

CUSTOMNews

Representing Custom Farming in Wisconsin | FALL 2015



WCO President Kathy Vander Kinter with members Joe and Jared Nemetz. Shop visits like this helped develop survey questions

Just a few minutes of your time:

WCO Member Survey

By Maria Woldt, WCO Executive Director

You have had a busy year - and for many of you, it's not quite time to slow down for the winter. But soon - you will all have some time to catch up with family, odds and ends around the shop and maybe even take some time off!

In the last issue of the newsletter, we introduced the idea of the upcoming WCO member survey. A committee of WCO volunteers together with our legal counsel at Twohig, Rietbrock, Schneider & Halbach developed a survey that covers a wide variety of topics - including rate information. However, rates are only one aspect - and some might argue one of the lesser important. Over the last year, I've had the chance to talk to WCO members about the grand challenges they face in their businesses. The conversation almost always leads to

employees, safety and regulations.

Our goal with the member survey is to help you improve best practises and ultimately improve the quality and consistency of custom farming services.

While we are all interested in the financial ratios related to custom farming services - data regarding safety, training, employee management and marketing could be more influential.

You can access the survey from this link: <http://bit.do/WCO>. We will also be sending the link via email. Thank you in advance - we can't wait to present the results.

Take the WCO member survey at <http://bit.do/WCO>

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

Forage Symposium
January 25-27, 2016
Chula Vista Resort
Wisconsin Dells, Wisconsin

WCO Safety Certification Program
March 2016
Location TBA

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From the President's Cab

By Kathy Vander Kinter



Harvest season is nearing an end for most of us. There is, however, never a shortage of that manure to haul! The winding down allows us to take a minute (or months) to reflect on what has worked for us as operators this season and where we could improve

ourselves, our business and/or our equipment. What better way to exchange information and gather new ideas to improve your business than to join us this Jan 26-27 at our annual conference in the Dells. From the topic surveys we collected at our conference last year it was evident to the Education Committee that our members of WCO have a "hunger" for business management topics and the latest and greatest ideas in the products market.

One topic that I want to touch on prior to the conference is the WCO Member Survey. Many times we have tried to bring you, our members, numbers related to rates for specific field operations in a general region. However, there always seems to be questions that remain unanswered. The WCO special projects committee has developed a survey that covers multiple business aspects including rate information, safety issues and general business practices. Be on the lookout in your email for a link to our WCO member-only survey. This data is what you have all asked for and we would like to continue this survey and tweak it to the needs of our operator members going forward. Remember that your responses are anonymous. We look forward to presenting and explaining the results at our meeting in January so stay tuned and provide us the information to present!

Another way to enhance your business is to attend our 2nd annual Safety Certification Training. We will announce the date and location at our meeting in January - topics like harvest safety, road safety and insurance rates with regards to safety performance were some of the topics addressed at our session this past March. The Safety Certification Training was well received by our members in attendance and we are proud to offer it again in 2016.

In conclusion, I hope that each and every one of you had a safe and enjoyable season! I look forward to hearing new stories and catching up with you all at the annual meeting. Feel free to email or call with any questions or concerns before then.

Happy Holidays and I look forward to seeing you in the New Year!

-Kathy

Your opinion matters - Contact us!

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Matt Digman, Kuhn North America, matthew.digman@kuhn.com

WCO seeks corporate and at-large directors; Committee members

Run for the Board!

WCO is looking for Board of Director nominations. Elections will take place at this year's annual meeting on January 27, 2016, held in conjunction with the Symposium event at Chula Vista Resort in Wisconsin Dells. Directors must be members of WCO and serve three year terms and with no more than two consecutive terms.

This year, WCO members will elect a corporate and at-large director.

Join a Committee!

Looking to get involved in a specific area of WCO? Consider joining a committee. Any WCO member or sponsor can join one of the following committees:

- scholarship
- education
- safety
- media
- membership
- special projects

Contact Maria Woldt,
Executive Director at
execdir@wiscustomoperators.org
or (608) 577-4345.

A freshly packed drive-over pile is a thing of beauty!
Photo by WCO at Dairy Dreams, LLC, Casco

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It's Time to Renew!

WCO sponsorships expire in December. Notices are sent via mail and e-mail. Please remember to renew your sponsorships before the end of 2015 - important Symposium discounts depend on it! You can also renew and pay online at www.wiscustomoperators.org



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Settling for less

By Tom Wall, The Dairy Coach™

Do you know anyone who would get on a plane being flown by the “least drunk” pilot, marry the only single person left in their town, or hire the cheapest heart surgeon they can find? Probably not.

Nonetheless, every time we make a decision, we find ourselves settling for something. And if you’re like most people, you probably think settling is a bad thing. But that’s not always the case. Sometimes you’re not able to or willing to invest any more time, money, energy, passion, or talent to find what you really want or need. In those cases you opt for a “good enough” version of what you originally sought.

Against your own best judgment, you choose the cheapest, or the most convenient, or the friendliest, or the most available, or the fastest. You take the path of least resistance and make a decision that simply focuses on getting the job done. Then when it doesn’t work out, you’re tempted to complain that you got a bad deal.

But if you’re truly honest with yourself, you’ll admit that chose to settle for what you believed was the best option at the time. Unfortunately, most people give up before reaching the actual “end-of-the-road”. They believe they’ve exhausted all of their resources when they actually haven’t. They quit before finishing the entire sentence.

Have you ever convinced yourself that the following sentence is true?... “This is the best we can find.”... Then realized that it’s not true until you finish the sentence with one or more of the following...

- for the money we want to spend.
- for the time we want to look.
- for the energy we can devote to it.
- for the number of candidates we care to consider.



Ultimately, hiring and promoting people tends to be a trade-off. And if you’re like most people, the pressure of urgency will probably convince you to trade your long-term needs for a short-term solution.



Tom Wall presented at the 2015 Forage Symposium. Just like a farmer should not select the custom operator based on cost alone or ‘who can get to it first’, Tom urges managers to have a simple ‘people plan’ to help their team get work done!

- for the distance we want to search. you settle for something less?

Ultimately, hiring and promoting people tends to be a trade-off. And if you’re like most people, the pressure of urgency will probably convince you to trade your long-term needs for a short-term solution. Although some business owners will continue searching weeks or months to fill a key role, most will simply opt for the most available and expedient option without realizing they created and imposed limits on themselves by not reaching farther or trying harder.

It’s your business and the stakes are always high. Are you willing to invest in finding what you truly need, or will

Tom Wall owns and operates Dairy Coach, LLC a coaching, training and consulting venture focused on the Dairy Industry. As his business name suggest, Tom is known as “The Dairy Coach”, and he speaks to national and international audiences about the importance of helping people reach their full potential. Tom presented to a standing-room-only audience at the 2015 Forage Symposium. Contact Tom at tom@dairycoach.com

Sign Up New WCO Members and Save!

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 2016 membership. Sponsors can participate also. Simply list your company name on the "referred by" line and earn money towards your 2016 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!

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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WCO Members D & J Manthe Forage Services early in the 2015 season at R & G Miller & Sons, Columbus

It all starts here for alfalfa

By Mike Rankin, Hay & Forage Grower Magazine

It doesn't matter where you hang your hat or pay taxes, alfalfa will not grow or be productive unless soil pH is 6.5 or higher (preferably 6.8 to 7.0). According to the Alfalfa Management Guide (North Central Region Extension Publication NCR 547), "Liming is the single most important fertility concern for establishing and maintaining high-yielding, high-quality alfalfa stands."

Fall is the time of year for soil testing, and once those results are known, it's also a great time to get needed lime applied and incorporated into the soil.

The primary reason alfalfa is a relatively high soil pH crop is not so much because of the plant, but rather for the Rhizobium bacteria that fix nitrogen for the crop. In acidic soil conditions, bacterial activity and nitrogen fixation become compromised and alfalfa productivity is severely impacted. Effectively, the crop suffers from a bad case of nitrogen deficiency.

Ed Rayburn, West Virginia University

extension forage agronomist, also notes that at low soil pH the solubility of aluminum and manganese increases. These minerals are toxic to plants and aluminum ties up phosphorus and makes it less available for root uptake.

The effectiveness of agricultural lime for raising pH hinges on two primary factors: purity and fineness of grind. The purity of lime will determine how much is needed to raise soils to the desired pH. Fineness is a function of how fast it will occur; course lime sources being slower than fine ones. Most state extension services have information on how to determine the neutralizing power of a particular lime source.

It's most cost effective to apply lime at least two years before establishing alfalfa. The process of changing soil pH takes time. Soils differ in their native pH. Some limestone-based soils maintain a pH near 7.0, other soils hover at something below 6.0. In the latter case, it may not be economically feasible to bring soil pH

higher than 6.5. Again, check your state's extension recommendations.

Sometimes a low soil pH problem isn't discovered until after the alfalfa is established. This is a situation that requires a shift into rescue mode. Though topdressing lime on alfalfa is not typically recommended, few other options remain if the alfalfa is already established. Don't expect full productivity, but the alfalfa will generally respond if a fine, fast-acting lime source is topdressed. For permanent pastures, topdressing is also an option.

Though there are many management factors to be considered for alfalfa, none of them will overcome a low soil pH. North, south, east or west, if you grow alfalfa or want to grow alfalfa, it all starts with a soil test to determine soil pH.

Editor's note: This article originally appeared in Hay & Forage Grower Magazine. Sign up for weekly updates at www.hayandforage.com. Thank you to Mike Rankin.



November 1 - loH Lighting and Marking

From the UW Center for Agriculture Safety and Health
& WI Department of Transportation

Lighting and marking of implements of husbandry (loH) are valuable safety features when operating on public roads. New regulations will take effect **November 1, 2015** but may be followed at the present time. Many pieces of farm machinery have already been manufactured with the lighting and marking requirements that are now reflected in Wisconsin law.

New rules for wide loH: As of November 1, 2015, self-propelled loH and farm equipment exceeding 12 feet wide or that extend over the center of the roadway will have new lighting and marking requirements. This is to ensure the safety of loH operators and the other traffic on the road.

Lights or lamps must be activated at all times, not just during hours of darkness.

*NOTE: Roadway widths vary. Standard lane width for county and state roadways marked with a center line is 11 feet. Therefore, an loH in excess of 11 feet wide would be "wide". Some town roads are 18 feet wide, making an loH wider than 9 feet subject to wide loH lighting and marking requirements.

Trailing loH: Provisions for transporting loH via trailer or semi-trailer from farm to field, field to field, and field to farm have been created. Any loH of any width can be transported during hours other than hours of darkness. During hours of darkness, the maximum width for any loH being transported by trailer is 8 feet, 6 inches.

Trailer loH must have:

- Yellow and red retroreflective tape
- 2 flashing amber warning lights, visible to the front and rear, activated during trailing
- A rear-mounted slow-moving vehicle emblem
- For loH wider than 12 feet, the amber strobe or beacon or the 2 flashing amber warning lights mentioned above must be activated.

View the complete lighting and marking requirements including easy to read charts at <http://bit.do/IOH>



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Remember to renew your WCO Membership!

Memberships expire in December - renewals are sent at the end of November. You can renew with your Symposium registration, via the WCO website or by mail. Thank you for supporting Wisconsin's custom farming industry!

Save the Date! 2016 Forage Symposium

January 25-27, 2016
Chula Vista Resort
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- Network with fellow operators
- Develop business relationships
- Learn the latest industry innovations

Registration opens in December
www.wiscustomoperators.org

To complete your no fee IoH/Ag CMV permit applications
(Required as of January 1, 2015), go to
www.dot.wisconsin.gov/business/ag

Questions about IoH definitions and rules? Go to
<http://wiscustomoperators.org/resources>