

Cornell Cooperative Extension North Country Regional Ag Team

Serving Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence Counties

Program Highlights

October - December
2018

Mike Hunter, North Country Regional Agronomist, Wins 2018 Statewide “Excellence in IPM” Award

In November, 2018, the North Country Regional Ag Team and its six county CCE association partners were notified that Mike Hunter had been selected to be the recipient of the 2018 ‘Excellence in IPM Award’ from the NYS Integrated Pest Management Program. The NYS IPM Program presents these awards annually to individuals or organizations in New York State whose work in integrated pest management deserves special recognition. These awards are presented for exceptional achievements in IPM such as developing new IPM tools: allowing IPM methods to be evaluated in their operations, businesses or organizations; encouraging demonstrations and adoption of IPM; and promoting IPM and bolstering the adoption of IPM practices. Much of Mike’s work as a field crops specialist and Extension Associate definitely falls into a couple of those categories.

Mike was nominated by a handful of his colleagues in Extension and within the IPM program. His nomination was supported by letters from other collaborators within these organizations as well as by statements from Cornell researchers and some of his farmer clients. All described stellar working relationships and a nod to Mike’s impactful knowledge of relevant crop pests, diseases, IPM protocols, and pesticides. Additionally, Mike’s understanding of specific pest challenges with NYS farm business scenarios – and his eagerness to share his knowledge - have been incredibly valuable to a broad range of NNY and NYS farmers, as well as extension and agribusiness agronomists. One farmer wrote, “When I look over the years of consistent, helpful and effective recommendations from Mike I feel he has amply earned this award! Mike is knowledgeable, he understands agriculture and can adapt solutions to the unique needs of the farm.” Another farmer said, “He can always find an answer to our issue, whether it is about the herbicide program at a winter meeting or a pest issue in season, I know I can depend on Mike to get us an answer in a timely manner.”

We in Extension are very proud for Mike and his award. Over his 16 years working with Cornell Cooperative Extension, he has served in a few different roles, but his fellow educators and agribusiness contacts appreciate and rely on his expertise. Mike’s generosity and willingness to teach others about pests, their impact and control has massively multiplied his impact in NNY and NYS.

Authored by:

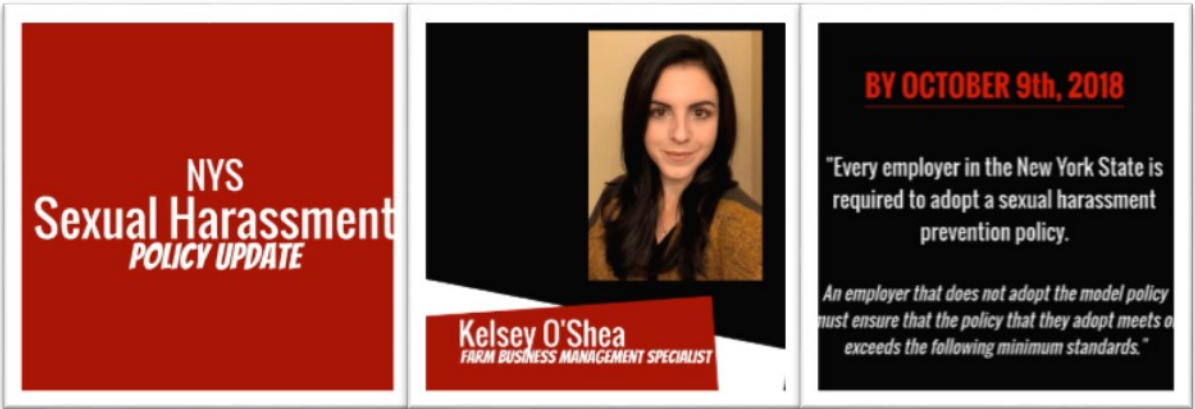
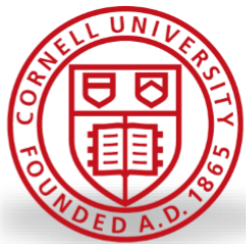
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New Labor Policies: The North Country Regional Ag Teams Role in Helping Farms Get Compliant



Kelsey O’Shea, The Farm Business Management Specialist, has been working in collaboration with Richard Stup, the Labor Workforce Specialist with Cornell University, to provide real time updates regarding New York States new initiatives and legislation designed to “combat sexual harassment in the workplace”. The new NYS law had a deadline that employers must have a sexual harassment policy in place by 10/09/2018 regardless of size of business or number or type of employees. Most importantly, there was no exemption from these rules for agricultural businesses as there have been with some other labor laws. All farms, even those who employ just one individual, had to develop a policy, have it signed by the employee and retain it on file. In order to ensure that farm businesses were aware of these laws, a short informational video was developed that featured Richard and Kelsey discussing the specifics of the new rules and the pertinent actions that needed to be taken by farms along with relevant deadlines. The short video also featured information on where to find resources online to assist with development of policies, and as well as future requirements for training employees on the signed policies. The video has reached over 1,069 people via Facebook with a total of 96 direct engagements. In addition, this video has been shared via direct email reaching over 1,000 additional farm businesses.

From these engagements, a work group has been developed to look at what Cooperative Extension can do to help support farms compliance with the new rules and regulations moving forward. This includes making sure all employees have completed interactive sexual harassment training that is compliant with NY State’s very specific requirements. The group is still in discussions as to how to best support farmers with this but will continue with updates as plans develop. In addition, these new regulations have spurred many businesses to develop or re-visit written employee handbooks and protocols to compliment the sexual harassment policies being put in place and further improve employee management. Kelsey O’Shea has already met with, or plans to meet with eight operations across the six counties to develop and tailor handbooks to the specific needs of the farm. Looking forward, she will continue to focus on best management practices for employees along with ensuring farms are compliant with emerging and changing laws.



Statewide Calving & Neonatal Workshops – Promoting Healthy Calves

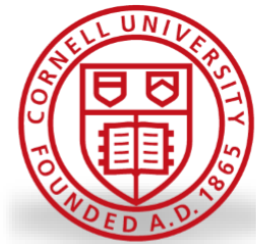
Forty percent of calves stressed at birth will die before 3 weeks of age. That is a huge numbers and dairy producers across NY want to decrease it. Calf management workshops have been held multiple times over the last 3 years on both a regional and statewide basis. These have been well attended, and we have seen improvements in calf management practices and calf health. Throughout these previous workshops a common theme arose “what about the prenatal period and calving”? Hearing this concern statewide, it was decided by multiple CCE Dairy specialists that we should collaborate and develop a neonatal calf and calving management workshop series. In June, 2018 we began to plan a fall program. Programs were planned for Northern NY, Central NY, South Central NY and Western NY, with the target audience being the people in charge of the maternity pen, and immediate post-calving care of calves. Workshops were held in November, 2018. Topics of discussion on day 1 included: Calving Assistance – what to do and when to offer assistance, assessing calving situations – what to do in a really difficult calving situation, and delivery and immediate calf care. Day 2 focused on the calf – not colostrum or other management factors we normally talk about, but an intense and focused discussion on the first few hours of life and how this is different for impaired or stressed calves. Additional topics included key points in sanitation, a physical exam of the calf and employee communication and training. Approximately 60 people statewide attended these programs. Additionally, a summary article of the workshops was printed in Country Folks and reached dairy farmers across the Northeast.

This program was a collaboration between the North Country Regional Ag Team, Besty Hicks (SCNY team), David Balbian (CNY team), Jerry Bertaldo (now retired), Rob Lynch (ProDairy) and Kathy Barrett (ProDairy).

Research Project Highlighted at Annual Stakeholders Meeting

Through a collaboration with the South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Team, the North Country Regional Ag Team has secured two rounds of funding over the last year and a half through the New York Farm Viability Institute’s Topic Specific Grants. The funding is for a project titled “Linking Lying Time and Lameness in Tiestall Facilities”, which focuses on cow comfort on tiestall dairies in south-central and northern NY. A total of 22 farms participated in the project, which included providing farmers with training on identifying lameness, a full cow comfort assessment on their farm, and a final report showing individual farm data compared to the project benchmarks. Further, through outreach efforts, at least 48 more producers and industry representatives attended on-farm meetings, and dozens more were reached through webinars, local publications, and conference presentations that included the project data and key findings.

This project was selected as one of only seven to be highlighted during the New York Farm Viability Institute’s (NYFVI) Annual Stakeholders Meeting in Albany this fall. The presentation provided the Board of Directors and stakeholders an overview of why the project was important, the changes and improvements farmers are making because of the study, and even included video interviews with two participating farmers. The feedback from the presentation was very positive, with one attendee stating, “the passion for the work you do, your competence and your desire to help NY farmers came through loud and clear.” This was a great opportunity for the North Country Regional Ag Team to showcase the work being done in the North Country to help local farms of all shapes and sizes, and drive home the message to stakeholders how valuable this funding is to continue this work.

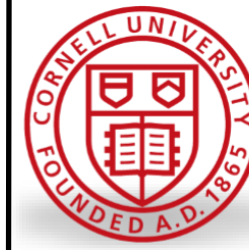


Harvest New York

On November 7 and 8, CCE Harvest NY and Cornell University's Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management hosted the Strategic Marketing Conference: Developing Your Brand and Marketing Strategies to Increase Sales in Lake Placid, NY. In the past, the Strategic Marketing Conference has been hosted in many parts of NY with various topic areas based on farmer's needs. This conference focused on brand development for a competitive market, collaborative approaches to marketing, multi-channel selling strategies, and technology adaption with your brand. Topics Included:

- Developing a Brand for a Competitive Market
- NYS Grown and Certified Program
- Exporting
- Marketing and Finding Additional Markets
- Legality Issues to Consider
- Multi-Channel Selling Strategies
- Technology Adaption with your Brand
- Collaborative Approaches to Marketing

The event was sponsored by CoBank, Adirondack Harvest, Farm Credit East, and Agricultural Marketing Community Economic Development Program Work Team at Cornell University with over \$7,000 in sponsored funds. The Strategic Marketing Conference brought in farmers and partner agencies from northern NY, VT, and CT with a total of 35 attendees and 12 presenters. "Cornell events are always packed with great information for producers. As a state agency that trains our producers/farmers. I appreciate learning from Cornell educators! Thank you!!" –anonymous



*Yolanda Gonzalez Marketing and Finding Additional Markets NYC
Photo Credit: Barb Williams*

Our Mission

"The North Country Regional Ag Team aims to improve the productivity and viability of agricultural industries, people, and communities in Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton, and Essex Counties by promoting productive, safe, economically, and environmentally sustainable management practices and by providing assistance to industry, government, and other agencies in evaluating the impact of public policies affecting the industry."

Contact us directly through our website: <http://ncrat.cce.cornell.edu/>

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities. NYS College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NYS College of Human Ecology, and NYS College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, Cooperative Extension associates, county governing bodies, and U.S.D.A. cooperating.