



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

July - September 2025

Yates County Field Day Showcases the Power of Cover Crop Diversity

The Yates County Cover Crops Field Day, held in August in the town of Milo, brought together over 30 farmers, agribusiness professionals, and conservation partners to explore how diverse cover crop mixes can build soil health, improve nutrient cycling, and strengthen crop resilience. The event was a collaborative effort between the Yates County Soil & Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Yates County, the NWNY Team, the Town of Milo Agricultural Committee, and King's AgriSeeds.

Following the 2025 wheat harvest, demonstration plots were established to showcase a variety of mixes, including triticale + clover + radish, sudangrass + cowpea, black oats, winter rye, Maize Pro Mix, Summer Solar Mix, and bio-strips with both in-row and between-row plantings. Additional interseeded buckwheat highlighted options for pollinator support and mid-summer soil protection. Participants had the opportunity to walk through each plot, observe growth differences, and discuss establishment methods and management strategies.

Extension specialists and conservation staff emphasized how species diversity can improve nitrogen retention, alleviate compaction, increase infiltration, and stimulate microbial activity. Farmers gained practical insight into integrating cover crops after small grains or corn silage harvest to make the most of late-season growth windows.

Majority of participants reported gaining new knowledge and planned to apply at least one new practice on their farm, such as adopting multi-species blends, trying bio-strip systems, or refining seeding timing. The event strengthened local partnerships and showcased how applied research and demonstration can guide producers in protecting their soils while improving farm profitability across the Finger Lakes region.



Helping Soybean Growers Manage Herbicide Resistant Weeds

Glyphosate resistant weeds such as common waterhemp, marehail and Palmer amaranth continue to cause weed management issues for soybean and corn producers. Waterhemp populations now have been identified in all ten partner counties in NWNY and in 25 counties across NY. To make matters worse this weed has also been found to have resistance to three other herbicide modes of action through previous testing in New York. It is very challenging to put together an herbicide program to control these weeds and prevent economic losses.

Cornell University weed scientist, Vipin Kumar, has done extensive on-farm and greenhouse trials on waterhemp for the past three seasons in our region. This summer we were able to collaborate with two growers in Seneca County that have an ongoing waterhemp problem. Waterhemp efficacy trials were established in one soybean field and one corn field to test multiple herbicides and application timings. The replicated blocks were broken down into application timings of pre-emerge only (1 pass), pre-emerge plus early post-emerge (2 passes) and early post plus late post-emerge (2 passes).

A field day was held in the town of Fayette on August 4 with a walking tour of soybean herbicide treatments to demonstrate which spray programs and timings were the most effective in managing waterhemp. Twenty growers, consultants and industry reps joined us for the tour. This walking tour was a very effective method of showcasing the value of 2-pass herbicide programs and why growers should utilize them to achieve season long control when applied at the right timing. It was also very apparent that glyphosate products are not an effective management tool for weeds such as waterhemp anymore. This demonstration plot provided invaluable hands-on training for selecting effective herbicide programs on soybean acres and participants received one certification credit towards their pesticide applicator license.



Partnering with American Farmland Trust for Regenerative Agriculture Education

Farmers work to achieve economic, environmental (soil, water, air, climate and others), and community objectives. When they base management decisions on research-based information, the likelihood of achieving objectives increases. Regarding soil health practices adoption on farms, farm business owners are looking for information.

The NWNY Team worked in conjunction with American Farmland Trust's NY Women for the Land Program to hold a pasture event at Tamberlane Farms, Ontario County. Amanda and Chase Brown now own and operate the farm previously owned by Chase's grandfather. They have improved pasture management, increased grazing acreage and cattle numbers, utilize cover crops for grazing, and worked with Ontario County Soil & Water Conservation District to construct a barn to house their cows during the winter. These practices greatly reduced erosion that would have flowed directly into Canandaigua Lake. Approximately 18 participants



View of Canandaigua Lake from Tamberlane Farms pastures.

learned good grazing practices, pasture management, and ruminant nutrition from Amanda, the team, and NRCS Grazing Specialist Karen Hoffman.

The team partnered with American Farmland Trust's NY Women for the Land Program to

develop resources and economic analyses. During the quarter, the team worked with farmers Peter Zelif and Nicole Porter, Zelif Farms, to complete a case study that included a before and after economic analysis. Farming land in Orleans and Niagara counties, Peter and Nicole, with their focus on regenerative practices, are considered successful soil health system adopters. Team members reported results via a variety of delivery methods. A field day at the Zelif Farms drew about 60 attendees and an article was shared in the team's monthly newsletter.

In both events contacts learned that successful adoption of a soil health system [regenerative practices] coincides with increased economic performance. Results provide incentives to others to pursue adoption of practices. Contacts also learned about research-based strategies for planning and implementation, keys to informed decision making and successful adoption. Better understanding increases the likelihood of achieving objectives.

2025 Corn Silage Dry Down Days Provide Critical Support for Seneca and Yates County Farmers

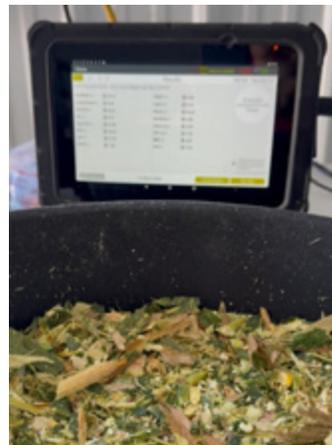
Producing high-quality corn silage each year hinges on timing harvest based on plant moisture content. In its second year of serving Seneca and Yates counties, Dry Down Days were held on three consecutive weeks in September, and helped ensure corn was harvested at the optimal dry matter level to preserve forage quality and promote herd health and production. In 2025, uncooperative weather caused widespread planting



CCE NWNY Team members David Bechtel and Mike Stanyard process corn samples through a woodchipper to prepare them for dry matter analysis. Photo by M. Quaassdorff

dates in spring. A droughty summer followed stunting corn growth and maturity creating difficulty in determining optimal harvest times. Using a portable near-infrared (NIR) unit provided by DairyOne, Dry Down Days were hosted in collaboration with CCE Seneca County at Keystone Mills in Romulus and with CCE Yates County at Himrod Farm Supply and Hardware in Himrod. Farmers from across the region sent in representative bundles of corn stalks for processing and analysis. In total, 108 field samples from 44 farmers were evaluated for dry matter and starch content. Each sample was chipped, scanned, and assessed to determine the optimal harvest window for that particular field, with some fields being tested multiple times over the 3-week span to track maturation progress. This program was especially beneficial for farmers in the Plain Community and those with smaller farms who may not have regular access to labs or technology to monitor the moisture levels of their corn crops. By offering free, local testing and individualized harvest

recommendations, Dry Down Days continues to remove barriers to making informed decisions at a critical time in the season. Dairy and forage specialists on the NWNY Team plan to continue to collaborate with the counties and local businesses in 2026, to ensure that each farmer has the information they need to make smart, timely harvest decisions.



Near-Infrared analysis of corn sample to determine dry matter and starch content in order to predict optimal harvest window. Photo by M. Quaassdorff