Stockpiling Pastures for Fall & Winter Grazing

By: Bill Verbeten

With the continued high hay prices and silage production costs many livestock farmers are looking for ways to get more out of their pastures. Extending the grazing season by stockpiling pastures in August through the early fall can greatly reduce the fed costs over the winter.

**How Does Stockpiling Pastures Work?**

Farmers have been successfully stockpiling pastures and rangeland across the United States since the 1960’s. In order to stockpile a pasture grazing is usually halted by August, between 50 and 75 lbs./acre of nitrogen is applied, and grazing is delayed until the first fall frost (usually October). In most cases these farms already practice rotational grazing and they graze their stockpiled pastures using strip grazing.

Farmer experiences and research from across the Northeast, the Midwest, the Great Plains, and Canada shows the grasses best suited to stockpiling pastures are tall fescue, meadow bromegrass, and orchardgrass. Smooth bromegrass, reed canarygrass, quackgrass, and timothy have lower stockpiled yields (0.25-0.5 ton DM/acre lower), lose forage quality quicker, and generally sustain more damage as a result of stockpiling. Farmers have had the best results stockpiling legumes in the following ranking: alsike clover, birdsfoot trefoil, red clover, white clover, and alfalfa.

Applying 50 to 75 lbs./acre of nitrogen in August when summer grazing ends generally increases stockpiled yields by 0.5 ton DM/acre. However there may not be as much of a yield response if legumes make up between 30 and 50% of the pasture.

Continued on page 3
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**Mission Statement**

The NWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops team will provide lifelong education to the people of the agricultural community to assist them in achieving their goals. Through education programs & opportunities, the NWNY Team seeks to build producers’ capacities to:

- Enhance the profitability of their business
- Practice environmental stewardship
- Enhance employee & family well-being in a safe work environment
- Provide safe, healthful agricultural products
- Provide leadership for enhancing relationships between agricultural sector, neighbors & the general public.
Every inch of rainfall/irrigation in August & September will increase stockpiled pasture yields by 300-400 DM/acre. Well-managed stockpiled pastures with normal autumn rainfall should yield at least 1.0 ton DM/acre.

Crunching the Numbers

The following is an example calculation of how long a stockpiled pasture could replace hay or silage. A farm sets aside 50 acres for stockpiling. Their stockpiled yields are 1 ton DM/acre and their harvest efficiency will be about 75% using strip grazing. They have 37.5 tons (75,000 lbs.) DM of feed available for fall/winter grazing (50 acres * 1 ton DM/acre * 75% harvest efficiency). Their 40 beef cows (medium-sized, ~1000 lbs.) consume about 3% of their body weight per day for a total feed use of 1,200 lbs. DM/day. Taking the harvestable pasture inventory (75,000 lbs.) divided by the daily feed use (1,200 lb/day) equals just over 60 days’ worth of feed. Less stockpiled forage will be available later in the winter; about 0.1 ton DM/acre is lost each month after October.

Cows harvesting their own feed on pasture require about one third of the investment of putting up the same feed as hay or silage. Even extending the grazing season by one to two months can greatly increase the profitability of a livestock operation with current hay prices still above $250/ton DM in many areas.

Contact Bill Verbeten at 585-313-4457 or wdv6@cornell.edu if you have further questions about stockpiling pastures.

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**Topics for Flock Improvements**

- Discussion on Genetics and Environment Factors, plus more
- Tuesday, July 16, 2013
- 7:00 – 8:30 pm
- Yates County Auditorium
- $10 per person; $15 per farm

Cornell University PhD student Natasha Pettisfor will be joining us for the discussion.

The last half hour will be for open discussion.

Pre-registration is required. Send name and payment to: CCE Yates Co., 417 Liberty Street, Penn Yan, NY 14527 by July 12th. Call 315-536-5123.

For questions, call Nancy Glazier at 585-315-7746.

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So What’s Your Elevator Pitch?

By: Nancy Glazier

You have 30 seconds to get your point across to an individual who has little or no understanding of what is involved with farming. What would you say? What’s your sales pitch?

Have you ever been in a situation where someone questions something about agriculture? Do you answer, walk away and wished you had given a better answer? This may be a busy time of the year, but it is something that should be given some thought.

First of all, how do you begin? What is your opening line? How do you prepare for a statement such as, “I only buy organic milk since it doesn’t have antibiotics in it.” This has happened to me many times. I recently heard this comment. After I hesitate a second I respond that all milk is tested for antibiotic residue and if any is detected the whole load is disposed of. You give your kids antibiotics when they’re sick; well farmers do the same with their cows. That milk is not put in the tank to ship till the required time for withholding has passed. Make sure you check your facts ahead of time, too. Think about those types of questions to open the door to dialogue and set the record straight, the 30-second (or longer) elevator pitch. This can pertain to dairy, meat or crops.

The next step is to pull that down to your farm level. What is it that you’d like your neighbor to know about the way you farm? What is something unexpected or not predicted that provides a different perspective? Try this: I do (blank) because (blank). Include 3 characteristics such as hope to…, with…, through…, or, for others. And don’t forget the adjectives. For example, “I raise environmentally friendly grass-fed beef because my discerning customers are looking for a local product that tastes good and is good for them.” However you fill in those blanks, they need to be delivered with energy, sincerity, and enthusiasm. Be real. Make each sentence be a sound bite, delivered in layman’s terms. Write it down and rehearse.

What do you want to accomplish after your pitch? Are you looking to change someone’s views, enlighten, or disseminate the correct information? Keep your cool; the best way to do that is practice.

Need some help with this? There are tons of resources on the web. There are many YouTube videos to get you started and provide motivation; search for elevator pitch. Visit industry council or checkoff websites to check your facts and get ideas. There have been media trainings over the years that are very helpful with this. You all have stories to share. Do it well. If you want help, give me a call.
Winter Wheat Harvest & Storage

By: Mike Stanyard

Year at a Glance
Overall the winter wheat across NWNY looks to be in great shape. Producers are investing more effort in their wheat production. I am seeing more stream bars applying nitrogen and less herbicide sprayed on with the nitrogen. Powdery mildew came in early this year and I know more producers than usual applied fungicides early and at flag leaf to protect it. Cereal leaf beetle and common armyworm populations were present but at non-economic levels. Most of our wheat pollinated over the first week of June and the weather was mostly favorable. I saw quite a few sprayers in the field at flowering which means fungicides were being applied mainly for Fusarium head scab. All that is left now is to get it harvested and in the bin.

Harvest Preparation
Know your grain moisture and have the combine prepared to go when it’s time to pull the trigger. Weather and field conditions do not always cooperate during harvest. Many producers will start harvesting at 20% and dry it down to 13%. Producers who don’t have dryers and rely on field drying, run the greater risk of reduced grain quality. The first harvested wheat will have the best quality. Vomitoxin from Fusarium head scab is also a concern each season. Look for pink coloration and shrunken kernels in the heads. If these conditions are present, set the combine fans to high to try and blow these light kernels back onto the field. The Fusarium Risk Assessment Tool (http://www.wheatscab.psu.edu/) projected a low risk of FHB infection for NY through most of the critical flowering stage. However, wet conditions moved some of WNY to medium risk on June 7 as wet weather prevailed.

Grain Bin Preparation
Storage facilities should be inspected thoroughly prior to grain fill. Look for openings, leaky vents, fallen supports, and signs of rodents. Bird nests are always a treat to find in the auger or vents. Stored grain insects survive in old grain so complete cleaning is the first line of defense. Clean up all remaining grain on the floor of the bin. Take a long-handled broom and remove any grain stuck to the walls, around the door, supports, and in the fan opening. If there are a lot of fines remaining on the floor, clean up with a shop vacuum. The same is true for grain handling equipment such as augers and drying bins.

We are very limited when it comes to empty bin insecticide treatments. TEMPO® SC ULTRA and STORCIDE™ II (see label for application restrictions) are both labeled. Diatomaceous earth (Dryacide) is a non-insecticidal silica sand that can be applied as a dust in the bin and below the floor.

Spray the floor and walls inside the bin to the point of runoff. Spray some through the fan under the false floor of drying bins. Spray around the outside base of the bin and eliminate any weeds and old grain debris within 30 feet of the bin. Insects and rodents can survive on weed seeds too!

Yield Prediction
At the Cornell Small Grains Field Day on June 6, Bill Cox reviewed past 30 years of weather data for April and May to make a yield prediction for NY this year. In years when we have above average rainfall in these two months, state yield averages are low. Bill’s prediction… 60 bushel state average. Let’s hope it’s higher!!!
Performance of WNY Dairy Farm Businesses in 2012
Progress of the Farm Business, Preliminary Results

By: John Hanchar and Joan Petzen

Last month’s issue of AgFocus contained preliminary Dairy Farm Business Summary (DFBS) results for Western New York (WNY) Region farms. We reported ranges of results for selected business factors. In this month’s issue, we provide additional preliminary results, highlighting WNY cooperators’ progress from 2011 to 2012.

Summary

◆ While milk sold per cow rose about 2.5 percent, gross milk sales per hundredweight (cwt.) fell $2.03 to $19.76 in 2012 when compared to 2011.
◆ In 2012, the total cost of producing a cwt. of milk was $19.00, a decrease of 10 cents per cwt. relative to 2011.
◆ Preliminary results compiled on April 4, 2013 suggest that the same 46 WNY farms achieved decreased levels of profitability in 2012 compared to 2011 -- for example, in 2012, the rate of return on all capital without appreciation averaged 6.4 percent compared to 11.2 percent in 2011.

Introduction

The following preliminary results were compiled by Linda Putnam, Extension Support Specialist, The Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University, on April 4, 2013 using data from Cornell University Cooperative Extension’s DFBS Program. The results were reported to, and used by participants during the WNY Region’s meeting for cooperators in April 2013. Participants used results to identify strengths and weaknesses of their businesses. The results reported below represent averages for the same 46 WNY Region farms cooperating in 2011 and 2012.

Profitability

◆ Net farm income without appreciation per cwt. of milk averaged $2.97 in 2012, a decrease of about 38 percent compared to 2011.

Income Generation

◆ Gross milk sales per cow decreased from $5,462 in 2011 to $5,074 in 2012, a decrease of 7.1 percent.
◆ Gross milk sales per hundredweight (cwt.) fell from $21.79 to $19.76.

Rates of Production

◆ Milk sold per cow rose from 25,060 pounds in 2011 to 25,681 pounds in 2012, a change of 2.5 percent.
◆ Hay dry matter per acre averaged 3.2 tons, down 11 percent from 2011, while corn silage per acre increased from 16.6 to 17.5 tons.
Cost Control

- Dairy feed and crop expense per cwt. of milk rose from $7.55 in 2011 to $8.24 in 2012, an increase of 9.1 percent.
- In 2012, purchased input cost of producing a cwt. of milk was $16.79, a decrease of 1 percent relative to 2011.
- Total cost of producing a cwt. of milk fell from $19.10 to $19.00.

Size of Business

- The average number of cows per farm rose 4.6 percent.
- Worker equivalents per farm rose about 7.5 percent to 16 in 2012, while cows per worker fell slightly from 48 to 47.
- Total tillable acres increased 4.1 percent.

Final Thoughts

Owners of dairy farm businesses cooperate in Cornell University Cooperative Extension’s DFBS Program for purposes of identifying strengths and weaknesses by comparing their results to results of other cooperators. Are you interested in realizing the benefits of DFBS participation? To learn more contact John Hanchar - for contact information please see information at the front of this newsletter.

For other preliminary results see the team’s website under AgFocus.

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2013 Aurora Farm Field Day

July 18

9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Robert B. Musgrave Research Farm

1256 Poplar Ridge Road, Aurora

Presentation Topics

- Corn & Soybean Planting Date x Seeding Depth Studies
- Foliar Fungicides: Tools for Corn & Soybean Production in NY
- Western Bean Cutworm & other Field Crops Pests of 2013
- Soil Health, Adapt-N and Cover Crop Interseeding for Adaptation & Resilience
- Establishing Cool Season Forage Grasses in Roundup Ready Alfalfa
- Organic Cropping Systems Grain Trial
- Corn Breeding and Variety Testing of NY State
- Nutrient Management Update

Registration at 9:00 with Coffee & Donuts
(No preregistration)

FREE LUNCH
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Questions:
Mary McKellar
607.255.2177
mem40@cornell.edu

NYS Pesticide Applicator Recertification Credits will be available
CCA Continuing Education Credits will be available

AG FOCUS JULY 2013 WWW.NWNYTEAM.ORG
Lower Cost Milking Modernization

By: Beth Dahl, WNY Dairy Modernization Specialist, Harvest NY

Milking dairy cows is far from being a cookie-cutter process; procedure and facilities can vary significantly among herds, depending on management preference and herd size, among many factors.

While investment in a new milking parlor typically accompanies herd growth, dairy owners may make the decision to expand or build a parlor based on other factors, including improving labor efficiency, milker safety, and reducing time spent and physical strain of milking.

Numerous dairy owners have made the transition from tie stall to freestall and incorporated a milking center in the new building. Others have successfully remodeled their tie stall barn to incorporate a pit parlor. This option can often be done at a lower cost than constructing new, but carries with it certain challenges.

If herd growth or transition from tie stall to freestall housing may be in your dairy’s future, there are a few key decisions to consider.

First, know where your farm stands financially. Your lender, NWNY team members and other WNY resources can assist in financial and performance analysis of your dairy. From this analysis, determine how much you can invest in new milking facilities.

Another key step is to spell out your farm and family goals. Strategic business planning will help guide decision-making around capital investment and transition. Identifying profitable use for time no longer devoted to milking activities, and changes in management accompanying a different housing system are critical to a successful, and ultimately profitable transition.

Cut costs cautiously. The appeal of remodeling a barn to include a milking parlor rather than constructing new is the impression of cost savings. It is important to keep in mind that this is not always the case. If cost is a key factor to you, identify what constitutes “low cost” then work with your extension specialist, milk quality expert, and milking equipment dealer to identify opportunities to save money and where focus on quality over cost is critical. Carefully planning for adequate slope, drainage, ventilation and size is key to the successful implementation of your new milking parlor. Numerous farms across western NY have successfully remodeled barns to house new milking facilities and are an excellent resource for advice and information as well.

Finally, take time. When making an investment in updated milking facilities, it is tempting to hurry through the planning process so as to enjoy the benefits of a new parlor. It is advisable however, to take adequate time to plan the project carefully to safeguard smooth transition, limit unexpected costs and challenges in construction, and ensure the end result is one that will work seamlessly with your farm goals. Relying on the guidance of industry experts and local farmers with experience in milking parlor transition and construction will provide ideas, cost - and headache - saving advice. Also, seek information from your consultants on energy - saving equipment and cost - sharing for new barn lighting and other technologies.

Incorporating a low cost milking parlor offers many potential advantages for labor and time savings, increasing herd size, and improving quality of life for milkers. While there are challenges unique to constructing a milking parlor within an existing tie stall barn, with careful planning, keeping design simple and utilizing resources to avoid costly mistakes, you can ultimately find yourself with an updated milking facility at a moderate cost as compared to constructing new.
Communicating for Safety

By: Libby Gaige

There are many risks inherent in working on a dairy farm. People, animals, trucks, tractors, mixer wagons and manure spreaders are among the host of moving objects that create potentially hazardous situations. It’s really a wonder that more accidents don’t take place on dairy farms! Even if your farm has never been subject to an accident, it’s a good idea to take into consideration some preventative measures to keep everyone - human and bovine - safe on your dairy farm every day.

Dairy farm employees from rural Mexico or Guatemala have often never operated machinery before. Many things that people who have grown up on a tractor seat take for granted as common sense can be very foreign to them. For example, what speed is acceptable in different areas of the farm? What hidden dangers are associated with driving a skid steer near manure storage? When training new employees to operate machinery, take time within the first few days to review important safety basics.

So what are the most important things for these employees to know as they learn to operate machinery? Something I've heard time and time again from managers is that they need to know when something breaks in order to fix it. All too often they find out the tractor has a flat tire when they need to use it; if their employees had let them know when it happened, then they could have made time to fix it and avoided frustration. Besides being a communication issue, broken machinery and installations can pose a threat on the farm to people and animals, especially when passersby are unaware of them. Managers, in turn, need to place a high priority on repairs so employees will continue to communicate. It's also important for managers to show their employees their appreciation for speaking up; nobody likes admitting they have broken something, so making the experience as painless as possible encourages them to come communicate these problems in the future.

Managers’ expectations for what maintenance machinery operators will perform on equipment varies from farm to farm, so the best thing to do is make those expectations very clear. Managers need to be very explicit about what needs to be done and why, as it may not be something that the employee has ever done before (check oil, grease, wash, fill with gas). Gas and diesel tanks should be clearly marked, and any necessary tools kept somewhere where they can be found.

A good way to increase everyone’s awareness of safety issues is to offer farm safety training to your employees. In many states NIOSH Agricultural Safety and Health Centers offer free safety trainings, sometimes in Spanish and English. Visit their website to see if trainings are available in your area: (http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/agctrhom.html).

*Amended from an article that appeared in the May 2013 issue of El Lechero.
On a Farm Near You...

Manure Injection – Not just for big farms anymore!

By: Jerry Bertoldo

Nutrient conservation is a good thing for the environment as well as the pocket book. The nitrogen (N) in manure is a valuable resource, but has to be incorporated into the soil rather rapidly to capture all of the potential. Manure nitrogen is either in the nitrate or ammonium form. Some of the available nitrogen, around 50% of the total, is subject to volatilization in the form of ammonium. Within 24 hours of land application, 35% of the ammonium fraction can be lost. After 5 days, there is nothing remaining of that nitrogen category. Nearly 50% of the total N content of manure can be lost just through volatilization.

Large dairy farms complying with CAFO regulations must address what happens to the nitrogen and phosphorus in manure. Small operations are not bound by the same mandates, but economics pushes them to pay attention to wise nutrient use.

John Reiff is a dairy producer in Yates County milking around 46 cows. He grows 25 acres of soybeans and 55 acres of corn in addition to hay crop. John is an excellent manager using the best management practices. He soil tests frequently and uses IPM recommendations. Small and progressive - these two words are not mutually exclusive! A few years ago he decided to go with no till corn. He has 5 months of manure storage and has always plowed down manure as soon as possible to keep as much nitrogen available to new planted corn. John was in between a rock and a hard spot with plenty of manure to put on but not work into corn ground. Large farms have taken advantage of direct injection many with drag hoses for some time avoiding this issue, but what could be done on a smaller scale?

John read an article in a farm magazine featuring a hog farmer from Iowa who had rigged up a small tanker to direct inject manure. Not long after, the Lancaster Farming News had an advertisement by a custom operator using a 1,000 gallon tanker to direct inject with a roadside nurse tank. A few phone calls and John had a good idea of what he needed to build his own unit.
John bought a used 2,220 gallon tanker. The PTO driven pump on it needed replacing. He added a hydraulic driven chopper unit at the back to reduce the size of the bedding straw in his manure. He purchased a used frame with 6 large furrow opening discs, drop hoses, delivery pipes and closing shoes to. The original plan was to first use the new unit on corn ground. Mechanical issues prevent that, so soybean acreage was the first test. Everything worked quite well with only one plug up at the junction of the drop hose and delivery pipe. Changing this plumbing arrangement to a hose fitted into instead of over the delivery pipe would be an improvement to guard against blockage points.

How does John know how much manure is being delivered per acre? After trying out different PTO and ground speeds, he was able to get a fairly good estimate of gallons applied per acre. There is no flow meter built in.

How much horsepower does this unit require? 100 HP is ideal. Does it completely cover the furrow and eliminate any volatilization? Yes, indeed. No telltale odors!

As with most innovative success stories in the Mennonite community, this small scale manure injection tanker will most likely be widely replicated and help many Yates County dairies financially and environmentally.
Soil Health Field Day

July 11th 9:30 am - 2:00 pm
Join us for demonstrations and presentations on soil health and cover crops. See equipment demonstrations in the field. Share your experiences and discuss what you’ve learned over a picnic lunch!

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Speakers: 10:00 – 12:00
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In Field Demonstration: 12:30-2:00

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On Pasture

Research and Experience Translated Into Grazing Practices You Can Use *NOW*

Welcome to On Pasture, an online publication that translates research and experience into grazing practices you can use now. On Pasture is brought to you by many of the same people whose articles you’ve read before or who you’ve seen at grazing conferences. Over the years, because of our work and our travels, we’ve spent time together and our conversations often turn to how to make life easier and better for people raising livestock on pasture. Here’s what we’ve talked about: See more at: http://onpasture.com/

One: There’s a lot of information out there to sift through and, without spending time reading and listening to others, it’s hard for a grazier to decide what to do.

Two: Not all the information out there passes the sniff test. Some of it seems designed to sell a product or a practice that might not be worthwhile, but again, without doing a lot of research, it’s hard to be sure what’s good and what’s not.

With On Pasture, we’ve decided to change that. We’re taking on the job of sifting through the piles of research and grazing practices, translating them into ideas that can work for you, and then putting together the simple steps for getting started. We know that scientific research is not everyone’s favorite topic, but used judiciously it can make the difference between wasting your time on something “magical,” or doing something that really works. So we’ll show you what the data means, in language that anyone can understand, and what it means for your day-to-day life. Likewise, when we share experiences from other farmers and ranchers, we’ll share their data in pictures and/or their bottom line, so you’ll know that what they’re doing has a solid foundation. And since everyone’s operation is different, we’ll give examples of how you can extrapolate the results of research or what other farmers are doing to your own place.

The editorial staff and authors working on bringing you On Pasture have plenty to do, so we wouldn’t be doing this if potential readers hadn’t already told us it was important to them. When we sent out a survey, respondents told us that, though 98% of them are reading other magazines and newsletters, that same 98% would like to have a publication that translates research and experience into grazing practices they can use right now.

So that’s what you’ll get from us: the best ideas and research, from the people who’ve been successful doing them, documented so you know they work, and translated into steps that you can start using right away.

We look forward to working with you and we encourage you to support the articles and authors you like, as well as the folks who sponsor us!
Save the Date...

**July 2013**

9-13  **Yates County Fair**, Old Route 14A, Penn Yan, Contact: 315.536.3830
15-20  **Seneca County Fair**, 100 Swift Road (Corner of Swift & North Road), Waterloo, Contact: 315.539.9140
16  **Topics for Flock Improvements**, 7:00 - 8:30 p.m., Yates Co. Auditorium.  **RSVP by: July 12th**, Registration: 315.536.5123
16-20  **Genesee County Fair**, 5056 E. Main Street, Batavia, Contact: 585.344.2424
16-20  **Hemlock Fair**, 7370 Water Street, Hemlock, Contact: 585.367.3370
17  **NY Weed Science Field Day**, 11:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m., Musgrave Research Farm, 1256 Poplar Ridge Rd. (Poplar Ridge Road, connects 90 & 34B), Aurora.  CCA & DEC credits have been requested.  For more information contact: Mary McKellar: 607.255.2177 or mem40@cornell.edu.  NYSABA Pork BBQ will be available.
18  **Aurora Farm Field Day**, 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Musgrave Research Farm, 1256 Poplar Ridge Road, Aurora
22-27  **Orleans County Fair**, Route 31, Knowlesville, Contact: 585.798.4265
23-27  **Ontario County Fair**, 2820 County Road #10, Canandaigua, Contact: 585.394.4987
31  **Niagara County Fair**, 4487 Lake Avenue, Lockport, Contact: 716.433.8839

**August 2013**

1-4  **Monroe County Fair**, Northampton Park, Hubbell Rd. (near ski hill & lodge) Ogden
1-4  **Niagara County Fair**, 4487 Lake Avenue, Lockport, Contact: 716.433.8839
10-17  **Wyoming County Fair**, 70 Main Street, Pike, Contact: 585.493.5626
12-17  **Wayne County Fair**, 250 W. Jackson Street, Palmyra, Contact: 315.597.5372
13  **NY Corn & Soybean Summer Crop Tour**, Du Mond Farm, Union Springs, NY
20-21  **Bovine Reproduction & Artificial Insemination**, CCE - Wyoming Co., 401 N. Main St., Warsaw.  Registration: 585.786.2251 x132

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