



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

## QUARTERLY HIGHLIGHTS

## July - September 2024

### Regional Dry Down Days Expand into Yates County

For any farmer who grows corn silage to feed dairy 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. It was a tale of two corn crops in 2024. With early May plantings and unseasonably warm temperatures turning into cooler weather later in the month, it was especially important for farmers to develop a plan for the 2024 harvest. Hosted by the dairy and forage specialists on the NWNYS Team, Regional Dry Down Days expanded in 2024 to serve both Seneca and Yates Counties. In collaboration with CCE Seneca County and CCE Yates County, a portable near-infrared (NIR) unit was brought to Keystone Mills in Romulus, NY and Himrod Farm Supply and Hardware in Himrod, NY to determine dry matter percentage of samples of corn plants destined to be harvested for corn silage in 2024. A total of 42 farmers from Seneca and Yates Counties submitted bundles of corn stalks cut from each field they anticipated harvesting for corn silage. Each of these bundles were processed through a wood-chipper, and then tested for dry matter and starch percentages. With DairyOne's NIR reader, samples from 89 different fields were scanned, and information about the overall corn maturity and starch levels in the ear were analyzed. Farmers were given their values for each field



*John Gloss from DairyOne uses near infra-red technology to determine dry matter and starch content of corn silage samples at the 2024 Yates County Corn Silage Dry Down Day.*



*CCE NWNYS Team Field Crop Specialists, Mike Stanyard and Jodi Letham feed corn samples through a woodchipper to prepare them for dry matter analysis.*

sample, as well as estimated harvest date ranges and information on best management practices for the 2024 corn silage harvest. This program reached and benefited many farmers in the Plain community and those with smaller dairies who may not have regular access to labs or technology to monitor the moisture levels of their corn crops.

### Collaboration to Hold On-Farm Water Quality Event

Canandaigua Lake supplies drinking water to 70,000 people in Canandaigua and the surrounding area. Water quality is critical and the farms along the lake need to manage runoff and other environmental concerns. Experts are available to help with resource concerns.

The NWNYS Team joined forces to host an on-farm event at Tamberlane Farms in Ontario County. The evening highlighted best management practices to the public and farming community. The farm has been improving their environmental-friendly practices for three generations. Tamberlane Farms supplied burgers, Ontario County Farm Bureau sponsored the rest of the dinner for the 50 attendees. Ontario County Soil & Water Conservation District highlighted their cost-shared barn project they worked with the farm owners on and the Agriculture Environmental Management program available to farmers. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County helped with planning and promotion. The NWNYS Team provided an overview of good grazing practices and pasture management. The fields nearest the lake are in permanent pastures to reduce the erosion potential.

The evening highlighted the great work done by the farm with guidance from the agencies. Farm and community neighbors were able to see how important water quality is and how well it is cared for at Tamberlane Farms.



*The view of Canandaigua Lake from the permanent pastures.*

## Unveiling the Potential of BMR Male Sterile Forage Sorghum

On August 28th, the NWNY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program hosted the BMR Forage Sorghum Field Day, bringing together dairy farmers and agricultural experts to explore the potential of BMR (Brown Midrib) male sterile forage sorghum as a cost-effective alternative to traditional corn silage. Organized with the support of Merrimac Farms, Sorghum Checkoff, S&W Seed Company and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Livingston County, the event highlighted how this innovative crop can improve silage quality, reduce input costs, and promote sustainability in dairy farming.



BMR male sterile forage sorghum has emerged as a valuable forage option, providing dairy cattle with a high-quality diet that supports excellent milk production with better components. With 90% lower seed costs than corn silage and the ability to thrive in high temperatures, sorghum is becoming an increasingly viable option for farmers seeking to improve their operations' resilience and profitability.

The field day featured expert presentations, with Tom Kilcer discussing past research and population studies that emphasized the crop's potential. Jodi Letham from the Cornell Cooperative Extension NWNY Team shared insights on ongoing nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium fertilizer trials, helping farmers optimize their fertility strategies. Dan Gard from S&W Seed provided valuable advice on seed sourcing and successful cultivation practices, while also generously providing lunch for all attendees.

Attendees participated in discussions on key topics like optimal seeding rates, row spacing, and fertilization strategies to maximize both yield and quality. They also gained firsthand experience with the forage, learning about the tangible benefits of on-farm research and practical applications of incorporating BMR sorghum into their dairy operations.

Looking ahead, the harvest in October will provide critical data for future planting strategies and fertility practices, further advancing the region's approach to forage management. This event was a prime example of how community engagement and knowledge-sharing can drive agricultural innovation.

Through the efforts of the NWNY Cornell Cooperative Extension Program and its partners, dairy farmers in the region are now better equipped to implement sustainable practices that enhance productivity and profitability. BMR male sterile forage sorghum stands as a promising tool in the evolving landscape of dairy farming, offering a practical solution for reducing input costs and improving silage quality. This highlights the impact of Extension's role in fostering innovative solutions for New York's agricultural community.

## Herbicide Walking Tour Helps Growers Battle Resistant Weeds

Glyphosate resistant weeds such as common waterhemp, marestail and Palmer amaranth continue to cause weed management issues for soybean and corn producers. Waterhemp populations now have been identified in all ten partner counties in NWNY and in 20 counties across NY. To make matters worse this weed has also been found to have resistance to three other herbicide modes of action through previous testing in NY. It is very challenging to put together an herbicide program to control these weeds and prevent economic yield losses.

Cornell University weed scientist, Vipin Kumar, has done extensive field and greenhouse trials on waterhemp for the past two seasons. This summer we were able to collaborate with two growers in Seneca County and one in Wayne County that have an ongoing waterhemp problem and heavy seed bank. Waterhemp efficacy trials were established in two soybean fields and one corn field to test multiple herbicides and application timings. The replicated blocks were broken down into application timings of pre-emerge only (1 pass), pre-emerge plus early post-emerge (2 passes) and early post plus late post-emerge (2 passes).

A field day was held in the Waterloo location on August 9 with a walking tour of soybean herbicide treatments to demonstrate which spray programs and timings were the most effective in managing waterhemp. Twenty growers, consultants and industry reps joined us in the rain for the tour. This walking tour was a very effective method of showcasing the value of 2-pass programs and why growers should utilize them to achieve season long control when applied at the right timing. This demonstration plot provided invaluable hands-on training for selecting effective herbicide programs on their soybean and corn acres and they received a credit towards their certified pesticide applicator license.

