

Cornell University Cooperative Extension Northern New York Regional Ag Team

CORNELL NNY REGIONAL AG PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS JULY-SEPTEMBER 2016

*Serving:
Jefferson, Lewis, Clinton,
Essex, St. Lawrence and
Franklin Counties.*

Regional Programing provides Dairy Producers with Latest Data on Reproduction

Dairy farmers produce one of the safest products, unfortunately they continue to be the center of activist attacks and consumer demands. With questions and concerns about the milk supply and animal care, the National Milk Producers Federation has developed (and continues to improve) a program that's goal is to increase consumer confidence as it is focused on animal care practices.

Currently, about 98% of nation's milk supply is coming from dairies that are part of the National FARM (Farmers Assuring Responsible Milk) Program. The FARM Program is administered by the National Milk Producers Federation and Dairy Management Inc., and is one way the dairy industry is working to promote and ensure healthy and comfortable cows, and safe and wholesome milk. As part of the program, dairies are evaluated in several areas of dairy production including record keeping, employee training, facilities and space, and animal-based measures from calves to adult cows including handling, lameness, and injuries. Although this program has been in place for multiple years, many dairies still aren't sure what the evaluation entails, and are therefore unprepared when an audit takes place.

Mapleview Dairy (2300 milking cows) was proactive and asked us to do an evaluation on their dairy. This was beneficial in many ways as it showed them what a real evaluation will look like and it identified areas of improvement with their protocol documentation and record keeping. Multiple visits were made to the farm to conduct an interview with the farm manager, score the animals, facilities, and records, and provide feedback and recommendations.

Jordan Fisher, manager and part-owner of Mapleview Dairy stated *"we asked Kim and Lindsay to work with us on an animal welfare audit to provide an unbiased evaluation of our policies, procedures, and animals. They provided us with a detailed report which we can use to measure progress going forward and make improvements towards our goal of becoming Validus certified. Their expertise in the FARM program and cow comfort was especially valuable in discussing areas where we are strong, like locomotion, as well as areas to improve on, like hock scores and missing protocols."*

On January 1, 2017, version 3.0 of the FARM Program will be released which contains some important changes including no longer allowing tail docking and requiring farms to have a documented VCPR (veterinarian client patient relationship). We plan to continue offering and promoting this service to producers, and as more farms are exposed to the program, we anticipate fielding more calls for resources and assistance in the coming months.

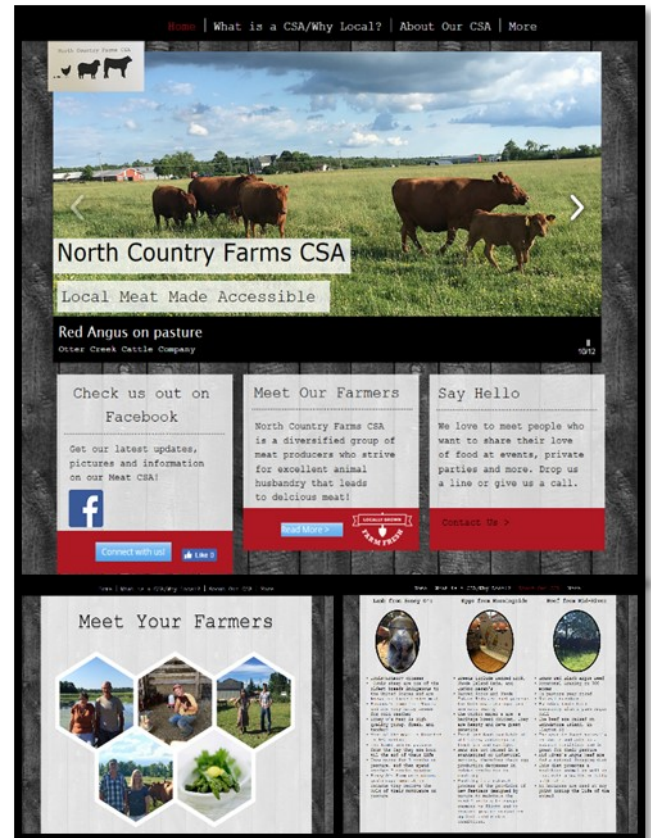


A New Kind of CSA: North Country Farms, CSA

In the past two years grant funding was received to promote and develop locally marketed meats. In collaboration with Jefferson County's Local Foods Educator and Ag Program Leader, the Regional Team Ag Business Management Specialist was brought in to help guide a group of farmers in the development of a meat CSA. The meetings began again in June with a group of four farming operations: three beef, one lamb, and one egg. At the first meeting the Ag Business Specialist guided a discussion of what would make farms want to participate in a CSA, in addition to the concerns or questions that would need to be answered such as business structure, pricing, and management. Also at this meeting to help inform and educate producers was the Harvest NY Livestock Processing and Marketing Specialist, and the Regional Livestock Specialist. She did an excellent job of communicating pre and post slaughter concerns of management and handling.

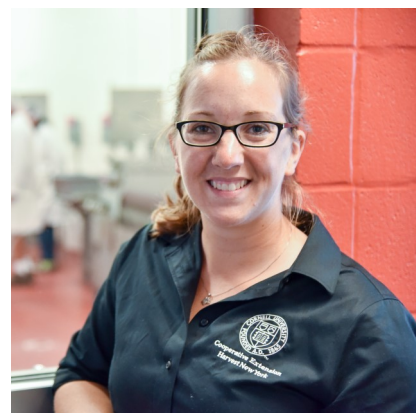
After working through those questions, the four producers decided that they will do 3-4 month membership with 3-4 pickups of either 10lb or 20lb boxes and are planning sell a minim of 20 shares for their first offering. This would be feeding 40-60 people their primary protein needs for up to six months depending on family size. The economic impact of the sales of these shares is around \$8,400 in the first, then multiplied by those funds being returned to the local economy via payments from farms to their various dealers. Their target markets are those living in the Watertown area and on Fort Drum. The Cooperative Extension team is currently assisting the group in the final preparations before shares become available in October.

The Ag Business Management Specialist has successfully aided the group in developing business plan, and evaluating each farms cost of production to determine the appropriate pricing matrix to ensure that farmers are making enough margin to be profitable at a sustainable level. The mission of the CSA, developed with the help of the NNY Regional Team, is to provide the highest quality locally sourced meat products in the Northern NY Region while raising our animals in a safe natural, environment to foster the healthy growth and development, and to continue to boost our own family farming operations in addition to contributing to the local economy. The group also believes that after they have worked through their first set of shares that they will be able to add other producers to include products such as chicken or pork again increasing the local economic impact. The NNY Regional Team is committed to engaging more farming operations in participation in CSA's to improve engagement and understanding between farmers and the general public in the North Country.



Harvest NY Impacts

With the support of Senator Patty Ritchie, the North Country has been working towards developing a food hub. Jefferson County is designated as the lead organization, and Harvest New York is supporting this initiative. Lindsey Pashow of Harvest New York organized a tour to Essex County to visit “Hub on the Hill”, a hub established just this year. This visit allowed for collaboration and an insight into existing models of aggregation, storage, processing, distribution and marketing. Lindsey also provided faculty for the CALS Summer Internship Student, and Harvest NY is looking forward to assisting with a variety of educational programming available to farmers in the future.



Anika Zuber delivered several workshops this quarter. They include: The Annual Certified Milk Inspectors course in collaboration with NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets (13 attendees); Dairy Science and Sanitation held in Ithaca, NY (38 attendees); Dairy Science and Sanitation held at Kraft Foods in Lewis County (19 Kraft employees); Advanced Fluid Milk Course (28 attendees); and two Preventive Controls for Qualified Individuals Courses, one in Jamaica, NY at the FDA office, and one at NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets in Albany, NY (71 total attendees). More programming for the North Country is anticipated in subsequent quarters.



August 24, 2016 marked the second meat processing course instructed by Harvest New York’s MacKenzie Waro, and SUNY Cobleskill. These classes are helping with CCE’s regional agriculture programs to spur agricultural development in the state by developing educational programs. For many current and prospective meat producers, raising the animals is the easy part; but knowing how the meat is cut and the sausage is made is not always as instinctive. CCE Harvest NY is working alongside SUNY Cobleskill to deliver much needed and requested meat marketing and processing classes. The most recent of these classes focused on pork and looked to provide greater understanding of pork cuts, pork marketing, food safety and sausage making. The session was sold out, with a wait list. March 2017, a follow up pork processing class will be offered.

The Regional Team in the Community

The NNY Regional Team has been hitting the ground running with many farming operations across the region. From one on one visits, to larger programs, to online newsletters, we are working hard to remain connected to our ag-businesses via their preferred method of communication. A big part of supporting our farm businesses includes educating the community about NNY farms and what they do in the region. We have made a targeted effort to make ourselves available to various community organizations events to share our knowledge and educational programs. The Regional Team participated in: Empire Farm Days, the Clinton County Birthing Center, the State Fair Birthing Center (sponsored by NY Animal Ag-Coalition), Regional 4-H Dairy Judging, Dairy Princess Programs in Multiple Counties, the Women in Ag- Tour, the Dairy Prospects Program, A Day at the Farm (sponsored by St Lawrence County Farm Bureau), A Day at the Farm (sponsored by Jefferson County CCE and Soil and Water), Sunday on the Farm (sponsored by Agri-Mark), Family Farm Day (sponsored by Lewis County CCE), and the Clinton, St Lawrence, and Lewis County Ag- Legislative tours.

The Clinton County Birthing Center was a new event for the Team. The birthing center was open to the public at the Clinton County fair and was modeled after the State Fair Birthing Center. The event was led by a local Veterinary office in addition to Clinton County Farm Bureau. A local farm provided 4 animals for the day with 3 of them giving birth over the course of the day with an anxious audience. Throughout the day many community members stopped in the barn with audiences of 30-60 people for each of the births. Kelsey O'Shea served as a narrator for two of the births explaining to the public what was going on in addition to many facts about the farm that provided the cows and farming in general.

One of the larger events that the team participated in was the "A Day at the Farm" event in St Lawrence County where 1,000 members of the community (roughly 80 ag-related volunteers and 920 non-ag community members) toured a local dairy farm operation. The regional ag specialists served in the following roles: Kelsey O'Shea served as a tour guide on the day wagons explaining general information on the farm and answering questions, Lindsay Ferlito manned the parlor station explaining how the parlor runs, Kim Morrill ran the calf station explaining the life and raising of calves, while Betsy Hodge brought sheep from the extension farm to explain the raising of other animals, Kitty O'Neil manned a GMO informational booth providing facts and answering questions on GMOs and how farmers use them. This was an excellent team effort to lend our expertise to help educate the public about various facets of agricultural operations in their community.

Kim Morrill helped organize Women in Ag Tour brought 24 individuals together to tour various agricultural operations and explore the options for women in agriculture. Lindsay Ferlito assisted with Family Farm Day in Lewis County that reached 750 people from the community. While Kelsey O'Shea and Lindsay Ferlito volunteered at the State Fair Birthing Center reaching a huge number of people from the region and across NY State.

We believe that community outreach programs are critically important. We also feel that one of the primary strengths of this regional team is the breadth of our expertise, allowing us to support numerous ag-community events by sharing our knowledge and skills. We continue into the fall helping with these type of events. Be sure to think of us should you need an agricultural knowledge or education resource at your next event!

Our Mission

"The Northern New York Regional Ag Team aims to improve the productivity and viability of agricultural industries, people and communities in Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton and Essex Counties by promoting productive, safe, economically and environmentally sustainable management practices and by providing assistance to industry, government, and other agencies in evaluating the impact of public policies affecting the industry."

Contact us directly through our website: <http://nnyrap.cce.cornell.edu/>

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities. NYS College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NYS College of Human Ecology, and NYS College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, Cooperative Extension associates, county governing bodies, and U.S. Department of Agriculture cooperating.