

# CUSTOMNews

Representing Custom Farming in Wisconsin | SUMMER 2016



Sgt. Bradley Ocain, WI State Patrol, during a DOT inspection at the recent WCO Safety Certification.

## 2nd annual safety certification event a success

This past March, a group of WCO members attended the second annual WCO safety certification program training held at the Arlington Ag Research Station. 14 years ago, the founders of WCO envisioned a program that would bring members a competitive edge, and this program embodies this vision.

This year's topics included: Risk management assessment and insurance premiums; OSHA compliance; a personal account of a fatal accident; a DOT mock truck inspection; and finally emergency preparedness.

Bryce O'Leary, an operator from Janesville, shared his experience with a fatal accident involving a car and chopping equipment. Read more about his presentation in Kathy's column on page 3. Unfortunately, accidents are too common in agriculture and Bryce's personal account was very eye opening and emotional.

This meeting teamed with accredited sessions at the Forage Symposium lead to WCO Safety Certification which is designed to be a badge of distinction for custom farmers.

In a down dairy economy, everyone is looking for creative ways to cut costs. It's inevitable that someone may try to undercut professional custom farming services. However, quality feed, produced safely and in a timely manner is a priority for progressive farmers. If you are certified, make sure your clients know. Show them your certificate, explain the program and display the window clings in your equipment.

Studies show that participation in incident-reduction programs like the Safety Certification Program actually reduce incident rates. Insurance companies are willing to offer discounts to businesses who participate in safety programs, so make sure to check with your provider.

## INSIDE:

President's Cab.....	2
Policy Update.....	2
Welcome new members.....	2
Join the WCO Board.....	3
LDMI Equipment Grants.....	4
Membership Incentive.....	5
Employee of the Year.....	6
Event Info.....	8
Permit Reminder.....	8

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

WI Farm Technology Days  
July 19-21, Snudden Farms  
Lake Geneva, WI  
*WCO Board Meeting - July 19*

Forage Symposium  
January 23-25, 2017  
Chula Vista Resort  
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

## CONTACT WCO:

Membership or Sponsorship:  
[execdir@wiscustomoperators.org](mailto:execdir@wiscustomoperators.org)  
(608) 577-4345



## From the President's Cab

By Kathy Vander Kinter



Hopefully this edition of the WCO newsletter finds you enjoying the summer rush! First off I would like to thank everyone who was able to attend the WCO Safety Certification program back in March. If you were unable to join us for the event you

missed a couple of impressive presentations from some alumni speakers including Dave Anderson, Mary Bauer and Jeff Nelson. Members took in a very "real" presentation from WCO board member, Bryce O'Leary. Bryce gave a very emotional speech from the heart about an accident that occurred on one of his job sites several years ago. His presentation was so real that it was like you were there at the scene as he retold the events of that warm summer day. It brought out adrenaline, frustration, sadness, heartbreak and questions in most of us sitting in the audience. It means a lot as a WCO member and custom operator to be able to hear those experiences from other members to learn what to do in the case of an emergency as well as the emotional toll it takes to overcome the situation. Thank you again to Chubb Insurance for sponsoring the event and Congratulations to our WCO Safety Certified members! Be sure to follow up with your insurance agents to let them know you are certified and ask about further discounts on your policy.

The Education Committee is seeking your input on topic ideas for the upcoming Symposium. Yes, I said Symposium. It will be here before you know it. We are thinking about doing a wide variety of sessions on human resources related topics, sustainability in agriculture, safety, regulations and policy. We have a lot of good ideas that we have brainstormed at our March meeting but if you have something you would like to hear about specifically or know of a potential speaker on these issues, please send me or Maria an email or we are always a phone call away.

Last but not least, environmental concerns have been in the news in my area (Kewaunee County). I encourage you to work with your dairy partners/clients to be the best stewards of the land wherever you harvest. Most dairy and crop farmers, custom service providers and environmental groups are all trying to do what is best for the land. Continual learning and keeping an open mind is key to eliminating conflict, problem solving and progressively moving forward together. As an organization, we need to support our members and their clients throughout the state by providing policy education and highlighting innovative technology that allows us to improve the quality of land and water in the state of Wisconsin.

-Kathy

## Policy Center *issues to watch*

In late June, WIDNR sent two scope statements to ag groups that would reopen NR 151 (runoff management rule) and NR 243 (CAFO rule). Both statements were vague, but it is apparent that DNR wants to make major revisions.

The reason for reopening these rules has to do with concerns over water quality.

Opening NR 151 and NR 243 is very poorly timed due to record low dairy prices and shrinking numbers of farms. Many of the farms impacted

by these rules are already very heavily regulated.

As custom operators, this may affect you as the primary nutrient applicators for clients impacted by these rules. Increased regulation hurts client's bottom line, which hurts operators.

Operators and farmers do not take environmental issues lightly and are actively engaged in practises that reduce footprint. The issues are very complex and the approach should be holistic.

## Welcome New Members!

The following list represents individuals who joined WCO from December 1, 2015 to June 15, 2016.

Will Boeder  
John Chapiewsky  
Cody Chaulkin  
Nick Chervenka  
Jay Copeland  
Dakota Ducat  
Travis Erickson  
Abe Good  
Travis Juckem  
Missy Kolarik

Andrew Kuehl  
Nathan Lauscher  
Wayne Leis  
Jason Lindner  
Issac Rowe  
Steve Sylvester  
Mike Turner  
Jerid Wos  
Zach Zaibel

Adequate moisture and heat have made this season a great one in most areas of the state.

# Have you considered the WCO Board?

We might be in the midst of the harvesting season, but it's already time to start thinking about WCO board elections. At the 2017 Forage Symposium, WCO will elect two operator representatives (north and south east regions) and one corporate representative.

The board meets in person four times per year at various locations throughout the state. Each board member is also asked to be on at least one committee.

Meetings generally coincide with association or industry events for ease:

- January - Forage Symposium
- March - WCO Safety Certification
- July - WI Farm Tech Days
- December - Stand alone meeting

Time is harder and harder to come by and with each year comes new

technology to adopt, new rules to follow and additional differentiations needed to remain competitive. WCO has been at the forefront of many of custom farming's top issues.

WCO board members were active in early loH legislation and continue to engage with revisions and future loH considerations.

WCO board members are also following other issues that impact manure hauling, water quality & quantity and more.

For a small investment of your time, you can make a difference! Please consider running for a spot on the board. If you have any questions or would like to add your name to the list, please contact Maria at [execdir@wiscustomoperators.org](mailto:execdir@wiscustomoperators.org) or (608) 577-4345.

### Join a Committee!

WCO is always accepting committee members. If you are looking for a small but important way to get involved, contact WCO about joining a committee. Choose from the following:

- Education/Conference
- Media
- Safety
- Recruitment
- Special Projects
- Scholarship



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## Cost-share grants available for Low Disturbance Manure Injection Equipment

From Dane County Land & Water Resources Department

Dane County Land & Water has announced a pilot project for custom operators in the Yahara Watershed to apply for grants to fund the purchase of Low Disturbance Manure Injection equipment. The Yahara Watershed consists of southern Columbia County, Dane County and northern Rock County.

Low Disturbance Manure Injection (LDMI) systems cut through residue, lift the soil, and inject nutrients. These systems create very little soil disturbance, are compatible with no-till planting, and allow custom operators to apply manure in a manner that reduces the risk of runoff and maintains residue on cropped fields.

### How can I participate in this program?

This program is offered Dane County in collaboration with Yahara Pride Farms, Clean Lakes Alliance, and Yahara WINs to provide cost-share assistance to offset some of the costs for operators to purchase LDMI equipment. This program is available to custom haulers who either surface apply or incorporate liquid manure to land located in the Yahara Watershed.

### Program requirements:

- Custom hauler must be certified by Professional Nutrient Applicators Association of Wisconsin (PNAAW).
- Agreement to use equipment on a minimum of 500 acres/year for at least three years within the Yahara River Watershed.
- Maintenance of all LDMI equipment in good working condition during the grant period.
- All land receiving LDMI must comply with an approved conservation plan.



- Producers/landowners who apply manure in the fall agree to use the LDMI equipment with no other tillage occurring in the fall, or with low disturbance subsoil tillage or strip tillage and the seeding of a cover crop.
- Over the course of the grant period, custom haulers agree to work with Dane County staff to inventory land and verify phosphorus reductions where LDMI equipment was used.

### Funding Assistance

Funding is available to purchase LDMI toolbars with maximum cost-share assistance provided below:

#### LDMI tool bar

75% of total cost, limit \$40,000

**Total Funds Not to Exceed \$40,000**

Used equipment can be purchased provided that the equipment dealer signs a written statement that the

equipment is in good repair and that it still functions as designed. Priority will be given to applicants who plan to implement the practice on a greater number of acres in the Yahara Watershed.

### Cost-share agreement process:

1. Applications are reviewed anonymously by Yahara Pride Farms Board for equipment eligibility and by Dane County staff for program eligibility and phosphorus reduction potential.
2. Applicant signs a cost-share agreement and receives 40% of the applicable cost-share funds at the time of equipment purchase.
3. Cost-share recipient receives a payment of 20% of the applicable cost-share agreement each year for three years once staff verify LDMI application.

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until all funds are used.

## Membership Incentive Program

Don't forget - WCO has a membership incentive program! If you sign up a new member and they list your name on the paper application or online, you receive \$25 towards your 2017 membership. Sponsors can participate also. Simply list your company name on the "referred by" line and earn money towards your 2017 sponsorship.

Incentive not to exceed cost of membership or sponsorship. We already have members and sponsors taking advantage of the program. Help WCO grow our membership base!

### Welcome to WCO

**General Members (\$50/year)** derive their income (whole or part) from custom farming. Receive full voting rights and featured on website with business information.

**Associate Members (\$50/year)** support the custom farming industry, but do not engage in custom farming themselves.

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City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

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Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership Type: \_\_\_\_\_ General \_\_\_\_\_ Assoc.

Amount Paid: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Referred By: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return membership form with payment to:

Wisconsin Custom Operators, Inc.  
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## WCO announces new Outstanding Employee of the Year Award

Dr. Kevin Shinnars, Chair - Scholarship Committee

Whether you have been in business for one year or 30 years, labor is the number one issue in custom farming. It's true - good help is hard to find, and many custom farming business have been lucky enough to find great employees. WCO has created the "Outstanding Employee of the Year Award" to recognize an employee who has made significant contributions in safety, efficiency, customer satisfaction, environmental stewardship and profitability of a custom farming business. This award is focused on acknowledging employee contributions that are beyond the normal job expectations.

Both full and part-time employees of a WCO member are eligible for nomination. The individual must have been employed by a WCO member during the last calendar year prior to the award year (2016 for this year).

Nominations are made by a WCO member using the Outstanding Employee of the Year Nomination form found on the WCO website

([www.wiscustomoperators.org](http://www.wiscustomoperators.org)). The deadline is November 1, 2016.

Nominees will be evaluated according to five different areas and should have achievements in at least three of the five areas:

**Professionalism:** above average knowledge of their job responsibilities and delivers job performance and services well beyond the expected norm. He or she shares pride in ownership of the day-to-day operation of the business

**Customer Focus:** consistently recognizes and meets the needs and requirements of the customer. The nominee demonstrates professionalism when working with customers, and is mindful of how his or her attitude and actions are perceived.

**Safety:** consistently uses safe practices during his or her work - both in the field and out. Examples of safety improvements suggested and developed by the nominee are appropriate.

**Teamwork:** the nominee consistently demonstrates teamwork by offering support to fellow employees to benefit the overall business effort. He or she has a positive approach in interacting with fellow employees and customers.

**Innovation:** The nominee has developed an original idea or suggestion that has a positive effect on the business; particularly innovations that improved the safety, efficiency or profitability of the business operation.

A single award will be given at the WCO Annual Meeting in January. **The winner will receive a check for \$750. The nominator will receive a check for \$250.**

We are seeking a sponsor for this new award. The sponsor will have the chance to present the award and say a few words on behalf of their company.

If you have questions about making a nomination or sponsoring the award, contact WCO.



Nominate someone from your team for the WCO Outstanding Employee of the Year award by November 1.



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As an organization, we need to support our members and their clients throughout the state by providing policy education and highlighting innovative technology that allows us to improve the quality of land and water in the state of Wisconsin.”

-Kathy Vander Kinter, WCO president

**Save the Date!  
2017 Forage Symposium**

January 23-25, 2017  
Chula Vista Resort  
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

- **New schedule**
- **Network with fellow operators**
- **Develop business relationships**
- **Learn the latest industry innovations**

Registration opens in December  
at [wiscustomoperators.org](http://wiscustomoperators.org)

DOT's website was recently redesigned. The former url for loH/Ag CMV's is no longer active.

To complete your no-fee permit applications go to:  
<http://wisconsindot.gov/Pages/dmv/agri-eq-veh/ag-prmts.aspx>

Questions about loH definitions and rules? Go to  
[wiscustomoperators.org/resources](http://wiscustomoperators.org/resources)