

Central New York Dairy Livestock and Field Crops Team

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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.

Spring Forage Quality Monitoring

For the past 14 years the Central New York Dairy, Livestock 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. This prediction of when to cut is based on alfalfa height which works well to predict both alfalfa and grass quality. The 2017 haycrop was ahead of the 2016 first cutting. In 2016 on May 3 the alfalfa averaged 9 inches tall and 65 percent of the fields were 9 inches or less. For 2017, on May 2 alfalfa averaged 13 inches tall and 83 percent of the fields were 10 inches or more. Although we try to start monitoring early enough to anticipate harvest this year by May 2 some locations grasse's were ready to be cut.



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2017 Annual Report

Precision Feed Management Project improves dairy farm profitability

Milk income is the largest income item on dairy farms. Financial data from Cornell shows that net milk income/ cow/day minus feed cost has the highest correlation to overall dairy farm profitability than any other measure. Feed costs are the largest expense on dairy farms. This project funded by the New York Farm Viability Institute concentrated on two of the most economically impactful areas of the business.

Precision Feed Management uses a series of benchmarks to assess the feeding performance of individual dairy farms with easily available data from the farm.

Nineteen farms completed this project. They saw an average improvement of \$267.47 per farm per day in net milk income minus total feed cost and an average improvement of \$253.83 per farm per day in net milk in-



(Left to right) Regional Dairy Specialist David Balbian, Kienan Gridley of Rapp Dairy Nutrition, and Michael Cantwell of Woodlawn Dairy discuss ration changes in the free stall barn.

come minus concentrate cost. If the final daily analysis is translated into an annual number, it comes out to an average annual improvement per farm of \$97,626.55 over total feed cost and \$92,647.95 over concentrate cost. The three organic herds completing the project also performed well economically on a per cow per day basis because of their much higher milk price.

The primary characteristics of participating farms associated with the best economic performance were :

- High quality forage
- Excellent reproductive performance
- Excellent herd management practices

We would like to acknowledge others for their financial support:



Central NY Beef Producers Fall Feeder Calf Sale leads to higher prices!



Pictured Left to Right: Ron Maidens, Tim Ross, Livestock Specialist Ashley McFarland, Fred Ross, Bill Gibson.

Central N.Y. Beef producers have come together to put a feeder calf sale on in the spring and fall of each year. The tele-auction has been growing and improving for the past three years and this fall, they had a record number of animals for this sale.

In the sale, 62 steers averaged \$1.35/lbs.; with the light-weight steer groups bringing \$1.50/lbs. and \$1.60/lbs. The 47 heifers averaged \$1.13 per pound.

The following week at local sale barns steers average \$1.02/lbs. and heifers averaged \$0.68/lbs.

Producers are required to following protocols in order for cattle to stay healthier through the transition process from producer to buyer. Animals are graded by a USDA certified grader and those not fit into the standard grade will not be allowed to be in the sale.

Maintaining corn silage quality from proper harvest and storage



Field Crop Specialist Kevin Ganoe explains how to use kernel characteristics to determine corn maturity.

Corn silage makes up 30 to 70 percent of the forage fed on most dairy farms so choosing hybrids that have good forage quality and yield is important. Equally important is harvesting and storing that silage so that it maintains that quality. David and Kevin put on a series of pre-harvest corn silage meetings at the

end of August to remind growers of best management practices as they relate to correct storage dry matter, kernel processing and particle size. Given the late planting due to excessive rainfall and the lack of heat during the summer, corn was three weeks later than normal at the end of August so part

of the discussion was on growing degree days and how to predict when corns silage might be ready for harvest.

Hybrid selection is an important factor in corn silage quality and the results of the PRO-Dairy corn silage trials were presented.

“Corn is grown on almost 100,00 acres in the team area and an important forage crop fed our dairy farms.”

Regional Field Crop Specialist
Kevin Ganoe

Helping producers through a difficult crop season



The 2017 growing season was very wet through May and June making planting difficult. Rainfall by June 12 was as much as six inches above normal for our area. The Central NY Dairy, Livestock and Field

Crops Team answered many questions related to late planting, crusted soils, alternate crops to plant, weed control and when corn was mature to harvest for corn silage. Potato leaf hopper is an insect pest

that caused significant damage to alfalfa in 2017. Kevin helped alert growers to the problem and worked with farms to use the best control measures possible.



Potato leafhoppers on a sweep net in June 2017

2017 Dairy Day and Corn Day bring latest technology to Central New York



Dr. Margaret Smith, Professor of Plant Breeding, Cornell University talks about using genetically engineered crops as one part of an integrated pest management program on a farm.

The Corn Day and Dairy Day, held each at the Otesaga Inn in Cooperstown, brings local dairy and crop farmers in touch with nationally and internationally recognized speakers on important topics of the day.

This year the Dairy Day had to be rescheduled from 3/14 to 3/28 because of the late season blizzard and managed to come off without issue. The topic of this year of dairy reproduction was addressed by Dr. Julio Giordano and Dr. Tom Overton from Cornell. The over 120 people in attendance were also able to interact with vendors at a trade show.

Keynote speaker of this year's Corn Day was Dr. Margaret Smith, Professor of Plant Breeding, Cornell University whose talk “Genetically Engineered Crops and Pest Management: Silver Bullet or Just Another Tool in the Toolbox?” was well received. The over 100 in attendance learned more about perennial weed control, choosing corn silage hybrids based on Cornell's corn silage hybrid testing program.