Other Educational Activities April – June 2019

Ashley has continued working with the NY Beef producers group to help educate in the local classrooms across the region on beef cattle production. This opportunity has opened doors into many different enterprises within the beef industry.

Nicole had the pleasure of speaking to a group of 4-H youth on financial management on April 29th. This 2 hour session taught the youth how to properly record their livestock projects to determine their net income of their fair project.

Nicole was hosted by Chenango County FSA speaking to producers on alternatives of dairying in NYS. During this session, Nicole delved into the financial component and marketing objectives of diversifying or transitioning to a different species of livestock.

Nicole presented to the Chenango County Ag Land Protection board to learn of opportunities in Ag Economic Development and how she can be of service to the board.

Grant and project activities April – June 2019

Dave met with Precision Feeding Topic Specific Team in Madison County met on April 3rd to review results of the 1st quarter data and to learn some technical information about how the project works and what the outputs mean.

Nicole is currently working with a team of Farm Business Management Specialists to create and host a 2 day live Zoom event for Sexual Harassment rules and regulations for the employer in the month of July. This group has also rewritten all sexual harassment scenarios and PowerPoints to be agricultural friendly. As of June 15, NYS Department of Labor approved the rewrites and this group will be moving forward to produce educational pieces for farm use.

The NYS Farm Viability Institute granted funds for a 2 year project to implement an Onboard training program for 50 farms in New York State. Nicole is currently serving on this grant project and will be searching out 5 farms in the next few months to kick off this training starting in January 2020.

Kevin is part of the 2019 Soybean CAPS Survey where the NY State Department of Ag and Markets is supporting four counties. The NYS Farm Viability Institute granted funds for a 2 year project to implement an Onboard training program for 50 farms in New York State. Nicole is currently serving on this grant project and will be searching out 5 farms in the next few months to kick off this training starting in January 2020.

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Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops

First cutting monitoring helps farms produce quality feed and more profit

Alfalfa height is not only a great indicator of forage quality of the alfalfa it is also an indicator of the quality of mixed and pure grass stands.

Poor quality hay can have a significant impact on milk production as delaying harvest 5 days decreases potential milk income by $24,400 for every 100 cows.

But from year to year there may be a two week difference when cutting should begin depending on location. Elevation, geographic location and soil type all have an affect. Research by Dr. Jerry Cherney, state forage specialist for Cornell University focused on field observations that might be indicators of forage quality in the field. He found that of all measures considered alfalfa height worked best not only for alfalfa but also with mixed stands of grass and pure grass stands.

For the past sixteen years the Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team has utilized Dr. Cherney’s research to monitor local conditions by measuring alfalfa and alfalfa grass stands through out the region. In May of 2019 the team sent out weekly report to the 1859 members of our email list that contained information on sixty three fields across eight counties. These sixty three field locations were listed by county, town and road so that producers could see the predicted quality for a location near them.

Feed consultants and nutritionists are the biggest supporter of this monitoring program as they regularly make sure customers who aren’t receiving the emails get put on the team email list or personally pass along the information. They know their clientele must have high quality forage for higher production at a lower cost and can use the monitoring program to reinforce that concept.
High quality genetics can lead to a more consistent product

Beef producers should always be looking for ways to improve the genetics of their herds, but they may not understand how to do that in a way that ends in consistent results. Expected Progeny Difference’s (EPDS) is a measurement tool that looks at the genetics of the parents and predicts the chances for improvement for various traits and the accuracy with which that may occur.

Beef producers listen to Dr. Jerry Emerich of Select Sires explain how to use expected progeny difference (EPD).

There are three different sections for EPD’s, production, maternal, and carcass. Each section has different items the producer can focus on depending upon what they feel their herd could improve on. Example, CED (calving ease direct), a producer would look for if they have had issues with calving in the past or look for a smaller cow, or first time heifer. Overall using EPDs should lead to animals produced should be more consistent which is what buyers want.

Ashley McFarland, Regional Livestock Specialist held an informational lecture on EPDs with Dr. Jerry Emerich from Select Sires as the guest speaker with over 30 people attending.

Helping local farms through a difficult cropping season

The 2019 cropping season started out rough and did not get better until late June. This winter was hard on many alfalfa fields as plants were frost heaved out of the ground leaving fields with too few plants to provide a crop. Seeding hay fields is considered a four to six year investment and many producers saw this investment wiped out in one to two.

Conditions were so wet in April and May that new hay seedings usually planted in April and early May were not planted at all. Many producers who have corn planted by May 10 did not even begin planting until May 25 and didn’t finish until later into June. Some farms stopped planting corn because they realized they did not have enough growing season to have the crop mature.

The rainy May weather meant first cutting hay was also delayed to the point where many farms harvested no quality at all. This winter was hard on many alfalfa fields as plants were frost heaved out of the ground leaving fields with too few plants to provide a crop. Seeding hay fields is considered a four to six year investment and many producers saw this investment wiped out in one to two.

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The Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team responded to producers who had questions on these field problems directly but also by various news releases and emails. Kevin sent out four Checking the Back Forty news releases that addressed winter kill of alfalfa, saturated soil affect on corn stands, insect pests and where to find information on whether or not there was enough growing season left to plant corn. David Balbian sent out an email to dairy producers with a list of 10 ideas for dealing with the lack of high quality first cutting. This list of items was picked up by NYS Farm Bureau, several veterinarian clinics, and some other regional teams. It was disseminated across NYS to multiple groups.

Unusual crop growing season

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African swine fever (ASF) is a new threat to hog production in the United States and has been rapidly spreading across Asia and parts of Europe for the past few years. African swine fever is a highly contagious, deadly viral disease that affects all ages of domestic and wild hogs. However this disease cannot be transmitted to humans.

Regional livestock specialist, Ashley McFarland held a series of workshops in the region on the disease with NYS Veterinarian Dr. Robert Scarrard explaining to veterinarians and producers the threat to US hog producers.

The disease can be introduced to uninfected herds a number of ways: feeding contaminated feed products, bites from soft-bodied insects, such as ticks, flies, lice; inoculation with contaminated syringes and surgical equipment; introduction of new pigs to the herd; and semen.

Transmission of the virus within the herd is generally through direct contact with infected bodily discharges, feces, vomit and dead carcasses. ASF has been tested and can live in an environment, feces, and tissues of infected swine for several months. This disease can remain active even while being frozen and smoking the meat products will not kill the disease. To learn more about this disease, please feel free to contact a State Veterinarian.