



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

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

April - June 2021

New Report Summarizes NYS Meat Processor Needs and Perspectives

Building a resilient local food system requires sufficient meat processing capacity. The COVID pandemic revealed that NYS did not have the ability to absorb shocks, including increased consumer meat demand, leaving farmers and consumers frustrated and meat processors overwhelmed.

In Fall 2020, a team of Cornell Cooperative Extension educators, Cornell Animal Science faculty and Small Farms staff embarked on an effort to interview all 300 meat processing facilities that provide services to farmers in NYS. The team sought to gain an understanding of their interest in expanding or upgrading to a higher level of inspection, barriers to sustainability and growth, and what types of support they needed.

The team concluded that there is no single, easy solution to the meat processing bottleneck, but there are several areas where investment is needed and would ease the situation for farmers and processors. Availability of grant funding for capacity expansion of all 3 types of meat processing facilities would help. While some new facilities are needed, investing first in expansion of existing facilities will accomplish more with fewer resources. Additionally, funding for full-time staff positions to provide technical support and succession planning to meat processors, as well as meat cutting training and food safety assistance, would provide some relief. There is enormous need for leadership and expertise in this area, but currently limited staff is funded to provide this support. The results and conclusions of these interviews are now available to read and download at <https://tinyurl.com/NYS-Meat-Processing-Report>



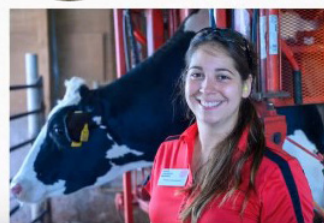
NWNY Dairy Management Specialist a Finalist for National Extension Communication Award

NWNY Dairy Management Specialist, Margaret Quaassdorff took home a National Finalist Award in the category of Computer Generated Presentations at the 2021 National Association for County Agriculture Agents (NACAA) Annual Meeting and Professional Improvement Conference for her contribution to the presentation titled, "Critical Calf Care: Total Calories, Nutrition, and Scours". This PowerPoint was one of seven that made up the Critical Calf Care Webinar series that was held in collaboration with other regional Cornell Cooperative Extension Dairy Specialists in January and February of 2021. The original presentation attracted over 45 live participants, and is available on the [NWNY Team's YouTube page](#) as a resource for producers to watch on their own time.

Margaret was also the Northeast Regional Winner in the categories of Feature Story and Published Photo. Her feature story entry was the article, "[Robotic Milking: Routine Flexibility](#)" which appeared on cover of the April 2020 issue of the NWNY Team's monthly newsletter, *Ag Focus*. It highlighted key management practices of NYS dairy producers who operate automated milking systems on their farms. The photo was of standing corn in a field, and was featured on the NWNY Team's Facebook page along with a post to encourage farmers to be thinking about the 2020 corn silage growing season and how it would impact the 2020 harvest season, while promoting the CCE and PRO-DAIRY podcast, "[Corn Silage Harvest Considerations](#)". She was also recognized as the New York State winner in the Audio Recording category with CCE Dairy Educator podcast episode, "[Dialing into Your Best Dairy Management for Record Setting Cows](#)" which launched on August 3, 2020, and has received 304 listens to date. The NACAA organization exists to provide professional improvement opportunities for extension agents from all fifty states.



Margaret Quaassdorff—New York



- Cornell University
- Critical Calf Care: Total Calories, Nutrition, and Scours



Published photo by Margaret Quaassdorff that was selected as the Northeast Regional Winner for the NACAA Communications Awards.

Crop Alerts: Timely Pest Observations for Growers

Timely pest management is crucial for maximizing production in every crop NY growers produce. There are many insects, weeds and diseases that growers need to be aware of and a lot of different crops and acres to get over and scout. Knowing what pests to look for at the appropriate time helps optimize scouting time. The goal of an IPM program is to identify potential pests before they reach economic populations and manage them before they reduce yield potentials. Every growing season is different and pest populations fluctuate each year based on environmental conditions.

The NWNy Team published a weekly online Crop Alert starting in late April. The alert informs growers and industry reps what pests we are currently seeing in corn, alfalfa, soybeans and small grain fields. We include pictures of the pests, plant injury and possible management solutions with additional resources. We even have short videos produced by team members that show how to scout for many of the pests. These videos can be viewed on the [NWNy Team's YouTube page](#). Many of the tips we get are from growers, consultants and industry reps. Our hope is to get the ag community out in the field correctly identifying pests and their injury, at the right time, with the appropriate control measure before economic losses occur.

A great example of the timeliness of our alerts is our utilization of pheromone traps to monitor for Black Cutworm and Common Armyworm. Both of these pests migrate in every spring on storm fronts from the south and can cause severe yield losses in corn and wheat. The traps allow us to monitor their first arrival into NY and how big of a flight comes in each week. Based on moth numbers and degree-day data we can determine when eggs will hatch and when larvae will be large enough to cause economic plant injury. We had some large flights of black cutworm in our western counties this spring and we were able to predict when corn fields should be scouted to determine if cutworms were present. As little as a 3% reduction in plant population results in an economic yield loss in corn.

CROP ALERT – June 24, 2021

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Northwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program


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**** CROP ALERT ****

Mike Stanyard & Jodi Putman, Regional Agronomists, Cornell Cooperative Extension, NWNy Team

Soybean Aphid Scouting

The last three growing seasons have not been big soybean aphid years, which has been great! However, I saw the winged forms flying off buckthorn three weeks ago. We are hoping that plants treated with Cruiser will take care of those first aphids. I have not been able to find any established colonies so far. **However, I have two reports (Erie and Niagara County) from consultants that they have found some plants already over the threshold of 250 aphids per plant.** These first SBA infestations are hard to locate so here's a tip. Look for the ants! The ants search out these aphids to get their waste products, honeydew. If you see ants on a soybean plant, I guarantee the aphids will be there. We have a [video on scouting for SBA](#) by looking for the ants, on our YouTube page. Hopefully, the natural enemies like ladybugs can find the early aphid colonies and keep them in check.



Look for the ants to find the aphids. Photo: M. Stanyard / CCE NWNy Team

Screenshot of the 6/24/21 Crop Alert, available to view online at <https://blogs.cornell.edu/nwny-dairy-livestock-field-crops/>

Soil Health: Extending Reach via Multi Subject Matter, Multi Target Audience Research and Extension Efforts

Various advisory and program committees that direct work of the NWNy Program reinforce what team members hear from other producers about the increasingly important topic of soil health. Understanding agronomic, economic, environmental and other resource considerations underlying soil health practice decisions are key to realizing optimal soil health practice adoption levels. The NWNy Team continued its work with project collaborators to increase farm business owner, advisor, non-operating landowner and other stakeholder understanding and implementation of conservation practices to improve soil health and farm resiliency.

The project team working on learning circle activities diversified delivery methods to include both in-person and virtual sessions to allow greater participation by landowners. In collaboration with American Farmland Trust (AFT), a learning circle in May focused on conservation planning. The project team working on case study activities partnered with owners/operators of the Mulligan Farm, Livingston County, NY to develop economic analysis to answer the following question. Can farm businesses in the Genesee River Watershed (GRW) achieve improved soil health outcomes while maintaining or improving economic performance? Analysts used the change in value of crop production less selected cropping program costs (a measure of profit) to measure economic performance. Project team members began reporting findings using a range of delivery outlets.

Thirty women from throughout the GRW attended the in-person session and another 25 from across New York attended the virtual session. Project members distributed information resources to another 82 women who registered for but did not attend the virtual session. Landowners that participated in the learning circle work gained knowledge about conservation practices and how to gain access to technical assistance in New York State. Tools for assessing their land and who to reach out to for conservation assistance were shared. Participants apply improved understanding so that they can play an active role in soil health practice adoption. Multimedia contacts learned that the Mulligan Farm successfully implemented soil health practices while improving economic performance. The calculated change in profit corresponding with the set of soil health practices was about \$75 per acre.

Research suggests that farm business owners that apply information regarding expected economic performance associated with proposed changes to the farm business achieve greater levels of profit when compared to the group that does not use such information.

