Farm Succession is a topic relevant to all farm businesses regardless of stage of development of the farm. Like retirement, it requires planning long before the entrance of a jr. generation or retirement of a sr. generation.

A workshop series was delivered that divided Farm Succession and Estate Planning into 3 areas: Basic Legal Protections, Farm Succession/Business Continuation and Asset Preservation. We will explain and discuss the tools that are used to address issues across these areas. The tools include: wills, trusts, buy/sell agreements, life insurance and family LLC’s.

The 28 attendees consisted of farmers from 5 counties (Cayuga, Cortland, Schuyler, Tioga and Tompkins). 10 were couples. Farm operations varied from single owner operators, multi-generational, semi-retired, small dairy, large dairy, beef, custom dairy heifer raising and crop enterprises. The group represented about 4900 cows and 5100 heifers.

Our presenters were experienced professionals who work with estate and succession issues regularly. They included: Mr. Mathew Neumann, Attorney and CPA with Riehlman Shafer & Shafer; Mr. Robert M. Shafer, attorney with Riehlman Shafer & Shafer; Mr. Andrew Polley, VP Investment Officer Wells Fargo Advisors, Ms. Erica Leubner, MSW, Personal Consultant with Farm Net; and Mr. Dan Galusha, Succession Planning Consultant, Farm Credit East.

**Topics Discussed:**
- Start with the End in Mind,
- A Poor Man’s Guide to Estate Planning,
- Preserving Your Assets,
- Considerations & Financial Planning for Retirement;
- Managing Family Communication and Conflict,
- Case studies of Farm Succession Paths.

This meeting series was intended to get people started w/ a to do list of tasks and formulating their farm succession plan. The primary reason(s) reported for why people attended the group:

- Currently working on the farm succession process
- Planning to pass my farm to my son and grandson
- Interested in working on my exit strategy
- To get some new ideas
- Try to figure out how to transfer
- We are in the process of transferring and it didn’t go well at all and wanted to get info how to make it easier for us and our children

**Participants valued:**

Learning about tax law (2),
The honesty and differences where people were coming from
Agreements needed to be in place
The amounts of pieces in a partnership set up

Continued on p.4
This group has a long history of getting together for learning and fellowship. Meetings focus on production and management topics pertinent to organic crop production for marketing or livestock. The group’s objective is to learn about the most recent information on growing organic field crops and organic dairy production. Farmers, extension agents, researchers, and agri-service personnel identify the meeting topics. Information is presented in a practical, applicable way.

The group met Jan 8, Feb 12 and Mar 12 at Jordan Hall, NYSAES, Geneva. 10 am – 2 pm with a dish to pass. Lunch allowed quality of time for conversation and networking.

**Topics addressed:**

**January:** Cornell Organic Dairy and Field Crop PWT. A range of speakers providing updates of current research at Cornell. Speakers: **Margaret Smith**, Plant Breeding., CU-The 5 state Breeding Project for Organic Corn Systems.


**Fay Benson**, Extension Educator – *Can grazing & flax feeding impact omega-3 and omega-6 levels in organic milk? This A NIFA funded project.*

**Barley fodder production and feeding to dairy cows.**

**Brian Caldwell**, Research Assoc. with the Cornell Organic Cropping Systems Project. *An overview of the project’s findings*

**Robert Perry**, NOFA – *Winter Meetings and Updates*

**Jason Karszes**, Pro-Dairy – *An overview of the Organic Dairy Farm Business Summary.*

**February:** *Managing your Weeds*

**Chuck Mohler**, SCAS, CU. *Sharpen your weed management skills* Chuck discussed how crop rotation affects weed species and populations as well as ecological management of ag weeds.

**Jim Sattelberg**, Thistledown Farms. ([http://www.everbestorganics.com/thistledownfarms.html](http://www.everbestorganics.com/thistledownfarms.html)) *Production and Marketing of organic dry beans and small grains*

**March:** *Panel Discussion on Crop Nutrition and Soil Fertility*

**Derek Christianson** from eastern Massachusetts. *Building profits through full spectrum fertility investments: growing in harmony with natural systems.*

**Jack Lazor**, Butterworks farm, Vermont. *Soil Testing & Soil Fertility*

**Klaas Martens**, Lakeview Organic, Penn Yan. *History, Philosophy & Soil Fertility*

**Educational Outcomes from these meetings included:**

- Chicken manure as a reasonably priced of organic fertilizer
- Inquiries about the Organic Dairy DFBS
- Learning about options and timing of different cover crops
- Monitoring soil fertility and managing it accordingly
- Potential for new crops and markets
- Options for diversifying income stream
- Awareness of hybrid development best suited for organic production systems
- Strategies for weed control
- Excellent networking opportunity with other producers and agri-service representatives

The participants in this group are encouraging. There is always interest and good discussion. Many drive from long distances. We are fulfilling a niche that is underserved.
Meetings & Workshops Fall/ Winter 2012/ 2013

**Dairy Management**

Oct 1
Annual Feed Dealer’s Meeting  
NYS Grange, Cortland in conjunction w/ An Sci CU  
John  
16 p

Dec 10
Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative National Conference  
Orlando, FL Invited presentation: Grazing Dairy Heifers  
Fay  
38 p

Feb 6 & 7
NE Pasture Consortium Manchester, NH  
Invited presentation, *Sprouts for Dairy Production*  
Fay  
68 p

Mar 16
Chenango County Grazing Conference  
Norwich Invited presentation: Evaluating Overall Health & Physical Movement of Dairy Heifers  
Fay  
23 p

Mar 20
Evaluating Overall Health & Physical Movement of Dairy Heifers  
Rensselaer Grazing Group CCE Rensselaer County Invited presentation:  
Fay  
12 p

Mar 26
Winter Dairy Management School  
NYS Grange, Cortland  
Janice  
25 p

**Farm Business Management**

Dec 11
Grain Marketing Discussion Group  
CCE Cortland  
Janice  
8 p

Jan 16
Women in Agriculture  
Business Planning w/ Jeff Perry  
Janice  
3 p

Feb 5
Women in Agriculture  
Solving the Financial Puzzle: Making Ends Meet w/ Barb Henza  
Janice  
8 p

Feb 26
Women in Agriculture  
Financial Documents & What Employees Expect. Betsey Howland & Tom Maloney  
Janice  
8 p

Mar 20
Women in Agriculture  
Strategic Marketing w/ Matt LeRoux & Communication & Stress Triggers Erica Leubner  
Janice  
8 p

Feb 7
Farm Succession Discussion Group I  
Setting the Stage for the Next Generation & Poor Man’s Guide to Estate Planning  
Janice  
27 p

Feb 28
Farm Succession Discussion Group II  
Planning for Asset Preservation  
Janice  
27 p

Mar 28
Farm Succession Discussion Group III  
Communication and Conflict & Farm Succession Case Studies  
Janice  
23 p

Mar 6 & 13
Managing for Success  
CCE Tioga  
Fay  
6 p

**Organic Production and Management**

Jan 8
NY Certified Organic Meeting: Cornell Workgroup  
NYSAES, Geneva Panel of Guests  
Fay/Janice  
32 p

Feb 12
NY Certified Organic Meeting: Weed Control  
NYSAES, Geneva Presenters: Chuck Mohler, SCAS, and Jim Sattleberg, Thistledown Farms  
Fay/Janice  
39 p

Mar 12
NY Certified Organic Meeting: Soil and Crop Nutrition  
NYSAES, Geneva Guests: Jack Lazor, Klaas Martens and Derek Christianson (veg grower from Mass.)  
Fay/Janice
Mar 7  Organic Dairy Producer’s Discussion Group  Janice/Fay
   NYS Grange.  Forage Needs and Cropping Systems  12 p

**Risk Management**

Jan 18  Catskill Ag Day  Fay
   SUNY Delhi  Presentation: *Pasture & Row Crop Insurance*  122 p

Jan 22  Crop Insurance Overview  Fay
   CCE Tioga.  Invited presentation by Tioga County Farm Bureau  5 p

Jan 25/26  Winter Green Up Grazing Conference  Fay
   Invited presentation, *Pasture & Forage Crop Insurance*  93 p

Feb 22  Farm Bureau Young Farmer’s Conference  Fay
   Liverpool HI.  Invited presentation on Crop Insurance  23 p

Mar 1  NOFA Organic Dairy Conference  Fay
   Holiday Inn, Auburn  Invited Presentation: Risk Management for Organic Dairies  8 p

**Crop Production**

Jan 23  Winter Crop Meeting  Janice
   Clarion Inn, Ithaca  124 p

Feb 15  Tully Ag’s Crop Meeting  Janice
   Invited Presentation: Combating Weed Resistance  32 p

Mar 21  Crop Protection Meeting  Janice
   Orchard Vali Golf Club, Lafayette  co-sponsored by Dowling Ag  25 p

Mar 27  Pesticide Applicator Training  Janice
   Dryden Fire Hall  12 p

**Public Awareness of Agriculture**

Mar 5  Cortland County Mini-Agricultural Economic Summit  Fay
   NYS Grange  Sponsored by Cort Cty IDA/BDC and area ag agencies  15 p

Mar 19  Cortland County Agricultural Recognition Dinner  Fay
   The Hathaway House, Solon  Sponsored by Cort Cty IDA/BDC and area ag agencies  155 p

Continued from cover: Farm Succession

- Resource materials
- Learning about buy/sell agreements
- Poor man’s estate planning tips

**Steps they planned to take as a result of the meetings:**

- Talk to family about land lease
- Work on planning with family
- Have agreements signed and in place
- Get more involved in the way partnerships are set up
- Vigorously pursue a transfer plan
- Plan better for my children and business
- Get Power of Attorney and Will in place
- More meetings with family business partners
- Get a consultant (2)
- Planning LLC and to plan succession
- Visit attorney and make arrangements for key employee.
- Interested in working out an exit strategy for next 5-10 yrs
- Going to continue to attend meetings like these and keep up on policies and laws and make sure we get the right people to help us plan accordingly
- Participants were engaged and asked many questions that helped expand the information.