

Cornell Cooperative Extension

South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Program

Broome | Cayuga | Chemung | Cortland | Tioga | Tompkins

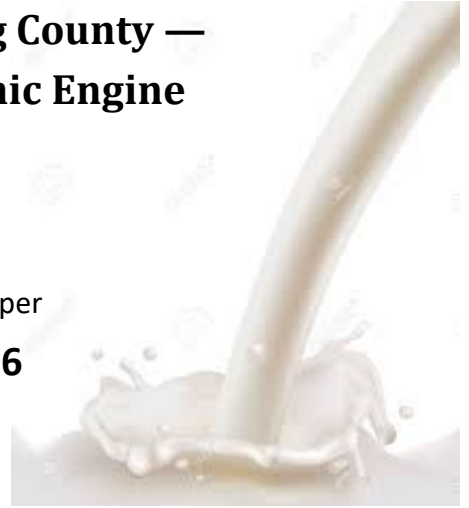
Dairy & Field Crops in Chemung County — An Important Economic Engine

DAIRY FACTS: 12 Dairy Farm Businesses earning

\$5.3 Million Dollars of farm gate income for milk

Caring for nearly **3000** dairy cows, Producing **2.6** million gallons of milk per year, Growing forages: hay crop and corn silage for their feed on **16,706**

Acres with a value of **\$7.2** million and
\$2.1 million income for cattle and calves sold.



Market Value of Ag Products Sold in Chemung County in 2022

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.

Youth Workshops Provide Hands-on Livestock Skills Training

In Chemung County, youth as part of the Animal Crackers Adventures were taught about the anatomy of the ear, and learned where the proper placement of the tag should be.

They were then given a tagger and a real tag, and applied the tag to the model calf's ear.

Youth were also learned about giving injections – first learning about needle safety and proper handling, and then were able to practice giving two types of injections to the calf model.

Using the model is ideal, as kids can practice as many times as they want without the fear of the animal reacting to the injection, or hurting the animal if they do it incorrectly. Through the many trainings Betsy has done, she has watched kids who were too afraid to even look at, let alone pick up a syringe, find the courage to properly give injections to the calf model.



Betsy Hicks of CCE SCNY Dairy Team helps a Chemung County youth learn how to correctly place an ear tag in the ear of a calf model. (photo credit Serenity Conklin)

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.

And 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

