



Agroecology 720

AGROECOLOGY FIELD STUDY

August 24 to 28, 2009

Instructors

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Short Description

This course provides a graduate-level, field-based introduction to the diversity of farming systems in Wisconsin, including both diversified and industrialized approaches. The bulk of the class time is a week-long sequence of field trips to farms, mostly as day trips out of Madison but also including one overnight stay. The course also provides an introduction to the agroecological study of farm systems.

For those in the Agroecology Masters program, this course is required. It is also possible for interested students not enrolled in *The Farm as a Socio-Environmental Endeavor* or in the Agroecology Masters program to take this course as 699 credits with one of the instructors.

This course has a lab fee of \$100 to cover transport and farmer honoraria, but this may not be charged in full, depending on funding. Also, there will be an additional \$25 dollar charge for one overnight stay. Food during the trips will be each student's individual responsibility.

Expectations

This is a one-credit, graded course based on the principles of experiential learning. Grading will be based entirely on participation in the fieldtrips and discussion sessions. There is no required reading for the course, nor written assignments. However, there are several recommended readings, which will be made available electronically.

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Monday Aug. 24

9 AM to 11:30 AM: *Introduction and orientation*
Room 145 King Hall.

11:30am to 1pm: *Travel*

1 PM to 4:30 PM: *Grass-based beef*

Travel to Cates Family Farm, a grass-based direct market beef farm operated by Dick Cates (one of the course instructors) and Kim Cates, in Spring Green, WI. Tour and discuss farm operation. Overview of the relevant issues facing farm families, rural communities, and working lands today. Website: www.catesfamilyfarm.com

5:30pm: *Return to Madison*

Tuesday Aug. 25

8:30 AM: *Meet*
Outside King Hall

10am to noon: *Mid-scale organic dairy*

Visit the Heisner family's farm, in Mineral Point, WI. Tour farm and discuss pasture-based organic practices and issues of family-scale farming.

1pm: *Large confinement dairy*

Visit New Providence Farm in Livingston, WI, operated by Randy and Ron James. Tour farm and discuss issues of CAFO agriculture.

3pm: *Small-scale goat dairy*

Visit Fantome Farm in Ridgeway, WI, operated by Ann Topham. Tour farm and discuss issues of specialty dairy production. Website: www.fantomefarm.com

6pm: *Return to Madison*

Wednesday August 26

8:45 AM: *Meet*
Outside King Hall

9:15 AM: *Community supported agriculture*

Visit Primrose Community Farm in Verona, and meet with Mike Noltner, the UW student who started the farm in 2005. Discuss issues of crop production, relations with eaters, and issues of farm start-up. Website: www.primrosecommunityfarm.net

11am: *UW 3rd Annual Organic Field Day*

Organic crop and livestock tours at the Arlington Research Station. No-till soybeans and corn; fertility management for vegetables; organic pest control; the economics of the Wisconsin Integrated Cropping Systems trial; and other topics.

Website: <http://news.cals.wisc.edu/newsDisplay.asp?id=1848>

2:45pm: *Travel north*

4pm: *Large-scale crop production*

Visit Coloma Farms in Coloma, WI, operated by Steve and Andy Diercks, a 3000 acre potato, grain, and processing crops farm. Issues of sustainability in large-scale crop production.

Also learn about their reigning horse training facility. Web profile:

www.protectedharvest.org/consumers/meet_diercks.htm

6pm: *Travel north*

Wed. evening: *In central Wisconsin near Amherst, WI*

There will be a \$25 charge for this overnight stay at the Central Wisconsin Environmental Station. Dinner at individual expense. Website: www.uwsp.edu/cnr/cwes/

Thursday August 27

8am: *Travel south*

10:30am to 12:30pm: *Field research on agricultural systems*

Attend the UW Arlington Agricultural Research Station Agronomy/Soils Field Day—Crops and soils tours; round-up ready production; a variety of other topics.

2pm-4pm: *Urban agriculture*

Visit and perform service learning in the gardens of Walnut Way Conservation Corp, an urban gardening and community development enterprise. Website:

<http://www.walnutway.org/>

6pm: *Return to Madison.*

Friday August 28

9 AM to 12 noon: *Course wrap up*

Room 145 King Hall