



Tile Drainage Field Day

The Need

Commodity prices relative to input prices continue to remain favorable. To take advantage of this favorable environment and with land availability a limiting factor to farm expansion, farmers are looking to cost effectively improve yields on existing acreage. Subsurface tile drainage has been shown to be an economically viable long-term investment to increase yields. To successfully apply tile drainage practices and achieve desired results, producers benefit by learning about: the how to's of tile drainage; the expected benefits and costs across ranges of field conditions; and alternative technologies, practices. For example, traditionally, installation was completed by a contractor. However, given current conditions, some farmers would like to consider the possibility of installing tile using the farm's labor force, and owned machinery and equipment, for example, tractor drawn tile plows.

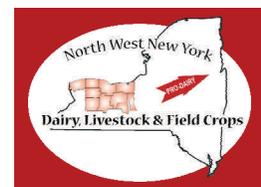


Extension's Response

Recent partial budget analysis work conducted by the North West New York Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Team demonstrated the value of owning a tile plow. This work and work examining the overall feasibility over a range of field conditions was presented at the two 2011 Corn Congresses. To provide further educational opportunities over a broader range of topics and to a wider audience, the NWNY Team collaborated with Yates County Soil & Water Conservation District, Finger Lakes Grape Program, and Cornell Vegetable Program to hold a Tile Drainage Field Day. Planning began six months in advance with the goal of hosting a multi-commodity field day covering the benefits of tile drainage. Many farmers grow crops across team responsibilities, so this would be a unique event. Event organizers planned a morning session consisting of presentations covering soil health, installation how-to's, and the economics of hiring a contractor vs. purchasing a tile plow. Donations from local businesses supported the cost of lunch. A field demonstration showcasing a farm-owned GPS guided tile plow was part of the day as well. The host farm had recently upgraded to another tile plow and demonstrated installation of lateral tile lines. Local specialists and a soil & water technician served as collaborators to cover the topics. The event was promoted in newsletters, newspapers, posters and via email.

The Results

Approximately 50 participants from a wide area attended the field day that was held on-farm. Participants learned about soil health and the impacts of tile drainage, an overview of tile drainage installation, and economics. Armed with information, producers are better prepared to successfully make decisions, regarding the adoption of tile drainage practices, and the likelihood of achieving desired results increases.



Cornell Cooperative Extension
Serving the counties of:

*Genesee * Livingston * Monroe * Niagara * Ontario * Orleans * Seneca * Wayne * Wyoming * Yates*