



Cornell University
 Cooperative Extension
 Central New York Dairy & Field Crops Team

Annual Report:
 A year in review

Serving
 Chenango, Fulton,
 Herkimer, Montgomery,
 Otsego, and Schoharie
 Counties

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grants help fund Precision Feed Management and Corn Nitrogen Management Projects

To be profitable dairy and field crop producers must use nutrients efficiently. The Central New York Dairy and Field Crops Team in 2012 has continued work on two National Fish and Wildlife Foundation precision feed management and corn nitrogen management grants through the Upper Susquehanna Coalition.

For the Precision Feed Management part of the project the team is currently assessing the feeding efficiency of 40 dairy farms

using seven benchmarks to find where improvements can be made to increase the use of home grown feeds, milk production and profitability while reducing environmental risk.

Twenty seven farms are part of the corn nitrogen management project which uses new soil and plant tests and computer modeling to fine tune nitrogen recommendations. Growers optimize nitrogen rates while obtaining profitable yields.



Taking Precision Feeding to the Next Level

To take our precision feeding efforts to a next level means focusing on feeding low protein diets and balancing dairy rations for amino acids to lower overall protein levels. Feeding specific amino acids means that less overall protein can be fed in the cows diet. The 42 attendees heard featured speakers Dr. Chuck Schwab (at left) from



Wisconsin, Dr. Larry Chase from Cornell, and Ryan Higgs (PhD student at Cornell) explain how to imple-

ment amino acid balancing on their farms. All of the feed companies in our region (including northern PA and western VT) were represented along with consultants and veterinarians. The team has started work with 8 participating farms and their nutrition consultants on the adoption of Amino Acid balancing.

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Notill Tour and Demonstration



The notill planting of crops can minimize soil loss, improve soil health and reduce machinery costs and labor. However, adjustments must be made to planters, weed control programs and crop rotations to make notill work. Sixty nine people attended a notill tour and demonstration hosted by John and Dianne Kemmeren on their farm near Bainbridge. The Kemmerens demonstrated in the field to attendees how they adjusted and modified their corn planter and notill drill to match their conditions so they consistently achieve the desired plant populations. Attendees were also able to see successful notill plantings of corn, sudangrass, sorghum-sudangrass, alfalfa, clover and various grasses.

On-Farm Fly Control Meetings

Flies can annoy animals and affect animal health resulting in decreased milk production and weight gain. Off farm movement of flies can lead to potential urban - rural conflicts and possible health concerns. IPM Specialist Ken Wise (at right) discussed fly control with the 22 people who attended meetings on farms throughout region.



Group Housed Calf Raising Seminar

Raising dairy calves in small groups rather than in individual pens or hutches can improve labor efficiency. Research conducted by Mike VanAmburgh (at left) from Cornell University has shown that calves raised via this method produce more milk when they enter the milking herd. The team coordinated with Pro Dairy to hold seminars in Richfield Springs and Oneonta with over 100 people attending.



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NYS Soil & Water Conservation Districts Boot Camp

The team conducted on-the-farm training for 20 new and relatively new Soil & Water Conservation District employees from across the state as part of a multi-day training that was based out of SUNY Cobleskill. The majority of these people have degrees in environmental science and/or soils, but have little farm production experience.



Potato Leafhoppers

The team assisted producers through a tough growing season



Drought Stressed Corn



Common Armyworm



Cold Injury to Alfalfa

2012 was a very difficult growing season for local farms with both insects and the weather having the potential to cause significant yield loss. The team worked to alert producers to potential problems and to help them minimize or cope with any injury or damage. Armyworms caused damage to local grass hay fields and corn fields in 2012. Potato leafhoppers arrived earlier than usual to our area and caused considerable damage in local alfalfa fields. Emails were sent to our CNYDFC list server to alert crop growers and ag industry personnel specifically on the presence of these insects and articles appeared in our Checking the Back 40 newsletter. The team responded to email and phone call requests for more information and to check fields for these insects. Frosted alfalfa in early spring and dry weather in the middle of summer reduced corn and haycrop yields. The team responded to requests from producers for help with feed budgeting and determining the cost of corn silage.



Forage Quality Project

Over the past eight years the Central New York Dairy and Field Crops Team has sought to improve the quality of first cutting forage by sampling fields and getting fiber levels in the field back to producers as quickly as possible. This information alerts dairy and livestock producers when they should begin harvest. There is no calendar date that is ideal to begin and so in field sampling provides the best data.



Central New York Dairy and Field Crops Team

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