



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

## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

October - December 2021

### Transition Cow Tuesdays Webinar Series

On seven Tuesdays from November through December 2021, regional dairy specialists teamed up with Pro-Dairy to present a series of webinars on topics relevant to transition cow management. The "Transition Cow Tuesdays" series drew over 400 registrants statewide, with approximately 130 participants during each session.

Webinars were presented by both Cornell faculty and regional dairy specialists. NWNy Team's Dairy Management Specialists collaborated on presentations on the topics of transition cow feeding management, calving management and post-calving monitoring. Other presenters included Drs. Tom Overton and Rob Lynch, Pro-Dairy, Dr. Daryl Nydam, College of Veterinary Medicine, Judy Moody, Dairy One, and other regional dairy specialists.



Screenshot from a Transition Cow Tuesday Session.

The Team received good feedback from dairy owners and managers in the region. One attendee commented that they "found [the series] beneficial because it makes you evaluate what you are doing. Sometimes we get complacent and need refreshers. Then we can see where we can make improvements, there's always something that can be done better. Thank you!". A dairy farmer in Pavilion, NY was inspired by Dr. Nydam's presentation to participate in his NYFVI grant involving selective dry-cow therapy. This grant is part of a multi-institution collaboration to decrease on-farm antibiotic use. NWNy dairy specialists were able to follow-up to facilitate enrollment and provide technical assistance, an excellent example of our role in extension to bridge the gap between Cornell research and the farm.

### Promoting Conservation Practices to Improve Soil Health and Farm Resiliency

The NWNy Team continued its work with the American Farmland Trust (AFT) and other project collaborators to increase farm business owner, advisor, non-operating landowner and other stakeholder understanding and implementation of conservation practices for the purposes of improving soil health and farm resiliency. Project members expect this work's need/opportunity importance to increase. Currently, agriculture and climate experts suggest that soil health practices will play an important role in helping to achieve climate sustainability objectives, for example, objectives associated with the dairy industry's Net Zero Initiative. Highlights for the quarter follow.

American Farmland Trust and Cornell Cooperative Extension NWNy Dairy Livestock and Field Crops Team were honored with the NYS Agricultural Society's 2022 Ag Promotion Award for the photo exhibition and on-line photo essay developed to inform the public about soil health and conservation practices being implemented on farms in the Genesee Watershed. The exhibition includes five 8-foot x 8-foot, 2-sided panels and the [online essay](#) includes nearly fifty captioned photos depicting and explaining the values of farm families and conservation practices being employed on their farms. Team members were integral in identifying subjects and helping documentary photographer Rebecca Dorbis to understand the conservation story that the project was aiming to capture.

American Farmland Trust finalized and released the Soil Health Case Study for the Mulligan Farm, Genesee River Watershed, Livingston County, NY. Team members developed economic analyses for the case study farm, including an approach to value increased cropping program stability associated with adopting a soil health system. Readers of the [case study](#) by way of the [AFT website](#) and other outlets learned that farm business owners in the watershed can achieve improved soil health results while improving economic performance. Preliminary analysis, using a reservation price for insurance-based approach, suggests that the value of improved stability averaged about \$10 per acre for different scenarios.



2022 NYS Agricultural Society's Annual Meeting. From left to right: Todd Lighthall, NY FFA Foundation; Mark Modzelski, Legacy Wealth Advisors of NY; Joan Sinclair Petzen, CCE/NWNy Team; Stephanie Castle, American Farmland Trust; Commissioner Richard Ball, NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets; and Jeff Perry, Alpha Zeta

## 2021 NYS Yield Contest Winners: Soybean Trophy Stays in NWNY

The NWNY Team supervises the annual Corn & Soybean Yield Contests sponsored by the NY Corn and Soybean Growers Association. There are cash prizes for the top three corn and soybean yields in the state and plaques for the top place winners in each of five designated regions (West, Finger Lakes, Central, North and East). The team has the privilege of emceeing the awards ceremony each year. It is a great opportunity to promote corn and soybean production in NY.

In 2021, growers in NWNY made us proud at the state and regional levels. Bobby Thompson, from Interlaken, Seneca County, was the New York soybean champion with a top yield of 82.61 bushels per acre. Ryan Swede, Pavilion, Wyoming County, was a close third place with a yield of 81.66 bushels.

For the first time in a long time, the corn champion was not from our region. The winner was from eastern NY with a whopping 302.32 bushels per acre. Adam Kirby, Albion, Orleans County, made a close run at it for second place at 294.01 bushels and Henry Everman, Dansville, Livingston County, came in third at 290.15 bushels.

The yield contests are an opportunity for farms to push their practices to the limits, experiment a little, learn a little and enjoy some friendly competition and bragging rights at the coffee shop. If you would like to see all the regional winners from our area, check out [the results on the NYC&SGA website](#).



*Bob and Rob Thompson with the NY Soybean Champion Trophy.*  
Photo: M. Stanyard / CCE NWNY Team

## Bovine Reproduction & Artificial Insemination Course Provides Hands-On Experience



Some genetics companies provide dairy customers with a technician for artificial insemination service. However, it is increasingly more difficult for small farms to have a technician come out only to breed a few cows, and for large dairies, having employees with this skill available at all times makes economic sense. In November of 2021, the dairy management specialists of the NWNY Team partnered with Genex Cooperative, Inc. to offer two 2-day Bovine Reproduction & Artificial Insemination Courses. The course was offered in Ontario and Livingston counties and catered to both English and Spanish speakers.

Twenty-four dairy and beef producers and farm employees came from seven different counties to learn bovine reproductive anatomy and physiology as well as proper semen preparation and management. The skill of heat detection (knowing when cows are ready to be bred) and cycle synchronization techniques were also covered, and participants engaged in good discussion surrounding their individual experiences on their own operations. Participants were able to practice with real bovine repro tracts first, allowing them to see and feel simultaneously, giving them a better idea of what to expect when working with live cows.

Over the 2-day workshop, there was plenty of time to take the techniques they learned and implement them to get hands-on practice with real cows on the host dairy farms.

To become proficient, participants were encouraged and expected to practice identifying heats and inseminating cows on their own operations on a regular basis. Participants left the course with new skills, management ideas, and feeling more confident in their ability to continue to practice insemination techniques on their own farms, or on those where they work. Having the knowledge of, and becoming competent in, artificial insemination of their own cows gives producers more flexibility and accuracy when it comes to their own herd, as well as contributes to economic efficiency when they can perform this timely task in-house.



*Participants of the Bovine Reproduction and Artificial Insemination Course gaining hands-on experience.* Photos: M. Quaassdorff / CCE NWNY Team