

CORNELL NWNY PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS JULY – SEPTEMBER 2015

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Genesee, Livingston, Monroe,
Niagara, Ontario, Orleans,
Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming,
& Yates Counties*

Temple Grandin Visit a Huge Success

In September the NWNY Team hosted Dr. Temple Grandin in an on-farm workshop at Lawnhurst Farms, LLC in Ontario County. Dr. Grandin is a professor of Animal Science at Colorado State University, a world-renowned expert on animal handling and one of the most well-known autistic professionals. More than 100 local dairy and beef farmers, extension educators, and people working in associated industries met in the farm shop to hear Dr. Grandin speak on reducing stress in animal handling.



Farm walkthrough prior to the event at Lawnhurst Farms, LLC

Photo source: Meg Gaige

Prior to the workshop, Dr. Grandin conducted a farm walk-through with the farm's owners. Dr. Grandin exclaimed about the excellent animal health as well as the clean, modern facilities. A message that she shared passionately then and throughout the day was that with so much bad press about dairy farms in the media, many people who don't grow up on farms come to think mistreatment of animals is the norm. She stressed that farms such as Lawnhurst should be looking for ways to tell the public the real story behind modern dairy farms.

Following the workshop at Lawnhurst Farms, Dr. Grandin spoke to an audience of more than 700 at Hobart and William Smith Colleges, a liberal arts college in Geneva. There she spoke about her life with autism and her work in the humane treatment of animals.

Animal welfare and the public's perception of it are major concerns for dairy and beef farms. Hosting Dr. Grandin in Ontario County was a unique opportunity for the Team to offer our producers one of the best speakers on the topic, and the high registration and positive feedback from attendees proved the event to be a resounding success. Several 4-H extension educators and club members and parents attended. They have decided to implement beef and pork quality assurance trainings and practices with their market animal program to ensure they are raising their livestock properly.

Cornell Intern Explores Precision Ag Adoption in NWNY

There is a rapidly growing interest by growers to learn about new technologies and how their use can improve efficiencies, input management and yield. This summer, Cornell student Kevin Kreher spearheaded a special project to evaluate the level of adoption of Precision Ag technology by crop producers in the ten county region.

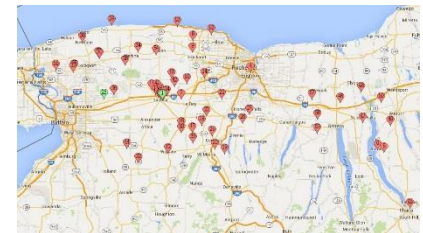


Photo source: Kevin Kreher

More than 60 people were interviewed for this report, encompassing the perspectives of growers, consultants, industry experts, dealers, and equipment manufacturers. The grower's portion of this survey represented the most advanced users group with almost 140 thousand acres of cropland in the region.

The majority of farmers surveyed agreed on the potential economic returns and benefits found when using GPS steering enabled equipment and additional technology to control several planting variables such as down force, population, and singulation. The ability to easily adjust these parameters, paired with row clutches or shutoffs, also provided noticeable economic returns. Variable rate application of is one of the most prevalent ways farmers are trying to use the data they generate and collect. Farms that do use variable rate technology have reported success with a wide array of different variable rate applied inputs. A final issue that was repeated over and over was the need for qualified service and support for all of the above-mentioned agricultural technology. See Kevin's whole report on our webpage at <http://nwnyteam.cce.cornell.edu/topic.php?id=15>.

Economics of Double Cropping on NY Dairy Farms

Double cropping involves planting, managing and harvesting two crops over a 12 month period on the same land area. NY dairy farmers practice double cropping by following corn silage with planting, management and harvest of winter cereals for forage, such as, rye or triticale. NY dairy farmers, through various channels, including the NWNY Program's Field Crop Advisory Committee, identified work on the double cropping topic, including economic analysis, as a need of high priority. To aid decision making, producers want to know what place double cropping might have in the management of their farm businesses.



*Winter triticale ready for chopping.
Photo source: Mike Stanvard*

NWNY Program members collaborated with other Cornell University researchers and extension staff, producers, and industry reps to develop and conduct economic analysis. Analysis reflected differences among the state's regions with respect to growing conditions and cropping practices, and three different farm sizes. Researchers reported the work and its results in: ["What's Cropping Up?"](#) a Cornell University newsletter targeting producers, researchers and extension staff; [Ag Focus](#); and the NWNY Program's website.

Readers of the above learned that double cropping a winter cereal for forage following corn silage has the potential to be an economically attractive, beneficial change in practice for dairy farms in NY. This includes double cropping's role in successfully managing risks related to meeting forage needs of the herd over time. Risks can relate: to variability in forage production due to poor growing conditions, including weather related; and, or to rising forage needs relative to land constraints. Producers can apply information from the analysis to make decisions regarding double cropping's place on their farms.

Analysis suggests that to achieve breakeven yields, producers can expect to spend a minimum of about \$105 per acre on variable inputs -- fertilizers, seeds, sprays and other crop inputs, labor, machinery repairs, and fuels -- for each double cropped winter cereal acre.

Dairy Profit Teams Springboard Farms Into Future

Dairy Profit Teams employed by dairy farms from Wayne to Wyoming use Cornell Cooperative Extension's North West New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team specialists as facilitators and for technical support. Two farms reported an increase in milk production of 10 pounds per cow after employing suggestions from their teams.



Jim & Jim Davis, Bliss, use a Dairy Profit Team to pool and prioritize ideas presented by their advisors.

Photo source: Joan Sinclair Petzen

Farms with herds numbering from 60 cows to 1,500, both organic and conventional, benefit from their advisors joining together in facilitated meetings. James Davis, III from Bliss commented, "The Team has given our advisors a venue to discuss our strengths and weaknesses. Advisors are sometimes reluctant to come to the farm and criticize what we are doing. The Team provides a forum for our advisors to discuss opportunity areas openly. In turn, we are able to improve operations and profit from those improvements based upon priorities arrived at by the Team".

The program requires farmer participants to hold a minimum of seven team meetings over a maximum 15 month period and cover 20 percent of the fees charged by the team, with the balance being paid by the New York Farm Viability Institute, up to \$2,500.

"Pulled together to address a specific production issue or to provide ongoing support to the farm manager or management team, Dairy Profit Teams contribute to the bottom line for dairies," says Farm Business Management Specialist Joan Sinclair Petzen.

Forage Focused Field Day Offers Timely Advice

The 2015 growing season was unusual with extremes in moisture and growing conditions. Decisions as to when to start chopping corn and what do you do if forage inventories are not up to snuff are best made before the growing season goes to slumber. To answer this problem the team organized the Pre-Harvest Field Day at a centrally located farm near Avon.

An attentive mix of 80 producers and consultants were in attendance to hear about the best management practices for forage harvesting and strategies for getting more tons per acre. Resource materials were readily picked up and taken home.

The morning featured four speakers “under the tent”. Topics included dealing with corn silage harvest variables such as maturity, hybrid differences and digestibility, adding to forage inventory by double cropping with triticale and sorghum, optimal preservation methods and dealing with the consequences of poor fermentation.

Four local machinery dealers brought forage harvesters and other equipment for inspection, provided machine-side explanation of features and capabilities in addition to sponsoring the event. Five other agribusinesses supported the field day as well. The event was well-received by both producers and agri-business representatives alike, all of whom were pleased with the opportunity to gather timely information from unbiased resources.



Photo source: Libby Eiholzer

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