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# Central New York Dairy and Field Crops Team



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension

2014 ANNUAL REPORT: A YEAR IN REVIEW

## Open house of farms that have transitioned from tie-stall to free stall/parlor

For many smaller dairy farms to continue operation by the next generation, additional income is frequently needed. Often the value of the farm makes up a substantial portion of the older generation's retirement. To buy the farm and to have their own income, this most often means that the farm needs to grow in size.

Smaller herds have historically been housed in tie-stall barns, while farms with larger herds have invested in free stall housing along with a milking parlor for the increased labor efficiency. Making the transition from tie



Dairy farm tour participants at the Dygert Farm

-stall to a free stall/parlor can be difficult. It's not a change for everyone.

Some farms have done the transition in stages. Others

have made the change via a low cost approach by using welding shop parlors, used equipment, and by placing the parlor in the old tie-stall barn building. Some have built totally new complexes.

### **Enhancing New York's Dairy Farms: Dairy Acceleration Program**

To help improve the chances of success as dairy farms look to grow their business this program, coordinated by Pro-Dairy, provides grant money for business planning, facility planning, and environmental planning. Dave is the facilitator for this program in our region and after applications are submitted conducts an in-depth interview. If the farm's application is approved he meets with them again along with a business planner, and sometimes an environmental planner to discuss and finalize what the expected outcomes are to be.

To highlight how others have made this change work for them, team dairy management specialist Dave Balbian organized an open house/drive-it-yourself tour of twelve dairy farms in the team region. It was a day that was open to farmers, their advisors, and their families to talk to others who have made this change.

## Malting barley for a growing local brewing industry



Kevin sampling malting barley for moisture with a mini combine

Recent legislation creating a farm brewery license that requires locally produced ingredients has been behind an increased interest in malting barley. The CNY Dairy and Field Crops Team has partnered with the Cornell Small Grains Project to conduct variety testing on 20 spring barley varieties and 20 winter barley varieties for two locations for two years with funding provided by the NY Farm Viability Institute.

This summer a field day was held in Sprout Brook at Inverness Farm that has hosted one of the variety trial locations. The 35 at-

tendees got to see winter and spring varieties plus learn more about diseases that affect malting barley.



Attendees look at the spring malting barley varieties in the test plots during the field day.



Larry Day, Soil & Groundwater Specialist for Delaware County SWCD, discusses the effects of cover crops on soil structure.

## Healthier soils lead to improved yields and profitability

Reducing tillage can be an important means of improving soils health by reducing soil compaction and runoff while increasing organic matter. The CNY Dairy and Field Crops Team held two field days in conjunction with CCE of Delaware County in the Susquehanna River Watershed on soil health. Joleanna Holsteins (The Johnson Family) near Unadilla hosted the first field day, that focused on cover crops and reduced tillage systems successfully used on that farm. Besides tillage equipment demos participants got to see soil quality demonstrations and test pits.

A second meeting held at the Jordan Brothers farm

near Oneonta emphasized managing residue as the brothers do an excellent job of no-tilling corn and soybeans into high crop residue situations. This was a hands-on field day as participants learned how to measure and evaluate the amount of residue, corn seed planting depth and plant populations.



Field Crop Specialist Kevin Ganoe discusses corn planting depth



## Spring forage quality monitoring

For the past 11 years the Central New York Dairy and Field Crops team has monitored the quality of first cutting hay crop in the field to give producers a better idea of when they should begin harvest. Producers are emailed the results within the day of measuring so they can make important management

decisions. Each year we receive more requests to be emailed the results of this monitoring. This year we tracked 67 fields in the teams region and worked with Madison County CCE staff as well. In 2014 there was a 7 day difference between locations when first cutting should begin.



## Dairy Day and Winter Dairy Management Schools emphasize modernizing dairy facilities

As dairy farms look to the future they need to find cost effective ways they can grow their businesses and increase efficiency. Dr. David Kammel, Professor of Agricultural Building Design at the University of Wisconsin-Madison was the featured speaker at both the 2014 Dairy Day (Cooperstown) and also the regional Dairy

Winter Management School at Ballston Spa. Kammel discussed options for low cost milking parlors and how to economically budget the transitions from tie stall to free stall with a low cost parlor. Dave Balbian covered



**Dr. David Kammel from the University of Wisconsin discusses options for low cost milking parlors**



**Kathy Barrett, Senior Extension Associate, Dairy Management, ProDairy, Cornell University talks about feeding strategies when using robotic milkers**

the low cost pit milking parlors topic at Morrisville and Middletown Winter Dairy Management Schools.

The 2014 Dairy Day also emphasized how profitable dairy farms make money and the economics and farm experiences of robotic milkers. This annual event attracted nearly 120 people and includes a trade show.

This year WBNG Ch. 12 Binghamton covered the Dairy Day program. They interviewed two speakers and two producers. On their local evening news the story got two full minutes of air time.

**Dairy Day Participant:**  
*"I liked how we discussed how to economically make your farm more efficient"*

**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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## Hay, Baleage, & Forage Quality Schools

The schools were a joint venture between the CCE Capital Area Agriculture and Horticulture Program and the Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Team held at three locations: Mt. Upton, Hudson and Ballston Spa. The first day of the two day schools provided in-depth training on the agronomics of producing forage. The second session focused on the details of the machinery used in making dry hay and baleage, the forage needs of livestock, and how to analyze your hay making to see if it is a profitable enterprise. A mix of veteran and new farmers alike participated with 163 people attending.



**Regional Field Crop Specialist Kevin Ganoe discusses management practices for at the Hay, Baleage, & Forage Quality School in Mt Upton.**

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*Diversity and Inclusions are a part of Cornell University's heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities*