

# Wisconsin Crop Manager

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#UWRightNow APRIL 18, 2012

## EARLY AFTERNOON IN MADISON

Campus is buzzing with work, classes, and events, today, April 18, 2012. #UWRightNow is capturing 24 hours of what makes UW-Madison an amazing place. We've posted nearly 600 contributions as of 3:40 p.m.

As you make your way through your day, help us out by sharing your story. Whether you are a student, faculty or staff member, or an alum halfway across the world, tell us what you're up to and what the UW means to you. Thanks to all who have contributed- we'll post as many as we can.



“ Beautiful day on farm #uwRightNow near a UW Nutrient and Pest Management program field research plot. <http://t.co/W6vOyCEO> ”

 WisCropMan

4:17 pm

Share [+]

## Vegetable Crop Updates Now Available

The third and fourth updates of the vegetable crop update are now available. To access the third vegetable crop update (4/9/12) [click here](#). To access the fourth vegetable crop update (4/15/12) [click here](#).

## The Wisconsin Pest Bulletin

The Wisconsin Pest Bulletin from the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection provides pest population estimates, pest distribution and development data, pest survey and inspection results, alerts to new pest finds in the state, and forecasts for Wisconsin's most damaging plant pests.

[Click here](#) to view the issue.

## NPM on internet event UW-Right-Now

Roger Schmidt, NPM and IPM technology specialist

UW-Madison's communications office setup a multimedia internet project to chronicle "24 hours of UW-Madison life" via Twitter, messages, pictures, and short videos. A special Twitter hashtag called #UWRightNow was setup for the event, and a special website is available for everyone to view some of the highlights from the special day. People participating from around Wisconsin, the US, and the entire world showed the global reach of the university. The UW Nutrient and Pest Management program participated as shown in the message on the right.

<http://uwrightnow.wisc.edu/tweet/tweet-cows/>

Check out the whole 24 hour highlight site. <http://uwrightnow.wisc.edu>

Or look at the Twitter #uwRightNow search page, as people are still using the hashtag to post messages. <http://twitter.com/#!/search/%23uwrightnow>

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## The National Soybean Sustainability Initiative Online Survey Tool

Shawn Conley, Vince David, Carrie Laboski, Paul Mitchell, Paul Esker, Jed Colquhoun, AJ Bussan, Jeff Wyman and Deana Knuteson

Soybean production is a critically important component of US agriculture both domestically and in the global market place. Global markets are increasingly demanding documentation of sustainability creating challenges to soybean producers. To ensure there is a balance to their agriculture, sustainability programs are encouraging growers to engage in resource conservation efforts and look at the environmental, social and economic aspects of many of the practices they currently use in their farming operations.

To be proactive in regards to sustainability the National Sustainable Soybean Initiative (NSSI) was created in 2011. NSSI's mission is to develop a roadmap of soybean management systems that will help producers to achieve verifiable sustainability outcomes, improve the environmental services and productivity of their farms, help their rural communities thrive, and satisfy performance expectations of the value chain.

We have developed a whole farm and soybean specific sustainability protocol that incorporates questions linked to environmental, economic and social sustainability factors. These criteria have been established utilizing researched based data from the Midwestern region. Growers are able to use the information from this protocol for their own on-farm research and marketing requirements.

To get a coordinated, regional baseline of sustainability of soybeans, we are working on collecting data from growers for the survey. No specific field or farm specific data will be received on the collection end, but growers are able to keep the data for themselves. We will only look at combined data and no grower specific data will be available. However, the combined data will allow us to look at a baseline of where soybeans growers in the Midwest are in regards to conservation and sustainability practices, and we will use the data to better enhance our research and educational programs. Furthermore, this data can be used by state and national organizations for communication and marketing purposes.

With this, we encourage you to participate by filling out Whole Farm Assessment (<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/802488/NSSI-Sustainability-Protocols-Whole-Farm-Section>) and Soybean Assessment (<http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/776277/NSSI-CASH-GRAIN-SOYBEAN-SPECIFIC-PROTOCOL>) protocols online. For more information, please contact Shawn Conley ([spconley@wisc.edu](mailto:spconley@wisc.edu)) or look at [coolbean.info](http://coolbean.info).

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## Wisconsin Vegetable Update will have Spanish versions

Amanda J. Gevens, Extension Plant Pathologist in Potatoes & Vegetables

A Spanish version of the Vegetable Update newsletter will be available at my website and the new UW Vegetable Team website approximately 2 days after the distribution of the English version. The new Vegetable Team site is intended as a multidisciplinary resource for supporting potato and vegetable production.

UW-Vegetable Pathology website: <http://www.plantpath.wisc.edu/wivegdis/>

UW-Vegetable Team website: <http://vegetables.wisc.edu>

Many thanks to UW-Plant Pathology graduate students Amilcar Sanchez Perez and Ana Cristina Fulladolsa for their translations.

[To view the fourth vegetable crop update in Spanish click here.](#)

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## 2012 Sulfur Fertilizer Price Comparison for Alfalfa

Carrie Laboski, Extension Soil Fertility and Nutrient Management Specialist

Reports from Southwestern Wisconsin suggest that sulfur deficiency may already be showing up in some alfalfa fields. Sulfur (S) deficient alfalfa will appear lighter green, will be shorter, and the plant will be more spindly with smaller leaves. Some fields have patches of lighter green and may be associated with eroded knolls; while other fields have an overall lighter green color.

Sulfur deficiency can be confirmed with a tissue test. A plant sample can be collected when the crop is in the bud to 1<sup>st</sup> flower stage. Sample the top six inches from 30 to 40 stems that represent the area being sampled. Samples should be submitted to a lab in a paper, not plastic, bag. If the S concentration in the plant tissue is less than 0.25 % S, then an application of 25 lb S/a is needed, and should be applied before there is substantial regrowth. In general, yield responses to applied S will be greater as the plant tissue S concentration decreases, though the recommended rate of S does not change. Also keep in mind that if tissue S concentrations are 0.25% or greater, there will be no significant increase in yield or profitability from S applications.

If S deficiency is occurring, then a sulfate form of S must be applied to alleviate the deficiency quickly. There is no effect of sulfate source on yield, meaning that potassium sulfate, calcium sulfate, or ammonium sulfate can all be used with success. When choosing a S source for alfalfa consider overall nutrient need and price of the fertilizer material.

Potassium sulfate may be a good choice of fertilizer for alfalfa that is S deficient, because there are probably few alfalfa stands in Wisconsin that wouldn't benefit from the potassium supplied by this fertilizer. The price of S, in potassium sulfate is \$0.77/lb of S if the value of K in this

fertilizer is taken into consideration. The nitrogen (N) in ammonium sulfate has no benefit to alfalfa making it a relatively expensive source of S at \$0.93/lb S. For alfalfa, potassium sulfate is a better buy than ammonium sulfate. Calcium sulfate, mined gypsum, is an even better buy because the S is \$0.59/lb, assuming no value to the Ca. A S fertilizer price comparison is provided in Table 1.

Table 1. Sulfur fertilizer price comparison using average prices in Wisconsin in March 2012.

Fertilizer	Price	Value of Nutrient			
		N	K	Ca	S
	\$/ton		\$/lb of nutrient		
Ammonium sulfate, 21-0-0-24S	445	0	-	-	0.93
Calcium sulfate, 23% Ca 19% S	223†	-	-	0	0.59
Potassium sulfate, 0-0-50-18S	817	-	0.54‡	-	0.77
Potash, 0-0-60	649		0.54		

† Price of calcium sulfate is for mined gypsum, not flue gas desulfurization gypsum.

‡ The value of K in potassium sulfate was assumed to be the same value as K in potash. After \$0.54/lb K<sub>2</sub>O was allocated in the potassium sulfate, the remaining price of the fertilizer was assigned to S.

