last summer, farmers and custom operators were fearful that new regulations would be imposed on them. But they were reminded that more-

stringent rules were already in place.

"If nothing else comes out of this, at least the education is going to help people," says Kraus. "People are learning what the laws are."

Skjolaas urges farmers and custom operators to begin communicating with local officials who will issue permits.

"If they know they have equipment that is of concern, they should be having conversations with the local towns and municipalities they are going to be working with," she says.

**WCO Addendum:** At our early April press deadline, SB509 awaits Gov. Walker's signature before becoming law, which could happen as soon as April 23. A staggered implementation strategy has been proposed: 30 days on size provisions and an 18-month delay on lighting/marketing and over-the-center-line provisions. Permits wouldn't be required until Jan. 1, 2015, using the form prescribed by DOT. A sunset provision of Jan. 2, 2020, exists on the bill, therefore it will be revisited before that date. The bill author's intention is to address this with follow-up legislation at the January 2015 session. For the latest information on IoH, visit <http://fyi.uwex.edu/agsafety/>.

## WCO Names Scholarship Winners, Accepting Applications For 2014

The Wisconsin Custom Operators, Inc. (WCO), recently awarded three scholarships to students pursuing further education.

These students were selected based on leadership, civic engagement, academics and volunteer activities related to agriculture. Students submitted essays detailing their future educational and vocational plans.

Scholarship winners are required to have ties to the WCO – as members, relatives of members or employees of members. Students each received a \$750 scholarship.

"In 2013, we accepted our greatest number of applications. We believe strongly that giving back to students interested in the agriculture industry helps ensure the future of the organization. All applicants were very deserving," says Dr. Kevin Shinnars, chair of the WCO Scholarship Committee and Professor of Biological Systems Engineering at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Winners of the 2013 WCO Scholarships include: Dustin Oesau, Mondovi, an agricultural engineering technology and agri-

cultural business double major at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls; Mike Sankey, Amherst, an agricultural business and agronomy double major also at the University of Wisconsin-River Falls; and Erin Harris, Madison, a doctorate of veterinary medicine student at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Applications for the 2014 WCO scholarships are currently being accepted and are due May 1. Interested students should visit [www.wiscustomperators.org](http://www.wiscustomperators.org) for more information on eligibility and criteria as well as application forms.

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The Wisconsin Custom Operators is an organization comprised of individuals throughout the state who derive their income in whole or part from providing custom farming services. These services include: forage harvesting (alfalfa and corn silage), forage bagging and baling, tillage, planting, combining, trucking, manure handling, and spraying, among other services.

## Education Committee Chair Tells How Conference Topics Are Chosen

**By Adam Danzinger**  
**Education Committee Co-Chair**

**I** hope everyone enjoyed our 2014 conference and found the topics interesting and useful for your operations. The Education Committee works very hard every year to select the best topics and speakers.

One of the best ways for us to gauge what topics interest our members is to review the surveys filled out after each session. From the surveys this year we had more than 60 topic suggestions – an outstanding response.

Of course, that many topics are more than we have time for at our annual conference, so the Education Committee is prioritizing them and finding speakers. We do this in several steps. Every committee member gets the full list of topics from the surveys and is asked to rank them in

priority as well as add any topics we may have missed.

We then have a face-to-face meeting to discuss our lists and create a master list of about 10-20 topics. That list is sent to the board of directors and each WCO member with the request to take an online survey. Once we get those results back, we take top topics and lock in speakers.

If any WCO member would like to be involved in this process, you are welcome to become an Education Committee member or send us topics you would like to see.

Feel free to contact me or any other committee member! I can be reached at [adam.danzinger@claas.com](mailto:adam.danzinger@claas.com).

