

Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension  
Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team



# Year in Review 2012



*Building Strong & Vibrant New York Farm Communities*

*"Cornell University Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities."*



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# NWNY Partnerships

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## **Seneca County**

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## **Wayne County**

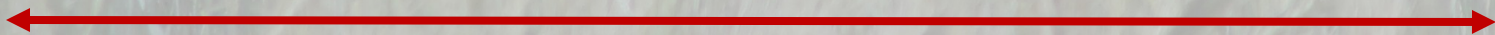
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## **Yates County**

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# Grant Funded Projects

## **NYSERDA—LED Lighting Systems to Improve Milk Production and Energy Efficiency: \$154,834**

Research has shown that lactating dairy cows exposed to 16 to 18 hours of light (long-day photoperiod) increase milk production by approximately 5.1 pounds/cow/day. Improper implementation by early adopters and increased energy costs have led to the perception that this management strategy is not cost effective. This project will review the effects of energy efficient lighting on manipulating photoperiod in dairy cows. Dairy specialists with the NWNY team will monitor milk production, energy savings and effective light provided by LED and T8 fluorescent lighting systems. A cost benefit analysis will be performed and findings presented to producers throughout the region.

## **EPA—Cover Cropping Education & Implementation: \$30,000**

Proper cover crop techniques will reduce erosion & nutrient runoff while increasing infiltration, holding nutrients in the soil, and improving soil health. Three field test plots were planted throughout the region and a series of twilight tours were conducted. Test plots included different varieties of cover crops on diverse soil types. This program will be an opportunity to bridge the gap between research test plots and on the farm benefits. By learning about the benefits at field demonstrations and by obtaining research updates, farmers will change their conventional ways of thinking and implement this essential BMP. Funding for this project funded by EPA (year 2 of 2).

## **NESARE – Precision Feed Management—Profitability & Environmental Stewardship in Yates County: \$69,672**

Precision feed management (PFM) is a nutritional approach to reducing effluence into waterways that leads to water quality problems. PFM utilizes farm resources more wisely resulting in decreased input costs. Yates County is a key area of interest as the majority of farms are under 200 cows and do not fall under federal and state regulations that mitigate and monitor environmental impact of agricultural operations. This project will engage 20 of these dairies to reduce feed input concentrations of nitrogen (N) and phosphorus (P), resulting in fewer nutrients leaching into the groundwater. Dairy specialists from the NWNY team will work closely with producers, nutritionists and other CCE experts to balance dairy cattle rations to better utilize homegrown feeds, reducing manure P and N excretions and improving profitability. Demonstrated benefits will then be promoted to other operations both locally and throughout NWNY.

## Grant Funded Projects

- AEM Base Funding Grant Project, Genesee County: \$850
- AEM Base Funding Grant Project, Livingston County: \$2,720
- AEM Base Funding Grant Project, Yates County: \$5,630
- Comprehensive Grazing Planning Training; Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education Professional Development Grant. Year 2 of 3 year project: \$4,333
- “Developing a Safe, Real Time Method for Estimating Packing Density in Bunk Silos” statewide project collaboration, NYFVI: \$1,000
- 2012 Soybean Tactical Agriculture Teams (TAg Teams): Soybean Management Education Programs for New York Producers, NY Soybean Board: \$4,437
- Farm Disaster Preparedness Certification: New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health: \$2,800
- Finger Lakes Resource Conservation & Development Council, Inc. Grazing Plan Development: \$7,300
- Three dairy focused discussion groups—Hispanic Employee Management, Young Managers of Ontario County and Calf Management, NYFVI: \$2,400
- Spanish language educational programs for New York dairy farms, USDA Smith-Lever. Year 1 of 2: \$60,000



# Field Crops

## **WNY and Finger Lakes Corn Congresses: Batavia and Waterloo**

Over 600 producers and agri-business representatives participated and were updated on a wide range of corn production topics including hybrid selection, planting populations, disease management, herbicide resistance, western bean cutworm, weed control, cover crops, and residue management.



## **WNY and Finger Lakes Soybean/Small Grain Congresses**

Over 300 farm and agri-business participants received updates on soybean and cereal grain production at these sessions. These included an update on soybean & wheat varieties, disease and weed management, seeding rates, population studies, insect problems, flax in NY, and nitrogen management in wheat.



## **Soybean TAq Team for Dairies**

Dairy farms are looking to grow their protein needs right on their own farm. Seven small dairies growing about 300 acres of soybeans in Ontario County learned how to most effectively plant, grow and protect their soybean crop. Five in-field classroom sessions covered IPM practices and crop production opportunities with a focus on weed, disease, and insect pest sampling and management. The producers increased their pre- (40%) to post- (78%) test knowledge scores by an average of 37% as a whole. All agreed that they would highly recommend this program to other soybean producers.



## **Cover Crop Twilight Tours**

Three cover crop demonstration trials were established with producers across the region. Tillage radishes were the focal point of these trials. Producers are looking for a cover crop that not only prevents erosion but can loosen heavier soil, scavenge excess nutrients in fall, and winter kill for quick nutrient release in the spring. Other alternative crops highlighted were forage oats, clovers, and peas, alone and in combination with radishes. Thirty producer/industry reps. took the walking tours to determine which cover crop best fit their cropping situation. Cover crop interest continues to grow.



## **Tile Drainage Field Day**

With land a limiting factor to farm expansion, producers are looking to improve yields on existing acreage. The NWNY Team collaborated with Yates County Soil & Water Conservation District, Finger Lakes Grape Program, and Cornell Vegetable Program. Approximately 50 participants attended the field day held on-farm with presentations covering soil health, installation how-to's, and economics of hiring a contractor vs. purchasing a tile plow. A field demonstration was part of the day as well. Donations from local businesses supported lunch.





# Field Crops

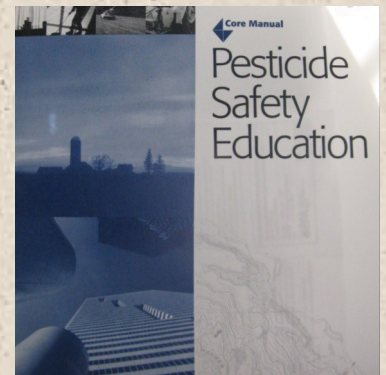
## **NY Corn and Soybean Yield Contests**

Organized and directed the statewide Corn and Soybean Yield Contests for the NY Corn & Soybean Growers Association. Presented 2011 summaries and awards to regional and statewide winners at the NY Corn and Soybean Expo in Syracuse. This was the first year for the NY soybean contest sponsored by soybean checkoff dollars. Scott Arliss of Clyde, Wayne County, was the NY soybean champion. Ron Gruschow, Livingston County, won first place in the western region in the corn contest.



## **Pesticide Certification Training**

Cooperated with Seneca and Cayuga CCE on a 2-day training of 23 field crop producers to get their private pesticide applicator license. This 8-hour training prepared these growers to take the NYS-DEC certified pesticide applicators core and category specific exams. All 21 producers that took the exam successfully passed and obtained their licenses!



## **Invited Industry Presentations**

Invited to give presentations on insect and disease management at eleven industry sponsored grower meetings. These included NY Agri-Business Association, Carolina Eastern-Crocker, Oxbo/BASF, Seedway, T & S Crop Service, Jeffres Ag. Service, Chemgro, Crop Protection Services, Monsanto, DeKalb Seeds, and Monroe Tractor. Over 900 producers attended.

## **Crop Issues: Common Armyworm Attack!**

For roughly three weeks starting on Memorial Day, approximately 125 phone calls were answered from wheat, grass hay, and corn producers, industry representatives and homeowners across the ten counties regarding management of armyworm. In addition, the team provided recommendations to TV and newspaper reporters on the current situation and worked on press releases, articles and fact sheets for distribution to the public. Even though many acres were lost, many were saved due to the resources and recommendations provided by the team.



## **Western Bean Cutworm on the Rise**

The Western Bean Cutworm (WBC) is a new pest of corn that was first identified in NY in 2009. A statewide pheromone trap program was set up again this year. Over 3,400 WBC moths were caught across NY this summer. This was more than double the amount caught in 2011. One-third of those moths were caught in our ten county region. WBC Identification and management trainings will continue at Corn Congresses in January.





# Dairies

## **Disaster Preparedness Course**

This collaborative program between Jim Ochterski, Ontario County CCE, and Jackson Wright is intended to help farm owners plan for and manage disasters that may occur on their operations and encourage farm owners to adopt current disaster planning and preparedness guidelines. Emphasis is placed on practical guidelines that will help dairy operations remain viable in the wake of such an event. Upon completion of the course, participants receive up to a 10% discount on farm insurance. 52 participants have already taken the class that will continue into 2013. In addition, a webinar introducing the Farm Disaster Preparedness Certification program to educators in New York State was developed to increase awareness.



## **Group-Housed Calf Systems**

In response to growing interest in housing and feeding baby calves in groups, the team became integrally involved in a statewide initiative with significant local involvement. 275 attended a day long symposium on the subject in Syracuse drawn from 19 states and 2 Canadian provinces. A NWN regional tour of 3 calf facilities later attracted 115 people. The annual Winter Dairy Management series followed continuing on the same theme with 48 in attendance locally and 210 more at 5 other location around the state. The number of farms using this calf-friendly, labor saving system has increased to over 100 from 42 within a year. A second calf symposium featuring health considerations will be held in December 2012.



## **Quality Milk Production**

Ten participants learned about udder anatomy, the biology of milk production, best milking practices, milking system analysis and maintenance as well as mastitis control from veterinarians and milking system managers. A practical, less technical approach from previous modules was well received by the class. The program involved 12 hours of contact time.



## **Hoof Health and Lameness**

This program was an expansion in scope and quality of previous educational efforts in this area. Industry, the Cornell Veterinary College, the NYSCHAP program and the Hoof Trimmers Association joined with extension to provide 15 hours of instruction. An exceptional faculty taught participants about anatomy and physiology of the hoof and lower leg, the economics of lameness, factors that contribute to lameness, proper use of the foot bath and hoof trimming techniques. A wide range of skills, farm size, job descriptions and ages were represented by the 24 participants.



## **Hispanic Employee Management Discussion Group**

In response to the requests of dairy managers, a discussion group was organized to provide dairy-specific Spanish language instruction to dairy managers. It also serves as a forum for managers to learn about the cultures of the countries that their Spanish-speaking employees come from.





# Dairies

## **Employee Training in Spanish**

The new bilingual dairy specialist, Libby Gaige, has continued this popular program by visiting and working with many farms since she joined the team in March. Since then fifteen farms have utilized the Spanish Dairy Management program for document translation, monthly or semi-monthly employee meeting facilitation and translation, as well as training sessions customized to their specific on-farm practices. Training topics included calving assistance, fresh cow health, milking procedure and mastitis prevention. Real-time translation was offered at the Quality Milk and Hoof Health and Lameness Dairy Skills Training workshops, making these more in-depth trainings available to Hispanic employees for the first time.



## **Young Managers Discussion Group**

Participants seek to identify management strategies capable of increasing milk production efficiency. Topics included improving cow comfort in existing facilities, increasing milking frequency, managing high feed costs, heat abatement strategies, precision feed management and making big dollar herd decisions. Guest lectures included topics on group-housed calf and farm business management. The discussion group of up to 20 meets monthly in Ontario County.



## **Artificial Insemination and Reproduction**

Difficult to arrange and often expensive describes practical instruction in cattle reproduction management and artificial insemination. With the collaboration of CRI/Genex Cooperative two, 2-day, on farm, 12 hour courses were offered. 24 individuals learned about reproductive tract anatomy and function, the skills needed to handle and deliver frozen semen to a cow in heat and the mastery of passing a "rod" into live animals. Starter kits for beginners were made available.



## **Quality Forage Production**

Twenty four farm employees participated in a 14 hour, 5 session training. Attendees learned about dairy cow nutrition, hybrid selection of forage crops, the ideal harvest window, principles of silage preservation, proper silage density and the value of inoculants and preservatives. New to the program was a forage chopper run-through by a veteran service person demonstrating key maintenance points and discussing proper settings.



## **Precision Feed Management Workshop**

This program covered proper forage management and feeding challenges associated with the current crop year and introduced precision feed management. This is a conservation approach to nutrient management using farm resources more wisely resulting in better herd health, increased milk yield, reduced input costs and improved environmental stewardship. The workshop designed for small family dairies had 30 participants.





# Small Farms / Livestock

## **Northeastern Silvopasture Conference**

Partnered with CCE Schuyler, CCE Ontario, and Cornell University to plan and host the 2-day conference, the first of its kind in the Northeast. Over 100 participants from 7 states learned about the practice of Silvopasture – managed grazing in woodlots from experts from Missouri, North Carolina, Pennsylvania and New York.



## **Step it Up Grazing Conference**

2012 was the third year of the event. Approximately 45 dairy and beef producers attended the event that featured a beef producer from Georgia, who presented on breeding for your microclimate. Also presenting was a relatively new startup dairy from eastern NY. Other topics included grass management tools, managing forage inventory, and the importance of the DFBS program. Breakout sessions were held for dairy and beef. The topics were practical and could be readily applied on-farm.



## **BQA in a Day, Beef Quality Assurance Training**

Two days of trainings were held in the region. By attending one of the one-day events, a total of 51 participants became Level 1 certified. The one-day format is an improved way to accommodate the many part-time operations. Participants that submit their veterinarian's signature will become Level 2 certified. Producers learned safe cattle handling techniques, ways to improve meat quality through proper vaccination techniques, as well as recordkeeping. These topics were readily applied on the participant's operations. In both sessions, a test was taken after the morning presentation. A veterinarian assisted with the chute side portion that was held in the afternoon. Each participant administered an injection as a mandatory part of the training.



## **Direct Marketing Grass Finished Beef**

Bill Hodge, Hodge Ranch, presented to 30 beef producers regarding his direct marketing operation in Georgia. Topics covered included USDA regulations, processing, marketing, and client loyalty. All topics were pertinent to the region's direct marketers.





# Farm Business Management

## **Dairy Farm Business Summary (DFBS) Program**

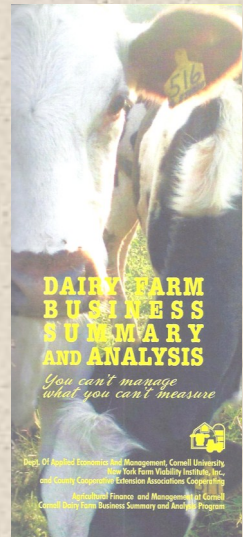
Over 55 dairy farm businesses from the region applied financial management skills to complete DFBSs for the 2011 year. The team cooperated with participants, Cornell University staff, and agribusinesses to complete DFBSs. Using their DFBSs for benchmarking purposes, participants learned about strengths and weaknesses of their businesses. Research studies suggest that farm business summary and analysis practices help producers achieve greater levels of economic performance compared to producers that do not use the practices.

## **Economic Analysis**

Farm business owners benefit from the team's work to develop economic analyses. Research suggests that producers that use information from economic analysis to make decisions regarding changes in practices and capital investments achieve greater levels of profitability than those that do not use information from analysis. The team cooperated with farm business owners, Cornell University researchers, and others. Highlights from selected analyses follow.

- Analysis of trends and performance of the region's dairy farm businesses provided producers and others in the agricultural industry with valuable information.
- Economic analysis examining group housed dairy calf systems suggests that overall costs of raising an animal from birth to weaning are fairly similar for four case study farms using group housed systems and dairy farms having high quality dairy replacement programs using hutches.
- Economic analyses of different milking frequency strategies by farm size suggest that 4X, 2X milking is a viable alternative to 2X for a 90 cow dairy, and to 3X for a 600 cow dairy over a range of milk prices, and marginal purchased feed and crop expense values.
- An empirical price analysis for corn silage suggests that the estimated marketing price for corn silage is most sensitive to alfalfa hay price and corn grain price.

Analysts reported these findings in many outlets including [AgFocus](#); various producer meetings such as symposiums and winter dairy management programs and field demonstrations. Producers apply findings to achieve better decisions regarding possible changes to their farm businesses.





# Promoting the Face of Extension



- Participating in local agricultural awareness events such as Agripalooza (Wyoming) that attracted 3,000 people, and Farm Fest (Livingston).
- Offering adult education talks to groups such as the Finger Lakes Community College.
- Exhibiting at the annual Empire Farm Days and joining other ag agents in greeting the public and answering questions.
- Working with campus to present the Dairy Profit Seminars at Empire Farm Days.
- Providing safety information to participants at the Yates County Farm Safety Day.
- Giving talks to high school and college students about agricultural career opportunities and the benefits of learning a second language.

- Developing and presenting Agriculture in WNY at Genesee Community College, a first ever broad scoped introduction to the importance of agriculture for college students in the region through the classroom and on-farm demonstration.
- Teaching and demonstrating to high school students the finer points of crop and dairy management during the annual STEM Camp hosted by 4-H Camp Wyomoco.
- Educating Livonia 7th graders about agriculture in the Conesus Lake Watershed.
- Highlighting “Tools of the Trade” to area high school students and community members at Genesee Community College’s Harvest Festival.





# Additional Team Activities from the Past Year

- ◆ Adult education on agriculture
- ◆ *Ag Focus* monthly newsletter
- ◆ Agricultural Environmental Management collaborations with Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- ◆ Board of Director & County Legislative presentations
- ◆ Collaborative programming with CCE county associations
- ◆ Collaborative research with Cornell faculty
- ◆ College agriculture course development and delivery
- ◆ Dairy Farm Business Summary (DFBS) Program including the annual meeting for WNY Region DFBS Cooperators
- ◆ Dairy Profit Teams
- ◆ Economic analysis
- ◆ Achieving Low Costs of Producing a cwt. of Milk: A Small Dairy Farm Case Study
- ◆ Cornell Manure Handling Costs Study
- ◆ Cornell Heifer Raising Costs Study
- ◆ Farm financial management education
- ◆ Federal & state legislative interaction
- ◆ Foreign animal disease regional drill
- ◆ Group Housed Calf Systems Symposium & Tours, planning and facilitation
- ◆ Hosting the NYS Assoc. of Ag Agents annual meeting & professional development conference
- ◆ Management education with an emphasis on business planning, implementation, and control
- ◆ NYSCHAP Calf Module development & roll out
- ◆ Program work teams
- ◆ Soil & Water Conservation District/GrazeNY consultation
- ◆ *Small Farm Quarterly*, grazing editor
- ◆ Regional and Statewide advisory committees
- ◆ Winter Dairy Management program planning & facilitation



## *NWNY Team Continues to Emphasize the Following*

- Farm Business Management
- Sustainable Resource Management
- Workforce Development







Back row: left to right: Mike Stanyard, John Hanchar, Jerry Bertoldo & Jackson Wright,  
Front row: left to right: Joan Sinclair Petzen, Nancy Glazier, Cathy Wallace & Libby Gaige

*Special thanks to:*

Dr. Tom Overton

Dept. of Animal Science

Director of PRO-DAIRY

*For his team supervision & direction*

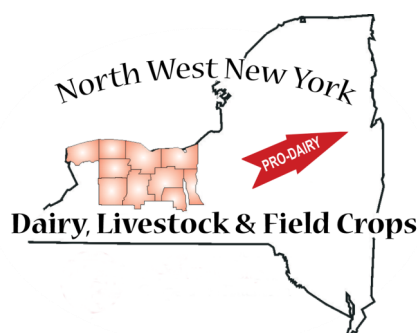


### The NWNY Mission

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

- ⊙ Enhance the profitability of their business
- ⊙ Practice environmental stewardship
- ⊙ Enhance employee and family well-being via safe work environment
- ⊙ Provide safe, healthful agricultural products
- ⊙ Provide leadership for enhancing relationships among the agricultural sector, neighbors and the general public

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