



CORNELL NWNY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2013

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

Calf Congress Builds on \$3.4 Million of Regional Investments

Calf care management remains a key area of opportunity for the dairy industry, New York's leading agricultural sector. Calf Congress 2013 was designed to build upon the estimated regional economic impact of 3.4 million dollars previously reported in 2013 resulting from earlier calf symposia, tours and pertinent Extension resources. After two years of close collaboration with the Cornell Pro-Dairy staff, leadership for the third annual state symposium on young dairy replacements passed to the NWNY Team. The location was moved from Syracuse to the RIT Conference Center near Rochester. Over 300 attendees joined all or part of the day and one half congress with its slate of exceptional researchers and producers. A wide spectrum of health, growth, environmental and facility topics of interest to any sized dairy were presented and discussed by producer panels. A similar event is being planned for 2014 in light of the very positive evaluations received from both sponsors and attendees.



A full house at the RIT Conference Center listens to Dr. Bob James of Virginia Tech talk about calf issues.

The Potential Dangers of Gypsum Bedding in Manure Storage Gets Wide Distribution

Some small farms use a gypsum product as bedding in their dairy barns. Concern arose after a serious incident on a Pennsylvania farm that used the product. Two small children were found unconscious next to the manure pit immediately after agitation. Dangerous level of Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S) was suspected to be the cause. Both children survived.

Gas readings in Yates County were taken by Yates Soil & Water Conservation District (YSWCD) and local fire departments. When dangerous levels were detected, the word needed to get out to the area farms as a precaution. The NWNY Team worked closely with YSWCD and Cornell Pro-Dairy staff to develop a fact sheet. This was mailed to 260 dairies in Yates County. It was sent out as an email alert across the state and Northeast by Pro-Dairy. The company was contacted to find the locations where it is sold. The local outlet has the fact sheet on-hand to distribute to customers. CCE and SWCD staff near other locations were contacted to work with distributing the fact sheet in those areas. This fact sheet has been distributed nationally and internationally. Communications have come in from Canada and Europe to share information and research findings.



Example of a gypsum bedding product that is used on some dairy farms..

Successful Online Outreach in 2013

The NWNY Dairy, Livestock, Field Crops Teams had over 13,000 contacts in 2013 through their Facebook page, YouTube account, Google Maps, and a technical blog. Additionally the team launched a new website to better serve the needs of the farmers, industry, and general public in Northwest NY. On Facebook the team posted agricultural articles, links to Crop Alerts, and local agricultural events throughout the year. Videos & pictures from crop fields were uploaded to YouTube and embedded in Google Maps to bring the field to the farmers throughout the growing season. The new website has been continuously updated with new resources for farmers to better manage their operations. These efforts will continue in 2014 so be sure to check these webpages out regularly for updates.



Planning for the Next Farming Generation

Planning for Succession workshop series focused on transfer of farm assets to a new generation of owners. Forty-three people from 20 farm families and two consultants learned skills and tools for developing and implementing a plan for business management succession. Workshops were held at Cornell Cooperative Extension offices in Rochester, Warsaw and Waterloo. Over 80% of the participants did not have a succession plan for their businesses when they started the workshop. Participants' general knowledge of business succession improved by 35%, based on the average before and after scores for knowledge on 14 succession issues combined. Seven farms indicated at the last workshop they have started to have more open communication about succession and/or improved the organization and effectiveness of family business meetings. One business has started reviewing and updating outdated buy-sell agreements. Three of the farms had already started working with advisors on a transition plan. Eight of the participating farms plan to organize a transition team to help them develop a succession or transfer plan within the next twelve months. Succession plans will help insure the financial stability of these farms for the next generation.



Bob Ott, Bennington Beefalo and Ryan Kehl attended Planning for Succession workshops seeking ideas for formalizing their business relationship.

Young Dairy Managers Improve Their Business Skills and Performance

Western New York Academy for Dairy Executives graduated 20 individuals from three agri-businesses and 13 farms. These operations collectively milk over 9,000 cows yielding over 55 million dollars in milk revenue and employ nearly 200 people. They honed their business management skills including budgeting, employee management, personal management style discovery, strategic planning, measuring financial performance, family business communication, working across the generations, conflict resolution and managing risk during three two-day sessions held in Mt. Morris, Java Center and Canandaigua throughout 2013. Presenters included industry experts, Pro-Dairy and Cooperative Extension specialists, and Cornell University faculty and experienced farm managers. Graduates are actively engaged in leading and managing the dairies they work for and/or own. Participants are already making changes to improve the performance of their businesses. Daily key leader meetings, more emphasis on budgeting, improved labor and financial efficiencies, more objective - less emotional decision making, monitoring of milk sales, feed costs and intakes are among the reported management changes that have been implemented by these young managers. The Academy was supported generously by agri-business sponsors, industry scholarships and participant fees.



Participants work together on budgeting exercises to build their financial management skills.

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities.