Cornell Cooperative Extension | Northwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program

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   April - June 2025

Pricing Corn Silage – Preliminary Fall 2025

Several years ago, in response to the program's Field Crops Advisory Committee's desire for work on pricing forages, the team developed an empirical price analysis model for corn silage. The team updates the work annually. In most years, the team reports its pricing corn silage work to its audience in late August through early October. Potential buyers and sellers seek expected price information to make management decisions. This spring, weather conditions led to unfavorable planting and other situations. Spring weather caused farm business owners to consider adjustments to cropping programs. Expected price information would help with these early season management decisions. Given the need, the team generated corn silage price estimates in late June, and shared estimates via the program's Crop Alert report. The report went out to about 1,400 contacts.

The fall 2023 estimate reflects an update to the data set, and other changes to the statistical model to best capture changes in supply and demand relationships. Readers of the Crop Alert item learned that given most recently available data, price analysis for NY suggests an estimated corn silage price of about $63 per ton for the fall of 2025. Farm business owners apply corn silage price estimates combined with understanding of relevant supply and demand factors from the individual farm business owner's perspective, to achieve better results from their decision making efforts.

Regarding the original work, one producer commented, "I think that your work on this will be helpful for many folks." Regarding the updates, producers comment that the work continues to provide information that benefits decision making regarding corn silage prices.

Using Pest Monitoring Tools to Protect Crop Yields

Black cutworm and common armyworm are two moth pests that can travel on prevailing storm fronts to NY each spring. The team utilizes pheromone traps across our region to detect these moths and monitor their first arrival into our area. Traps are checked weekly, and the number of moths is recorded. Utilizing degree-day (DD) data starting at the first significant flight (10 or more moths per week), we can determine the time of egg hatch and when larvae will be large enough to cause economic plant injury.

In 2025, we set up five cutworm and five armyworm traps across the region in late April. Significant catches of both moths were recorded in Genesee, Livingston, Ontario and Yates counties on May 7. We started recording (DD) from that date utilizing the Network for Environmental and Weather Applications (NEWA) site. We hit the 90 DD mark on May 21 as larvae were hatching and feeding on corn leaves. By June 10, the NWNY region hit 300 DD, and cutworms were large enough to cut corn plants.

Weekly results were published in our weekly Crop Alert on the NWNY Team Blog. Crop Alert is published May through September and informs growers, consultants and industry reps what we are currently seeing in corn, alfalfa, soybean and small grain fields. As a result of our trap network, we were able to advise farmers that they should be out scouting their corn fields for potential plant injury at the appropriate time to avoid economic crop loss. As little as a 3% reduction in plant population can result in an economic yield loss in corn.

Equine Pasture Management: Strengthening Horse Health, Farm Viability, and Environmental Stewardship Across New York

The Equine Pasture Management Extension program delivered practical, science-based education to horse owners and farm managers. Developed in response to growing interest and increasing calls from horse owners seeking guidance on pasture, manure, and soil management, the program was designed to improve equine well-being, reduce environmental impacts, and support farm sustainability. This rising demand highlighted the need for more structured, accessible education and technical assistance—ultimately leading to the creation of this multi-session webinar series and the directing horse owners to the Horse Farm Improvement Program in New York State led by Cornell University Animal Science faculty Lindsay Goodale, DVM.

The webinar series equipped participants with actionable strategies for managing rotational grazing, selecting and establishing resilient forages, equine nutrition 101, testing and amending soils, and handling manure to minimize runoff. Attendees also gained insight into adjusting management strategies for seasonal weather extremes common to the region. Following the webinar series, many participants transitioned into the Horse Farm Improvement Program, where they are now working closely with extension educators, university specialists, and industry partners throughout the summer. This hands-on, integrated approach not only helps farms implement sustainable practices but also strengthens the bridge between academic research, extension outreach, and real-world application.

Future plans include developing advanced modules on pasture renovation, integrating digital tools for field assessment, and offering in-person workshops and farm tours to further enhance learning.

The increasing demand for science-based, equine-focused pasture education is clear—and with continued collaboration and investment, this program is well-positioned to meet that need and contributes meaningfully to the health of New York's horses, farms, and natural resources.

Bovine Reproduction Course for Beef and Dairy Farms

Many beef farms in the NWNY region are small, part-time operations with an average of 15 cows with a short breeding season. A bull with quality genetics is needed to a quality calf. This makes it costly to purchase and keep a bull throughout the year, along with concerns for safety with owning bulls. Beef and dairy producers have started utilizing artificial insemination as an option, though technicians are not always available to service a few cows.

While proper artificial insemination technique is important in any farm's reproductive program, understanding the cow's anatomy and physiology are also essential. The NWNY Team set up the training upon a request from a beef producer. The 12 participants learned the biology of bovine reproduction, giving them a better understanding of the whole reproductive system. The training was held on a dairy farm in Livingston County where there were a number of cows available for hands-on practice to gain experience with proper insemination technique. Genex Cooperative, Inc. led the training that consisted of both classroom sessions and hands-on practice.

Over the course of two days, students learned the basics of bovine reproduction and artificial insemination. The course offered as much hands-on practice as possible, though it was a beginner's course meant to teach the basics of artificial insemination. Participants were expected to practice inseminating cows on a regular basis on their own farms in order to become proficient. Each participant was provided with a manual for future reference. This class was offered in English; a Spanish-only course the fall.

Photo credit: Margaret Quaassdorff