

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

QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

July - September 2022

2022 Hoof Trimming Workshop Provided Hands-On Training

Dairy farmers typically contract with a professional hoof trimmer to service their cows multiple times per year. To save costs, ensure a consistent hoof care schedule, or to step in when lame cows come up, hoof trimming may be done in-house by dairy farmworkers. Beef farmers typically are responsible for the cattle foot care on their own operations. There are limited options for introductory training in this field, and farmworkers are often inexperienced in some aspects of this job. Dairy Skills trainings, hosted by NWNY Team Dairy Specialists in collaboration with professional trimmers, presented these skills which are critical to the success of herd health and the farm business.

In August, five farmers from Genesee, Wyoming and surrounding counties participated in a 2-day on-farm workshop presented in both English and Spanish. This in-person workshop included presentations followed by a hands-on demonstration, and several hours of practice to train farm personnel in the performance objectives of:

- 1. Understanding bovine hoof anatomy
- 2. Monitoring and detecting lameness in dairy cows
- 3. Safe and effective foot bath preparation
- 4. Exercising proper balanced trimming technique and evaluation
- 5. Proper use of hoof blocks and wrap
- 6. Safe handling of equipment and sharpening of knives

Under the guidance of experienced professional hoof trimmers, participants applied the concepts from the presentation and demonstrations using cadaver hooves. After completing the workshop, participants felt more comfortable in their



Niagara Pasture Walks: Venues for Learning, Culture and Networking

Pasture walks are great events for knowledge transfer and networking, especially for new and beginning farmers; they

garner ideas and information from those who are more experienced. The NWNY Team recently partnered with Niagara County Soil & Water Conservation District, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and CCE Niagara to organize and host two pasture walks in Niagara County. The first was at a new farm raising goats and chickens for on-farm slaughter for both Halal and Kosher customers. Over 65 participants learned about the farm, their goals, and reasons for serving the ethnic communities.

The second farm, run by a chef, is focusing on pastured poultry, looking to scale up to and process 20,000 broilers on-farm. He may add pigs raised outdoors for a specific flavor profile for charcuterie, and possibly cattle. About 20 participants shared their practices and thoughts on overcoming the challenges of raising broilers on pasture, and suggestions for pasturing pigs in a woodlot.

Both farms provided dinners for everyone with protein raised on their farms. Over dinner and afterwards, farmers had time to network and make connections to supply and sell their livestock.



Participants learning about the pasture raised meat chickens at the Binksberry Hollow pasture walk on September 30, 2022.





Successfully Adopting Soil Health Systems while Maintaining or Improving Farm Viability

The NWNY Team continued its work with 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 purposes of improving soil health and farm resiliency.

In July, American Farmland Trust (AFT) and USDA/NRCS completed an extensive review and approval process for the Mulligan Farm Case Study (Livingston County, NY). The NWNY Team worked on the before-after economic analysis and responded to reviews and comments to finalize the case study. The AFT/NRCS cobranded 2-page fact sheet was published online. The case study showed 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.

In August, AFT's NY staff conducted a full day tour of four Genesee River Watershed Demonstration Farm Network locations in Livingston, Genesee and Wyoming counties. The target audience included: funders from various organizations and agencies of current and possible future work including staff from NRCS, AFT and EPA, WNY Crop Management, SWCD, Cornell and others. NWNY Team members served as resources for farm economics and management, and crop production/soil health topics based upon their case study work, on farm research, and roles as providers of technical support to farmers.

The next day, team members assumed similar roles during an AFT led soil health field day in Genesee County. About 100 farm business owners and their families, advisors, input suppliers, university, agency and other stakeholders learned: how farm businesses in the region are successfully adopting soil health systems, while maintaining or improving economic performance; and about agriculture's likely roles in achieving climate sustainability objectives by way of soil health system adoption.

Corn Silage Dry-Down Day Improves Harvest Accuracy

For any farmer who grows corn silage to feed cows, planning for and timing harvest appropriately is critical to producing a quality product. Whole plant dry matter is the best indicator of when harvest should begin. With the droughty weather and variable rainfall in the region during the Spring and Summer of 2022, it was especially important for farmers to have a harvest plan. 2022 Corn Silage Regional Dry-Down Day, hosted by the dairy and forage specialists on the NWNY Team in collaboration with CCE Seneca County, brought the Dairy One forage lab and their near-infrared (NIR) reader to Keystone Mills in Romulus, NY to aid farmers in determining accurate harvest timing.

Twelve farmers from Seneca county brought or sent in bundles of corn stalks cut from each field they anticipated harvesting for corn silage. Each of these bundles were put through a wood-chipper, and then tested for dry matter or moisture levels. With Dairy One's NIR reader, over 23 samples were scanned at the mill, and information about the overall corn maturity and starch levels in the ear were analyzed. Farmers were then given their values for each field sample, as well as estimated harvest date ranges, and information on best management practices for 2022 corn silage harvest.

This program reached and benefited many farmers including those in the plain community and those with smaller dairies who may not have access to regular monitoring of moisture levels of their corn crops.



Sarah Fessenden from Dairy One using Near Infra-red technology to determine dry matter and starch content of corn silage samples at the 2022 Corn Silage Regional Dry Down Day.