Selecting malting barley varieties for New York conditions

In June of 2012 the NY State Legislature passed the Farm Brewery Law which means to receive a Farm Brewery license the business must primarily use NY produced ingredients in the production of their product. Malting barley is an important ingredient in beer production but no malting barley is currently being grown in NY. To meet the demand The Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Team and the Cornell Small Grains Project received a $40,000 grant from the NY Farm Viability Institute to test for malting barley varieties that will perform under NY conditions. Currently available malting barley varieties are grown under the drier conditions of the Upper Midwest and are prone to greater disease pressure here in the more humid east. Preliminary results from 2013 show that although some varieties have promise Fusarium Head Blight will be a major problem for growing malting barleys without the use of fungicides or finding more resistant varieties. As a result of this project potential malting barley growers should have the agronomic and malting characteristic information available to choose varieties adapted to NY when that information does not currently exist.

NY Farm Brewery Law
The beer manufactured under these guidelines would be designated as “New York State” labeled beer. Initially by the end of 2017, at least 20% of the hops and 40% of all other ingredients must be grown or produced in NY. By January 1, 2023, no less than 90% of the hops and 90% of all other ingredients must be grown or produced in NY.
Helping producers make first cutting harvest timely and profitable

For the past 10 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 weekly monitoring.

This year we tracked 67 fields in the teams region and worked with Madison County CCE staff as well. In 2013 there was a difference in elevation of fields of over 1300 feet from low to high and 80 miles north to south. These differences in field location create over a week difference of when to begin cutting grass hay fields.

Team aids farms amid times of wet weather and flooding

The wet weather that started in late May and carried through the floods of late June and early July had a huge impact on the farming community. Many acres of corn were never planted or lost to wet soil conditions and flooding. Hay crops were never harvested or late. The Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Team provided support by answering questions on: replanting corn, how late corn can be planted, what are alternatives to corn late in the season, how much nitrogen lost due to the saturated soils and changes to herbicide programs with taller weeds sprayed late. The team also provided information on how to price corn silage as dairy farms were looking to replace lost crops and farms that had extra were looking to sell.
Project helps farms optimize nitrogen applications for profit and environment

In 2013 The Central New York Dairy and Field Crops Team has continued work on two National Fish and Wildlife Foundation precision feed management and corn nitrogen management grants through the Upper Susquehanna Coalition.

A highlight of this summer was a meeting held at Cheshire Valley Farm owned by Bob and John Hofmann who have been participating in the project for three years. This year the Hofmanns have applied multiple rates of N in a field and make yield checks to see if suggestions that have been made for fine tuning how much nitrogen should be applied are accurate. Meeting participants were encouraged to see if they could tell the various nitrogen rates apart visually. The 25 participants also learned how the Corn Stalk Nitrate Test (CSNT) may help them assess the nitrogen status of their corn crop at the end of the season and adapt farm specific rates.

Winter Dairy Management Schools look to make dairy farms more resilient in changing times

The saying is “bend but don’t break” certainly applies to how dairy farms need to manage if they are to survive in the future. This years Dairy Winter Management Schools: Managing Your Dairy for Resiliency held throughout the state looked to identify key areas where dairy farms need to improve management if they are to survive. The 99 participants who attended local sessions in Ballston Spa and Richfield Springs heard a message that emphasized on modernizing facilities, cow comfort and lighting to improve health and performance for profitability.

Growers learn about soybean diseases and micronutrients through soybean scouting program

For the fourth year the Central New York Dairy and Field Crop Team has offered a scouting program to help soybean growers identify insect pests and diseases. The 12 participating growers received a scouting card with each visit so they knew what insect and diseases were present and also plant height and growth stage. This years scouting program emphasized in particular testing for micro nutrients through leaf analysis and soil testing. This testing will lead to research on the effect low levels of micronutrient are having on the profitability of growing soybeans.
The team’s annual Corn Day (February) and Dairy Day (March) are held each year at the Otesaga Resort in Cooperstown with over a hundred people attending each. Speakers may range from farmer panels on a particular topic to internationally known experts in their field.

Keith Waldron from the Cornell IPM Program discusses the spread of Western Bean Cutworm across NY at Corn Day.