Serving:
Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, & Yates Counties

CORNELL NWNY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

APRIL – JUNE 2013

Managing Current Field Conditions with Crop Alerts

Corn plants under early season stress.

The team has provided weekly Crop Alert updates to over 600 people working directly in farming or with farmers in the NWNY region the past three months. These Crop Alerts are weekly, emailed updates that address current problems and challenges faced by farmers in the fields. Pictures of current field conditions, links to additional resources, and observations from other members of the agricultural community are included in these reports. Our reports are widely shared by those that we work with among the wider agricultural community. Crop Alerts are posted to our team Facebook page and website as well as sent via fax those without internet access. Feedback from dozens of individuals indicates these reports are timely and very helpful to those engaged in the farming industry. "Crop Alerts" will continue on a weekly basis throughout the 2013 growing season and impact will be evaluated then.

Spanish Discussion Group Improves Hispanic Employee Management

Members of the discussion group visiting new facilities on farm in Niagara County

Although many farms throughout our region have relied on Spanish-speaking employees for years, language and cultural barriers continue to present a challenge. The NWNY Team formed a discussion group with support from the New York Farm Viability Institute to address the need of Spanish language instruction and employee management support. Members of the group include dairy farms and agri-service personnel working with Hispanic dairy workers.

The group met bi-monthly in Wyoming County from October through the June. Time was split between learning basic conversational dairy Spanish and exploring Latin American culture in order to better understand and communicate with employees. Participants led the language sessions, coming prepared with everyday phrases that they wanted to learn in Spanish. The most valuable part of this group has certainly been the interaction between members, giving them a forum in which to share their experiences and get advice from colleagues dealing with similar situations. Sixteen dairy producers and agri-service professionals participated, representing over 8,000 cows.

Finding the Best Small Grain Varieties for NWNY Growers

July 20 twilight meeting

Small grains are an important part of the overall crop rotation for cash grain producers. In addition, the recent passing of the NY Brewing Act increases the potential for expansion of malting barley acres in NWNY. Selecting an appropriate variety based on local growing conditions is crucial in achieving desired plant health, growth and yield goals. The NWNY Team worked with local producers and Cornell Small Grains Program to establish three variety trial locations in Monroe, Livingston, and Genesee Counties. Two locations have over 60 varieties of red and white winter wheat and 20 varieties of winter malting barley. The third location is a spring malting barley trial with 20 varieties. A twilight tour at the Monroe site in June attracted 25 producers, industry reps, malters, and distillers to view the varieties and listen to team members and Dr. Gary Bergstrom from Cornell speak on the latest production techniques for both small grains. Final yields will be published, posted on our webpage and reviewed at the 2014 Soybean and Small Grains Congresses.

Dairy Farm Business Summary (DFBS) Program Highlights Greater Farm Profitability

Farms that participate in DFBS achieve greater levels of profitability.

Applying financial management skills, approximately 45 dairy farm businesses from the region cooperated with regional specialists, PRO-DAIRY staff, and agribusiness consultants to complete 2012 DFBS's. Cooperators learned about strengths and weaknesses of their businesses using their summary and analysis results, DFBS data for the Western 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 producers using DFBS achieve greater levels of profit than producers that do not. Greater profitability contributes to enhanced economic viability. This profitability increases the likelihood businesses have the capacity to invest in replacement and/or expansion assets, maintain and/or increase employment levels. Estimates using DFBS results suggest that the 45 cooperating businesses invested a total of $17.3 million in land, buildings and improvements in 2012, and a total of $12.3 million in machinery and equipment. Estimates suggest the 45 farms employed a total of 725 worker-equivalents, where an equivalent represents 230 hours worked per month for 12 months, and generated a total of $193.1 million in cash farm receipts from milk, cattle, crops, and other receipt items.

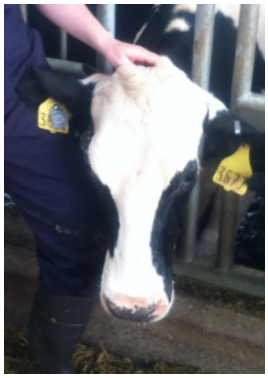
BQA in a Day Helps 20 Producers Improve Carcass Quality

Dr. David Scoville demonstrates proper injection.

BQA teaches safe cattle handling and wellbeing, and is a tool to promote consumer confidence in beef production. The national voluntary program was developed based on scientific research. By request of a producer, the Beef Quality Assurance training was held in Wayne County. Beef producers attended a Saturday workshop in June including classroom instruction at a local restaurant and on-farm chute side training where all participants gave an injection to a beef animal.

20 producers from across the region learned about safe handling of vaccines, proper recordkeeping and feeding. Attendance in the day-long workshop provides the opportunity for participants to be certified. Assistance was provided by a local veterinarian, a state veterinarian and an pharmaceutical company representative.

NYSERDA Contracts Extension to Investigate Utilizing Energy Efficient Lighting to Increased Milk Yield



Light meters attached to ear tags to measure light at cow eye level.

The NWNY team continues the lead on a NYSERDA funded project focused on the use of LED lighting in dairy housing, which has been extended for another year. Milk production increases can be seen when dairy cows are exposed to a certain level of light for at least 16 hours a day. This is commonly referred to as long-day photoperiod (LDPP). Many farms are equipped with metal halide or high pressure sodium vapor fixtures. Fluorescent lighting provides energy efficient illumination and is the one used commonly for retrofits and new installations. LED lighting is more expensive from the capital investment stand point, but has other attributes that deserve to be looked at for economics in the long run. Next to sunlight, LED lighting provides the spectrum of light that cows respond to the best. They are durable, efficient, and less prone to deteriorating output and operate well in the cold. A large commercial dairy in NWNY is comparing fluorescent to LED lighting in a side by side study to be completed in the summer of 2014. This project is in collaboration with the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and the Perry Veterinary Clinic.

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities.