

YEAR IN REVIEW 2014



Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities.

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Grant Funded Projects

GVRMA - Research & Extension for Malting Barley Production in New York: \$63,982

Malting barley is a rapidly emerging market with acres doubling every year in NY State since the Farmer Brewing Act was passed in 2012. These funds support many Extension efforts including: crop scouting of commercial malting barley fields on a weekly basis during critical times of the growing season; disease, fertility & grain quality survey sampling on nearly 30 commercial farms; on-farm research in partnership with Cornell faculty; informational meetings at many established and new venues for farmers; Extension publications specific to malting barley; economic analyses pertaining to costs of production of malting barley; time spent working one-one with malting barley farmers, malt houses, brewers, & distillers for their various needs. Our efforts continue to support the education, training, and establishment of business relationships to make regional malting barley production in NY and the greater Northeast a reality. The NWNY Team also received a portion of \$27,000 allocated to CCE from the NYSDAM Facilitation Prosperity in NY Brewing Industry through Research & Extension on Production of Malting Barley & Hops grant. In total Cornell University received \$310,000 for these grants with CCE receiving \$92,000.

NYSERDA—LED Lighting Systems to Improve Milk Production and Energy Efficiency: \$164,866 Year 2 of 2

Research has shown that lactating dairy cows exposed to 16 to 18 hours of light (long-day photoperiod) increase milk production by approximately 5.1 pounds/cow/day. Improper implementation by early adopters and increased energy costs have led to the perception that this management strategy is not cost effective. This project is reviewing the effects of energy efficient lighting on manipulating photoperiod in dairy cows. Dairy specialists with the NWNY team monitored milk production, energy savings and effective light provided by LED and T8 fluorescent lighting systems. A cost benefit analysis is almost completed and findings will be presented to producers throughout the region. Project extension was granted through spring of 2014.



Grant Funded Projects

- AEM Base Funding Grant Project, Yates County: \$4,700
- American Pastured Poultry
 Producers Association
 Educational Grant: \$500
- Annie's Project Farm Business
 Risk Management Education for
 Farm Women: \$6,154
- Cornell University On Farm
 Research Partnership: Evaluation
 of Manure Injection Equipment
 Using Yield Monitoring: \$4,000
- Dairy Acceleration Program (DAP): \$5,986
- NESARE and NNY Ag
 Development Program, WinterForage Small Grains to Boost
 Feed Supply and Emergency
 Summer Annual Forage Crop
 Mixtures: \$4,000
- NYFVI, On Farm Impact of Fall/ Spring Nitrogen on Winter Forage Yields: \$1,500
- NYS Dept. Agriculture &
 Markets, Increasing Cooling
 Space for Small Farms: \$250
- NY Soybean Checkoff, Diagnosis and Assessment of Soilborne Diseases of Soybean in NY: \$2,000
- NY Soybean Checkoff, Increasing Soybean Yields with Liquid Nitrogen Applications at Vegetative & Reproductive Growth Stages: \$5,000
- Three dairy focused discussion groups—Young Managers of the Genesee Region, Young Managers of Ontario County and Hispanic Dairy Employees, NYFVI: \$2,400

Field Crops

Congresses Continue to Break Attendance Records

Almost 1,000 producers and agri-business representatives attended the NWNY Team's Corn and Soybean/Small Grain Congresses in Batavia and Waterloo. These four winter meetings are the largest grain meetings in the state and get bigger every year. It is a full day of educational topics from NWNY Team specialists, Cornell researchers, IPM specialists, and invited industry speakers. The industry trade show is packed with all the local seed, chemical, fertilizer and machinery dealers to show off the latest and greatest and answer questions. These shows give everyone lots to think about and research over the winter months and even gets them some much needed certified pesticide applicator and certified crop advisor credits.



Livingston County Dominates NY Corn & Soybean Yield Contests

Organized and supervised the New York Corn and Soybean Yield Contests are sponsored by the NY Corn & Soybean Growers Association. Contest summaries and awards to regional and statewide winners were presented at the annual Corn and Soybean Expo in Syracuse. Brad Macauley of Livingston County was the NY soybean champion (77.21 bu). Henry Everman, also of Livingston County, was the NY champion in the corn contest (297.69 bu). Both won all expense paid trips to the Commodity Classic in San Antonio, TX in March.



Western Bean Cutworm Populations Continue to Increase

The Western Bean Cutworm (WBC) is a new pest of corn and dry beans that was first identified in NY in 2009. A statewide pheromone trap program was set up again this year. Almost 11,000 WBC moths were caught in pheromone traps across NY this summer. This was 50% more moths captured than in 2013. Twenty-five percent of those moths were caught in traps located in our ten county region. WBC identification and management trainings are needed as this pest nears economic status and will continue at Corn Congresses.



Crop Alerts Keep NW NY Growers Informed

Seventeen Crop Alerts have been sent to over 800 farmers, consultants, and members of the agriculture industry during the 2014 growing season, http://nwnyteam.cce.cornell.edu/newsletter.php. These bulletins cover a wide range of topics including pest & disease outbreaks, weather impacts on crop management, timely management tips & reminders, and upcoming events. The farming community continues to express their gratitude for these updates as a trusted source of information.



Nitrogen Fertility Drives Triticale Silage Yield

A research trial was conducted in Ontario County assessing the fall and spring nitrogen needs of triticale silage during the winter of 2013/spring of 2014. Different combinations of fall and spring fertilizer produced triticale silage yields of 2 to 4 tons of DM per acre. Two spring 2014 nitrogen rate trials were conducted in Wyoming County on triticale silage fields showing a range of 1.5 to 3 tons DM/acre. These trials, in addition to the 15 trials conducted in 2013 in NWNY, will help the farmers growing triticale silage on ~10,000 acres raise their yields around 1 ton DM/acre.



Field Crops

First UAS Approval from FAA to Scout Farm Fields

We received the first permission in NY from the FAA to begin using unmanned aerial systems (UAS), commonly called "drones", to evaluate farm fields in two of our ten counties. We are continuing to obtain FAA clearance to fly over a select group of farms across NWNY. In 2015 we will be evaluating the ability of our UAS to monitor disease, insect, & weed pressure, count corn, soybean, & small grain populations, estimate crop yields & nutrient content, map soil variation, and other tasks on 5,000 acres representing many different crops, soils, farm practices, and environmental conditions across our region.

Malt Barley Education & Research

The NWNY Team is leading the state-wide effort to educate NY farmers about growing malting barley. They scouted malting barley fields on over 20 farms in NWNY in 2014 to help farmers produce a high quality crop. Plant tissue, soil, and grain samples were taken to evaluate diseases, fertility, & grain quality on nearly 30 farms statewide growing malting barley. Three variety trials of malting barley and rye took place. Seven malt houses were educated and supplied by farmers in our region. Phone calls, emails, and seminars have communicated best management practices for malting barley production across the Northeast. Acreage of malting barley will likely be between 3,000-4,000 acres statewide in 2015.



Team Finds New Soybean Disease in NWNY

The team collaborated on the assessment and diagnosis of soilborne diseases of soybean in NY as part of a statewide grant project funded by the NY Soybean Checkoff. The cool wet weather in 2014 provided perfect growing conditions for many of the soilborne diseases. Plant samples from seven counties were taken and submitted to Cornell for diagnosis. Pathogens identified included: Brown Stem Rot, Phytophthora Root Rot, White Mold, Cercospora Leaf Blight, Brown Spot, Frogeye Leaf Spot, Downy Mildew, Soybean Vein Necrosis Virus, Bacterial Pustule, and Bacterial Blight. Plant samples submitted on August 25 were surprisingly diagnosed with Northern Stem Canker. This is the first that this fungus has been reported in NY. We will educate producers how to best manage this new soybean disease at Soybean/Small Grains Congresses and invited industry meetings this winter.



Field Crop Educational Presentations in High Demand

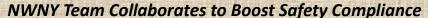
Team Field Crop Specialists gave 38 presentations at local ag. industry meetings, NWNY Team, CCE, Cornell, and SWCD sponsored programs, and statewide ag. organizations' annual meetings. Team specialists shared their expertise with over 2100 growers and industry representatives on topics such as Integrated 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.



Dairy

Dairy Acceleration Program (DAP) a Boon for Local Farms

DAP is a partnership between the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation that was announced in 2013. Through the program, farms can be awarded funding to help cover the cost of a business plan focused on growth, design of new or remodeled facilities, or development of environmental and farmstead plans. So far the NWNY Team has been involved in ten DAP projects with two more pending approval. Team members have served as facilitators and business planners for the projects. One especially successful project was with Loho Farms, LLC in Niagara County. They received funding to develop a farm business plan, which helped them define two major goals: improve the farm's financial viability through increasing profitability and cash flow, and to improve labor efficiency. Two major improvements they have made towards those goals to date include barn renovations and milking parlor renovations. These improvements have the potential to increase net income by up to \$45,000 per year.



In October of 2013, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) announced a Local Emphasis Program (LEP) on New York dairy farms. This consisted of surprise safety inspections of dairy farms statewide, beginning in July 2014. Stringent OSHA standards and the possibility of heavy fines (into the tens of thousands of dollars) made it a priority for the NWNY team to help to prepare local dairies. Since the announcement, team members have authored articles in Ag Focus offering information about the LEP and resources available to support farms in complying with OSHA standards. They've also attended work group meetings and helped to organize farm walkthroughs attended by 25 producers. The team's bilingual dairy specialist partnered with the New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) to offer on-farm worker safety training in Spanish and English. By October 2014, 268 employees had been trained on 19 farms. Participants were grateful for the support in helping them to prepare for the inspections. Their pro-activeness in working to comply with OSHA standards will go a long way in reducing any fines that they may have incurred without the preparation.

Dairy Discussion Groups Offer Learning Opportunities

The dairy team currently organizes three unique discussion groups across the state. The Young Managers Group in Ontario County has continued to meet monthly and has grown to include new participants. The Young Managers Group in Genesee County was started this year with ten members having attended a number of events. The Hispanic Group was started last year with the goal of bringing together mid-level Spanish-speaking staff for informal dairy education. Attendance to a number of meetings has reached 15 participants. Collaborations with Genex, Elanco, Farm Bureau and staff from Cornell's Pro-Dairy and IPM programs have made many resources available to the groups and have created unique learning opportunities.









Dairy

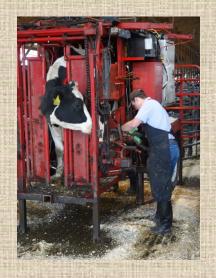
Calf Congress Builds on \$3.4 Million of Regional Investments

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 sponsors and attendees.



Taking Dairy Skills to the Next Level

This rotating series of practical dairy skills education continued over the last year with 3 modules offered with the collaboration of Cornell faculty, private consultants and agri-business who joined the team in delivering these trainings. "Feeds & Feeding Management" gave background to ruminant digestion, dairy nutrition, forage production, storage and delivery. "Hoof Health & Lameness" brought professionals together from the US and Canada to assist in presenting this popular hands-on module. SUNY Cobleskill participated in the classroom sessions via Webex, the first of planned wide broadcasting of these dairy skills trainings around the state. "Artificial Insemination and Bovine Reproduction" was offered again this year. There were two Hispanic employees who completed the course with the aid of the team bilingual specialist. All training modules were multi-day and included at least 5 hours of on-farm practical demonstrations and hands-on learning. Twenty five individuals in total (exclusive of Cobleskill) were enrolled.



Timing the Corn Silage Harvest

Corn silage is an integral part of dairy cattle rations. The moisture content of the corn plant is one of the main factors that determines how well corn silage will retain its nutritional content and remain stable until fed. Even with chopper mounted moisture testing equipment becoming common on larger operations, hand cutting, chopping and drying of samples is a valuable process to decide when to start harvesting silage corn. The team joined with feed company nutritionists and a machinery dealer to hold two corn "burn down" centers. One focused on small Mennonite farms and the other on larger dairies. Farms delivered 3-4 stalks of freshly cut corn which were mechanically chipped. Dry matters were determined on these samples either by heat drying or stationary Near Infra-Red (NIR) scanning. Producers were notified of results on site or by phone that day. Twenty two farms had 42 samples analyzed helping them make better decisions on harvesting the corn crop after an unusual growing season.



Farm Business Management

Young Dairy Managers Improve Their Business Skills Performance

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



<u>Producers Introduced to New USDA Margin Protection Program</u>

NWNY Team together with local USDA Farm Service Agency (FSA), local Cornell Cooperative Extension staff, and Upstate Niagara Cooperative organized and hosted thirteen opportunities at eight locations across the region for producers to learn the ins and outs of USDA's new Margin Protection Program for Dairy (MPP-Dairy). Seventy-two producers from 51 farms attended one of the in person sessions. They viewed the webinar led by Professor Andy Novakovic, Cornell University, and learned about program details from FSA County Executive Directors. NWNY Team Specialists demonstrated how to use the Web Based MPP Decision Tool developed by the National Program on Dairy Markets and Policy. Webinar attendees will apply a better understanding of the program and this web based tool to decide both the percentage of milk to cover and level of margin coverage needed for their individual businesses for the purpose of achieving improved risk management results.



Annie's Project a Success in Northwest New York Region

Twenty-nine participants at three sites learned about risk management, as part of a statewide program, using Annie's Project developed at Iowa State University. Dedicated 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 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 improve profitability.



Farm Business Management

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.



- 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 who 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.



Dairy Farm Business Summary (DFBS) Program

Applying financial management skills, owners of 42 dairy farm businesses from the region cooperated with regional specialists, PRO-DAIRY staff, and agribusiness consultants to complete DFBS's for 2013. Cooperators learned about the strengths and weaknesses of their businesses using their summary and analysis results, DFBS data for the Western New York region as a whole, and by using DFBS data for a group of most profitable businesses by size using the two-page Comparison Report. Research studies conclude producers using DFBS with analysis achieve greater levels of profit compared to producers who do not. Greater profitability contributes to enhanced economic viability, increasing the likelihood that businesses have the capacity to invest in replacement and/or expansion assets, and maintain and/or increase employment levels. Estimates using DFBS results suggest that the 42 cooperating businesses invested a total of \$15.7 million in land, buildings and improvements in 2013, and a total of \$12.5 million in machinery and equipment. Estimates suggest that the 42 farms employed a total of 748 worker equivalents, where an equivalent represents 230 hours worked per month for 12 months, and generated a total of \$205.9 million in cash farm receipts from milk, cattle, crops and other receipt items.



Small Farms / Livestock

Profitable Pastured Poultry Workshop

Poultry production works well on small farms as these operations do not require a large land base. The NWNY team received a small grant to organize and host 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 one 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."



2014 NY All Forage Fed Bull Test Concludes

The beef industry in New York is in a great position to take advantage of high prices with excellent forage quality and available land. Good genetics are a way to assist with producing a high quality product brought to market in as short a time as possible. The NWNY Team conducted the NY All Forage Fed Bull Test at the Cornell University Ruminant Center. This is a unique test with only stored forage and minerals fed. The second year of the 112-day test concluded with weight gains exceeding model predictions by 0.5 lb per day. This discrepancy opens up possibilities for research to 'ground-truth' the model in the future.



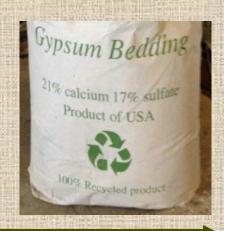
Yates Farm Safety Day

Farm safety is always a concern. The NWNY Team partnered with Yates County Soil & Water Conservation District to present at the Third Biennial Yates Farm Safety Day. Some of the topics were safe use of: bikes on the road, lawn mowers, chainsaws, tractors, and wagons and grain bins in 20-minute, round robin sessions. Our topic was manure and silo gas safety, a hot topic in the county. The use of gypsum bedding has increased the amount of hydrogen sulfide gas released from lagoons during agitation and some serious accidents have occurred. The team has worked closely with YCSWCD to provide further education on this topic. Over 300 people, young and old, attended the all-day event. Participants found the information very useful.



Potential Dangers of Gypsum Bedding in Manure Storage Gets Wide Distribution

Some small farms use a gypsum product as bedding in their dairy barns. During agitation dangerous levels of Hydrogen Sulfide (H₂S) are potentially released. 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. This fact sheet has been distributed nationally and internationally. Communications have come in from Canada and Europe to share information and research findings.



Promoting the Face of Extension







- Participating in local agricultural awareness events such as Agri-Palooza (Wyoming), Farm Fest (Livingston), & York Valley Fest.
- Exhibiting at the annual Empire Farm Days and joining other ag specialists in greeting the public and answering questions.
- Working with campus to present the Dairy Profit Seminars at Empire Farm Days.
- Giving talks to high school and college students about agricultural career opportunities and the benefits of learning a second language.
- Engaging the public in personal conversations and narrating at the NYS Fair Dairy Cattle Birthing Center.
- Presenting and testing on the topic, 'Sustainable Agriculture: Local Foods' to Genesee County high schools teams for the annual Envirothon competition. Follow-up assistance provided to county winner for the state competition.

- Judging New York State Hay Contest at the State Fair and educating general public about hay and silage production.
- Highlighting "Tools of the Trade" to 300 area high school students and community members at Genesee Community College's Harvest Festival.
- Joining other Extension specialists and Farm Bureau in visiting state legislators in Albany to stress the importance of supporting agricultural programs in the state.
- Representing Extension on campus through lecture presentations and committee positions.
- The team has had a total reach of nearly 16,000 unique visits through Facebook during the past year.
- Presentation to WNY Government Appointed Historians Association on using the USDA Census of Agriculture & recent technological developments in agriculture.









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Dr. Tom Overton
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&

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Extension Administration
For their administrative support

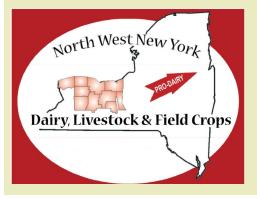
Back row: left to right: Mike Stanyard, Jerry Bertoldo, John Hanchar & Bill Verbeten Front row: left to right: Joan Sinclair Petzen, Libby Eiholzer, Cathy Wallace & Nancy Glazier

The NWNY Mission

The NWNY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops team will provide lifelong education to the people of the agricultural community to assist them in achieving their goals. Through educational programs and opportunities, the NWNY Team members seek to build producers' capacities to:

- Enhance the profitability of their businesses
- * Practice environmental stewardship
- * Enhance employee and family well-being via safe work environment
- * Provide safe, healthful agricultural products
- * Provide leadership for enhancing relationships among the agricultural sector, neighbors and the general public

North West New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Program



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