



Cornell University Cooperative Extension North Country Regional Ag Team

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

CORNELL NORTH COUNTRY REGIONAL AG TEAM HIGHLIGHTS

January - March 2017

North Country Research Yields Statewide Awareness

With help from Cornell Cooperative Extension research, North Country farmers are adapting to a new and more troublesome pest – the Western Bean Cutworm (WBC). This corn pest has steadily increased in population since it was first discovered in NYS back in 2009. Since that time, the NYS IPM program has implemented a statewide trapping network each season to monitor insect numbers. Traps in St. Lawrence, Franklin, Jefferson and Lewis Counties consistently catch the most WBC moths in the state, so North Country farmers have begun to implement strategies to protect their corn crop. Current management strategies available to control WBC in corn include the use of foliar insecticides or selecting transgenic corn hybrids with specific Bt traits. Foliar insecticide treatments are difficult to apply to tall tasseling corn. Two transgenic Bt traits, Cry1F and Vip3A, are available in various corn hybrid seeds and are labeled to protect corn from WBC. Because of recent reports of inadequate control of WBC with the Cry1F trait from Midwest states, the North Country Regional Ag Team was awarded funding from the NNY Ag Development Program to conduct a set of on-farm trials to examine its effectiveness in NNY. The team implemented comparisons of these Bt traits on 4 farms in NNY in 2016. The trial was planted on the Murcrest Farm in Jefferson County, on the Conway Farm in Lewis County, and on JPL Farms and Logue Farms in Franklin County. For the first time, incomplete control of WBC with the Cry1F trait was confirmed in NY corn fields in this trial. Efficacy of the Cry1F trait ranged from no control to some suppression of WBC while the Vip3A trait provided full control at the same sites.



Image from CountryFolks.com web article.

This important finding received a lot of attention and was communicated widely, via written articles and in-person presentations at 2016-17 winter meetings. Mike Hunter, lead investigator on this project, gave oral presentations at the North Country Crop Congress and 8 other field crop meetings to 896 attendees across the New York State. Written articles were published in the North Country Regional Ag Team's "Ag Advisor" newsletter and our press release was picked up by Country Folks and Lancaster Farming newspapers and websites. Dr. Elson Shields, Cornell entomologist and collaborator on the project, also gave reports on these findings to various audiences during this past winter. The project will be repeated, and expanded, in 2017 with funding from NNYADP. The North Country Regional Ag Team will place the trial on 4 more NNY farms and Mike Stanyard, NWNYS CCE Agronomist, will replicate the study in Western NY with funding from NY Corn Growers Association.

International Dairy Foods Association Food Safety Leadership Award



The 1st quarter of 2017 brought recognition to Cornell's Dairy Food Team, as we received the International Dairy Food Association (IDFA) Inaugural Food Safety Leadership award. IDFA chose our team for this award for our comprehensive approach to support and improve food safety across the dairy industry, and our ability to extend the research conducted directly to the industry.

A video describing our team and programs was created for the award presentation. We were honored to receive recognition and will continue to work with educational institutions, regulatory agencies and dairy processors to best serve the dairy industry. Watch the award video here: <https://vimeo.com/201985633>.

Harvest New York Training Programs

Harvest New York has continued to conduct Food Safety Modernization Act courses over the first quarter (34 people), along with a Dairy Science and Sanitation Course (26 people). In order to help small businesses in Northern New York determine if the Food Safety Modernization Act applies to them or how it affects their business. Harvest New York held a 4 hour seminar in Essex County to assist in clarifying the rule and the rule's requirements. 13 people attended the seminar to receive an overview of the rule and its requirements.

USDA Market News Report Now Available for New York State Auction Markets



For 100 years, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) has provided free, unbiased price and sales information to assist in the marketing and distribution of farm commodities. Market News reports are now available in New York State for anyone to use. Access to this data allows businesses to make purchasing and buying decisions with the most recent information. Market News reporters across the country capture data for hundreds of products including organic products, retail store pricing, and locally and regionally marketed products

There is a vital need for people involved in the livestock industry to have an unbiased explanation of the true value of their livestock. NY auction markets have not been reporting market news through AMS until recently. This 3rd party reporting from a USDA Market News Reporter lists prices on a consistent basis across markets. Previously, our producers had to rely on the auction barn's own reports or look at USDA Market reports from other states.

Special funding for Market News Reporting is sourced through a grant from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets so prices from several NYS auction markets are now available. Reports list feeder cattle, meat goat and lamb, cull dairy cow, and dairy bull calf prices by grade, or by size, weight and quality

groupings. Info is disseminated immediately after the sale is completed over the internet; and many publications pick up this information, such as Country Folks. Market Reports can be found here: <https://www.ams.usda.gov/market-news/livestock-poultry-and-grain-list-reports>.

At present, the following NYS livestock auctions are regularly reported:

- Empire Livestock Auction - Cherry Creek, NY
- Empire Livestock Marketing - Bath, NY
- Finger Lakes Livestock Auction - Canandaigua, NY
- Empire Livestock Auction - Gouverneur, NY
- Cambridge Valley Livestock Market - Cambridge, NY
- Maplehurst Livestock Auction - Hinsdale, NY
- Empire Livestock Auction - Vernon, NY

Collaborators on this initiative are Dr. Mike Baker, Cornell University Beef Extension Specialist; Ron Kuck, North Country Regional Ag Team and CCE Jefferson County; Betsy Hodge, North Country Regional Ag Team and CCE St. Lawrence County; Billy Bullock, Market News Reporter; Levi Geyer, USDA OIC



The first ever graded lamb, sheep and goat sale in the North Country was held on October 15, 2016 at Empire Livestock Auction Barn in Gouverneur. This auction attracted close to 400 head and sold within 25 cents per pound of reported sales in New Holland, PA, the premier auction barn for small ruminants. Buyers prefer graded sales as they can efficiently buy groups of 10 to 30 animals of uniform size and quality at once, as opposed to one animal at a time, to meet their market requirements. The first market news report for a special feeder cattle sale was published on Dec. 10, 2016. Again the auction barn was Empire Livestock in Gouverneur. More North Country "special sales" are scheduled for 2017. The dairy farms in the region also benefit from accurate, weekly, local reporting of slaughter cow and bull calf sales. The management of the sales barn in Gouverneur and others in NY are eager to work with the regional livestock educators from Cornell Cooperative Extension to add value to animals brought to auction for both the seller and the buyer.

- The successful graded goat and lamb sale last fall at Empire Livestock in Gouverneur has encouraged North Country small ruminant producers to consider selling their animals through local auction instead of trucking to the New Holland, PA sale barn.

- Group pricing based on USDA feeder grading has encouraged more beef farmers to pre-condition their feeders and to have their cattle graded before the sale to better determine the value of their cattle.
- Reports generated for dairy slaughter cows and calves give North Country dairyman a better understanding of the market for their cull cows and bull calves.

Farm Transfer and Estate Planning

After many requests from farmers, a program on the basics of transfer and estate planning was offered during this past winter. At most farms visits, there is some discussion of “what’s next” for the farm. Whether that be transferring the farm to the younger generation, or selling the farm to plan for retirement, it is a topic that all farmers have to think about eventually. Three speakers were recruited for this program: Anna Richard, Pro-Dairy employee with a specialty in taxation of transfer planning, Steve Walker, Esq. of Scolaro, Fetter, Grizanti, McGough & King, P.C., and Mark Modzeleski CFS, CLTC. Mark is a Financial Services Representative at the Voss Group. The program was held in Malone, NY and Watertown, NY with a total of 30 participants between the two locations. The morning sessions focused on general estate and transfer planning concerns and how to get the most out of the program, key points to have ready for your attorney, and where life insurance may fit into a farm plan. The afternoon sessions were divided into two breakout sessions: one that covered the topics most pertinent to the retiring or senior generation and one that covered the topics of concern for the entering or junior generation.

It was stated by numerous participants that they found the most benefit in the breakout sessions. These smaller group sessions were centered on participant’s questions and concerns. The focus in the junior generation was on business structures and how those can be used to facilitate ownership and transfers over time, in addition to liability and insurance topics. The senior generation was focused on asset protection, liability, and security of retirement income. This allowed for each generation to address their specific concerns and needs with a group of their peers. This brought on many more questions than fit the schedule, with participants sharing their own situations while receiving specific advice from the presenters.

One of the participants, Emily Beller, commented that she wished her son could have come to the program with her and that the material was so important for all size/types of farms. Even though some farms have worked diligently to stay on-top of their farm and transfer planning, like the Bellers, the trends and tax code continue to change, meaning that plans constantly need to be updated. Another attendee who works in the ag-services industry commented that he felt the information could be used by all of his clients. Because other attendees indicated that they enjoyed the program and viewed the content as useful, we plan to hold this program every other year to make sure that farms are served when they need information.

In addition to the attendees, this program was the first to be offered through our new online system. The live program was recorded and can be viewed using our online registration/purchase system. This will allow farmers who cannot attend due to time constraints the opportunity to gain the shared knowledge and experience online. We are hopeful that farmers will utilize this new tool readily, creating a new way to reach more farmers across the 6-county region.

Livestock Processing and Marketing

The first quarter of 2017 has been very progressive and informative. Harvest NY teamed up with St. Lawrence CCE to bring a lamb processing workshop to the North Country. Participants first watched as a lamb carcass was split into primal cuts, and then were able to get hands-on experience processing those primals into subprimals and retail cuts. Lewis County CCE hosted a charcuterie board workshop for consumers. Twenty-five participants spent the evening at the

BarkEater Craft Brewery learning about local charcuterie and local cheeses. Not only were they taste-testing local products, consumers learned how to create a attractive board that you eat with your eyes first. These charcuterie board classes raise awareness for local meats, cheeses, and craft beverages to the consumer.

Right after the New Year, a few days were spent in New York City to travel to numerous Craft Butcheries. These butcheries are buying NY meats to process and sell downstate.



Developing markets is very important, and these craft butcheries are a piece of the puzzle to help our upstate New York Livestock Farms. The collaboration between SUNY Cobleskill and Harvest NY brought two new meat processing workshops for the first quarter of 2017. February 3, our Lamb Processing workshop taught participants the art of butchering. This lamb class concluded the first section of the Meat 1.0 workshops through the collaboration. The second component of the Meat Workshops began March 17. At the Beef Cutting and Cooking workshop, participants were able to have hands-on experience cutting a beef carcass. They moved on to the culinary center and learned to cook heart, sweetbread, tongue, and bones. These are all value-added products, but many producers have a hard time selling them. Harvest NY held their second Meat HACCP course at Cornell University with Penn State Extension on March 28 and 29. This collaboration between two land grant universities is an opportunity for participants in the meat industry to learn from industry leaders and experts, and the HACCP course and instructors are accredited.

2017 Cow Comfort Conference

Cow comfort is essential to maximize cow health, production, profitability, and ensure positive consumer perceptions of the dairy industry. Understanding just how big a role facilities play, improving existing facilities, and designing new facilities for the future were the focus of the 2017 Cow Comfort Conference in Syracuse, NY, this March. The conference was organized by the North Country Regional Ag Team, in partnership with the South Central New York Dairy & Field Crops team, PRO-DAIRY, and the Miner Institute. With about 80 people in attendance from across the state, including producers, students, extension employees, and industry professionals, the event was a success. The conference featured locally and internationally known consultants and specialists in cow comfort, along with a producer and industry panel discussion. The 18 sponsors were able to display booths in the exhibit hall, providing more information to producers on specific products, and additional opportunity for networking and discussion.



Dr. Albert De Vries, University of Florida, presented producers with the economics behind stocking density and the financial benefits of heat abatement throughout the entire lactation and dry period. “It is profitable to cool cows everywhere in the country – except maybe the state of Alaska”, De Vries stated. He also stressed the importance of knowing all the factors that can influence the optimal stocking density on each dairy, including that with low milk prices, overcrowding could actually be hurting a lot of dairies. Emily Yeiser Stepp, National Milk Producers Federation, gave an update on Version 3.0 of the National FARM Program, and addressed emerging issues that producers and allied industry should be aware of and should be discussing. Dan McFarland, Penn State Extension, gave recommendations for barn and stall design, and practical on-farm solutions to improve cow comfort in existing facilities. He suggested to producers that if the estimated cost of remodeling exceeds 2/3 to 3/4 of the cost of a new facility, they should seriously consider building new.



“We received a few ideas for renovations and simple adjustments that could make a big impact,” one producer indicated. Others noted they planned to take the information back to their farms and look at everything from increasing ventilation and bedding, to reducing overstocking, looking at stall design and new barn plans, and considering calving blinds. About half of the attendees completed conference evaluations and they were overwhelmingly positive, and provided good direction for next year. The North Country Regional Ag Team plans to make this an annual conference, focusing on different areas that affect cow comfort each year.

Our Mission

“The North Country 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.”

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.D.A. cooperating.