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Cornell Cooperative Extension

Southwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program

swnydlfc.cce.cornell.edu



A partnership between Cornell University
and the CCE Associations in these five counties:
Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Steuben.

Annual Report January - December 2020

Our Year in Review



The Southwest New York Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Program began in July of 2019, making 2020 the first full calendar year of our program. As our specialists were gaining momentum, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the world as we knew it. However, our specialists were able to adapt and continue to help improve the productivity and profitability of the farms in the Southwest New York Region.

In this report, you will find examples of how our team has continued to provide low cost, high quality, research based

programming to the dairy, livestock, and field crops producers of the Southwest New York region. In addition to fostering educational opportunities for our region's farms, our team has also taken the pause and opportunity COVID-19 created to critically evaluate our own bias and traditional approach to programming. This has included analyzing ways that our reach can be more inclusive of race, gender, sexuality, ability, and other marginalized identities.

For the year's programming, we've identified some of the educational needs of the agricultural industry through surveys and conversation which we began to address and will continue to prioritize moving forward. In response to this new normal, we've taken hands on learning curriculum and adapted it to virtual programming. In order to further our reach and connection with those who lack internet access in an equitable manner, we've increased our newsletter and press release outreach. Most importantly, our team has continued to build relationships and trust with our region's farmers throughout the year.

We appreciate the incredible support of our agricultural producers, agribusiness representatives, community stakeholders, and the five Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Steuben Counties.



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1,895

Farm Consultations
on topics related to Farm
Business Management, Field
Crops, Dairy Management,
and Livestock Production.

3,240

Event and program direct participants
who've attended one of our 65 events/
collaborations or have received our
direct email/mail updates.

510

Website submissions
and Facebook posts
providing timely
information to a large
audience.

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.



Online Dairy Feeder School Success

SWNYDLFC was part of a state wide collaboration with Regional Dairy Specialists and Cornell PRO-DAIRY to host a virtual dairy feeder school. The event was offered in both English and Spanish. Each offering of the program spanned two days and received extremely positive feedback from participants. The program had more than 143 individual registrations with additional viewers from the same location and views of the recording on YouTube.

Josh has assisted with herbicide resistance screenings and testing on the maretail populations collected throughout the state in the fall of 2020. Dr. Lynn Sosnoskie is currently testing 30 populations for Roundup resistance and results are being presented at winter meetings.



This testing will help provide field crops producers with targeted management recommendations, protecting their crop's production and their farm's profitability.



Forage Variability Research Underway

SWNYDLFC is part of an effort to bring producers research-based recommendations directly from our region by conducting local research trials. Dairy Management Specialist, Alycia Drwencke, is working with Dr. Kristan Reed of Cornell University to collect forage sample data that will influence dairy cattle nutrition recommendations.

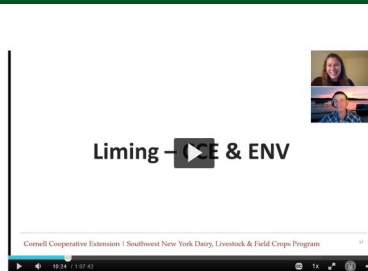
Straight from our Farmers: Public Facebook Review from The Vanstrom Homestead



"So our back paddock is cursed by the chicken gods. These birds are days away from butchering and something scared a bunch of them to death last night. Luckily (or not?) We already had Amy from SWNY Cornell Cooperative Extension coming out to see our youngest group of birds (who have not had a good week to say the least) and happens to be a poultry person. She necropsied the big birds and found most of them most likely had heart attacks. Except for finding a bunch of dead birds first thing, it was a neat morning learning how to do a preliminary investigation on chickens. If you ever have bird or farming questions be sure to check this team of awesome people out. Link in the comments."



Our 2020 Fall Pasture Management Series was a success! The program focused on late summer management topics and had 30 attendees. There were also videos and resources created to aid in future programming.



The SWNYDLFC Team has been working with Cornell PRO-Dairy to bring information and connections to the Dairy Advancement Program, providing grant funds to dairy producers in the region that will improve farm profitability, with 5 farms funded to date and a fifth application in progress, led by Alycia Drwencke.



A traditionally in-person training was converted to an online delivery course all about "Minding Your Marketing P's, Q's (and C's)". This virtual event was delivered using an interactive Facebook group and featured videos, discussion posts, and homework designed to help participants jump start their own marketing plan development. Over 30 people participated, and the workshop generated several follow-up inquiries and future programming around Business Planning and Financial Management.

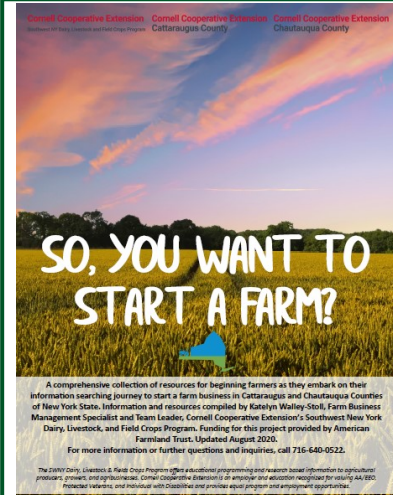
In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, businesses were required to have safety plans in place, including farms that continued to operate throughout NY PAUSE. Our team fielded over 50 calls on the topic, and conducted radio and tv interviews in addition to broad spectrum information/resource sharing to help producers meet this requirement.

Timely Collaborations for Livestock Producers

Amy has been working with the Livestock Program Work Team on surveying red meat and poultry processing plants across the state. The goals of this project are two-fold. 1.) to develop a list of USDA, Custom Exempt, and 5A processors to provide to local farmers, and 2.) to collect information on the roadblocks for plants thinking of becoming USDA inspected to help understand what opportunities are most needed to help expand USDA-inspected processing capacity in the state.

Soybean Cyst Nematode Testing with Campus Connections

Soybean cyst nematode (SCN) is considered to be the number one pest of soybeans nationally and globally. Field Crop Specialist, Josh Putman, participated in a 2020 statewide SCN survey which revealed 23 NEW counties confirmed with at least one field positive for SCN. In SWNY, 3 out of 5 counties tested positive for SCN (Steuben, Allegany, and Chautauqua). This brings us to a total of 30 counties with SCN confirmations since 2016.



Katelyn Walley-Stoll, Farm Business Management Specialist, has developed a comprehensive guide for beginning farmers available electronically and via hardcopy that features existing resources developed by various agricultural agencies as part of a grant effort with American Farmland Trust's Regional Navigators program. Team Specialists will continue to use this resource when working with beginning or transitioning farmers as a way to communicate various production pathways.



The Spring 2020 poultry management series was a great success. 34 guests and 9 CCE staff joined, generating 29 questions related to poultry management and bringing in over \$600 for our team. Feedback was overall very positive. Some comments included: the classes were in an approachable format, it was convenient to attend online, most liked that the notes were shared and presentations recorded for future viewing, and requests for the notes and lecture recordings were received from new attendees after the live classes had ended.

SWNYDLFC NEEDS ASSESSMENT

From July 2019 through April 2020, SWNYDLFC Team Specialists visited with over 100 farms to introduce our new program and gather informal, conversational data to inform our needs assessment. The goal of this needs assessment was to identify the areas of programming that would be most important to agricultural producers. These programming areas help to identify educational opportunities where we can provide resources, support, and expertise to help producers overcome challenges and grow or maintain a successful farm business.

While visiting, farms were asked the following questions:

- Please describe your operation. What are you the most proud of?
- What are the biggest challenges you face? What are the biggest challenges your farm neighbors face?
- What types of programming/resources would you like to see from our team?
- Is there anything else you'd like to share with our new program?

Collecting this informal data, we were able to pick out 14 main “themes” that were mentioned multiple times while visiting with farms across the region. These themes, in order of prevalence, are:

1. Employee Management and Farm Labor: need to stay up-to-date and in compliance with regulations, develop clear communication channels with employees and management, implementing sound hiring practices and recruitment techniques, building an effective and efficient team, supporting and developing middle managers.
2. Financial Literacy and Recordkeeping: calculating cost of production, benchmarking, back-to-the-basics financial statements, better able to monitor profit, weather market changes and fluctuations, implementing recordkeeping systems on-farm (vs. hiring out).
3. Herd Health: implementing heat abatement strategies, body condition scoring, lameness, translating the latest research in practices to implement on-farm, developing protocols, financial analysis with different treatment options, developing hands-on technical skills for on-farm treatments, breeding protocols, incorporating automatic milking systems and other technologies.
4. Farm Succession and Business Planning: preparing the farm for future generations and structuring those transfers, operating with multiple generations and clear communication, developing and envisioning a clear path into the future with price uncertainties.
5. Marketing and Market Access for Direct Sales: increasing the amount of livestock and dairy direct sales, but lacking access to processing facilities (USDA certified meat processing and custom dairy processors), issues with accessing and understanding marketing regulations, food safety plans, product quality consistency, and developing consumer oriented products.
6. Access to Educational Opportunities: need to provide workshops, newsletters, online programming, and “people to call” (specialists/extension educators) to farmers in the SWNY region while also working with other agriservice organizations to distribute information in a timely manner.
7. Aging Infrastructure and Facility Planning: as farms look to the future and grow/expand, provide resources and assistance on changing farmsteads strategically, retrofitting existing facilities to save money vs. building new, consideration of future plans, running multiple species through common areas.
8. Calf Care (Dairy): providing consistent access to water, monitoring nutrition and rate of gains, health considerations, developing protocols and latest research support, using technology, hands-on skills.
9. Forage Quality: forages will reduce feed costs if high quality, how to grow a quality product on poor soils, managing crop diseases and pests, how to monitor fields, obtain pesticide recertification credits.
10. Consumer Education: need assistance with offering farm tours and responding to media requests, sharing messages with the public, issues with direct sales and product education.
11. Nutrient Management: how to work within watersheds, spreading and storing manure effectively and safely, knowing what your fields need through soil sampling, developing fertility plans.
12. Access to Capital: notification of grant availability and assistance with applications, accessing start-up funds for new farms, working with lenders to cash flow during difficult times or expansion.
13. Animal Nutrition: finishing livestock animals to market quality, feeding for milk production, foundational knowledge to work with a nutritionist, evaluating home-grown forage and crop quality.
14. Pasture Management: managing parasite loads, developing proper rotation schedules, evaluating how much is needed, and access to water.