

2026 Dairy Day in Madison & Saratoga County

This year's Central NY Dairy Day was a group effort from the CNYDLFC team (as we eagerly await the arrival of our new Dairy Specialist!), but Ashley, Raevyn, Heer, and Erik were up to the challenge. Cornell PRO-DAIRY experts Lindsay Ferlito, Tim Terry, and Dr. Bob Lynch taught cow and calf comfort and welfare, while Anna Richards (2020 Consulting, LLC) taught *Financial Management Through Expansion Projects* to a full house of attendees at the Appley Center in Hamilton on January 13th.



Dairy Day was held at both the White Eagle and the Saratoga CCE office, bringing together approximately 50 attendees from across the region. The event focused on current dairy industry topics, providing producers with valuable insights into herd management, production efficiency, and emerging challenges, while also offering opportunities for networking and knowledge sharing among local dairy farmers and industry professionals.

Central NY Corn and Soybean Day



For the second year in a row, Erik held the Central NY Corn & Soybean Day crop congress in two locations, the White Eagle Conference Center in Hamilton, and the large conference room at CCE Saratoga County. In addition to research updates from the neonic research team from Cornell's Dept. of Entomology (Chloe Cho), Erik and Heer gave updates on their potato leafhopper monitoring program, Dr. Vipin Kumar discussed management of herbicide-resistant weeds, Dr. Quirine Ketterings discussed soil fertility and liming strategies, we heard from our new Field Crop Pathology faculty member Camilo Parada-Rojas, and learned about the economics of dry and storing grain from our own Raevyn Saunders. Attendees earned 2.75 DEC and 3.5 CCA recertification credits.



and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations of Chenango, Fulton, Herkimer, Madison, Montgomery, Otsego, Saratoga and Schoharie Counties.

Heat Stress Webinar

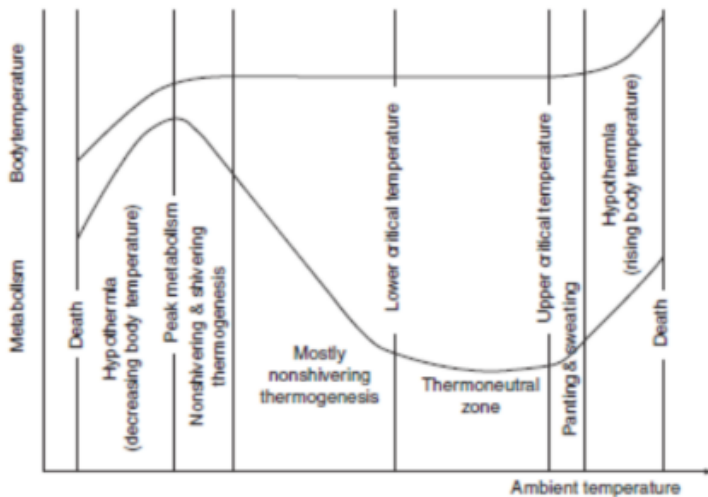


Figure 1 Effect of ambient temperature on animal metabolism and body temperature (A. Collin, personal communication).

Ashley was invited by the state climate specialist to help educate livestock producers across New York on recognizing and managing heat stress in livestock. She delivered a well-received webinar covering key signs, prevention strategies, and practical management approaches. With increasing challenges related to climate change, she plans to continue expanding this educational effort to better support producers in adapting to extreme weather conditions.

Swine Series Webinars

Ashley has been working closely with the Cornell Small Farms program to develop a comprehensive Swine Series Webinar program designed to support producers at all levels. Through bi-weekly workshops, she provides education ranging from fundamental management practices to more advanced aspects of swine production. This ongoing series has created valuable learning opportunities for both new and experienced producers, and she plans to continue offering these workshops throughout the spring and summer months.



2026 Catskill Regional Ag Conference

Ashley was invited to speak at the Catskill Regional Ag Conference in January, where she presented to a group of livestock producers on key management topics. Her presentations focused on creep feeding strategies across multiple species—including cattle, swine, sheep, and goats—highlighting practical approaches to improve growth and performance.



She also delivered a session on selecting replacement females, covering important traits and decision-making tools to help producers strengthen herd and flock productivity.

Sherburne Agriculture Roundtable

The team participated in the Sherburne Agriculture Roundtable hosted by the Town of Sherburne Planning Board. The event brought together local farmers and agricultural partners for an open conversation around current challenges and priorities in the industry.

Extension staff were there to share information on available programs and services, answer questions, and connect directly with producers.



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Dry to Fresh Workshop – PRO-DAIRY Collaboration



The team supported the planning and delivery of a regional “Dry to Fresh” workshop in collaboration with PRO-DAIRY, hosted at Marshman Farms. This one-day, hands-on program was geared toward farm employees and Agri service professionals working directly with dairy cattle. The workshop focused on the transition period, with discussions and demonstrations around dry cow management, monitoring calving, and conducting fresh cow health checks. Participants rotated through interactive stations, including hands-on work with a dystocia model and conversations around facility and pen management.



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Expanding Farm Sales Webinar Series

Raevyn participated in a workshop series hosted by Schoharie and Otsego Counties focused on expanding farm sales and improving profitability. As part of this program, Raevyn presented on marketing tools and pricing strategies, sharing approaches to help producers understand their costs, price their products effectively, and identify the right market channels for their operations. The series also covered topics such as direct-to-consumer, wholesale, and institutional sales.

NYS DEC Pesticide Application Exam Prep Course



Not everyone uses restricted-use pesticides on their farm, but those who do are required to hold a NYS DEC-issued pesticide applicator's license. Earning that license requires an individual to pass two exams: a general pesticide safety exam (Core exam) and an exam focusing on specific crops or settings where pesticides are applied (Subject exam). Erik and Heer teamed up with Maryellen Sheehan (CCE Madison) and Crystal Stewart-Courtens (ENYCHP) to provide more than 30 local farmers with full-day preparatory training to pass those exams. These sessions were held at local CCE offices in Saratoga, Herkimer, Madison, and Chenango counties.



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Neonicotinoid Seed Treatment Efficacy and Field Crop Yields

With the ban of neonicotinoid insecticide seed treatments set to take effect on corn, soy, and grain crops in 2029, Erik and Heer have been heavily involved in Cornell's efforts to assess the threat that various insect pests pose to our field crops, and to identify viable alternative pest management strategies. Along with ongoing field trials, Erik and Heer will have even more field work this year as they help Cornell IPM install five new weather stations at farms around the region. These new weather stations will not only provide real-time weather data to local farms via Cornell's NEWA network, they will provide detailed records of weather and field conditions to add context to our ongoing corn and soybean research. In order to fully understand the effect of seed treatments on crop yields, we need to be able to account for the effects of weather and climate.



Additionally, Erik and Heer have been busy completing their training to become FAA licensed UAV (drone) pilots. In addition to the weather stations, NYSDAM and Cornell IPM have provided regional Field Crop teams with drones equipped with multispectral imaging cameras. For the duration of the neonic studies, we will use drone imaging to track and compare our plots in an effort to more fully characterize the effect of seed treatments on crop health. A lot can happen between planting and harvest, and the addition of these two technologies will help us fill critical observational gaps.

NERME Risk Management Grant Award

The team collaborated with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Herkimer County and was awarded a \$75,000 Risk Management Education grant through the Northeast Extension Risk Management Education Center. This funding will support a regional effort focused on strengthening farm risk management and emergency preparedness. This collaborative project will include development of educational programming and resources to better support producers in preparing for and responding to on-farm emergencies.

Other Educational Activities: January - March 2026

- Erik participated in discussions with interviewees for the Field Crop Entomology faculty position.
- Erik taught Grain Production in NY in Dr. Grace Armah-Agyeman's class at SUNY Cobleskill on March 2nd.
- Erik and Heer attended the Cornell Organic Field Crops conference in Waterloo and Seneca Falls on March 5-6.

Future Grant and Project Activities:

- Raevyn will continue program development for the NERME-funded project in collaboration with regional partners.
- Raevyn will deliver the *Leading the Farm Team: Supervisory Skills for New Managers* webinar series held on April 14, 21 and 28th.
- Raevyn will continue one-on-one technical assistance with producers.
- Raevyn will continue building relationships with producers and partners to support future programming and outreach efforts.
- Erik will host Organic Farming: What, How, and Why, with Klaas Martens (Lakeview Organic Grain) and Crystal Stewart-Courtens (Philia Farm and CCE-ENYCHP).
- Erik and the team will monitor alfalfa stands for their annual First Cutting Forage Quality program.
- Erik and Heer will begin producing the weekly Field Crop Update e-newsletter.
- Erik and Heer will begin 2026 field trials for the neonic seed treatment study.
- Erik and Heer will work with weed science and NY Soil Health Alliance extension faculty on a knapweed management study.
- Erik and Heer will work with NY Soil Health Alliance on a soil health project involving multi-year monitoring of soil health metrics.

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