

Quarterly Report Q2 2026



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Expanding the Scope of the State-Wide Neonic Project

New York State passed the Birds and Bees Protection Act in 2023 which will gradually phase out the use of neonicotinoid (neonics) insecticides in NY. As a result of this legislation, a three-year state-wide project led by the Cornell IPM Program and funded by the NYS Ag and Markets was established to assess the cost/benefits of using neonic treated versus untreated seed.

In 2025, the team coordinated neonic seed treatment trials in corn and soybean on 14 farms across the NWNY region which resulted in limited to no agronomic or yield benefits from the use of seed insecticide. Now in year two, we have established the untreated versus neonic treated plots on the same 14 fields as last year. It was decided to expand the scope of the trial to also include a Diamide treated seed with additional trial locations. A diamide would be the next choice for a seed treated insecticide after neonics are banned. The Team worked with grower cooperators to establish four additional sites that compared an untreated, neonic treated and a diamide treated seed.

With the unpredictable wet weather, we struggled to get fields planted early to truly test the efficacy of these seed treatments. Our first test field was planted on May 4 and our last was planted on June 11. Over the last two months we collected data weekly on all 18 trials. This includes seed collections, determination of germination failures, plant populations, and biomass measurements. We are done until fields are harvested. A half-acre plot will be harvested from each treatment and yield determined. Results for all 50+ of these trials planted state-wide will be presented at winter meetings such as Corn Congress.



On-Farm Milk Culture Workshop

On-farm milk culture is a diagnostic test performed on a dairy farm to identify the type of bacteria causing mastitis in an individual cow's milk. This technique is a herd management tool that helps producers and veterinarians make informed treatment decisions. The ability to correctly identify a mastitis-causing organism is key to selecting the correct antibiotic or therapy to use, helping a sick cow recover quicker, and using resources efficiently and effectively on-farm.

In June, in collaboration with Quality Milk Production Services (QMPS), the CCE NWNy Team hosted a workshop for farm employees to do a deep dive into their on-farm culture program. Eighteen participants from 7 farms met at the CCE Ontario County office, and learned about common organisms that may result from a cultured milk sample. They were given plates

with colony growth as examples to view the differences in pathogen colony appearance, and went over techniques to properly plate their own samples for the clearest results.

They learned how to hypothesize which organism they may be dealing with, ways to confirm, and protocols and considerations to discuss with their farm vet and QMPS consultants. Participants also received a laminated copy of a decision tree to easily identify cultured species, as well as tri-plate test procedures, and documents to record results. Participants formed direct connections with QMPS staff, and some farms are planning to expand and improve their on-farm milk quality with continued support of QMPS services.



New York Crop Budgets Developed for Corn, Wheat and Soybean Growers

The key to achieving economic objectives is committing time and effort to making informed management decisions. Just as farm business owners seek research based information to make informed nutrient, pest, and other crop production management decisions, farm business owners that commit time and effort to decision making regarding economics of the business seek information regarding economic performance, for example, expected costs, value of production, and returns – all products of crop budget work. Currently, crop budget information for New York farm businesses is limited. Availability would better position farm business owners for achieving objectives.

With financial and other support provided by the NY Corn & Soybean Growers Association, county, state, federal and other partners, budget project work completed during Quarter 2 – 2026 focused on developing and extending projected costs, revenue, and returns for corn, soybean, and winter wheat by way of applied economic analysis, and information delivery activities

During the 2nd Quarter of 2026, budget program efforts developed and delivered extended research based information to farm business owners and other ag community stakeholders. Efforts resulted in the drafting, review, revision, and finalization of 3 crop budgets. Utilizing data from representative western NY farms practicing conservation tillage, budgets for winter wheat, soybean and corn were developed.

Program efforts distributed each budget by way of: a) Ag Focus, the NWNYS team's monthly newsletter, b) Crop Alert, the team's weekly release of information during the planting through harvest seasons; c) Blog and other website type posts. Each outlet reaches about 300 contacts with some contacts reached by 2 or more methods. In addition, about 250 attendees at a GrowMark grower event at the Batavia Downs, mid February, 2026 learned about the budget program, preliminary budgets, and related topics.

Contacts learned about budget concepts, and projections for corn, soybean, and winter wheat production for western NY. When applied to decision making efforts, information increases the likelihood that the farm business achieves its objectives.



New Weather Stations Assist in Improved Crop and Pest Management Decision Making

Weather and climate data is used by the Network for Environment and Weather Applications (NEWA) to predict pest and disease outbreaks, inform cultural practices and focus scouting and pest management on the times when conditions favor outbreaks. Weather data is also used to schedule planting and plan harvest and management activities. Additional data by expanding regional site locations can assist decision-making and enhance pest and disease prediction models.

Through April and May 2026, the NWNV Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops team set up 13 weather stations at farms participating in the neonicotinoid corn and soybean seed treatment trials. Including the twelve weather stations erected by the vegetable team and others, there is a total of 25 new stations in our region with at least one new weather station in each of our region's ten counties. The weather stations collect and wirelessly transmit the following weather data to NEWA: precipitation, temperature, relative humidity, dew point, leaf wetness, wind speed and direction, solar radiation, and soil moisture and temperature.

With additional weather stations, farmers and NEWA have more accurate local weather data to predict pest and disease outbreaks and plan activities around favorable weather conditions, helping to improve time management and crop quality. These weather data will augment NEWA model revisions to predict pest outbreaks such as the seed corn maggot model being revised using trap catch data from late winter and spring 2026. Incorporating climate and national weather data with local conditions will enhance seasonal disease and pest outbreak predictions.



Field Support Specialist, David Bechtel, setting up a weather station in Niagara County on May 8, 2026.