



Cornell Cooperative Extension

South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Program

Broome | Cayuga | Chemung | Cortland | Tioga | Tompkins

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

DAIRY FACTS: 24 Dairy Farm Businesses earning

\$41.9 Million Dollars of farm gate income for milk

Caring for nearly **5000** dairy cows, Producing **21** million gallons of milk per year.

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

23,115 Acres with a value of **\$11.6** million and

\$2.5 million income for cattle and calves sold.

Market Value of Ag Products Sold in Broome County in 2022 - \$54 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.

A Broome County dairy received focused assistance to update their FARM program requirements. FARM is a nationwide

program, required by most farms' processors to ship milk. Main facets of this program include annually updated Veterinary Client Patient Relationship (VCPR), protocols for animal care and ongoing employee training in the employee's native language. For this particular farm, we have held semi-monthly trainings on herd health topics in Spanish to ensure the farm employees have continuing education. These topics include stockmanship, maternity pen care, care of special needs cows, euthanasia, and calf care. A coordinated effort between farm owners, managers, the veterinarian and extension has made it possible to not only update this farm's standards, but also bring educational opportunities to key herd health employees. These consultations come about after creating a relationship with the farmer – sometimes these topics are very personal and sensitive, and adoption of recommendations comes with trust built. Some of this trust is inherent; we as extension educators are a trusted third party with no sales agenda. Some trust, though, is in the relationships we build over time with our region's farmers. It creates a very rewarding relationship, one that can have a positive impact on farm operations and profitability.



A day-long workshop was hosted by a Broome County dairy to extend these trainings to a wider audience. The SCNY Dairy and Field Crops Program partnered with Cornell PRO-DAIRY to offer a Hands-On Animal Care Dairy Training Program. Seventeen attendees benefited from this workshop and kept their farms compliant with FARM program requirements.

Supporting Non-Dairy Livestock

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. 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.



Horses are notorious for tight grazing, which can degrade pasture quality. The pasture system for Heavenly Acres was designed in consultation with the Broome County Soil and Water Conservation District. The farm practices structured rest periods and nighttime grazing to prevent overuse. Hay supplementation allows paddocks additional rest when needed.

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 farmer graziers.

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

