Yahara Pride Farms welcomed more than 100 guests to the annual Ag Innovation Field Day event on Aug. 16. New this year, the organization extended an invitation beyond farmers in the Yahara Watershed to farmers, agribusinesses and the general public from across the state. The goal was to extend the reach of successful programs and practices.

The day kicked off with lunch, followed by several hours of field demonstrations across four sites. Manure was a central topic of the day and attendees had the chance to see dragline and tanker methods of applying manure using low-disturbance injection techniques at the first two stops.

The third stop included a tour of a newly built manure composting facility at Endres Berryridge Farms. The group learned about the science behind the process and the equipment needed to successfully compost manure. Attendees also saw finished compost applied to a field.

The final stop included a detailed cover crop planting demonstration where attendees watched eight different pieces of equipment plant a barley-pea mix on a recently harvested wheat field.

"Field days give farmers a chance to get up close and personal with new techniques and new equipment. The day also allows community members to learn about conservation techniques that their neighbors are using to protect the land, water and air," said Jeff Endres, chairman of Yahara Pride Farms.

After a long, hot day, the group reconvened for dinner and refreshments. Wisconsin Secretary of Agriculture Ben Brancel delivered the evening keynote and emphasized the importance of farmers learning from farmers. Spreading the word through farmer-led conservation and sustainability initiatives is the best way to increase the adoption of innovative practices like those highlighted during the field day.

Secretary Brancel commended Yahara Pride Farms for their efforts thus far and their future projects.

The main focus of Yahara Pride Farms throughout the year is reducing phosphorus delivery to the Madison
As I write this column, I am thinking how challenging the fall harvest has been so far this year. By the time this issue reaches your mailbox, I hope for more favorable harvest weather.

Cover crops have been a challenge this year. Due to wet conditions, planting cover crops following corn silage has been delayed. This delay has limited the amount of cover crops that can even be planted as well as type. At this point in the season, our choices are pretty much limited to winter rye and winter wheat. We encourage you to do what you can given the complexity of the situation. Mother Nature is not always kind despite our best intentions.

Despite our challenges, there are opportunities too. New this year, Yahara Pride Farms has expanded its cost share program to include low disturbance deep tillage. We believe that this will be very beneficial this year given the wet conditions and excess soil compaction. Low disturbance deep tillage will remove excess soil compaction and increase water infiltration. Any time we implement fall tillage it is always more affective in reducing run-off if we till the ground on the contour.

Speaking of our cost share program, please consider participating in Yahara Pride Farms Cost Share program this year. To learn more, read the article on page 4. Sign up cards were sent in the mail a couple of weeks ago and are due Nov. 15. If you have any questions or did not receive a card, please contact Joe Connors at (608) 444-4702. As always thank you for your participation and have a safe harvest.

- Jeff

**Ag Innovation Day (continued from p. 1)**

...chain of lakes and the Yahara River through innovative agriculture techniques including: Low disturbance manure injection, cover crops, waterways and harvestable buffers to name a few.

In 2015, farmers in the program reduced phosphorus delivery by 8,642 lbs. Since 2012, farmers have documented a total phosphorus delivery reduction of 15,872 lbs. Yahara Pride Farms has also developed a certification program where farms undergo an extensive voluntary evaluation process and achieve a specific passing score. In all cases, farms are provided with prioritized feedback on current conservation practices as well as areas for improvement. Yahara Pride Farms has engaged the community, public utilities, environmental groups and agribusiness through a holistic approach to conservation where everyone shares in the successes and areas for learning.

Yahara Pride Farms also wishes to thank the more than 25 organizations who contributed to the field day through sponsorships, grants and in-kind donations. The Ag Innovation Day and the programs offered by Yahara Pride Farms would not be possible without their support. A special thank you to Al Kalcheur, Blue Star Dairy, Endres Berryridge Farms and Darin Ripp for donating field sites for the various demonstrations.

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**Thank you YPF partners!**

Yahara WINs

- Carbon Cycle
- Carl F Statz and Sons Inc.
- Dairy Business Milk-Marketing Cooperative
- Fields Silo and Equipment
- Foremost Farms USA
- HUB International Insurance
- Insight FS
- IM Kahling Auctions
- Kalscheur Implement Co. Inc.
- Kaz’s Flying Service
- Markley Enterprises LLC
- Mcfarlanes’
- Middleton Farmer’s Coop
- Morton Buildings, Inc.
- MSA Professional Services Inc.
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- PiP Seeds
- United Cooperative
- Wagner Insurance
- WI Department of Agriculture, Trade & Consumer Protection
- WI Farm Technology Days
Clean Lakes Alliance, in partnership with Clean Fuel Partners, Ripp’s Dairy Valley and Yahara Pride Farms, hosted our third annual Farm & Manure Digester Tour on Sept. 7. More than 60 attendees braved the rainy weather for a behind-the-scenes tour of the Clean Fuel Partners digester and Ripp’s Dairy Valley in Dane. Attendees learned about a variety of manure and farm management techniques that help benefit water quality in the Yahara River watershed.

At the digester, attendees learned the site receives roughly 90,000 gallons of manure per day from the three contributing farms, Endres Dairy, Ripp’s Dairy Valley and White Gold Dairy. Attendees also learned the site acts as a manure storage for the farmers because digesters have a 25-to-30-day retention time. In addition, the digester also removes roughly 60 percent of the phosphorus content in manure from the watershed through solid removal as bedding pack.

At the farm, attendees received an overview of the history of the farm, how the farm operates today and strides the farm has taken to benefit water quality in our watershed. Gary and Chuck Ripp gave an overview of conservation management practices they implement on their farm site and farmland to meet their nutrient management plan including vegetative treatment areas, leachate collection, and stormwater retention ponds.

The Ripps discussed their manure management strategy including why and how they pipe manure from their farm to the Clean Fuel Partners digester and the use of low-disturbance manure injection to apply the manure returned from the digester. Finally, they discussed crop production, basic animal care and the milking procedure.

Thank you to Clean Fuel Partners and Ripp’s Dairy Valley for taking the time to give tours and answer questions. This tour was made possible by a grant from Dane County Farm Technology Days.
Yahara WINS and Yahara Pride partnership continues in 2017
By Dave Taylor, Madison Metropolitan Sewerage District

For the last four years, Yahara WINS and the Yahara Pride Farms group have worked together to promote actions that are cost effective, make good business sense for farmers, improve soil health, and improve water quality. Specifically, WINS has provided funding to support the Yahara Pride Farms cost share program and related activities.

This funding has helped farmers test phosphorus reduction practices such as the use of cover crops, strip tillage and low disturbance manure injection. Funding has also been provided to help Yahara Pride in other areas.

It is clear from annual reports developed by Yahara Pride Farms that farmers in the Yahara watershed are making great progress toward the goal of improving water quality. In recognition of this progress, the 2017 Yahara WINS budget provides for an increased level of funding to Yahara Pride Farms to support the cost share program and related activities.

The 2017 WINS budget also contains funding for continued support of water quality monitoring throughout the Yahara watershed. More than 600 water quality samples have already been collected throughout the Yahara Watershed in 2016 alone, with additional sampling anticipated. The resulting data will be used along with historical information to document trends in water quality.

Yahara WINS is also working with urban partners in the watershed to reduce phosphorus loads and improve water quality. Through its phosphorus grant program, WINS has provided funding to support multiple phosphorus reduction projects targeting urban stormwater. The 2017 WINS budget includes funds to support continuation of the phosphorus grant program.

In short, 2017 is shaping up to be an exciting year, with phosphorus reduction efforts ramping up in all areas. By working together we can make a difference! Look for more specific information on joint WINS and Yahara Pride Farms efforts in future editions of the Forward Farmer.

YPF cost share enrollment due Nov. 15
By YPF Communications

About a month ago, farmers received a postcard in the mail detailing the 2016 YPF cost share program. Enrollment is due by Nov. 15. Simply complete the postcard and mail it to the YPF address listed on the back page of this newsletter. If you did not receive a postcard, you may download a copy at yaharapridefarms.org/cost-share-program.

COVER CROPS
$40/acre - Up to 50 acres
Cover crops are grasses, legumes, small grains or other crops grown between regular grain crop production periods for the purpose of protecting and improving the soil. One of the major reasons for growing winter cover crops is to reduce soil erosion. The most common cover crops in our region are fall-seeded cereals, such as rye or wheat, and fall-seeded annual ryegrass. In 2015, 4,908 acres of cover crops were enrolled (1,390 cost shared) resulting in 1,693.2 total pounds of phosphorus delivery reduced.

LOW-DISTURBANCE MANURE INJECTION
$20/acre - Up to 100 acres
Low disturbance manure injection places manure below the surface where it adds nutrients to the soil and avoids adding phosphorus to waterways. Surface application of manure is more susceptible to run-off, whereas injecting or incorporating manure into the soil minimally disturbs the soil while decreasing the likelihood of runoff. In 2015, 566 tillable acres were enrolled (140 acres cost-shared) with a total of 1,080 pounds of phosphorus delivery reduced.

STRIP TILLAGE
$15/acre - Up to 50 acres
Strip tillage is a conservation system that uses minimum tillage. Farmers use strip tillage as a way to combine the soil-drying and warming benefits of conventional tillage with the soil-protecting advantages of no-till. Strip tillage can be easily identified in the field by looking for darker, disturbed soil only in the portion of rows that will contain the seeds. In 2015, 1,488.6 acres were enrolled (60 acres cost-shared) with a total of 990.4 pounds of phosphorus delivery reduced.

NEW this year, low disturbance deep tillage will be cost shared in combination with cover crops. Please note the cost share amount above as there was an error on the postcard. Low disturbance deep tillage involves using a tillage tool that does not mound or ridge the soil like traditional cultivating or discing. Low disturbance deep tillage pulls through the field to remove excess soil compaction and increase water infiltration. This is an excellent method for those who plan to use no-till planting in the spring.

phosphorus grants supports multiple phosphorus reduction projects targeting urban stormwater. The 2017 WINS budget includes funds to support continuation of the phosphorus grant program.

In short, 2017 is shaping up to be an exciting year, with phosphorus reduction efforts ramping up in all areas. By working together we can make a difference! Look for more specific information on joint WINS and Yahara Pride Farms efforts in future editions of the Forward Farmer.
Cover your soil after corn silage
By Heidi Johnson, crops and soils agent, Dane County UW-Extension

The lack of residue cover and typical manure application after corn silage harvest provide ideal acres for cover crops. Cover crops will help to hold manure and soil in place while improving soil health by keeping a living crop on the land for more months of the year. Here are some tips for establishing a cover crop after silage harvest.

1 GET THEM IN AS SOON AFTER HARVEST AS POSSIBLE:
The sooner cover crops get planted, the more growth they can put on to protect the soil. One great option is to plant the cover crops immediately after harvest and apply manure to the growing cover crops. It is just best to avoid putting the manure out when the cover crop is less than 2-3 inches and can be smothered or burnt by the application. Another great option is to aerially plant cover crops into standing corn but this needs to be done no more than 2 weeks prior to harvest.

2 THE BEST COVER CROP TO PLANT DEPENDS ON PLANTING DATE:
Spring barley and oats make great fall cover crops but they really need to be planted prior to Sept. 15-20 to grow enough to keep the ground covered the following spring. The nice thing about these cover crops is they will die out over the winter and won’t need to be terminated in the spring.

Winter rye and triticale are cover crop options for planting later into September and early October. These will both survive the winter and require spring termination. They should be terminated as early as possible in the spring, unless they will be kept to be harvested as a spring forage. Clovers, radishes and other cover crops are not recommended covers for after silage due to the short period of time for growth.

3 TO DRILL OR NOT TO DRILL:
Planting covers with a drill or an air seeder will typically give the most consistent stand but using an air-flow spreader, spinner spreader or airplane are also options that can work well with adequate rainfall.

4 HOW DO YOU DETERMINE SUCCESS?
When using cover crops, it’s always best to decide ahead of time what will determine success. If erosion control is the goal for the cover crop, check the cover cropped field the following spring to make sure there is still residue. If there is no cover crop residue through the months of April and early May, you may not be achieving your goal and may need to evaluate whether you have selected the right cover crop or planting date.

For more information on using cover crops in Wisconsin check out fyi.uwex.edu/covercrop or contact Heidi Johnson, (608) 669-6246, Johnson.heidi@countyofdane.com.
By YPF Communications

YPF has a tremendous list of sponsors and supporters. Without their assistance, YPF would not be able to offer the level of programming that has come to be expected from our group. Each issue, we focus on one of our sponsors. We sat down with Leif Erickson from HUB International Insurance to talk about their business and what drew them to YPF.

**As a Company, What Attracted You to the Yahara Pride Farms Group?**

As a Farm & Agribusiness focused team, we’ve been working to stay proactive and innovative in terms of working with our clients to mitigate their environmental risks. Our experience and perception is that Yahara Pride Farms mirrors our approach and that caused us to naturally gravitate toward the group.

**What Services Do You Provide the Agriculture Community?**

Our firm offers business/farm, personal lines, pollution liability, and employee health benefits for the ag community. In addition, we offer OSHA, safety, DOT/transportation, confined space, food safety/product recall, etc. resources to our clients in addition to their insurance solutions.

**What is Pollution Insurance, and What Should Farmers Know About This Product?**

Pollution insurance covers costs related to pollution claims such as manure spills, groundwater contamination due to manure application, odors and irritants. This part of the industry has changed more in the past two years than the previous 25. We believe the biggest threat is actually groundwater contamination (nitrates in wells) and not actual manure spills. As subdivisions and cities continue to grow around farms, this will only magnify the issue. Many, if not most, farms and custom operators are not properly protecting themselves against pollution-related claims. Some people believe that pollution claims related to manure would be covered under a general liability policy but that simply isn’t true. If a farm or custom operator is handling manure, they should have a pollution liability policy.

**Is Pollution Insurance Just for CAFOs? Who Needs This Coverage?**

Pollution insurance is not just for CAFOs. It’s our belief that with the current state of the farm marketplace, any farm with manure exposure should be looking at how to protect themselves and their farms in the event they are found liable for an environmental related loss or incident. We believe it’s important for farmers to remember that the liability will ultimately lie with the land owner regardless of being a CAFO and regardless of the use of a nutrient management plan. Also, a farm that uses custom operators to pump, haul and apply their manure is not insulating themselves from this liability. That being said, custom operators should also have coverage for sudden and accidental claims.

**Please Give a Brief History of HUB International**

The Murphy Insurance Group was founded in 1990 in Waunakee, Wis, and grew through the years into a successful mid-market insurance brokerage. In July 2015, Murphy Insurance joined with

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HUB International, the ninth largest insurance brokerage in the world. This merger has allowed our team to continue the culture, service and work ethic that our clients came to respect and enjoy while allowing us to have resources nationally to better assist our clients with complex claim issues and insurance needs. Being a vertical market agency, we stick to our core industries and take pride in not ‘being pretty good with a lot of industries’ but instead are driven to ‘be the best insurance partner in very focused markets. Farm & Agribusiness is our teams’ focus and passion.

DO YOU HAVE ANY WORDS OF WISDOM BASED ON WHAT YOU SEE ON A DAILY BASIS?

With the current state of the marketplace and the developing trends we’re following, farms should begin to think of pollution liability insurance like they do auto insurance on vehicles or property insurance on milking parlors. The amount of additional premium to purchase a standalone pollution program is worth mitigating the risk of an environmental incident for a farmer.

HOW CAN PEOPLE CONTACT YOU OR THEIR AREA AGENT?

My Farm and Agribusiness partner Mike Bearson and I are out visiting Farms and Agribusinesses about 75 percent of the time but are available on our cell phones and via email at any time day or night. Working with farms and agribusinesses mean we have calls and meetings well before 6 a.m. and after 7 p.m. 📞

Contact us!
Leif Erickson
Office: (608) 849-1349
Mobile: (608) 558-1795
leif.erickson@hubinternational.com

Mike Bearson
Office: (262) 317-7208
Mobile: (608) 214-8880
mike.bearson@hubinternational.com

YPF Announcements

Farm Signs

To get a Yahara Pride Farms sign after completing the certification program, please contact us at (608) 824-3250 or email info@yaharapridefarms.org

Clean Sweep: Free ag chem disposal

Thanks to a DATCP grant, farmers can dispose of ag-related chemicals at no cost (ag businesses pay half the normal cost) at Clean Sweep. Details:
- Appointments are required: Located at the landfill on 12/18 on Madison’s east side
- Questions? (608) 838-3212 or carroll.john@countyofdane.com.
- Full program details are available at danecountycleansweep.com

LDMI equipment grants available

The Dane County Land & Water Resources Department is currently accepting applications for low disturbance manure injection equipment cost-share. Up to $40,000 per farmer or custom operator is available on a rolling basis. To learn more and to apply, call (608) 224-3730 or email landcon@countyofdane.com.
Cover crops will help to hold manure and soil in place while improving soil health by keeping a living crop on the land for more months of the year.”

- Heidi Johnson, Dane County UW-Extension

Dates to Remember:

- Nov. 15 - Cost share enrollment.
- Dec. 13 - UW Discovery Farms conference.
- Dec. 14 - DATCP Farmer-led Watershed meeting.
- Jan 18-19 - Dairy Strong Conference, Madison. Register at dairystrong.org
- Early Jan. - YPF agronomist meeting. Date TBD.
- March - Watershed-wide conference. Date TBD.

More info at yaharapridefarms.org