



CORNELL NWNY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS JANUARY – MARCH 2014

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

Economics of Narrow Row Corn Grain Production

The program's Field Crops Advisory Committee recently identified work on row spacing in corn grain as a priority need. A new narrow row corn planter and new narrow row harvesting head require added initial capital investment of approximately \$90,000 when compared to conventional row spacing equipment. Producers ask, "Does it make sense to switch from conventional 30 inch rows to narrower rows, given conditions in the NWNY region?" To help answer this question, the team worked with a corn, soybean farmer utilizing 15 inch rows from the region to estimate expected changes in profit. The work and results summarized below were presented to over 600 attendees at the team's two 2014 Corn Congresses. Attendees learned the following.



Thirty inch versus fifteen inch row width corn

- Switching from 30 inch to 15 inch row spacing for corn grain can be an advantageous change for a no-till, corn soybean farm with about 3,000 acres
- When expected corn price is \$5.56 per bushel, expected change in annual profit varies from about \$23,000 to about \$104,000, for expected changes in yield from 0.6 to 7.5%, respectively
- Sensitivity of results suggests that farm operators should develop analyses specific to conditions on their farms

Research studies show that producers that apply profitability analysis when making decisions regarding possible changes in practices achieve greater profits when compared to the group that doesn't utilize analysis to make decisions.

Profitable Pastured Poultry Workshop

Many landowners with small acreages and limited agricultural background are looking to utilize their properties for farming. Poultry production works well on these small farms as these operations do not require a large land base. The NWNY team organized and hosted a pastured poultry workshop to address all aspects of pastured poultry production. An overview of practices was provided by the team and three producers presented on their operations. About 34 participants learned production practices from care of newly-arrived chicks to processing options to working with customers. From a participant: *"I found it hugely informative and helpful because the presenters were open and honest about all aspects of their farms, both their successes and failures. And getting a chance to chat with other attendees is always a great bonus. At any rate, I just wanted to let you know I thought everything was first-rate, well organized, and well worth the 2-hour drive and the cost of admission!"*



Chicken tractors in action.

NWNY Team Collaborates with NYCAMH to Boost Safety Compliance

In October of 2013, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced a Local Emphasis Program (LEP) on New York dairy farms. This will consist of surprise safety inspections of dairy farms statewide, beginning in July of 2014. Stringent OSHA standards and the possibility of heavy fines (into the tens of thousands) made it a priority for the NWNY team to help to prepare local dairymen.

Since the announcement, three articles have been featured in Ag Focus offering information about the LEP and resources available to support farms in complying with OSHA standards. Team members attended work group meetings, helped to organize farm walkthroughs attended by 25 producers and promoted a meeting in conjunction with Genesee Community College featuring Ron Williams, the Compliance Assistance Specialist from OSHA. The team's bilingual dairy specialist also partnered with the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) to offer on-farm worker safety training in Spanish and English. So far, 268 employees have been trained on 19 farms.

Participants were grateful to receive clarification on what is expected of them by OSHA and for the support in helping them to prepare for the upcoming inspections. They have been working diligently to come into compliance with OSHA standards, and their pro-activeness will go a long way in reducing any fines that they may have incurred without the preparation.



Libby Gaige leads a safety training on skidsteer operation.

Annie's Project a Success in Northwest New York Region

A total of 29 participants at three Team sponsored sites; Livingston, Orleans and Wayne County Cornell Cooperative Extension offices learned about risk management as part of a statewide program using the Annie's Project Concept developed at Iowa State University. Committed farm women and a couple of gentlemen completed a six week course involving 30 hours of instruction and discussion. Topics revolved around managing the risks associated with finances, production, human resources, marketing and legal aspects of operating a farming operation. People from all aspects of agriculture from cash grains, to dairy and beef, to fruits and vegetables were a part of the groups and represented a wide range of experience in running agricultural businesses. One experienced farm woman told us that even though she had been doing their farm's bookkeeping and work with the herd she learned a tremendous amount and hopes to explore some changes to mitigate risk and make their business more profitable.



John Hanchar works with Annie's Project group in Livingston County.

Field Crop Educational Presentations in High Demand

Team Field Crop Specialists gave 38 presentations at local ag. industry meetings, NWNY Team, CCE, Cornell and SWCD sponsored programs, and statewide ag. organizations' annual meetings (NEDPA, CCA, NYC&SGA, WNY CMA). Team specialists shared their expertise with over 2100 growers and industry representatives on topics such as Integrated Pest Management (IPM) on grains and forages, maximizing forage yields and quality, nitrogen and manure management, small grains (triticale, malting barley and wheat), cover crops, maximizing soybean yields, vertical tillage and pesticide applicator training. These winter meetings are critical for educating growers about the latest agronomic developments and our ongoing on-farm research efforts.



Participants at the Soybean and Small Grains Congress in Batavia

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