



Cornell Cooperative Extension North Country Regional Ag Team

Serving Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis, and St. Lawrence Counties

Program Highlights

April - June
2018

Collaboration with PRO-DAIRY to Bring Resources to the North Country

Two years ago, the Regional Ag Business Specialist contacted PRO-DAIRY on campus to discuss the possibility of starting a new Breakthrough Management Team (B-MAT) with a portion of the participants from the North Country Region. The idea behind this came from the request from farmers that they wanted to participate in the B-MATs but given that some of their operations were smaller in size, they did not have the flexibility to travel as far as these groups required. After brainstorming with the PRO-DAIRY group, 12 farms were contacted and the group had its first meeting in December of 2016. What is unique about this group is that it is actually run and managed by Kelsey O'Shea, our Regional Business Specialist, with the supportive help of PRO-DAIRY and their resources. This allows PRO-DAIRY to reach more farmers and helps to engage the regional staff in strong, effective, and already well developed programs through campus.

This spring, the group met at a member's farm that had just completed a large expansion, almost doubling in herd size. The farm knew that they would be expanding when they joined the group two years ago and also knew that before their expansion they were one of the smaller scale operations in the group. They knew that they wanted to have a network of other farms to rely on and to keep them accountable for keeping track of their profitability going into this expansion. The meeting consisted firstly of a half day of financial review from 2017 as they all had completed the Dairy Farm Business Summary, and then each farm from the group's data was compiled to show comparisons in various categories. This allowed each farm to see how they are doing in comparison



to the rest of the group. From there, the group discussed how management choices on the farm affected, or contributed to, those numbers. This gave the farms a chance to see how their peers are managing through some of the same issues or challenges.

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The second day of the meeting the group toured the new facility of their fellow group member. This allowed all to see and ask questions regarding choices made and what they might have done differently. In addition, the group was also able to tour a feed mill nearby that the farm utilizes. This was a great experience for the farmers to ask questions and explore the feed industry, given that feed is the largest single expense on a dairy farm. The tour was the group's fourth meeting together and it was clear that the participants are forming relationships and trust to share their business strategies and decisions with each other. Group members almost unanimously indicate that the collaborative/social aspect of the group is what they feel is most valuable.

Layout/design by:
Tatum Langworthy

Overall, applying the structure that PRO-DAIRY created for the Breakthrough Management Teams to other regions of the state is mutually beneficial for all involved. By PRO-DAIRY sharing in the administration and implementation of these B-MATs with regional team members, the hope is that more farms and areas can be positively impacted by the excellent resources Cornell Extension has to offer.

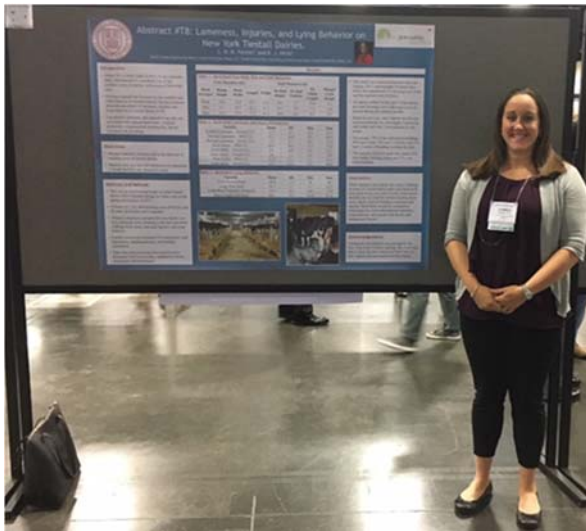
North Country Research Shared with Farmers Locally and Nationwide



Through grants from organizations like Northern NY Ag Development Program and NY Farm Viability Institute, Kim Morrill and Lindsay Ferlito, our Regional Dairy Specialists, are able to conduct research on North Country dairies focusing on important and timely topics such as tiestall lameness and cow comfort, calf health and housing, mastitis management, and record keeping and protocols. To ensure maximum outreach and impact from these studies, data is shared in various forms from on-farm workshops to webinars and print articles.

In the winter and early spring of 2018, multiple on-farm meetings were held at local tiestall dairies across the North Country. Data and key findings from a recent tiestall project were shared with over 45 attendees, and farmers had the chance to tour the host facility and have a beneficial discussion about housing and management and ways to improve their own dairies. The data and conclusions from the study were also shared with producers in the North Country and across the state through the PRO-DAIRY winter webinar series, and in print and online articles in Lancaster Farming and Dairy Herd Management. Further, at the end of June, data from the tiestall cow comfort project, a tiestall industry impact project (a collaboration with National Milk Producers Federation), and a mastitis project were shared at the annual American Dairy Science Association conference in Tennessee, which draws thousands of participants (farmers, researchers, veterinarians, students, and extension associates) from across the globe each year.

One producer who participated in the tiestall cow comfort study commented how great and encouraging it was to see how much coverage the project was receiving and he hoped it would help motivate other farms to consider making changes to improve cow comfort on their dairies. Participants at the American Dairy Science Association conference were excited to see tiestall data specific to NY being presented. Data from these projects will continue to be shared through all avenues to ensure producers have access to and can benefit from the information.

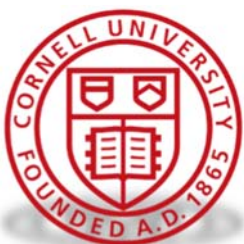


“Feeding your Future” – Agriculture Career Exploration for Middle School Students: A Community Collaboration

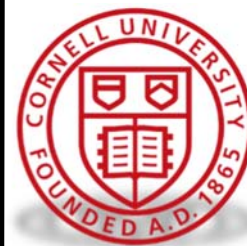
The economy of northern New York is dependent on agricultural viability and in turn a reliable work force. With few people moving into NNY, and more people moving out, it’s important to develop an agricultural workforce and an interest in working in the agricultural field. In the spring of 2018, BOCES received a grant to do educational outreach focused on career exploration in agriculture. Patty Fisher, Patty Gilbert, and Rachelle Romada from BOCES reached out to Cooperative Extension to partner on a program focused on career exploration in agriculture with the target audience being middle school students.

After a meeting at the end of March to brainstorm ideas, “Feeding your Future” was created. It was determined that we would collaboratively host a 1-day program for 7th and 8th grade students at a local dairy farm. On June 6th, we hosted ~120 students from 5 districts at Adon Farm in Parishville, NY. Each student visited 6 stations (animal care, veterinary medicine, crop management, technology, milk quality assurance, and animal nutrition), and had a tour of the dairy farm in which numerous areas of management (calf care, cow comfort, nutrient management, hoof trimming, herd health, etc...) were discussed. At each station and along the tour, presenters discussed what they do, the level of education required to perform their job, careers available in each of the topic areas, and how to get involved as a student.

The outcome of this program will continue to be evaluated as teachers submit evaluations, and hopefully more students enroll in the BOCES Ag Academy program. “Feeding your Future” would not have been possible without the dedicated people from BOCES, CCE St. Lawrence County, specialists from the North Country Regional Ag Team, Farm Credit East, Cargill Nutrition, DFA, NY State Ag & Markets, and Adon Farm, who spent the day talking with students about the many opportunities available for careers in agriculture. We look forward to planning our next “Feeding your Future”.



Harvest New York



Northern New York Marketing

Over the last six months, Harvest NY has helped support and provide trainings on marketing education in northern NY. This support included teaching a variety of marketing programs across the region. The educational programs provided included market assessment, wholesale channel communication, collaborative marketing, digital marketing, and general marketing. These programs reached around 70 farmers across northern NY and led to farmers finding additional markets inside and outside of northern NY.



Dr. Todd Schmit (Associate Professor, Cornell University) and CCE Harvest NY secured funding to host a Strategic Marketing Conference in northern NY for later this year. These Strategic Marketing Conferences have been occurring around NY over the past couple of years, but haven't been hosted in northern NY before. These conferences have brought together farmers across the state to learn about finding new markets, buyer expectations, and market demand. The speakers for the conference are usually farmers, buyers, and educators. The intent of the conference is to help prepare farmers for new markets and for farmers to find new markets.



Northern New York Craft Beverage Cost Establishment Project

Currently northern NY has around 30 craft beverage operators across six counties. Harvest NY and a Cornell University College of Agriculture and Life Science summer intern, Tyler Baisi, have been working on a project to determine the cost of establishing a brewery, distillery, and/or hard cider operation. The intent of the project is to help people determine the overall cost of establishing a craft beverage operation. Currently, Harvest NY and Tyler Baisi are meeting with existing breweries, distilleries, and hard cider operations to collect this information. From this, Harvest NY will create a report on the present status of the industry and develop an interactive spreadsheet for would-be entrepreneurs. Last year a similar report and interactive spreadsheet were created for the wine industry.



Our Mission

"The North Country Regional Ag Team aims to improve the productivity and viability of agricultural industries, people, and communities in Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton, and Essex Counties by promoting productive, safe, economically, and environmentally sustainable management practices and by providing assistance to industry, government, and other agencies in evaluating the impact of public policies affecting the industry."

Contact us directly through our website: <http://ncrat.cce.cornell.edu/>

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities. NYS College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NYS College of Human Ecology, and NYS College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, Cooperative Extension associates, county governing bodies, and U.S.D.A. cooperating.