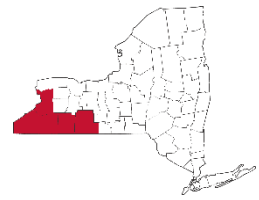




COWS CROPS & CRITTERS



A partnership between Cornell University & the CCE Associations of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, & Steuben Counties.

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Southwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Program

2026 1st Quarter Report January 2026 - March 2026



PHOTO CREDIT: Kelly Torrey

Broiler Project

Our team completed the final report for their 3.5 year-long research project, “Optimizing the Economic Return of Pasture Raised Slow Growth and Conventional Broilers”. The report includes the summary of production and pricing parameters from 36 small farms across New York State. It provides farmers and educators with resources to help make informed decisions about the true costs of raising meat chickens on a small scale on pasture in the Northeast. In addition, resources were developed around tracking production information, rearing & processing, value-added processing, and pricing to earn a profit. The report and resources can be found at https://projects.sare.org/sare_project/lne22-435/



Leaving Your Legacy Series

Kate co-hosted a 2-part “Inspired by Annie’s Project” webinar series: Leaving your Legacy: Planning for Your Farm’s Future with other CCE educators. Annie’s Project is a national educational program dedicated to strengthen women’s roles in agricultural enterprises. “Inspired by Annie’s Project” programs, like this one, are specific to local needs and assist women to develop additional skills across a range of areas, including information management, financial documentation, land ownership and leasing, marketing commodities, and educational needs. The event was attended by 19 participants representing diverse backgrounds and stages of succession planning.



Thank you for the continued support of our newsletter sponsors!

We continue to receive extremely positive feedback about our printed/mailed monthly editions of “Cows, Crops & Critters”. We couldn’t do it without the advertising that helps us offset our costs. Our sponsors include: Country Crossroads Feed & Seed LLC, Ernst Seeds, Farm Credit East, Fertrell, Growmark FS LLC, Lactalis USA, NY FarmNet, Pavlock and Son’s Construction, Timac Agro, VM Agritech, and Wild Acres Family Farm.

Grab n’ Go Pesticide Safety Education

SWNYDLFC, CVP, and LERGP have partnered together on a grant through Northeast Extension Risk Management Education (NERME) titled “Creating Active-Learning, Grab n’ Go Pesticide Safety Education Modules and Toolkits”. This project is designed to develop lesson plans around pesticide safety content as active educational strategies for various topics. This quarter, SWNYDLFC has been involved in teaching this content at six different events reaching field crops, vegetable and fruit producers. Hands-on activities have included topics around Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), developing risk maps for farmsteads, jar tests and understanding incompatibilities, math for mixing, and identifying pesticide contamination and strategies to minimize risk. Feedback has been incredibly positive, with many producers commenting on their appreciation for hands-on activities, rather than PowerPoint presentations.

This work is supported by the Northeast Extension Risk Management project award no. 2024-70027-42540, from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s National Institute of Food and Agriculture.



PASA

Katie had the opportunity to attend the PASA Sustainable Agriculture Conference through a grant from the Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship and Wolfe’s Neck Center. During the conference, she gained valuable insight into sustainable agriculture practices and connected with farmers actively engaged in grazing.



Allegany County Highlights from SWNYDLFC

Katie hosted an Advanced Hoof Health Program targeted at experienced hoof trimmers and upper-level farm management. Topics covered included: creating a strategic trimming program for your dairy; the latest in lameness technology for the dairy industry; and housing and flooring design and their roles in hoof care. There was great discussion at the event, and we hope to continue educating on the importance of regular hoof trimming.



Kate partnered with a NY FarmNet consultant to provide combined financial and emotional support to a severely under resourced farmer in Allegany County. In addition to a review of farm financial ledgers, expenses, and income, Kate assisted the farmer with finding appropriate legal counsel and applying for a public defender.



Alfred State College invited our team out to teach Fecal Egg Count testing to their animal science class. Students learned how to restrain sheep and goats, collect feces, prepare samples, review prepared slides, and interpret the results. They were excited to learn this new skillset, and those with sheep and goats at home were looking forward to taking what they'd learned back to the farm.



Southern Tier Crop Congress came back this year! This meeting was an intimate setting, with approximately 15 producers, which was a fabulous fit for the hands-on education provided. Attendees were able to learn about upcoming legislation impacting seed treatments, field crop diseases, and pesticide safety education.



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Cattaraugus County Highlights from SWNYDLFC

This winter, NYSDEC reached out with an interest in hosting additional pesticide exams, which reflected the strong relationship that SWNYDLFC has built over the years. With this, we were able to host the “NYSDEC How to Get Certified Course” in March, with a complimentary exam. Between the course and exam, we were able to reach seven individuals that were actively attempting to get their pesticide license or had an interest. In addition, hosting this course brought in calls of interest for more information about becoming a certified applicator.



Kate provided several 1:1 farm business management consultations for Cattaraugus farmers. Consultations involved technical assistance relating to beginning farming, agricultural land rental rates and land valuing, estate planning, and grant funding.

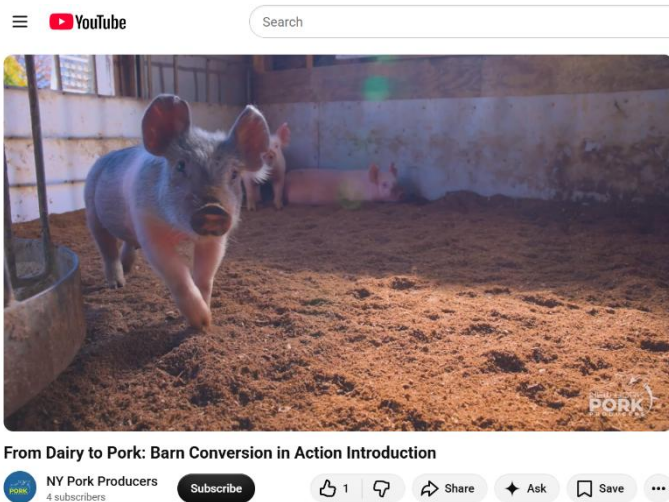


This past fall, our team partnered with the New York Pork Producers and Tim Terry from Pro Dairy to put together a series of short videos covering the basic considerations of converting old dairy barns into facilities for swine. The series includes 3 short videos featuring 3 regional farms, including one from Cattaraugus County, as well as a recorded webinar that covers more details about what's involved in a conversion.

To view the playlist, you can visit:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLid3gUIND6wnc5-ciZc_grViCggtjczgo

Our team partnered with Wild Acres Farm and Cattaraugus County Soil and Water to host an event for Amish producers interested in organic dairy farming. Presentations included lactation biology and milk quality (Katie), organic regulations and recordkeeping (Amy and Kate), and soil fertility and weed management in organic systems (Katelyn). Many attendees also signed up for our monthly newsletter.



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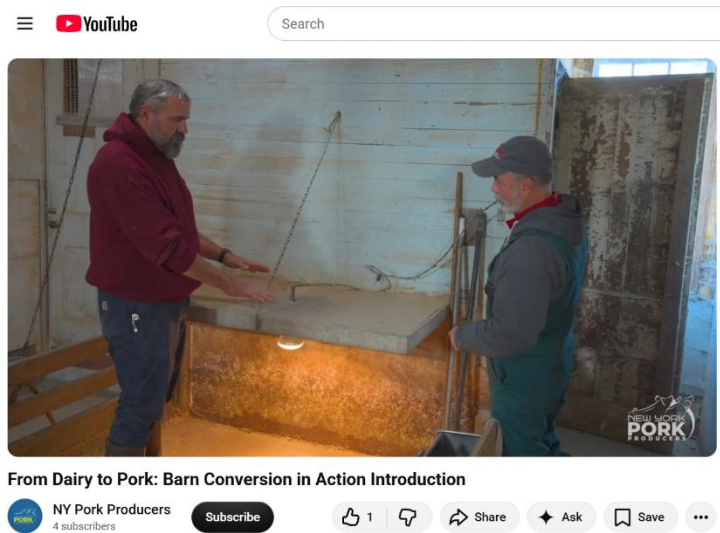
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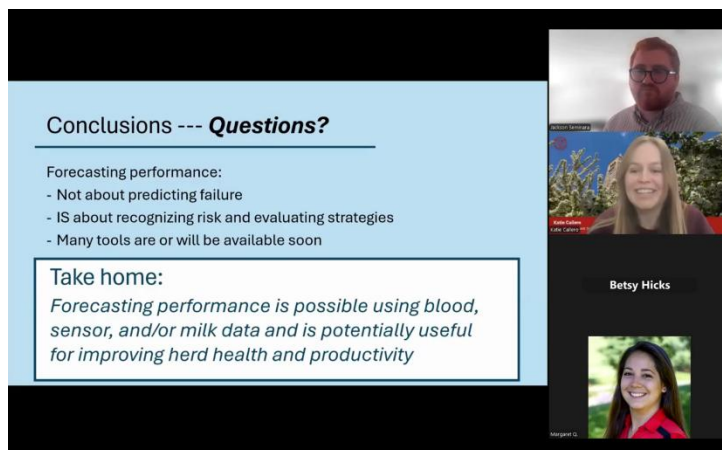
Chautauqua County Highlights from SWNYDLFC

This past fall, our team partnered with the New York Pork Producers and Tim Terry from PRO-DAIRY to put together a series of short videos covering the basic considerations of converting old dairy barns into facilities for swine. The series includes 3 short videos featuring 3 regional farms, including two from Chautauqua County, as well as a recorded webinar that covers more details about what's involved in a conversion.

To view the playlist, you can visit:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLid3gUIND6wnc5-ciZc_grViCggtjczgo



Katie led the coordination of the annual webinar series hosted by the regional dairy specialists in partnership with PRO-DAIRY. This year's series focused on dairy cow research from Cornell's College of Veterinary Medicine and featured seven weekly webinars. More than 400 participants attended over the course of the two-month series.



29 growers came together to learn more about Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) at the Chautauqua Produce Auction. Katelyn was able to provide support to Elizabeth Buck of CVP on this content, while also providing timely regulatory updates to sweet corn producers as it relates to seed treatments and the new mitigations that are being added to pesticide labels. This event also resulted in follow-up education for two folks interested in getting their pesticide license in the county.

Kate provided several 1:1 farm business management consultations for Chautauqua farmers. Consultations involved technical assistance relating to beginning farming, agricultural land rental rates and land valuing, estate planning, and grant funding.



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Erie County Highlights from SWNYDLFC

Katie held a private, on-farm calving training workshop at an Erie County farm to teach staff the signs of labor and the red flags to watch for during calving. Staff then practiced delivering a calf using a dystocia cow model in various positions to build their skills in correcting abnormal calf presentations, with the goal of reducing the need for veterinary intervention and ensuring a healthy cow and calf.



Cornell's PRO-DAIRY team partnered with our team to bring a hands-on calving training to Troicaire College's veterinary technician class in February. Dr. Rob Lynch taught students the basics of labor and delivery for cattle, which included the use of the PRO-DAIRY life-like dystocia model. Using the model, students learned how to perform a uterine exam and manipulate a malpositioned calf into the correct position for birth using common obstetrics tools and techniques. This opportunity provided an exposure to the opportunities for veterinary technicians in large animal medicine.



In February, Kate met with staff at Providence Farm Collective to develop the existing relationship between PFC and the SWNYDLFC team. Kate's background and interest in international agricultural development position her to have a meaningful partnership with PFC. PFC supports under-resourced resettled immigrant farmers needing access to clean, rural farmland, farming and business education, technical assistance, access to markets and the opportunity to farm for income. Kate will be speaking at a PFC event this April that showcases the resources available from agricultural service providers like CCE.

Partnerships with local agribusinesses continue to grow, as SWNYDLFC and CVP collaborated with Laing-Gro, a division of Timac, to host winter field and vegetable meetings. At both events, producers were able to hear about timely production updates, industry products, and pesticide safety content. Between both events, we reached approximately 80 producers, which exceeds historic attendance of these events.



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Steuben County Highlights from SWNYDLFC



Katie hosted an Advanced Hoof Health Program targeted at experienced hoof trimmers and upper-level farm management. Topics covered included: creating a strategic trimming program for your dairy; the latest in lameness technology for the dairy industry; and housing and flooring design and their roles in hoof care. There was great discussion at the event, and we hope to continue educating on the importance of regular hoof trimming.

The entire SWNYDLFC team was able to meet with Steuben County Soil & Water to learn more about Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMP). This education allows us to better understand resource concerns to consider on farms, improve our educational strategies, and think about possible partnership opportunities.



By way of introduction from Susan Walker, Agriculture & Natural Resource Program Leader for CCE Steuben, and a partner at the Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District, Kate provided several 1:1 farm business management consultations for Steuben farmers. Consultations involved technical assistance relating to beginning farming, agricultural land rental rates and land valuing, estate planning, and grant funding.



Our team completed the NE-SARE Grant project, “Optimizing Economic Return of Pasture Raised Slow Growth and Conventional Broilers”. The report includes the summary of production and pricing parameters from 36 small farms across New York State. It provides farmers and educators with resources to help make informed decisions about the true costs of raising meat chickens on a small scale on pasture in the Northeast. In addition, resources were developed around tracking production information, rearing & processing, value-added processing, and pricing to earn a profit. The report and resources can be found at https://projects.sare.org/sare_project/Ine22-435/



A partnership between Cornell University and the CCE Associations in these five counties: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Steuben Counties.

Poultry Carcass Breakdown

Breaking down a whole poultry carcass into its parts is a way to potentially increase the value of your chicken, while offering customers more purchasing options. With practice, this process can take less than 2 minutes per bird.

Step 1: Collect your supplies

Start with a whole and cleaned carcass, cutting board, and sharp boning knife. Boning knives are optimal for this task because of their thin, flexible blades that average 7" in length. A sharpening steel is good to have on hand to hone the blade of the knife in-between every 5 birds or so. Beginners may need to hone their blades more frequently because of the tendency to hit bone.



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SWNYDLFC 1st Quarter Events & Funded Projects

EVENTS

- 1/13 – Boots in the Barn: Breeding Today for the Herd You Want Tomorrow: Tools to Support Semen Choice Tradeoffs, Webinar
- 1/14 – On-Farm Calving Training, Eden
- 1/15 – Advanced Hoof Health Program, Belfast
- 1/20 – Boots in the Barn: Research in Precision Livestock Health, Webinar
- 1/21 – Converting Dairy Barns to Swine Facilities, Webinar
- 1/27 – Boots in the Barn: Early Calf Management: Key Influences on Heifer Development, Webinar
- 1/28 – Southern Tier Crop Congress, Belfast
- 1/30 – Chautauqua Produce Auction Winter Meeting, Panama
- 1/30 – New England Grazing & Livestock Conference, Manchester, NH
- 2/03 – Winter Field Crops Meeting, North Collins
- 2/03 – Boots in the Barn: Evidence-based Development of Best Cattle Management Practices, Webinar
- 2/04 – Winter Vegetable Meeting, North Collins
- 2/09 – Leaving Your Legacy: Planning For Your Future Part 1, Webinar
- 2/10 – Boots in the Barn: Forecasting Performance – How Clues from Blood, Milk & Sensors Can Predict Unfortunate Outcomes in Multiparous Cows, Webinar
- 2/13 – Leaving Your Legacy: Planning For Your Future Part 2, Webinar
- 2/17 – Boots in the Barn: Advancing Milk Quality – Integrating Workforce Development & Artificial Intelligence in QMPS Research, Webinar
- 2/24 – Boots in the Barn: Sensor Technologies in Calf Health Monitoring, Webinar
- 2/25 – Fecal Egg Count Mobile Workshop, Alfred Station
- 2/25 – Field Crops Industry Meeting Presentation, West Valley
- 3/03 – NYSDEC How to Get Certified Course, Ellicottville
- 3/09 – Organic Dairy Information Meeting, Conewango Valley
- 3/19 – LERGP Winter Grape Grower Conference, Fredonia
- 3/25 – Knowledge Park Produce Grower Update, Erie, PA

GRANT PROJECTS

- **NERME:** Creating Active-Learning, Grab n' Go Pesticide Safety Education Modules and Toolkits
- **NYS DAM:** 2025-2026 Integrated Pest Management (Bioeconomy) - Neonicotinoids Implementation
- **NERME:** Improving Production Outcomes and Reducing Parasite Resistance in Small Ruminants in Southwest New York Using Targeted Deworming Strategies
- **SARE:** Optimizing the Economic Return of Pasture-Raised Slow-growth and Conventional Broilers
- **Pork Checkoff Grant through NYS Prok Producers:** Dairy to Swine Barn Conversion Video Series
- **NEDBIC:** Northeast Regional Dairy Grazing Apprenticeship Program

1st QUARTER 2026 BY THE NUMBERS

267

Farm Consultations on topics related to Farm Business Management, Field Crops, Dairy Management, and Livestock Production.

1,463

Event and program direct participants who've attended one of our 23 events/collaborations or have received our direct email/mail updates.

83

Website submissions, press releases, interviews, and Facebook posts providing timely information to a large audience of more than 9,352 indirects.