

**Quarterly Report: April-June 2018**

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

**Team Administration****Nicole Tommell Hired as Regional Farm Business Management Specialist**

We welcome Nicole Tommell as the new agricultural business management specialist on the Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops team. Her primary goal will be to provide business analysis, planning and development support for agricultural businesses in the region. Nicole received her Bachelor of Technology degree from SUNY Cobleskill in Agricultural Business. She also holds a Masters in Agricultural Education from North Carolina State University. Before joining the team, Nicole was a Visiting Instructor at SUNY Cobleskill teaching courses ranging from agricultural business to animal science. She has also managed a diversified cattle operation she owns with her husband. Please welcome Nicole to the team.



Nicole Tommell

**Current Projects and Grants:****Spring Forage Quality Monitoring**

For the past 15 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. Growth for 2018 was considerably behind 2017, especially for the May 8 observation, because of cold temperatures. In 2018 May 8 alfalfa was averaging 9 inches tall and 59 percent of the fields were 9 inches or less. In 2017 on May 2 the alfalfa averaged 13 inches tall and 17 percent of the fields were 9 inches or less. This was valuable information because producers in many years need to consider prioritizing starting first cutting over planting but 2018 this wasn't one of them. Although air temperatures were cool reducing forage growth, soil moisture was on the dry side so tilling and planting could continue. (Balbian, Ficken, Ganoe, Gibson, McFarland, and Schmidt).



Alfalfa grass mix near St Johnsville

**Montgomery County Agriculture Microenterprise Grant – Facilitator**

Assisting in facilitating the Microenterprise Grant with Montgomery County. Responsible for coordinating and overseeing 4 business modules for producers that are awarded the microenterprise grant. Ongoing through Spring 2019. (Tommell)



### **Monitoring program for soybean producers**

Again this summer the team is working with 11 soybean growers to monitor soybean fields for insects and disease. Also this summer an effort is being made to measure residue cover as more growers go to no-till planting of soybeans. The field data will be summarized and presented to the growers in December at a follow up meeting.

### **NYFVI Grant: Using forage quality testing to improve the corn silage hybrid selection process on dairy farms**

For this grant 6 additional samples were taken this spring that were inaccessible when our initial fermented samples were taken back in January. In some instances, they represented a different crop year. A final set of fresh samples will be taken again in the fall of 2018. (Balbian, Ganoe)

### **Dairy Acceleration Program (DAP)**

Dairy Acceleration Program (DAP) applications continue to come in as this quarter two farms applied for Business Planning. The emphasis of new applications has been changing to resiliency. (Balbian)

### **Grasstravaganza**

Grasstravaganza is a grazing related event being conducted by NRCS. The CNYDLFC has been asked to be on the planning committee and the committee meets approximately every other month. It will be held July 25-27, 2019 at SUNY Cobleskill. (Balbian, Ganoe, McFarland, Tommell)

### **Monitor insect pests with pheromone traps**

Kevin and other CCE educators across the state have put out traps to monitor for insect pests such as black cutworm, armyworm and western bean cutworm. The traps contain a pheromone that attracts male moths to a trap to be counted. Few moths of either black cutworm or armyworm were seen this spring and the trapping changed to western bean cutworm beginning in July. (Ganoe)



Pheromone Trap

## Educational Activities

### Improved Forage Quality=Increased Profitability\$\$ For Livestock Producers

Ashely McFarland and Kevin Ganoe held discussions on how to better utilize forages to make your livestock production more profitable. Topics included animal nutrient requirements, defining what quality forage is, and cutting management to achieve the desired forage quality.

## Emerging Issues and Individual Assistance

Met once this quarter with two different dairy farm profit teams. (Balbian, Tommell)

Individual consultations on dairy farms have dealt with dairy nutrition, facility design & expansion, raising replacements, ventilation, stall design, and dealing with the low milk prices. (Balbian)

Individual consultations on record keeping: records for calving, vaccinations, health issues, rate of gain. Also teaching them to produce a consistent product for their customers, so they will keep their customer's, and proper tools and techniques for vaccinations and castration. (McFarland)

Individual consultations on planting issues related to shallow planting and bird damage and corn and soybeans failing to emerge from compacted soils. Also, lack of nodulation in soybeans, and poor weed control. (Ganoe)

## In-Service and Professional Development:

Attended the Ag Tax Assessor Training at CCE Albany County June 5 - 6, 2017. (Tommell)

Participated in a training conducted by Jason Karzas of Pro-Dairy for educators looking to utilize the Dairy Farm Business Summary. Assisted Ashley Howlett and Sandy Buxton with Dairy Farm Business Summary Review. (Tommell)

Attended joint Educators Meeting Albany Co CCE. (Tommell)

Utilized webinars, websites, and individual meetings with FSA staff for updates on the revised MPP program (Balbian).

## Newsletters and Media

Central New York Dairy Day was covered in the May 7th issue of Country Folks. It was titled *Technology Forging Ahead in the Northeast*. It covered 2 pages and include a large color photo of the speakers. (Balbian)

Although the NYFVI Grant using precision feed management to improve profitability on dairy farms is complete, an article about success on two participating farms appeared in the April 10, 2018 issue of Hoard's Dairyman. (Balbian)

<https://cnydfc.cce.cornell.edu/submission.php?id=759&crumb=dairy|1>

Worked with other CCE educators and specialists and Cornell faculty to develop a malting barley publication. (Ganoe)

[https://fieldcrops.cals.cornell.edu/sites/fieldcrops.cals.cornell.edu/files/shared/documents/Malting%20Barley Keys%20to%20Successful%20Production%20in%20New%20York FINAL%20WEB.pdf](https://fieldcrops.cals.cornell.edu/sites/fieldcrops.cals.cornell.edu/files/shared/documents/Malting%20Barley%20Keys%20to%20Successful%20Production%20in%20New%20York%20FINAL%20WEB.pdf)

Developed a newsletter about the MPP (Margin Protection Program) and put together the economic benefits it would bring in its latest version. Followed up with several email reminders and called the decision a "no brainer." Local FSA offices that some producers arriving to sign up said that they heard it was a no-brainer. Received phone calls, emails, and had one-on-one conversations with producers about this program. (Balbian)

Two early season *Checking the Back Forty* newsletters focused on the more normal beginning to the growing season and alfalfa weevil. (Ganoe)

## Public Relations

Participated in the salute to Agriculture Night for Montgomery County at an Amsterdam collegiate summer baseball team game. (McFarland and Tommell)

## Next Quarter and Future Activities

- Working with Ashley Howlett (Pro-Dairy) and Ed Varnum (Cargill, Inc) to introduce Dairy Profit Monitor to moderate sized farms that could potentially find use in the program. (Tommell)
- Crop Insurance Grant: working with Cornell faculty to incorporate Crop Insurance educational programs with a potential for Dairy disaster educational programs in the CNYDLFC region. (Tommell)
- Currently working on the Regional Ag Team Retreat Planning Committee for a Spring/Summery 2019 date. (Tommell)
- Working with Pro-Dairy to create a program for Succession Planning in the CNYDLFC region as well as statewide. (Tommell)
- BQA Meeting with Dr. Mike Baker in July (McFarland)
- Twilight meetings on farm's in multiple counties during the summer months (McFarland)
- Continue Livestock newsletters in September, October, November, December (McFarland)
- Livestock Committee Meeting in September (Bring in a few producers from each county to work through challenges they see) (McFarland)
- EPD's – understand what to look for and what your goal is for each selection (McFarland)

- Continue work on the Dairy Acceleration Program. Dave acts as a facilitator for this program across our region. (Balbian, Tommell)
- Meet with 2 Dairy Profit Teams (Balbian)
- Continue work on a Calving & Neonatal Care Workshop program with other dairy specialists in NY (Balbian)
- Work on planning 2 Forage Quality Seminars in our region (Ganoe, Balbian)
- Continue work on the NYFVI Corn Silage Hybrid project (Ganoe, Balbian)
- Plan & apply to NYFVI for funding to conduct a Precision Feed Management Project in Madison County (Balbian)
- Continue with individual assistance on facilities & dairy nutrition (Balbian)
- Plan for Dairy Day for 2019 (Balbian)
- Attend Empire Farm Days with a display (Balbian, Ganoe, McFarland, Tommell)
- Attend Farm Progress Show with a display (Balbian, Ganoe, McFarland, Tommell)
- Plan & Conduct Pre-harvest Corn Silage Meetings (Ganoe, Balbian)
- Collect green C.S. samples for our C.S. Variety Trial Project (Ganoe, Balbian)
- Participate in Sundae on the Farm & Day on the Farm (Balbian, Ganoe, McFarland, Tommell)
- Plan for Corn Day for 2019 (Ganoe)
- Continue monitoring program for soybeans (Ganoe)
- Plan and carry out a *Dairy Listening Session* for Dairy Producers with Mike Baker regarding cull cows to hopefully benefit dairy and beef producers. (Balbian)