



Cornell University Cooperative Extension

Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team

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

Quarterly Report: July-Sept 2017

Educational Activities

Pre-harvest Corn Silage Meetings

Dave and Kevin put on a series of pre-harvest corn silage meetings the last week of August attended by over 35 growers. Corn silage makes up to 30 to 70 percent of the forage fed on most dairy farms and is there for a valuable feed stuff that must be harvested and stored properly to maintain its quality. These hands-on sessions demonstrated to growers how to assess: dry matter content for proper storage, desired particle size and effective kernel processing. Attendees also learned how to identify stages of corn maturity related to harvest and corn leaf diseases.



Regional Dairy Specialist Dave Balbian discusses how to properly store corn silage on a farm near Fort Plain.

Given the acres of corn planted late and the lack of summer heat corn matured late this year. These meetings gave corn silage growers a realistic view of when corn would be at the proper dry matter content for harvest. (Balbian and Ganoe)



Ashley McFarland leads discussion on beef management at a farm in Herkimer County.

Twilight Beef

Management Meetings

There are more beef operations starting in Central New York so Ashley put together summer twilight meetings in Little Falls and Richfield Springs so that producers could share ideas. Topics for the evenings included how to market this year's calves, what producers can do to get through times of low prices and finishing animals based on the market you have chosen. (McFarland)

Summer Dairy Research Update

This August dairy producers in the team region were given the opportunity to learn more about Cornell dairy research while touring the host dairy farm. Raising heifers represents a major cost perhaps as much as 15 to 20% of the total cost of production. Dr. Julio O. Giordano, Cornell University, Department of Animal Science discussed strategies for minimizing the duration of the non-lactating period by reducing days to pregnancy to help reduce farm operating costs. Dr. Magdalena Masello, Cornell University PhD student and Dr Rob Lynch, DVM, of the Pro Dairy program provided information on a recent large trial conducted on farms in NY that provided insight into which cows truly benefit from oral calcium supplementation. (Balbian)



Paul Bargstadt, owner of Stony Brook Farm, Amsterdam, NY points out features of his freestall barn at the Summer Dairy Research Update.

Current Projects and Grants

NYFVI Grant

Using precision feed management to improve profitability on dairy farms

A no cost extension is allowing the results to be summarized and the opportunity to write articles for publication. An article submitted to Hoard's Dairyman magazine described the success of two farms that participated in this project. One of the goals of the project was to have 75% of the farms achieve an improvement of net milk income minus concentrate cost by \$.40/cow/day. 53% of the farms achieved that goal. However, the average improvement over all farms was \$.57/cow/day. The other goal was to have 75% of the farms improve net milk income minus all feed costs by \$.30/cow/day. 74 percent of the farms reached that goal, with an average improvement of \$.65/cow/day. (Balbian)

NYFVI Grant:

Using forage quality testing to improve the corn silage hybrid selection process on dairy farms

Three groups of seven dairy farms are participating in this project this project funded by the NYFVI which started in August and will run through Oct 31, 2018. Initially this fall participants are collecting fresh corn silage samples which will be analyzed for forage quality. The results will be used to help producers determine which varieties on their farms have quality characteristics to improve milk production. This will be done again in the fall of 2018. During the winter of 2017-18 fermented samples will be taken to assess forage quality and management practices at harvest and in storage used to demonstrate how they affect milk production potential. (Balbian and Ganoe)

Scouting program for soybean producers

Again this summer the team worked with 9 soybean growers to scout soybean fields for insects and disease. Summer intern Danielle Ricci, from Cazenovia College, besides monitoring fields for pests, took soil tests and estimated plant populations and residue cover. The field data will be summarized and presented to the growers in December at a follow up meeting.

FINPAK for livestock producers

Dr. Michael Baker, beef specialist for Cornell University received a grant to help NY livestock producers analyze their financial records. FINPAK is a software package that will allow livestock producers to look at their profitability and costs of production in particular. Ashley has worked with six farms to use the software. (McFarland)



Sclerotinia White Mold found in local soybeans are one of the many diseases soybean growers need to be aware of

Dairy Acceleration Program (DAP)

As a facilitator for this program across our region Dave continued to work with farms on the Dairy Acceleration Program as applications continue to come in. This quarter he met with 2 farms that applied for Business Planning. (Balbian)

Speaking Opportunities:

Dave moderated a panel of dairy producers with the topic of “Are you a member of the 7 Pound Club?” at the Dairy Profit Seminar tent of the Empire Farm Days. (Balbian)

Dave was asked to speak about how milk is priced, milk price volatility, and the economics of dairy production at a Boot Camp for New Soil & Water District Employees across New York State held in Cortland. (Balbian)

Ashley and Kevin met with the Chenango County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board to discuss the alternative use of land for field crops and livestock.

Emerging Issues and Individual Assistance

CCE and PRO-Dairy staff are working together again to bring the Academy for Dairy Executives program to the western part of our region. This program is targeted towards younger people taking over management roles on the dairy. The three session program goes from noon to noon & includes

an overnight. Sessions will be at The Colgate Inn in Hamilton on 12/12-13/17, The Hilton Garden Inn in Auburn on 1/23-24/18, and the Holiday Inn Southside in Oneonta on 2/20-21/18. (Balbian)

Dave has had individual consultations that have dealt with dairy nutrition, feed costs, productivity, calf barn ventilation, heifer barn design issues (related to animal injuries) and cash flow issues.

Kevin has had individual consultations that have dealt with potato leafhopper damage, when to stop planting corn, alternatives for fall crops, corn leaf diseases and assessing corn maturity for corn silage.

Over the past few months Ashley has met with producers that have been keeping management records on paper and moved them to software (CattleMax and HerdBoss) that is much easier to use.

Ashley is working closely with a few operations to produce a consistent product so they can keep their buyers coming back year after year. Many producers that are struggling in the industry do not produce a consistent product year after year.

Vaccination is important procedure that Ashley finds only about half of the producers she has worked with use. She will be working with veterinarians in the area to educate producers as to why this is a necessary animal health practice that leads to a higher quality product.

Public Relations

Each year the team puts up displays at various events and interacts with attendees. We put up an exhibit at the Empire Farm Days in the CCE building. The Empire Farm Days is the summer state wide agricultural exhibition for producers held each year near Seneca Falls. The Farm Progress Show in Mohawk is the exhibition for local agricultural producers held every year.

The team participates every year in events for the general public to learn about agriculture. This year Sundae-on-the-Farm was in Montgomery County was held at Honorone Dairy Farm near Canajoharie while a similar event, A-Day-on-the-Farm was held at Rogers Family Orchard in Fulton County. The team set up an exhibit about feedstuffs and local crops and talked to participants.

Newsletters and Media

Front page coverage in Country Folks with article about our corn silage pre-harvest meetings.



Progressive Dairyman, a national dairy magazine did an article about the “Dairy Profit Seminar” at Empire Farm Days that Dave moderated, titled Are You a Member of the 7 Pound Club? Two of the three farmer panel members are from our territory.

In-Service and Professional Development

The team attended the Regional Ag Team Retreat in Lake Placid, NY in July.

Next Quarter and Future Activities

Continue work on the Dairy Acceleration Program (Balbian)

Meet with 2 Dairy Profit Teams (Balbian)

Continue work on the NYFVI corn silage project (Ganoe, Balbian)

Continue with individual assistance on facilities & dairy nutrition (Balbian)

Continue work on the Academy for Dairy Executives Program. The first session will be conducted in December. (Balbian)

Attend the annual Cornell Nutrition Conference (Balbian)

Continue planning Dairy Day for 2018. (Balbian)

Conduct the 2 Feeder Schools in our area scheduled for late November, early December (Balbian)

Attend the 2017 Agriculture and Food Systems In-service. (Balbian, Ganoe and McFarland)

Attend the 2017 Northeast Region Certified Crop Advisor Training. (Ganoe)

Plan winter meetings such as Corn Day and Field Crop Pest Management meetings. (Ganoe)

Conduct meetings on equine forage management. (Ganoe)

Assist with state wide malting barley meeting to be held in Syracuse in December (Ganoe)

Conduct summary meeting for soybean scouting program in December (Ganoe)

Hold meeting vaccination for livestock producers (McFarland)

Hold meetings on livestock marketing (McFarland)

Help with Central NY Beef Producer Feeder Pool (McFarland)