



WMARS POLICIES & PROCEDURES

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JANUARY 2023

UW WEST MADISON AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH STATION
8502 Mineral Point Rd., Verona, WI 53593

PURPOSE AND DESCRIPTION

The West Madison Agricultural Research Station (WMARS, 8502 Mineral Point Rd, Verona, WI) is a research complex of the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, (CAL S) with primary focus on plant-based applied research. The station has 528 ac that includes: 505 cropped with 30 ac being certified organic, a large 6-a horticultural display garden, a certified compost operation, and facilities and storage dedicated to plant-breeding research. The main lot has several buildings including the Chemical Management Facility (CMF); the shop/unheated storage; Agronomy/BSE/Genetics/Horticulture, which houses a biomass dryer facility and two large walk-in coolers; a 3-sided hay shed; and an interim Seeds Building (former Soil & Plant Analysis Lab). Two more unheated storage sheds exist on the south side of Mineral Point Rd. The USDA shares an unheated pole shed with Fruit & Veggie Facility, where researchers wash, process produce under a lean-to, and hold produce in a small walk-in cooler.

The Walnut Street Greenhouse has two structures located here as well. Each greenhouse is one big open 40 by 100 feet space, with combined bench space of 4400 square feet for research and instruction. Contact Ben Erdman (berdman2@wisc.edu) for use/policies of these structures.

The station is very busy with often 100 or more people using the station on any given day. This number could easily be double that in peak season and when the conference room is being used. Use caution when driving and parking.

All first time users of the WMARS complex are required to schedule an orientation to the facility with the WMARS staff. The session will provide an overview of the facility and available services, and an introduction to WPS (Worker Protection Standards), emergency response plan, and other safety issues pertinent to the research station. In addition, the Policies and Procedures of the WMARS will be reviewed. Other topics will be addressed as needed, or upon request i.e. training for using a backpack sprayer, small engine operation, utility vehicles/tractors use.

The WMARS operates under the WMARS Policies and Procedures that follow.

FIELD SPACE ALLOCATION AND PLOT MAINTENANCE

WMARS staff will designate the location of field plots and manage rotations and basic fertility.

The management of WMARS must be made aware of all space request needs, preferably as far in advance as possible with the ARS Project Information Request Form (PIRF) due by Jan 31 annually. PIRFs are found on our webpage: <https://westmadison.ars.wisc.edu/>

Due to the nature of rotational crop research, any project with less than a **SIX**-month notice that needs to terminate a crop pre-maturely must pay for the lost crop revenue.

Requests are considered on a first-come/first-served basis. Priority will be given to faculty, staff and students of CAL S conducting plant-based research.

PIRFs and plot maps are necessary and must be provided to station management **before** any work by WMARS will be done. This is to prevent mistakes and to facilitate communication.

Nutrients: Upon request, WMARS will manure/compost fields and incorporate during the fall. Spring preparation consists of a range of soil tillage implements. Soil tests are taken in the fall and P and K fertilizer applied in the spring per the test. Nitrogen will be applied per UW recommendations unless specified.

Researchers are responsible for keeping their plots weed-free and in an orderly condition. All biological aspects of the research, including establishing, maintaining, and harvesting research crops are the responsibility of the research teams.

Contact us:
WMARS – 608-262-2257
janet.hedtcke@wisc.edu

WMARS staff will maintain unassigned areas in the field by filling in with similar crop, mowing, tilling, sowing a cover crop or applying herbicide. But only after researchers have clearly identified their plot boundary with a 3-foot tilled or mowed border.

When you come across rocks in your plots, please remove them or pile them on plot corner and flag them and ask for assistance to move them off site. Do not toss them into grass alley, as they will be hit with the mowers and cause damage or injury.

Field research is expected to be completed by November 1 unless prior arrangements have been made with the station manager. All flags, stakes, cages, hoses, plastic mulch and dripline, and other materials should be completely removed by November 1 so final fieldwork can be completed before snow or frozen ground.

Land may not be used for propagating or producing plants for personal or private use.

Land used by researchers is for data and sample collection only. Crop offtake from said research plot is for station use only.

Problems regarding space allocation will be brought to the Ag Research Stations Committee via the WMARS Manager.

IRRIGATION

We maintain 3 traveling guns, pipe, and fittings used with the high capacity well. Only WMARS staff will operate these guns and the well. Pipe layout assistance may be requested from projects in high-demand times.

Gun/pipe Irrigation is upon request and a schedule will be developed in times of high demand so everyone gets some.

Water silos will be filled on request (with advance notice) and mobile water wagons available to use upon request. Any plumbing /sprinkler attachments that come with the mobile units belongs to WMARS and if lost or damaged, will be charged to projects. Water silos, pumps, mainline/driptape/connectors are the responsibility of the project.

Pipe needs to remain in place until transplants/seedlings are successfully established. Ask for assistance to move or disassemble pipes. Use caution when driving near pipes. DO NOT drive over them.

NO METAL POLICY

Use of metal flags, stakes, landscape fabric staples, spikes, signs, etc are prohibited in the fields for 2 important reasons: 1) metal left in the field will end up in the forage and can kill livestock (hardware disease); and 2) metal left in the field can and will cause damage to ARS equipment/tires.

Exceptions: t-posts pounded in the ground for plant support and ground anchors use in/around hoopouses. Materials must be inventoried before AND after so everything is accounted for and nothing left in the field. Nothing should be left out in the field longer than necessary.

Repair cost (labor and supplies) to ARS equipment will be charged to research project responsible for the metal damage.

STORAGE SPACE/BUILDING USE ALLOCATION

Decision of space is up to Superintendent and ARS director and is priority is given to programs with active research at the station.

Space may not be used for propagating or producing plants or storing material for personal or private use.

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Aisles must be kept clear of obstructions to allow for safe and unobstructed passage and access between and within buildings.

PROJECT ASSISTANCE

The WMARS staff is available to assist with problems or special needs that arise during the course of a project.

The WMARS staff will assist with various activities such as the following: Small engine troubleshooting and training; Repairs and Fabrication (labor, fuel, and supplies will be charged back to research project); and attaching 3-pt implements.

The shop, and power tools within the shop, are for the exclusive use of the WMARS staff. However, hand tools may be checked out to individuals. The cost of unreturned tools will be charged against project accounts. Power equipment may not be used without proper training and the use of safety equipment.

A sign-out book is in the shop on the table in the small engine cage; tools and equipment must be signed out before taking. Please request 24-hr in advance. Please return at end of each day - do not take WMARS tools/equipment off station.

Large field equipment and tractor operation will be exclusively done by the WMARS Crew.

The WMARS maintains and has available a variety of smaller equipment, tools and supplies for occasional use by researchers. Examples include a fertilizer spreader, carts, wheelbarrows, mowers, hand sprayers, hoses, hose extensions, shut-off valves, nozzles, watering cans, trashcans, ladders, miscellaneous hand tools, etc. Equipment should be returned promptly, clean and ready for the next user. No materials may be taken without asking and signing it out first.

Each project should maintain a basic set of supplies. If your project depends on regular use of such tools/utility vehicles, then you should obtain your own set.

Shop use must be supervised with at least two people present when working on equipment/tractors.

RESPONSIBILITY and ETTIQUETTE

We have a lot of shared “common space” at WMARS: Workspace (hay shed, veggie facility, dryer facility, CMF) and breakroom table/ sink areas should be cleaned up immediately after use and all general equipment, space and dishes/utensils should be returned promptly, in clean condition.

Heed to the 20 mph speed limit on field roads. Drive with caution, particularly around blind corners, in the parking lot, when crossing Pleasant View and Mineral Point Rd and driving on Elderberry Lane. Be aware of irrigation pipe laying on ground and do not drive over the pipes.

Do not drive into the fields or park in fields, as this will cause permanent compaction damage. Use gravel field roads or sodded alleyways to access your plots and carpool when possible.

Throughout the course of their project, researchers are responsible for keeping their assigned fields clean, orderly and maintained. Researchers should follow routine hygiene practices in assigned spaces. Dead plants and debris must be cleaned from fields in a timely manner. Produce crates, waste buckets and trash shall be emptied regularly. Clean and store produce crates in a timely manner.

Failure to maintain assigned space in an orderly manner and weed-free condition may subject the project to a \$30.00 per hour, per person clean-up fee. A warning will be issued before a clean-up fee is assessed.

Heed the ‘LEAVE NO TRACE’ policy. Remove all plastic: flags, tags, bags, flagging, stakes, plastic mulch, irrigation material, sandbags, bricks etc. - whatever you put in for project must be removed at end of the season and be well-marked in-season.

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At the termination of a project(s), researchers are responsible removing, discarding and/or returning all equipment, materials, supplies and rubbish from their field space. Anything put in for a research trial needs to be removed. LEAVE NO TRACE. Provide clear, preferably written, communication to Superintendent when the plots can be terminated. Upon project completion, if space is not left in acceptable condition, the researcher will be notified and given five (5) working days to complete termination of their project. After the five (5) days, WMARS staff will perform the work and charge the project at the rate of \$30.00 per hour, per person.

Clean up/wash down things after borrowing them. Cleanup time should be figured into daily timeline.

24-hr advance notice needed when needing ARS equipment/personnel.

When using ARS tractors & implements:

Check the oil and fuel before leaving the shop or ask for help to do this;

Ask for help with 3-pt attachments for proper preparation, leveling, and greasing;

Wash down things with hose or pressure washer and soap on the lawn or grassy area i.e. utility vehicles, truck beds. Smelly produce attracts flies and wasps and is frustrating to clean when dried on.

Use power washer to remove dirt; compressed air to blow off plant debris. These requests follow good sanitation principles.

When something breaks, let someone know directly or attach a note describing issue ASAP.

PEST MANAGEMENT/ CHEMICAL MANAGEMENT FACILITY (CMF)

It is up to each research project to scout and request specific pesticide application that WMARS staff will apply with boom sprayers; all backpack/direct sprays are to be calibrated and applied by researcher team members. Triple rinse tanks immediately after use in the field where product was applied. Be sure to factor in tank rinse time to your schedule as it can take more time than the actual application.

Each research team needs their own set of PPE: Coveralls, boots, gloves, dust masks, goggles, etc., per label of product being applied. CMF has a locker room and lockers for storing PPE.

Each department has a locked room for their chemicals and a key to the building and specific room will be loaned out upon request. Chemical spills in the storage rooms are the responsibility of the assigned users. Please check your rooms frequently and address spills ASAP. Use designated 'spill mop' to clean up chemicals in your room and discard dirty water according to the pesticide's label.

Inventory chemicals annually and maintain SDS binder in two places: CMF and Main Office.

Clean up after yourself (benchtops, floors, hallways) when using the CMF as there is no janitorial service. If not cleaned up satisfactorily, a \$30/hr. fee will be charged to your program.

WORKER PROTECTION STANDARD TRAINING

Worker Protection Standard (WPS) training is required by Federal law for anyone who works within the ARS network. Even those who expect to spend only a few weeks on a project must receive WPS training.

WPS training provides information to help insure worker safety while on station. It takes approximately 20 minutes to view video and does not involve taking a test. Annual certification is required.

It is recommended that each project read and understand the Pesticide Applicator Training manual 'Field and Vegetable Crops' to be familiar with pesticides and labels and safety.

Certification should be obtained **prior** to starting work at the station. Campus generally conducts WPS training sessions, as can WMARS with advance notice. Training session times are flexible to be as convenient as possible.

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Failure to obtain WPS certification may result in loss of station access.

All users of the WMARS are expected to comply with WPS regulations, WMARS pest control policies and WMARS safety procedures.

Pesticide postings are always available in a 3-ring binder in cabinet on the wall of the hay shed.

SAFETY/TRAININGS

*ARS has a **Safety Manual** posted to the website that station users should review:

<https://kb.wisc.edu/cals/safety/96887>

***Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures (SPCC):** Anyone operating a tractor or equipment with engines that use fuel/oil must take the annual SPCC training by EHS –

<https://canvas.wisc.edu/enroll/9FGCGP> enroll then choose West Madison ARS PowerPoint from the list.

***UTVs** – all users that operate a utility vehicle must take the safety training at least once and more often if there has been an incident. Use this link to get to the training:

<https://kb.wisc.edu/cals/safety/page.php?id=104484>

***Forklift certification** – anyone needed to operate the forklift must be certified (every 3 yrs.); otherwise ask for assistance from the WMARS crew ahead of time to operate truck.

<https://inside.fpm.wisc.edu/training/forklift-safety/>

RECYCLING AND TRASH AND COMPOST

We have several trash dumpsters, a cardboard/paper dumpster, AgBag and hoophouse film dumpster (no driptape allowed), and co-mingled recycling bin (glass, tin, aluminum, #1, #2 plastic bottles, jugs). Read the sign before dumping so the right material is put in the proper dumpster.

Herbaceous plant debris (**no paper or woody material**) can be deposited in concrete bin next to greenhouse for composting. Paper products are troublesome because they blow around the fields, which creates unsightly surface pollution/litter. Make arrangements with WM management if you need to dispose of woody material.

CONFERENCE ROOM

The conference room is a revenue generating facility and must be kept clean and tidy.

Must reserve before using, \$55/day, no food allowed unless renting room.

Upper parking lot is reserved for room renters.

Please ask if room has been reserved before using.

The refrigerator in this room is not a spare for daily lunchboxes. It is for room renters only.

ACCESS AND SECURITY

Normal working hours for the WMARS are 8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Shipments should be within the 8:00 to 4:00pm window to allow us time for unloading.

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All users are required to lock their buildings, and other used areas such as the dryer facility, the Chemical Management Facility, etc. before leaving for the day.

Keys for user buildings can be obtained at the front office by filling out a contact card. There is a \$5 deposit/key (returnable when key is returned).

Announcements and notices are posted at the high traffic areas -hallway, near water fountain. Users are advised to read the information posted on these bulletin boards on a regular basis.

Tours of the station can be arranged for visiting researchers, community or school groups with advance notice.

PARKING

Vehicle parking at WMARS is restricted to active station users. During the growing season, the facility is busy with researcher activity, farm operations, garden visitors and parking is limited. Please do not park along the driveway as it blocks the access for trucks and large equipment coming and going to/from the lot. No extended parking of personal vehicles allowed.

Temporary parking requests must be approved by management and a spare set of keys left at the front office. Fees of \$50/week will be imposed if vehicles are stored here longer than one week.

WINTER/OFFSEASON

During the off-season, the lot needs to be kept clear for snow removal. Please allow reasonable time after snow event for the WMARS crew to clear snow before visiting the station.

Fields are generally not accessible in the offseason due to snow and freeze/thaw cycles that make the condition of the field roads (gravel or sod) unpredictable or impassible. Furthermore, waterway aprons are often filled with deep icy water that vehicles may break through and get stuck. If you must go the field in winter (or anytime when roads are unsuitable for driving on), please get permission from station personnel first. Be proactive to find suitable conditions to walk from the parking lot or check out a utility vehicle if you know how to navigate muddy/icy/sloshy conditions. If you must drive, be sure your vehicle has 4-wheel drive and stay on the gravel road but only if it has been cleared of snow first.

We have limited space for vehicle storage during the offseason and station users are given priority. Project vehicle access and maintenance is the responsibility of the lab using the vehicle. These vehicles cannot be maintained or serviced by WMARS staff. Be proactive to operate the vehicle occasionally over the offseason to prevent dead batteries. If battery is dead or other service is needed, please contact UW Fleet Garage for assistance: Phone: (608) 262-3555 Email: fleet@fpm.wisc.edu.

Because of the number of station research vehicles left here for storage over winter, we can't keep them shoveled out/cleared of snow/accessible (they are 'stacked' 3-4 deep). Leave a spare set of keys with us if you leave a vehicle on-station. If you need to access/use of the vehicle during winter, it is your responsibility to clear it out and let us know 24-hr in advance if your vehicle is parked behind another vehicle. Again, we cannot maintain departmental vehicles while they are stored here; hence, it is not ideal to park vehicles here if you frequently need them during the offseason.

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Appendix of photos

Manage uncropped areas of your field: Weeds should be mowed, tilled before setting seed. Remove plastic mulch, flags, and other non-degradable material at end of each season.



Broadleaf weeds (pigweed, lambsquarters, velvetleaf) in corn plot



Crabgrass in vegetable plots

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Stay on designated path/gravel roads. Stay out of fields with vehicles, especially under wet conditions



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