

# FALL FARM & Harvest

MONROE COUNTY  
**HERALD**

Hillsboro  
Sentry • Enterprise

October 13th & 14th, 2021 | 8 pages







Herald photo by Kyle Evans.



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# Above average temperatures enable more days in the fields

**BY NICOLETTE NAUMAN**  
*Sentry-Enterprise Editor*

According to data collected by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), Wisconsin experienced above normal temperatures at the end of September moving into October, providing Wisconsin farmers with roughly six full days suitable for fieldwork.

While rain did occur in certain areas of the state, Wisconsin farmers were able to make significant progress with the harvest during this time. A high moisture corn harvest was reported in several districts, with topsoil moisture rated at 11% very short, 16% short, 69% adequate, and 4% surplus.

Data indicates that approximately 80% of the corn crop was mature. This is a day earlier than last year's corn crop, and roughly 11 days ahead of schedule based on the 5-year average.

By October 3, USDA reports indicated that 12% of the grain harvest had been completed, which was five days ahead of last year's metrics and a fully nine days earlier than in normal years. Corn silage harvests were listed as being 91% completed.

Field corn harvest for grain had a moisture content of 23%, and 73% of the corn was recorded as being in good to excellent condition.

The soybean harvest was listed as being 31% complete, which was similarly ahead of previous years as the grain harvests. Soybean condition was also recorded at 73%, and like with the corn harvests, was also down by several percentage points compared to figures for the week prior.

Potato harvests were listed at 71% complete. Winter wheat planting recorded 59% completion rates. Though this is five days behind schedule compared to last year's figures, this is still eight days ahead of the 5-year average.

Crop Progress as of October 3, 2021

Item	Districts										State			
	NW	NC	NE	WC	C	EC	SW	SC	SE	This week	Last week	Last year	5-year avg	
	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	(percent)	
Corn mature .....	67	78	78	78	82	84	74	88	76	80	61	79	62	
Corn harvested for grain .....	4	7	11	11	14	7	13	18	10	12	5	7	6	
Corn harvested for silage .....	90	83	96	84	84	93	93	97	99	91	80	89	68	
Fall tillage .....	23	26	8	11	24	21	21	15	19	19	10	10	10	
Hay, alfalfa, fourth cutting .....	82	81	99	97	84	95	94	96	99	92	89	90	84	
Soybeans dropping leaves .....	86	98	96	94	93	94	96	93	93	94	80	87	77	
Soybeans harvested .....	25	27	31	24	13	34	39	39	36	31	11	17	13	
Wheat, winter, planted .....	94	79	73	43	60	71	52	50	38	59	42	67	47	
Wheat, winter, emerged .....	62	27	32	21	35	45	26	12	7	29	18	40	26	



# Woolly Bears and Old Man Winter

BY NICOLETTE NAUMAN  
Sentry-Enterprise Editor

It's a relatively common bit of folklore that the coat patterns of the woolly bear caterpillar can indicate what sort of winter we'll get each year. Every year, come autumn, my family and I would keep our eyes out for these fuzzy little creatures.

The story goes that the three bands of color—always two black and one brown—could forecast the winter if you knew how to read them.

If the caterpillar was more black than brown, with only a thin ring of brown on it, then you could expect a harsh and relentless winter: frigid temps, heavy snowfall, and plenty of ice to trip you up. If the brown band was wide, covering most of the caterpillar, than the winter was likely to be mild—and the browner the caterpillar, the milder the winter! A moderately sized brown band, which doesn't seem to be much larger or smaller than the black bands, always meant a moderate winter: not too harsh, not too mild.

The location of the bands also carried key information, according to the tales. If the brown band was closer to the head of the caterpillar, then the winter was likely to begin mild but would become harsher towards the end. If the brown band was closer to the tail end of the



The distinctive reddish-brown band on a woolly bear caterpillar—the predecessor to a tiger moth—has been used as a way to forecast the coming winter weather since America's colonial days.  
Contributed photo.

caterpillar, than the opposite was true: a harsh start to the winter season, but it would become milder as the season continued.

Many versions of the story liken the caterpillar's 13 body segments as representative of the 13 weeks of winter, giving us a more exact indication of what the winter would bring. Some versions focus more on the fuzziness of the caterpillar—the woollier the coat, the colder the winter. In addition, the direction in which a caterpillar

'WINTER' cont. on page 6

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# What's the buzz about?

By **RHONDA HESS**  
*Contributing Writer*

Ben Reimann is busy as a bee. He and his wife, Kathy, own KandBees, a bee-friendly family farm in Tomah.

Reimann said they focused on the name and branding of their company this summer but he has been a beekeeper for many years.

In 2016, he started with two hives. "We were avid gardeners," he said. That love of gardening made him curious about pollination, so bees were a natural next step. However, it did not come easy at first.

"All of the bees died the first year," he said. "It's a challenge."

Reimann estimates about 50 percent of bees survive the harsh Wisconsin winters.

He is currently working with 25 hives that house between 50 and 80 thousand bees each.

Several gallons of honey are collected from the hives, along with beeswax, which the couple makes into lip balm, soap and candles.

They are even offering pollination services to local cranberry growers.

"It started out as a hobby and turned into an addiction," Reimann said, adding that the many health properties of bee products are still

being discovered.

The hives required weekly attention at first, he said. "When you first start out, you need to be in there every weekend so you can catch anomalies sooner, before they become a problem," Reimann said.

Despite the challenges, Reimann continues to buzz around with his hives, giving the bees sugar water to get through the winter.

The bees will cluster together, with the queen bee in the middle, to keep the hives at a balmy 95 degrees throughout the cold season.

"It's fascinating, once you get into them," Reimann said.

To purchase some of the products

from KandBees, stop at the Target Bluff Shops in Camp Douglas or visit the couple's other business, K and B Flooring of Tomah.

Soap and other products by KandBees are available at Target Bluff Shops in Camp Douglas or K and B flooring in Tomah. Photo by Rhonda Hess



A close-up of the inner workings of one of KandBees hives. Contributed photo



Ben Reimann works with bees at KandBees. Contributed photo



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## Corn, corn, corn

A group of hard-working men unload corn at Sparta Co-op Services. ABOVE Joe Flock, Bob Miller, and Tom Waters supervise the falling corn. RIGHT Joe Flock pulls the lever to release the corn. Herald photos by Greg Evans.

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## 'WINTER'

cont. from page 3

traveling was used to indicate the coming winter, as well.

These caterpillars have been used as winter forecasters since the earliest days of European settlement in the Americas. The story gained more popularity after a small study published in 1948 by Dr. Howard Curran, curator of entomology at the American Museum of Natural History. Curran, a reporter, his colleagues, and their wives went out to Bear Mountain in New York to study the brown bands of 15 different woolly bears, publishing a prediction about the coming winter in the New York Herald Tribune.

The truth of the matter is, as fun as this bit of folklore is, a woolly bear caterpillar is no more able to predict the coming winter than any of us. Its distinctive black-and-brown coat is based on a variety of factors, from its age and species to what it has been eating. The better the growing season has been, the larger it will grow, resulting in a narrower brown band.

Still, the myth persists and folks in the Midwest and New England regions of the United States continue to keep an eye out for the little critters and their distinctive brown bands. Here's hoping that this year's woolly bears promise good things for the winter season!

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Ruby Evans, 8 months old, from Cataract sits in the wagon with her pumpkin haul at Tucker & Becky's Pumpkin Patch in Cashton.

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