

**Are we still  
headed in the  
right direction  
with grazing?**



“Pretty much.”

Lots of graziers are still  
doing well despite it all.

After all these years ...

...US grazing is still  
operating within a  
scientific vacuum.

We were getting  
things figured out.

Then the world  
changed.

We have entered  
an age of  
competition for  
limited resources.

Economics of (organic) grain

## Income over feed costs/cow/day

(pasture season only)

12 lbs./cow: \$0.38

6 lbs./cow: \$2.20

0 lbs./cow: \$3.61

Source: University of Minnesota WCROC

Net farm income/cow  
Wisconsin organic dairy farms

2010: \$762.04

2011: \$788.12

2012: \$1,041.67

Tom Kriegl, UW Center for Dairy Profitability



Grazing remains an extremely competitive dairy production system for those with the required scale, labor efficiencies and management ability.\*

\*Note the caveats.

WI grazing and conventional  
\$ NFI/cow

	<u>Grazing</u>	<u>Conventional</u>
<b>2010:</b>	919.39	317.18
<b>2011:</b>	761.59	722.57
<b>2012:</b>	627.43	640.32

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# Is grazing falling behind?

\* lack of productivity gains?

# Challenges

- \* perennial forage genetics
- \* lack of institutional support
- \* labor efficiency/business skills
- \* overall lack of productivity
- \* high land costs
- \* poor quality winter feed
- \* feed costs and lack of hay
- \* weather volatility
- \* government policy
- \* skilled management/farm transfer

# “Weatherproof” your dairy

- \* irrigation
- \* annuals and cover crops
- \* warm season perennials
- \* CORN

# Build feed reserves

- Review stocking rates
- Measure, monitor, manage
- Improve fertility management

# Look harder at added value

- \* grassfed/non-GMO
- \* find a beef niche

# Develop a cattle genetics plan

\* Too much “flavor of the year”



# Develop a systems approach

\*Too much attention to the parts, too little to the whole.

# Develop new management talent

\*need more formalized programs

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Who are  
"we"?