#### NORTHWEST NEW YORK DAIRY, LIVESTOCK & FIELD CROPS TEAM



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## Greetings from our new Team Member

By: Libby Gaige

y name is Libby Gaige, and I am pleased to introduce myself as the new Bilingual Dairy Support Specialist here in NWNY. I grew up on a 400-cow dairy just outside of Ithaca,

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It was a truly amazing experience, and while I know that I did have a positive influence on the people I worked with, in the end I learned much more than I was able to teach. Although I had

NY. I was always interested and involved in our family farm, and developed really passion for dairy while studying Dairy Science at Cornell University. I graduated in 2009 with a Bachelor's degree in Dairy Science and a minor in Spanish. During college I had wonderful two internships: one on a heifer ranch in Spain, and one at an 1,800cow dairy in Cayuga County, NY, where I continued working for two years. There I

worked with the herdsmen, gaining skills and knowledge in herd management. While at Cornell, I was also involved in the Dairy Fellows program and competed in the National Dairy Challenge. Both experiences gave me a better understanding of the problem-solving and decision-making aspects of dairy farming.

Upon graduation I departed for Guatemala, where I served for two years in the Peace Corps. I worked as a Food Security Facilitator, teaching women and children better ways to grow and prepare food in order to improve the nutrition of their families.



worked with Hispanic employees on dairies in NY, living and working in a remote village in Guatemala gave me an insight into the lives of the family members who stay behind when their brothers and fathers go to work in the U.S.

I am very excited to begin working with the NWNY team. I look forward to meeting many of you soon, and hope that I will be able to provide

a valuable service to you and your employees. ¡Hasta pronto!

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- Enhance the profitability of their business
- Practice environmental stewardship
- Enhance employee & family well-being in a safe work environment
- Provide safe, healthful agricultural products
- Provide leadership for enhancing relationships between agricultural sector, neighbors & the general public.

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## **Key Considerations with Colostrum Management**

### By: Jackson Wright

dequate and timely consumption of colostrum by the calf is a key factor that can influence calf morbidity and mortality. Colostrum is highly nutritious and contains several beneficial factors including multiple hormones that influence development of the gut and mammary epithelium, as well as IgGs necessary for a successful passive transfer of immunity. One critical aspect to colostrum management is ensuring the calf is fed as soon as possible after parturition. This is because the calf slowly loses its ability to absorb IgGs after parturition. However, high quality colostrum may not always be available for the calf to consume. For instance, the dam may produce low quality colostrum or may be positive for Johne's disease or bovine leukosis. Under these circumstances it is important to maintain an adequate supply of high quality colostrum or colostrum replacer. High quality colostrum is superior to colostrum replacers as it contains multiple hormones that increase long-term thrift and performance, and provides IgGs specific to pathogens present on the farm.

As a result, managing colostrum supply can be a critical factor for success of the calf. Colostrum should be tested for quality to ensure a successful passive transfer. This can be done quickly using a colostrometer, which estimates total protein levels and subsequent IgGs. In general, older cows produce colostrum of higher quality compared to heifers. If colostrum quality is consistently low you may want to review your vaccination protocols with your veterinarian as colostrum quality can be improved with timely dry cow vaccinations. Dams that produce excessive quantities of high quality colostrum should have their colostrum stored in 1 liter zip lock bags and labeled with the cow identification and date. Should cows test positive for diseases that are transmissible to the calf their colostrum can be easily identified and discarded. In addition, dating stored colostrum can ensure that all colostrum fed is relatively fresh. Colostrum should then be frozen immediately to prevent bacterial contamination and preserve the nutrient content. Prior to feeding, frozen

colostrum should be thawed slowly in warm water. Using excessively hot water to thaw colostrum can denature beneficial proteins and reduce the activity and availability of IgGs. Once thawed, colostrum should be fed immediately to avoid bacterial contamination. Should colostrum be left at room temperature, bacteria such as E. coli can double every 20 minutes; therefore if colostrum is not fed immediately you could be inoculating the newborn calf with E. coli while its gut is capable of absorbing complete proteins. This can easily overwhelm the calf, predisposing it to scours and septicemia. In general, calves should be fed between 10% and 15% of their body weight at the first feeding, with a second feeding of the same amount within 12 hours after birth. Reviewing your colostrum management protocols can improve overall calf health and improve the long-term thrift your animals.

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Seven Wonders of the Corn Yield World **By Harold Brecht** 

Ever since raising 300 bushelper-acre corn in Illinois more than 25 years ago, Fred Below, Ph.D., has spent his career researching how other farmers can do it, too. A professor of plant physiology in the Department of Crop Sciences at the University of Illinois and paid consultant for AGROTAIN® nitrogen stabilizer products, Below has spent his life's work not only identifying but also ranking and quantifying the seven most important factors to achieve the highest possible com yields.

Below used his understanding of these seven factors to develop and evaluate a "high tech" package of five optimized management practices and inputs, compared to a standard management system currently used by most growers. Yield enhancements from the use of a "high tech" system were compared to standard treatments in the grower's system and

factor was determined using an "Omission Plot." This is where a single "high tech" treatment is either added one at a time to the standard system or removed one at a time from the "high tech" system. Replicated in various locations in the Midwest over various years, the results are invaluable to growers as they evaluate which new products and practices contribute to yield.

"When combined, all of these factors contribute to big-yield gains." The relative bushel values below are averages of ranges and will vary depending on a number of factors, including but not limited to location and the other factors on the Wonder list. In order of importance (along with their relative contributions to yield, in bushels-per-acre), the factors comprising the Wonder list are:

1. Weather (70 bu) 2. Nitrogen (70 bu)

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Harold Brecht

- 3. Hybrid (50 bush)
- 4. Previous crop (25 bu)
- 5. Plant population (20 bu)
- 6. Tillage (15 bu)

7. Growth regulators (10 bu)

Each factor interacts with the others to produce an average bushel-per-acre yield. For example, weather and nitrogen directly affect each other. But Below stated that, if used correctly, nitrogen accounts for almost the same value as weather; therefore, when combined, weather and nitrogen account for more than half the crop yield. The "high tech" package in Below's study included AGROTAIN® nitrogen stabilizer products to control nitrogen losses that typically occur.

If you have a question for the Nitrogen Miser, don't hesitate to contact me at harold.brecht@kochind.com or 570-245-8675.

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## Financial Condition and Performance of Organic Dairy Farm Businesses – 2010 Results

### By: John J. Hanchar

### <u>Summary</u>

- \* Efforts are beginning to yield consistent measures of the financial condition and performance of organic dairy farm businesses.
- \* Results suggest that in 2010 organic dairy farm businesses realized wide ranges in income, cost, profitability and other results. For example, labor and management income per operator/manager for the roughly 70 percent of farms around the average ranged from -\$45,136 to \$143,786.
- \* Owners of organic dairy farm businesses are encouraged to ask, "Would my business benefit from dairy farm business summary and analysis, including comparing results to others for the purposes of identifying areas for possible improvement, and monitoring progress over time?"

### <u>Background</u>

Two or three summers ago, I was meeting with the owners of an organic dairy farm business. We were reviewing results from their Cornell University Cooperative Extension Dairy Farm Business Summary (DFBS). While reviewing results, the owners asked, "How do our results compare to others?" The owners understood the value of comparisons for the purposes of identifying possible areas for improvement. My response was that not enough organic dairy farm businesses were participating in the DFBS program at the time to provide meaningful comparisons among farms.

Things have changed since then. Efforts, including an effort funded by Organic Valley and led by Wayne Knoblauch, Professor, Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University, with on campus support from Linda Putnam and Dick Overton, are now generating results in numbers adequate for meaningful comparisons. Other Cornell University staff, CCE educators and others are working with owners of organic dairy farm businesses to collect, summarize and analyze financial and other information about their businesses.

Selected results reported below for the 2010 DFBS year are preliminary. In the coming months, look for more comprehensive, detailed reporting of results.

### Organic DFBS Cooperators for 2010

Seventeen cooperators provided data for the 2010 DFBS year. Selected size of business factors follow.

- \* Average number of cows: 130
- ★ Worker equivalents: 4.20
- ★ Total tillable acres: 549

### <u>Results</u>

The ranges reported below represent the lower and upper boundaries for the 68 percent of farms, observations as measured around the average based upon 2010 data.

### Rates of Production

- Milk sold per cow ranged from 8,280 to 16,896 pounds.
- Hay production measured in dry matter tons averaged 2.30 per acre.
- Corn silage production averaged 11.60 tons per acre.

### Cost Control and Milk Price

- Operating cost of producing a hundredweight of milk ranged from \$13.62 to \$24.48.
- Total cost of producing a hundredweight of milk ranged from \$21.57 to \$43.37.
- Milk price per hundredweight ranged from \$26.18 to \$32.50.

### <u>Profitability</u>

- Net farm income without appreciation per cow ranged from \$138 to \$1,782.
- Labor and management income per operator/ manager ranged from -\$45,136 to \$143,786.
- Rate of return on assets without appreciation ranged from 0 to 12 percent.

### Financial Condition

- ☞ Farm net worth at the end of 2010 averaged \$1,357,162.
- Debt to asset ratio ranged from 9 percent to 37 percent.
- ☞ Farm debt per cow ranged from \$1,383 to \$3,957.

### <u>Final Thoughts</u>

Look for more comprehensive, detailed reporting of results in the coming months.



Please contact me, if you would like to collect, summarize and analyze financial and related production results from your organic dairy farm business for purposes of answering the following questions.

- \* Where is the business now financially?
- \* Where do I want the business to be?
- \* How will I get the business to where I want it to be?
- \* Is the business realizing desired results after making changes?

Sound financial planning and control are keys to long term viability of farm businesses.



WHAT DOES THE FUTURE HOLD FOR MAY WERED?

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# 2011 NY Soybean Yield Contest Award Winners

By: Mike Stanyard

What a challenging season to hold the first ever NY soybean yield contest sponsored by the NY Soybean Checkoff Board. Only 16 entries from three regions submitted their yield data. All of these entries did exceptionally well when you consider the overall state soybean yield average was 43 bushels per acre. NY growers were still above the national soybean average of 41.5 bushels. The top place winners for each soybean maturity group



in each region were presented plaques at this year's NY Corn & Soybean Expo in Syracuse on January 26<sup>th</sup>.

Grower	Region	County	Brand	Cultivar	Group	Bu/A
David Blodgett	West	Livingston	Northrup King	S09-N6	0	51.00
Scott Root	West	Orleans	Growmark FS	19A11	1	49.90
Bret Meyer	West	Livingston	Northrup King	S24-J1	2	60.00
Gary Pritchard	Finger Lakes	Ontario	Channel	1900R2	1	57.80
Scott Arliss	Finger Lakes	Wayne	Northrup King	S21-N6	2	67.08
Rodman Lott	Finger Lakes	Seneca	Pioneer	93M11	3	58.30
William Tack	Central	Onondaga	Seedway	2110	2	64.46

### **Regional Award Winners in each Maturity Group**

### 60 Bushel Club

Rank	Grower	Bu/A	Region	County	Brand	Cultivar	Group
1	Scott Arliss	67.08	Finger Lakes	Wayne	Northrup King	S21-N6	2
2	William Tack	64.46	Central	Onondaga	Seedway	2110	2
3	Paul Roe	63.70	Finger Lakes	Yates	Northrup King	S25-R3	2
4	Matt Rodgers	63.48	Finger Lakes	Ontario	Channel	2300	2
5	Doug LaFave	61.70	Finger Lakes	Cayuga	Growmark FS	217	2
6	Bob Pawlowski	60.14	Central	Oneida	Pioneer	92Y31	2
7	Bret Meyer	60.00	West	Livingston	Northrup King	S24-J1	2



Scott Arliss of Pit Farms in Clyde, Wayne County, was the overall winner of the first NY soybean yield contest with his entry of 67.08 bushels. Scott won a paid trip for two to the 2012 Commodity Classic March 1-3 in Nashville, TN. *Congratulations Scott!* 

The contest will be held again in 2012 so look for applications from the NY Corn and Soybean Growers Association and NY Soybean Checkoff Board this spring. A little incentive – the Commodity Classic will be in Orlando, FL in 2013!

Scott Arliss receives his first place award from NY Corn & Soybean Growers Assn. VP Ron Robbins.

### 2012 NYS Dry Bean Meeting

Monday, March 19, 2012 9:00 am – 3:00 pm LeRoy Country Club, 7759 E. Main Rd, LeRoy (~1 mile east of Rt. 19 in LeRoy)

### Pre-Register to <u>SAVE \$5</u> over walk-in registration!

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(Bring your DEC ID card, and attend the entire meeting to receive credit)

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Vicki Jancef, ext. 33 or Kim Hazel, ext. 26, Orleans County CCE at 585-798-4265.

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## WILL NY BE PREPARED FOR THE "NEW" FARM BILL?

### By: Fay Benson – SCNY Dairy Team

The USDA classifies New York as an underserved state for crop insurance, meaning we aren't using crop insurance to cover our agricultural production at rates seen in other areas of the country. This will put New York at a disadvantage with the direction that the Farm Bill is heading, which is away from Direct Payments and Disaster Assistance to more of a reliance on Risk Management for farmer's protection from disaster events. The January 2012 report from the Congressional Budget Office crystallizes this direction.

Mandatory spending for agricultural support totaled \$15 billion in 2011; it is projected to average \$16 billion in each year between 2012 and 2022, under the baseline assumption that current farm programs remain in place after the 2008 farm bill (the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008, P.L. 110-246) expires in 2012. That spending will dip in 2012, to about \$13 billion, largely because of changes in the timing of mandated payments for crop insurance and commodity programs. Starting in 2013, spending for the crop insurance program is expected to rise as a result of projected increases in crop prices and the value of insured crops. The higher spending for crop insurance will be offset by the scheduled termination of some other agricultural support programs, such as agriculture disaster assistance and payments to tobacco growers.

If Crop Insurance is to become one of the key avenues for farms to receive federal protection from adverse weather or market events, New York Farmers will be at a disadvantage since they have not had the experience of using it on their farms. They will need to learn more about Crop Insurance and how it can fit their farm. If a natural disaster occurs or market prices plunge, crop insurance allows the producer to pay bills and remain in operation. Beyond this fundamental strength, there are other benefits of crop insurance to producers, government and the public.

 Producers Share in the Program Cost. When a producer wants crop insurance coverage, the producer must pay for it. While the program is partially subsidized by the government, producers have substantial "skin in the game."

- Producers Receive Crop Insurance Indemnities in the Timeliest Way. While some farm programs may make payments fairly promptly, such as marketing loan benefits, others pay out long after the payments are needed. For example, the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Payments Program (SURE) payments may occur about 1 ½ years after harvest. Crop insurance policies require the companies to pay within 30 days of claim settlement. Losses due to disasters like floods or hurricanes and prevented planting and replant payments may be paid well before harvest.
- Producers Can Use Crop Insurance as Collateral for Loans. When bankers loan to a producer, they require an expectation that the loan can be repaid. Many producers use land, equipment or crops as collateral to secure the loan.
- Producer Indemnities are not Capped by Arbitrary Payment Limits. There are no income caps to be eligible to buy crop insurance, and crop insurance premium subsidies and indemnities are not limited.
- Crop Insurance Has Already Contributed to Deficit Reduction. While the budget for the new farm bill remains uncertain, it is likely to be quite limited. The crop insurance program has the benefit of having recently undergone substantial budget cuts, most of which have been earmarked for deficit reduction.

To learn more about Crop Insurance in New York contact your county Cornell Cooperative Extension Office. You can also visit NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets Crop Insurance Education Program at: http://www.agriculture.ny.gov/AP/ CropInsurance.html or contact Sarah Johnston at: 518-457-4531, or sarah.johnston@agriculture.ny.gov

The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) : http://www.cbo.gov/ftpdocs/126xx/doc12699/01-31-2012\_Outlook.pdf.\_

Source: National Crop Insurance Services TODAY, February 2011

By: Nancy Glazier

This year the calls began the first week of January. When should I frost seed? March is a great time to add some legumes into your pastures or hay-fields. It is a way to improve pastures without losing a production year. Added legumes will boost production and fill in thin patches or bare spots; they will provide needed nitrogen to the grasses already grow-

ing, and provide protein for the livestock. Little or no tillage is involved which reduces the potential for soil erosion. Hopefully, you did your homework last fall by checking the forage quantity, types and groundcover. If not, take a walk!

Frost seeding is the same as any other type of seeding or planting; seed-to-soil contact is critical. What works with this technique is the freeze-thaw process in late

winter/early spring. As the days get above freezing and nights are below freezing, this action works the seeds down into the soil in preparation for germination. Your best option is to spread the seed on frozen ground to reduce the potential to rut up the pasture.

Legumes work best for frost seeding due to the shape of their seeds. Success will vary farm to farm, but clovers will establish better, specifically red clovers. They are shorter-lived in a pasture; a way to offset that would be to frost seed red clover with slowerestablishing birdsfoot trefoil. By the time the clover dies out, the trefoil will be growing well. Another

Lbs/Ad	5
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Red Clover - 6 to 10

Ladino Clover - 2 to 5

Birdsfoot Trefoil - 5 to 8

Alfalfa - 6 to 10



way would be to routinely frost seed half of their pastures every year. It can be an inexpensive improvement. Alfalfa can be frost seeded, but don't try to seed into a field with alfalfa (even a thin stand) growing. The existing plants have an allelopathic effect on alfalfa seedlings; they won't let them grow and become established. Suggested rates are below. The price of seed is relatively low, so don't skimp.

Frost seeding grasses may have limited results, but is

successful with more bunch type grasses like orchardgrass. Try seeding some on a small scale. If the pasture is tall or matted, your success with grasses or legumes may be limited. An option to try is to broadcast the seed and let livestock in – carefully - for a flash or quick grazing. Between their minor munching and hoof action, the seed will have a better chance of reaching the soil.

Also, a light disking or harrowing could scratch the ground enough to let the seed get down the soil to grow. You may need to frost seed grasses and leg-umes separately due to the seeds different shape.

Equipment for frost seeding can be as little or as big as needed. The size of the pasture or field will dictate what's needed, unless you have time to walk a large field with a small cyclone spreader.



A broadcaster can be mounted on the back of an ATV or small tractor. Fertilization will help seedlings get established as well as existing grasses. Wait till late summer if a soil test shows phosphorous or potassium is needed.

Sometimes overgrazing or continuously grazing will leave bare or thin spots, or kill the existing legumes. Frost seedings can be done to improve the stand, but this will only be a short term fix. Rotationally grazing is the best way to improve a stand for the long term. Frost seeding will return legumes to the pastures; dividing the pasture into at least four paddocks will provide forages time to rest and regrow through the growing season. Grazing needs to be carefully managed early season to prevent damage to the tender seedlings, yet allow light to reach them.

Who can predict what this spring will be like? Dry spring conditions will discourage seed germination. Unfortunately, there is no way to control this. With the seed in place, there is a chance that it will germinate and grow when sufficient moisture is there.



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## Drug Therapy Standards – Not Just for Milking Age Cattle

### By: Jerry Bertoldo

**R** eplacement animals are out of the farm's mainstream of activities most of the time. The housing is separate, the feeding system can be different, the personnel are often dedicated to just young stock and treatments are less worried about as far as drug residues. The Dairy Calf and Heifer Association (DC&HA) over the last few years has developed a very useful set of guidelines known as "Gold Standards" covering a wide variety of best management practices for calf raising. The latest, Gold Standards III, covers animal welfare. Drug therapy standards are a part of this section.

Without the serious risk of drug residues and relatively little veterinary oversight, the replacement enterprise on most farms is generally not as intensely managed as the dairy operation. Record keeping and protocols are less prevalent. Drug storage and labeling does not come under the milk inspector's scrutiny. In reality, there is more flexibility for extra label use in young stock. This, however, legally requires veterinarian driven protocols.

Besides the dose, length of treatment and withdrawal considerations, calf/heifer medicating via injection should incorporate injection site guidelines. Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) is a program aimed at minimizing the trim from a carcass at slaughter. Since most dairy animals will enter the beef market at some point it is important to adopt injection site strategies that limit these losses. Starting with a BQA approach for calves conditions employees to instinctively know where vaccines and injected treatments should be administered. Research has pointed out that irritating injections will lead to undesirable changes to muscle tissue that will not heal with time.

It is interesting to note that the movement towards better pain intervention and prevention does not make BQA compliance any easier. Flunixine, a commonly used anti-inflammatory and pain killer, as a stand-alone product must be given intravenously according to the label. Administration in the muscle is much easier, but creates intense irritation and scarring. Other analgesic products presently available need FDA approval for cattle use.

Drug therapy standards posted by the DC&HA (visit at **calfandheifer.org**) include:

- Use drug therapy as prescribed by the herd veterinarian to treat disease and relieve pain and suffering.
- Follow BQA guidelines for handling and administering medications.
- Develop written, on-label treatment protocols with the herd veterinarian.
- Train new employees on diagnostic and treatment procedures and review with veterinarian and employees quarterly.
- Follow label instructions for dosage, treatment frequency, route of administration, age restrictions, withdrawal times and storage recommendations.
- \* If animals do not respond to treatment protocol within 48 hours, seek veterinary examination.
- \* Discard expired or contaminated drugs.





1998 Int'l Paystar 5000, N14 Cums. 460 h.p., 18 spd., eng. brake, 607, 450 miles, rubber block susp. 20 alum. box, tri axle, 20,000# F/A, 46,000# R/A

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## Cornell University Cooperative Extension

Save the Date...

### March 2012

- Beef Quality Assurance Training, 9:30 a.m. 2:30 p.m., Tamberland Farm, 4117 State Route 364, Canandaigua, Contact: Nancy Glazier: 585.315.7746
- 8 Farm Disaster Preparation Certificate Course, 8:30 a.m. 2:30 p.m., CCE-Genesee Co., 420 East Main Street, Batavia, Cost: \$35.00 per person, To register contact: Jan Beglinger, 585.343.3040 x132 or jmb374@cornell.edu



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