



Cornell Cooperative Extension

South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Program

Broome | Cayuga | Chemung | Cortland | Tioga | Tompkins

Dairy & Field Crops in Tioga County — An Important Economic Engine

DAIRY FACTS: 46 Dairy Farm Businesses earning

\$25 Million Dollars of farm gate income for milk

Caring for nearly **7000** dairy cows, Producing **13** million gallons of milk per year.

Growing forages: hay crop and corn silage for their feed on

34,328 Acres with a value of **\$17.4** million and

\$3.3 million income for cattle and calves sold.



Market Value of Ag Products Sold in Tioga County in 2022 - \$67 Million!

Hands-On Learning Labs

Feeder School: Understand equipment maintenance, proper feed mix, cow behavior and communication with farm team

- Optimize feed bunk management, silage storage, best practices and SAFETY.

Transition Calf Workshop: Identifying bottle necks for raising calves through weaning & transition

Sprayer & Planting Clinics: Prepare machinery to optimize performance



Focus on Forage Quality



Alert for Hay Crop First Harvest - Measuring alfalfa height is a reliable indicator of forage quality for both alfalfa and grass hay. By tracking alfalfa heights weekly in the early spring, we can predict first cutting harvest dates to help farms achieve optimal forage quality. Alfalfa heights are easy to measure, and they are more accurate than other methods used to determine harvest timing. A report is sent weekly reporting crop status and anticipated harvest dates.

Corn Silage Clinics - Our burndown clinics are designed to help producers develop a harvest plan based on field maturity. Corn silage is a cornerstone crop for dairy farms because it provides a high-energy, digestible forage that supports milk production and herd health. Its ability to deliver consistent nutrition—especially in the form of fermentable carbohydrates and fiber—makes it a reliable feed source throughout the year.

Forage quality directly impacts milk yield, and corn silage offers a balance of starch and fiber that complements other feed components.

Supporting agricultural awareness in local communities is central to our mission. With less than 1.5% of the U.S. population directly involved in farming, few people have any connection to agriculture. We believe it's essential for people to understand where their food comes from and recognize the many benefits farms bring to their communities. We team up with County CCE Associations and industry stakeholders to give opportunities to learn about farming and showcase the importance in our community. Ag awareness includes focused events for students and open houses held on farms for the general public.

Building Ag Awareness



This year, Janice and Betsy included butter making at the county fair. This simple activity allows children and adults to make their own butter from a splash of heavy cream. Butter making gives the team an opportunity to talk about dairy production in the few minutes that participants are shaking their container. After hearing the familiar butterball rattle around in the container, many people are thrilled with the magic they just shook with their hands and eager to taste their efforts with a piece of bread or a cracker. People often say, they “didn’t know it was so easy to make butter”, and ask how to make a greater amount at home. The interaction gives a positive spin to dairy products and the farmers that produce milk, encouraging people to ask questions and learn more about dairy in their community.



Pasture Management Education

On-farm pasture walks offer more than just a scenic stroll—they’re immersive, hands-on learning experiences that bring pasture management principles to life. Marty Schlabach and family hosted this pasture walk and provided an impactful demonstration of grazing height and regrowth of the pasture.

Managed pastures check all the boxes: they support environmental health, foster community goodwill, and make economic sense. With year-round vegetation, biodiversity, and erosion control, pastures are a powerhouse of sustainability. Let’s face it—there’s something heartwarming about seeing livestock grazing peacefully. It evokes a sense of connection to local agriculture and appreciation for the farmers behind it.

From a production standpoint, pastures are the most cost-effective forage system. Pasture requires more management than feeding stored feeds because the quantity and quality change daily. Animals harvest their own feed, reducing the need for expensive equipment. Each host farm opens its gates to share their unique management strategies—from fencing and watering systems to paddock layout—creating a rich setting for peer-to-peer learning.

By the Numbers 2024 Meetings and Workshops

- 30 Meetings / Workshops with 687 participants
- 203 Personalized Consultations & Responses to phone inquiries
- 11 Events to Increase Public Awareness of Agriculture
- Podcasts with 201 listeners
- Virtual Seminars totaling 350 contact hours

