Winter Dairy Management Schools

This year Winter Dairy Management programs held in Cooperstown, Fonda and Schuylerville focused on the profitability of increasing butterfat and milk protein output. David Balbian and Dr. Tom Overton teamed up to put together presentations on how nutrition affects milk protein and butterfat. Dairy producers were invited to make presentations on how their farms improved and maintained high component levels.

"The presenters taught me in detail the relationship between component prices and profitability. Very nice!"

- Winter Dairy Management Schools Attendee

Josh and Heather Lathrop of Sherburne explain how they have achieved high protein and fat levels in their milk.

A program and funding partnership between Cornell University, Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations of Chenango, Fulton, Herkimer, Montgomery, Otsego, Saratoga and Schoharie Counties

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CENTRAL NEW YORK DAIRY AND FIELD CROPS TEAM

Cornell University Cooperative Extension

Annual Report **2015**

Extension provides programming to help meet challenges to the dairy industry

2015 has been a very challenging year economically for dairy producers because of the severe downturn in milk prices. The milk supply in the Northeast is more than adequate and some farms have had the challenges of finding a market for their milk. Interest and capital available for herd expansions is certainly much lower than in 2014 when there were record high milk prices. The Central New York Dairy and Field Crops Team strives to provide educational programming that helps dairy farms meet their business and personal goals even in these difficult times

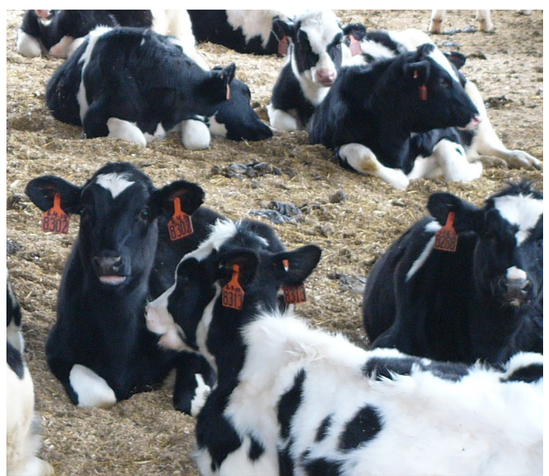
In This Report

Dairy Acceleration Program (DAP)

The Dairy Acceleration Program or DAP provides New York state funding to dairy farms for business planning and plans to protect the environment. Regional Dairy Specialist David Balbian is the facilitator in the process, helping the producer, the business planner, and environmental planner to all be on the same page and to complete their tasks in a timely fashion. Most all of these farms are looking to increase milk output by expanding cow numbers and/or increasing milk per cow. For farms with an adequate land base to produce enough feed and the milking center capacity to milk more cows this can be a viable business strategy to be more economically competitive, even during this period of lower milk prices. In the team region seven farms applied and were approved for DAP funding in 2015.

Focus on producing a healthy, profitable cow

For dairy farms to be profitable in the future they will need to have great cows that were raised using best management practices and that have the genetic potential to be very productive and healthy. Central New York Dairy and Field Crops Team educational programs focused on bring that next generation of cow to the farm.



Calf management is an important part of a profitable dairy farm.

The 2015 Dairy Day, titled "Breeding, Raising, and Managing Your Future Herd of Super Cows" looked at evaluating genetic potential through the use of genomics, new strategies to improve conception through artificial insemination and new research looking at how dairy animals are raised and how well they grow early on in life can influence how productive they will be once they enter the milking herd.

A series of Calf Management Training webinars aimed at those responsible for raising calves were held four evenings during October and November of 2014 at the CCE offices in Herkimer and Ballston Spa. These webinars, viewed across the state on the same evenings, covered topics like providing healthy environment for growth, calf nutrition and what data to collect to assess animal performance. An on-farm session was held after the webinars at a dairy located in Fultonville.

NRCS National Soil Health Expert Ray Archuleta discusses the importance soil structure with soil health field day participants.

"The enthusiasm is infectious.

Man am I excited!..."

- Soil Health Field Day Attendee

Scott Ryan explains proper setup of his drill to attendees of the no-till drill demonstration.

Improve soil health… improve productivity and profitability!

Soils that are compacted with little poor space, low organic matter and little biological activity provide a difficult place for crops to grow. Reducing tillage and increasing the use of cover crops improves soil tilth and protects soils from compaction and erosion.

No-till Drill Demonstration

A no-till drill demonstration held in mid-July was a joint collaboration between the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation District and the CNYDFC team. Three different no-till drills available in the area, Haybuster, John Deere and Great Plains, were on hand so that attendees could experience of how to properly setup and operate each model.

Soil Health Field Day: Building Better Soils with Cover Crops

Kevin worked with CCE staff from Delaware County, the Eastern NY Horticulture Program and the Capital Area Agriculture & Horticulture Program to conduct a cover crop field day September 3 at the Carrot Barn in Schoharie. The featured speaker was NRCS National Soil Health Expert Ray Archuleta who brings his special enthusiastic brand of hands-on teaching of soil health concepts to growers. Over 170 people attended this event which focused on how cover crop can aid in improving soil health.

Left, Dave Wilson of King's AgriSeeds and right Brian Caldwell of Cornell University talk winter cover crops at the field day.

Participants were able to have a guided tour of a demonstration of over 35 cover crop or crop mixtures that were planted in early June and in early August. These plot tours were guided by Cornell and industry experts who could explain the advantages of using the various crops.

Malting Barley Variety Trials

The CNY Dairy and Field Crops Team has partnered with the Cornell Small Grains Project to conduct variety testing of malting barley varieties with funding provided by the New York Farm Viability Institute.

Winter malting barley trial at Inverness Farm in Sprout Brook.

Small grains provide winter cover, spring forage and ingredients for beer

Small grains, such as wheat, oats, barley and rye have made a resurgence in the past few years as farms look to diversify crops in the rotation to not only improve soil health and reduce erosion but also gain a quality forage or grain.

Malting Barley Variety Trials

Farm brewery legislation requires the use of NY state ingredients to maintain a farm brewery license so malting barley use will only increase. The results from the two year study have shown that varieties are available to provide the quality desired.

Winter rye at time of nitrogen application in April.

Winter Forage Nitrogen Trials

Again this year Kevin worked with Dr. Quirine Ketterings of the Cornell Nutrient Management Spear Program on a statewide project aimed at determining how much nitrogen is needed for profitable forage yields of crops like rye and triticale in the spring. Nitrogen applications in the spring may result in more yield and determining when the nitrogen is needed and how much is needed is the focus of this research. In 2015 trials were placed on a farm in Montgomery County and demonstrated a need for 30-60 more pounds of nitrogen.