



A partnership between Cornell University and CCE Associations in these nine counties: Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne and Wyoming.

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

January - March 2021

NWNY Region Dairy Farm Business Summary (DFBS) Cooperators, a Significant Source of Economic Activity in 2020

Through the first quarter of 2021, applying financial management skills, owners of about 30 dairy farm businesses from the region cooperated with regional specialists, PRO-DAIRY staff, and agribusiness consultants to complete DFBS's for 2020. Cooperators learned about the strengths and weaknesses of their businesses using



- their farm's summary and analysis results
- DFBS data for the Northwest New York region as a whole, and
- by using DFBS data for a group of most profitable businesses by size using the two page Comparison Report

Research studies conclude that producers using DFBS with analysis achieve greater levels of profit compared to producers that do not. Greater profitability contributes to enhanced economic viability, increasing the likelihood that businesses have the capacity to invest in replacement and, or expansion assets, and maintain and, or increase employment levels. Estimates using DFBS results suggest that the cooperating businesses invested a total of \$7.3 million in land, buildings and improvements in 2020, and a total of \$11.3 million in machinery and equipment. Estimates suggest that the roughly 30 farms employed a total of about 640 worker equivalents, excluding operators, where an equivalent represents 230 hours worked per month for 12 months. The farms generated a total of about \$227.9 million in farm receipts from milk, cattle, crops and other revenue producing sources.

Virtual Crop Congresses Exceed Expectations

The all-virtual Corn Congress (Jan. 6, 7), Soybean & Small Grains Congress (Feb. 10, 11) and Forage Congress (March 11) were held from 10:00am to noon each day. All the programs were run through Zoom and each registrant received their own link to join the meeting. Those that needed DEC credits were able to click on a link in the chat box and enter their information before and after the meeting to receive their credits. Questions for the speakers could be typed into a Q&A box and covered after each presentation.

These virtual events allowed us to bring in more out-of-state specialists than we would for an in-person congress. We had presenters from Purdue, University of Wisconsin, Michigan State and Penn State along with Cornell faculty, regional and state CCE specialists. Many of the topics covered on crop production and pest management were identified by our field crops advisory committee as needs for our region.

Precision Planting in Winter Wheat

Dennis Pennington
Manni Singh
Kalvin Canfield

Project GREEN
Michigan Crop Improvement Association
MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY Extension

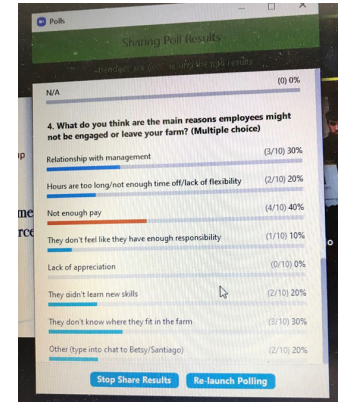
Screenshot from Day 1 of the 2021 Virtual Soybean & Small Grains Congress.

Overall, we were very pleased with how all our congresses went and the amount of participation and industry support exceeded our expectations. Almost 500 participants attended the three virtual congress events with 40 different industry sponsorships. Everything seemed to go much easier for participants as they gained experience with each meeting attended. We encouraged everyone to not forget about using Zoom as it provides lots of additional opportunities to attend educational programming. It is not going to go away! We received many positive comments from attendees. Some felt that they were able to focus and absorb more of the materials presented and loved that they could adjust the volume and hear everyone clearly. Many continued to lament that they really missed the interaction with other farmers, visiting the exhibitor booths and of course LUNCH! We missed seeing all of them too! We are all looking forward to in-person congresses in 2022.

Dairy Manager Discussion Group - Winter Series

Dairy Managers and owners in the NWNY Region had the opportunity to join peers and industry experts in a virtual discussion group series in February and March of 2021. This program allowed attendees to participate from the comfort of their own homes or offices, while giving managers a chance to network with each other and experts while discussing some of the industry’s newest topics and pressing issues. The first in the series featured Santiago Ledwith, Director of Talentum4, a group of consultants who specialize in Executive Leadership Coaching and Team Building for the agricultural industries. A total of 25 dairy managers participated from the counties of Niagara, Orleans, Monroe, Livingston, Wyoming, Ontario, and Genesee in the NWNY region. They asked questions and problem solved through challenges associated with Fostering Employee Engagement in a Multi-Cultural Workforce. Bilingual managers were also able to ask questions and get clarification in Spanish during this session.

The second session discussed the newly developed Dairy Employee Handbook created by Dr. Rich Stup of Cornell Ag Workforce Development and his collaborators. Many dairy managers were curious about how to create a handbook for their operations and learned from those who had some prior experience. Many participants found high value in this session considering the updated labor laws in New York. The final session informed participants of the preliminary results of the NY Dairy x Beef Calves Survey conducted by Margaret Quaasdorff and Betsy Hicks, CCE Regional Dairy Specialists. Many farms in the region are turning to using quality beef sires on a percentage of their dairy herd in order to manage dairy replacement numbers. The resulting calf is a higher value co-product of the dairy industry, which consistently brings \$150 more at the sale barn than a standard Holstein bull calf. Managers participated in live polls to share their current practices regarding breeding choices and dairy x beef calf raising and marketing practices, and concluded that there was still more to learn about this industry opportunity. Virtual programming such as this allows managers to easily and effectively connect with their peers and area experts, and learn about the progressive topics in the dairy industry.



Screenshot of a live poll taken during one of the discussion group sessions.

Electrical Conductivity Mapping to Create Management Zones

Precision agriculture can contribute to the long-term sustainability of agriculture production by addressing the variabilities in a field. Soil electrical conductivity (EC) is the ability of soil to transmit an electrical current. The EC data can be used to quantify variation in soil texture and yield potential of production.

The NWNY Team worked with growers on existing technologies to provide knowledge about zone creation stages and zone management philosophy. The EM38-MK2, is a soil electrical conductivity meter that does not contact the soil. It sends electromagnetic waves into the soil and measures soil EC. It induces current to flow to produce a magnetic field. The strength of that current depends on the amount of clay or moisture in the soil or other properties such as salinity, compaction, and temperature. Two types of readings; shallow or root zone readings and deep EC readings, can reveal valuable information about soil health (Fig. 1 & 2), helping farmers make informed decisions.

The EC machine was utilized and management zone mapping was conducted on three farms in the region (Niagara, Orleans, and Monroe counties). All the farms learned about using the Electrical Conductivity Machine to address the variations in their fields and create management zones, leading to a better optimization of crop inputs on their farms.

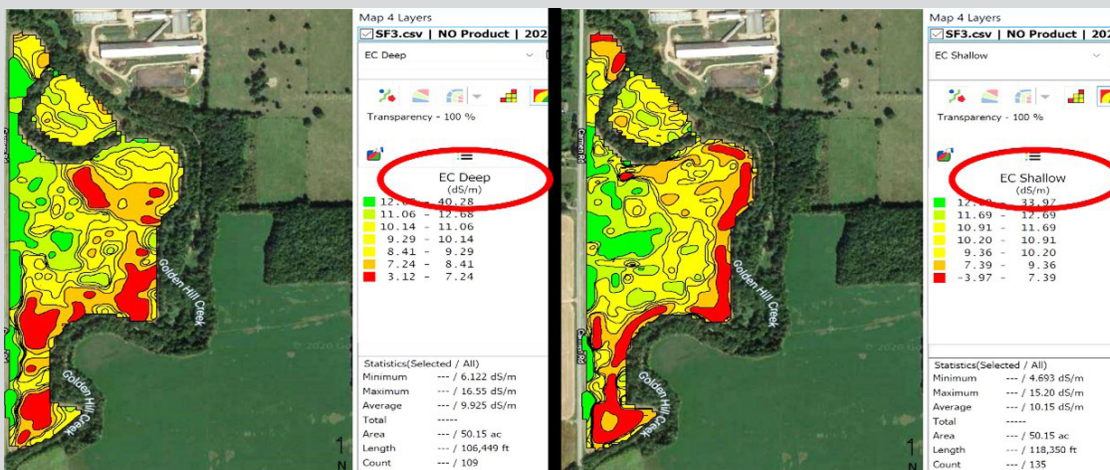


Figure 1 & 2. ES Maps created using EM38, containing two types of readings, shallow or root zone readings and deep EC readings, which can reveal valuable information about soil health.