NORTHWEST NEW YORK DAIRY, LIVESTOCK & FIELD CROPS TEAM

Ag Focus

Lots of Open Acres: Opportunities for Cover Crops

By: Mike Stanyard

It's time to start thinking about Cover Crops! The last couple of seasons, cover crops have received a lot of interest, especially tillage radishes following winter wheat. Unfortunately, this year there is a lot of open ground that did not get planted this spring. Some of these acres will go into fall seedings and some will be planted to winter wheat. What about the rest of the prevented planted acres? What are some of the options?

An example of crimson clover

Cover Crop Trials in 2010

Last year the team worked with four cooperators across the region to plant different cover crops alone and in combinations (see Table below). All of these were following small grains and planting methods varied (broadcast, airflowed, and drilled). All plots emerged fine but planting dates varied throughout the month of August. Ideally, what we learned was that the plots planted during the first two weeks of August looked the best. After this date, many of the species did not get the size needed to get completely established and achieve full coverage. Four more trials are being set up again this year. We will have two field days this fall to showcase all the different treatments.

Some Words of Caution

There were many things we learned (the hard way) from our cover crop experimentation last year. Remember, all of our trials followed winter wheat.

Continue on page 3

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Mission Statement

The NWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops team will provide lifelong education to the people of the agricultural community to assist them in achieving their goals. Through education programs & opportunities, the NWNY Team seeks to build producers' capacities to:

- 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.

- Volunteer wheat can compete with the desired cover crop. We sprayed the wheat prior to seeding and still had some issues.
- Decide if you want a cover crop that winterkills or overwinters. No-tillers want a crop to winterkill such as forage oats or tillage radish. Many people think forage turnips and annual rye grass winterkill. They do not! In fact, our forage turnips bolted and flowered and had to be sprayed early to prevent seed-set.
- Tillage radish needs some N applied at planting or it will stunt, yellow and not cover well. A history of manure application will help.
- Some covers will not establish well in wetter ground. In this situation, stick to the shallow rooted grasses and small grains. The brassicas and legumes will not do well.

For additional information on these cover crop species and decision making, visit Dr. Thomas Bjorkman's cover crop web page at http://www.hort.cornell.edu/bjorkman/lab/covercrops/index.php.

	Drilled	Broadcast	Price/lb.	Winterkill?
Annual Rye Grass	10-20 lbs.	20-30 lbs.	$.84/lb.	N
Sorghum-Sudangrass	30-40 lbs.	30-40 lbs.	$.52/lb.	Y
Crimson Clover	12 lbs.	20 lbs.	$1.18/lb.	N
White Clover	5-9 lbs.	7-12 lbs.	$2.88/lb.	N
Red Clover	7 lbs.	10 lbs.	$1.76/lb.	N
Field Peas/Austrian Winter Peas	120/50 lbs.	140-60 lbs.	$.52/$.90/lb.	Y/N
Hairy Vetch	15-20 lbs.	25-30 lbs.	$2.58/lb.	N
Forage Radishes	8-10 lbs.	12 lbs.	$3.50/lb.	Y
Forage Turnips	4-7 lbs.	10-12 lbs.	$4.00/lb.	N
Oats (Spring or Forage)	80-110 lbs.	110-140 lbs.	$.44/lb.	Y
Triticale	80 lbs.	110 lbs.	$.44/lb.	N
Wheat	70 lbs.	100 lbs.	$.36/lb.	N
Winter Cereal Rye	60 lbs.	85 lbs.	$.29/lb.	N

Cows of the Future?

By: Jackson Wright

In the US, the composition of milk (fat, protein) is the primary driver of milk price, and almost half of U.S. milk production is utilized to manufacture cheese. Cheese production is contingent on milk fat and protein, and Jersey cows have a significantly smaller body size and produce milk with a higher nutrient density. Recently, Dr. Jude Capper analyzed the environmental impact of producing cheese using milk from Jersey cows compared to Holsteins.

In comparing the larger Holstein cow to the smaller Jersey cow, Jerseys produce less milk by volume; however Jersey milk contains substantially higher milk fat and protein. As a result expected cheese yields are 12.5 lbs. cheese per hundredweight (cwt.) from Jersey milk compared to 10.1 lbs. cheese per cwt. from Holstein milk.

When analyzed on a larger scale using milk production data from approximately two million dairy cows in over 13,000 herds, the higher fat and protein content of Jersey milk lead to a 19% reduction in the amount of milk required to produce 1.1 billion pounds of Cheddar cheese. It is noteworthy that to produce this amount of milk required an additional 91,460 Jerseys, compared to Holsteins. However, the smaller stature of the Jersey cow indicated total body mass of the Jersey population was 26% smaller compared to the Holstein population.

Further analysis indicated that using Jersey milk to produce cheese required 11% less land than Holstein milk. In addition, total feed consumption decreased by 1.75 million tons with Jerseys, and Jerseys produced 2.5 million tons less manure compared to Holsteins. Moreover, water use was reduced by 32%, conserving approximately 66.5 billion gallons of water.

Producing cheese from Jersey milk also used less fossil fuels, equivalent to the amount of energy necessary to heat 6,335 U.S. homes per year. Furthermore, per unit of cheese, total CO2-equivalents were 20% less for Jersey cows than that of Holsteins, equivalent to removing 443,900 cars from the road annually.

The lower total body mass of the Jersey system reduces maintenance costs per animal, meaning proportionally more nutrients are being devoted to milk production instead of homeostasis. In addition, the greater nutrient density of Jersey milk further dilutes maintenance requirements over more units of cheese, leading to greater production efficiency.

In the dairy industry profitability is closely related to production efficiency. The substantial reductions in resources such as land, water, fuel, waste output, and greenhouse gas emissions, coupled with milk composition being a primary driver for milk price may suggest Jerseys are not only more efficient but more profitable in today's marketplace, and therefore may comprise a larger portion of future herds. This data may indicate the Jersey is the cow of the future.

References

Capper , J. L. and R. A. Cady. (2010). A Point-In-Time Comparison of the Environmental Impact of Jersey vs. Holstein Milk Production. Greenhouse Gases and Animal Agriculture Conference, Banff, Canada.

Capper , J. L. and R. A. Cady. (2010). Cheese production from Jersey milk cows conserves resources, reduces impact on environment. DairyBusiness.

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(3) 2001 Peterbilt 357, Cums. ISM 335 h.p., 8LL trans., Chalmers susp., 250" w.b., 22.5 tires, T/A, 20,000# F/A, 44,000# R/A, 145,062 miles, low mile trucks, mixers to be removed, 21' of frame behind cab, stk# 3583/3584/3585, **$28,900.**

1999 Peterbilt 357, CAT C12 425 h.p., 8LL trans., eng. brake, air ride susp., 178" w.b., 22.5 on alum., T/A, 18,000# F/A, 44,000# R/A, 520,601 miles, nice, clean heavy spec day cab, new recap tires, stk# 3628, **$27,900.**

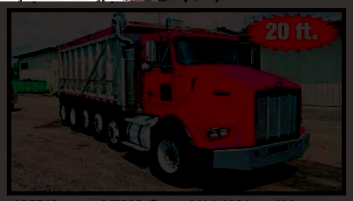
(3) 2000 Western Star Plow/Sander Trucks, CAT C12, 350 h.p., eng brake, 8LL, air lift 3rd axle, dbl frame, 20,000# F/A, 44,000# R/A, 211" w.b., 16/ steel bed, 12 ft plow, Monroe 11 cy spreader, pre wet sys, elec spreader control, hyd tailgate spreader, coming soon!!!

2005 Volvo VNL42T300, Volvo VED12 465 h.p., 18 spd., eng. brake, air ride susp., 4.11 ratio, 220" w.b., 22.5 on alum., T/A, 14,600# F/A, 46,000# R/A, 476,163 miles, very clean heavy, stk# [illegible], $38,900.

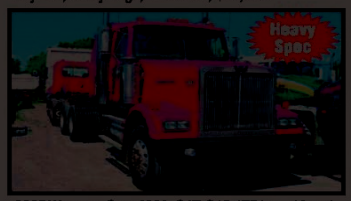
2007 Mack Vision CXN613, Mack 460 h.p., 18 spd., eng. brake, air ride susp., 191" w.b., 22.5 on alum., T/A, 14,000# F/A, 46,000# R/A, 416,692 miles, very clean day cab, ready to go, stk# 3667, **$47,900.**

(2) 2006 Mack Vision CX613, Mack E7 427 h.p., 10 spd., eng. brake, air ride susp., 177" w.b., 22.5 on alum., T/A, 12,000# F/A, 44,000# R/A, 530,688 miles, heavy spec day cabs w/wetlines, stk# 3617/3618, **$37,000.**

2002 Kenworth T800, Cums. ISM 350 h.p., 8LL trans., 17' steel dump body, 4.88 ratio, 266" w.b., 22.5 tires, tri axle, 18,000# F/A, 46,000# R/A, 332,156 miles, very clean, stk# 3609, **$34,900.**

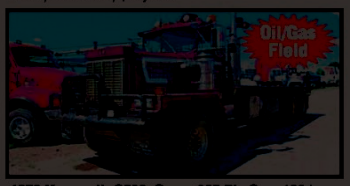


1997 Kenworth T800, Cums. M11 400 h.p., 8LL trans., eng. brake, 20' alum. rust free dump body, Chalmers susp., 255" w.b., alum./steel whls., 5 axles, 20,000# F/A, 46,000# R/A, 536,081 miles, clean, stk# 3629, **$33,900.**



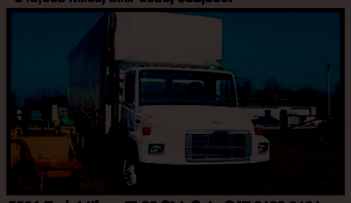
2005 Western Star 4900, CAT C15 475 h.p., 18 spd., eng. brake, Haulmaax susp., 244" w.b., 36" flat top slpr., 22.5 on alum., T/A, 14,600# F/A, 46,000# R/A, 545,068 miles, stk# 3636, **$52,500.**

1999 Western Star 4964FX, CAT 3406E 475 h.p., 18 spd., eng. brake, Hend. susp., 258" w.b., 24.5 on alum./steel, T/A, 12,000# F/A, 45,000# R/A, 443,813 miles, southern truck, stk# 3626, **$52,500. Also: 1999 Peterbilt & 1994 Western Star Oil Field Winch Trucks!**



1979 Kenworth C500, Cums. 855 Big Cam 400 h.p., 5&4 spd., eng. brake, rubber block susp., 269" w.b., T/A, 20,000# F/A, 46,000# R/A, HD flatbed w/Tulsa 35 ton winch & 18 ½' deck, 5th whl. folds down & hides in deck, stk# 3632.

2007 GMC W4500, Isuzu 190 h.p. diesel, auto. trans., S/A, 12,134 miles, Victory Mark II sweeper powered by CAT C2.2, stk# 3566, **$48,900.**



2004 Freightliner FL80 Std. Cab, CAT 3126 246 h.p., 9 spd., 30"x96" body, spring susp., all steel whls., T/A, 12,000# F/A, 40,000# R/A, swing door, 348,530 miles, good runner, stk# 3554, **$22,500.**

(2) 2000 Kenworth T800 Daycab, CAT 430 h.p., engine brake, Eaton Fuller 18 spd, full lock, air ride, 20,000# F/A, 46,000# R/A, 199" w.b., wet kit.

2006 Peterbilt 357, Cums. 330 h.p., Allison auto., 20,000# F/A, 46,000# R/A, 250" w.b., alum. wheels, 10'6" cu. yd. mixer, steerable booster axle, remote controls. **Also: 2005 Peterbilt coming soon! In Stock: Int'l, Kenworth, Volvo & Peterbilt Mixers or C&C.**

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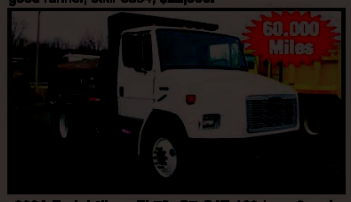
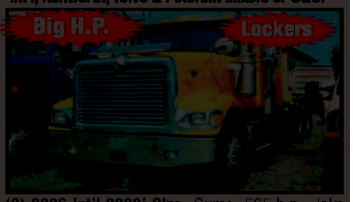


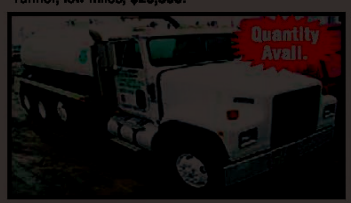
2004 Freightliner FL70, C7 CAT 190 h.p., 6 spd., 10', spring susp., steel comp., 22.5 tires on all steel, S/A, 12,000# F/A, 21,000# R/A, 60,358 miles, good runner, low miles, **$28,500.**

1998 Mack CL713, Mack E7 400 h.p., Fuller 8LL trans., air lift 3rd, 4th & 5th axles, dbl. frame, 20,000# F/A, 44,000# R/A, Camelback susp., 21' alum. box.



(2) 2006 Int'l 9900i Slpr., Cums. 565 h.p., Jake Brake, 18 spd., 14,000# F/A, 46,000# R/A, lockers, 590k - 650k miles, **$44,000.**

2007 Int'l 9400I, Cums. ISX 450 h.p., eng. brake, 12 spd. auto. trans., air ride susp., 46,000# R/A, 320k miles, **$53,650.**



1999 Int'l 5000 PayStar, Cums., Jake Brake, 8LL trans., air lift, 18,000# F/A, 46,000# R/A, vac. pump, rear discharge. **Many Other Freightliner/Volvo/Int'l Alum. & Steel Tank Vac. Trucks In Stock & More Coming!**

(5) 2004 Freightliner Columbia Day Cabs, CAT 430 h.p., Jake Brake, 10 spd. man., 46,000# R/A, 475k-520k miles, **$33,500 each.**

2006 Hyundai ROBEX 450LC-7, bucket, 11' stick, 4641 Hrs.

Maximizing Performance through Cow Comfort – Economic Analysis

By: John Hanchar and Jackson Wright

In the June 2011 issue of AgFocus, Dairy Specialist Jackson Wright wrote about maximizing performance through cow comfort. Jackson wrote, "Facilities with poor cow comfort limit access to resources which in turn increases competition and social confrontation between animals. In overcrowded facilities this is noticeable at the feed bunk following milking or fresh feed delivery, as dominant cows will demand priority in feeding." Regarding overcrowding, a key is to consider a whole farm perspective. Tradeoffs associated with reducing cow numbers, in the form of effects on profitability, exist as the farm manager attempts to improve milk sold per cow through cow comfort efforts that reduce the stocking rate. The analyses described below were developed to answer the question "What are the expected changes in profit associated with enhancing cow comfort through decreases in stocking rates for ranges of key variables?"

Summary of Work

The benefits of addressing overcrowding effects on milk sold per cow through decreased cow numbers must be weighed against the expected changes in costs associated with achieving higher levels of production, for example, higher purchased feed and crop expenses, and the expected changes income and costs associated with decreased cow numbers.

Results suggest that enhancing cow comfort by reducing the stocking rate can be expected to increase profit over ranges of two key variables – expected change in milk sold per cow per year attributed to cow comfort efforts, and expected purchased feed and crop expense per additional pound of milk. We examined 20 expected change in milk sold per cow per year, expected purchased feed and crop expense per additional pound of milk combinations. Twelve combinations expected changes in profit less than zero, while 8 combinations yielded positive expected changes in profit.

A farm manager's decisions regarding overcrowding will benefit from analyses that reflect conditions, and expectations specific to the farm, due to the sensitivity of results to changes in key variables. Following recent cow comfort training, Jackson, sums up this aspect of the work – "The hard part is finding each facility's threshold where you are fully [optimally] utilizing the facility, while maintaining adequate cow comfort and subsequent production per cow."

Economic Analysis

One factor that producers use to evaluate possible changes in practices is the expected change in profit. Profit equals the total value of production, income minus the costs of resources, inputs used in production. Expected change in profit equals the expected change in total value of production minus the expected change in costs. Analysts construct a partial budget to estimate the expected change in profit associated with a proposed change in the farm business, for example, cow comfort enhancement through reduced stocking rates.

Selected Assumptions

- The dairy farm's housing consists of 100 stalls.
- Current production is approximately 21,000 lbs./ cow/ year, at a stocking rate of 117 cows.
- The stocking rate will be reduced to 100 cows.
- The expected change in milk sold per cow in an average future year attributed to cow comfort efforts examined initially is 18 percent.
- Expected net milk price (gross less marketing expenses) is about $16 per cwt.
- The expected purchased feed and crop expense per additional pound of milk sold per cow examined initially is $0.07 (Source: Cornell University Cooperative Extension's Dairy Farm Business Summary Program). Whole farm, average future year, before tax, marginal analysis.

Results

Initial partial budget results appear in Table 1. The "change in accrual receipts, milk sold" item reflects the overall effect on farm performance associated with increasing milk sold per cow while milking fewer cows.

Sensitivity results are reported in Table 2. Note that for a given marginal feed cost, not all expected increases in milk sold per cow per year yield expected increases in profit. For some combinations, even though milk sold per cow per year is expected to rise, the farm business can't overcome the negative overall effects on profit of milking fewer cows.

Table 1: Partial Budget

Proposed: 100 cows for 100 stalls, improved parlor efficiencies and other changes leading to improved cow comfort versus Current: 117 cows for 100 stalls

Expected Changes in Total Value of Production (TVP), Income:	
⇒ change in accrual receipts, milk sold	$3,308
Sum of expected changes in TVP (A):	$3,308
Expected Change in Costs:	
⇒ change in accrual purchased feed and crop expense	$2,195
⇒ change in accrual expenses due to decreased cow numbers (breeding, veterinary & medicine, etc.)	-$3,383
Sum of expected changes in costs (B)	-$1,188
Expected Change in Profit (A minus B)	$4,496

Table 2: Sensitivity Results

Expected feed and crop expense per additional pound of milk sold	Expected change in milk sold per cow per year attributed to cow comfort efforts (expressed as a decimal)			
	0.05	0.10	0.15	0.18
0.04	-16,550	-4,154	8,242	15,680
0.05	-17,585	-6,225	5,136	11,952
0.06	-18,621	-8,296	2,029	8,224
0.07	-19,657	-10,367	-1,078	4,496
0.08	-20,692	-12,439	-4,185	767

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Ask Extension...

How Do I Market My Meat Products?

By: Nancy Glazier

"Mom, I am headed home now."

"Drive safely."

"I'm in the Volvo not the Trans Am."

Hmm. You are probably thinking, "What does this have to do with marketing?" Well, a lot. Your marketing strategy should have a target audience, and not the shotgun approach. You need to brand your product. Volvo has branded themselves as a safe, family car. They may be trying to change the image to be sportier, but it's a tough job. Think about Scotch tape or Kleenex, brands with so much recognition they are household names. These are national examples, so bring it down to the local level.

Develop your own marketing strategy. Your farm enterprise should be treated like a business. And, like it or not, you need to be a salesman. You will need to toot your own horn. The big question: What sets you apart from the rest of the producers of your product? What claims will your customer care about the most?

To market your product strategically, pick a target customer. That doesn't mean eliminate everyone else along the way; it means your marketing will have a focus. At a recent Strategic Livestock Marketing Workshop 3 types of customers were described: Foodie/locavore enthusiasts; health /social cause-motivated; traditional/value shopper. There's other types, but keep it simple, they are the focus.

- Foodie/locavore enthusiasts – these food buyers want the best of the best, those premium cuts. These customers are least price sensitive but may not be loyal shoppers.
- Health /social cause-motivated – these buyers are moderately price sensitive. They will shop at farmer's markets, CSAs or freezer trade. They will be moderately loyal with their purchases.
- Traditional/value shopper – these are the smart shoppers who shop around and then buy in bulk. They are the most price-sensitive and most loyal.

Define your marketing objectives. Think about these points:

* How will I stand out from the crowd?
* How will I better my position in the marketplace?
* How will I carve out my spot?
* How will I gain customers?
* How will I increase sales?

Keep your message clear and focused for your targeted customer. How do you want to be known? Develop a logo for your enterprise and use it on all marketing material – business cards, brochures, and website.

Fill in the blanks:

Our farm raises_____(claims, products) for_____(target customers) who_____. (activity, demographics, behavior)

This is a brief overview. I always tell prospective livestock producers to think about the end before they begin. If you'd like to learn more about marketing, let me know and will put together some fall and winter workshops!

Heat Stress – the Rest of the Story

By: Jerry Bertoldo

The weather has been on everyone's mind and in our conversations since spring – from endless rains to now parching sun and heat. Milk production has suffered across the board. Those armed with fans, misters or soakers or a combination of these, have had the least impact on herd production. Minimal or no heat abatement has resulted in milk losses of 10-20%.

Not designed for the heat

Cows are biological factories with a heat generating rumen as part of their powerhouse. In one day, they give off the same heat as a 1500 watt electric hair dryer running for one hour. Cows have limited ability to sweat. Their surface area is small compared to the body mass. Radiating excess heat is not very efficient. Much heat loss must occur through breathing. Cows have a need to dump extra body heat when ambient temperatures exceed 68°F. High humidity makes the job tougher.

We most easily see the evidence of this overheating in decreased dry matter intake and lower milk production. Panting increases standing time and crowding develops as the situation worsens. Prolonged heat stress will limit the expected recovery in pounds of milk in mid to late lactation cows and dampen the peak milk for early lactation ones.

Heat stress with consequences occurs in cattle when body temperatures exceed 103°F, respirations are more than 80 per minute, feed intake drops more than 10-15% and milk production decreases the same. The efficiency of energy utilization for milk production may drop 30-50% as well.

Immediate and delayed consequences

The effects of heat stress are more numerous than these previous observations. Body temperatures over 103°F for several hours are lethal to embryos and reduce the effects of vaccinations. Birth weights are lower when the calf is carried through the last trimester in hot conditions. Colostrum quality is lower. Body condition is harder to maintain. Laminitis is more common after hot weather. Metabolic problems occur more frequently in transition cows during these conditions. Ketotic cows have reduced fertility two months after the episode. Immune function suffers after heat stress resulting in more mastitis, retained placentas and metritis.

Laminitis is a big dollar issue

Cattle trend towards erratic eating patterns and less cud chewing during heat stress. This leads to lower saliva production and rumen pH. Drooling of bicarbonate rich saliva during extreme heat wastes this buffer when it is needed the most. Panting contributes to the acidosis picture by lowering blood pH. Higher rumen acidity ulcerates the rumen lining opening a way for harmful toxins and bacteria to enter the bloodstream and promote the release of powerful chemicals that inflame the soft tissues inside the hoof. This is how chemically induced laminitis happens. The result is at first the bruised appearance of the sole followed by white line and heel separations, sole ulcers and abscesses. Eventually the fever rings and misshapen hoof walls become apparent.

Continue on page 12

From a purely mechanical point of view, it is fairly common to see laminitis after cows have experienced long periods of standing versus lying down compared to the ideal 12 hours plus off their feet. Overcrowding is often the cause. This occurs in all weather conditions; however the severity of the situation is much more dramatic when putting the metabolic changes of heat stress on top.

The signs of laminitis start with stiffness in gait and evolve to more dramatic lameness. Telltale signs of sole discoloration take up to two month to show, matching the growth rate and thickness of the sole layer. Continued insult to the sensitive areas in the hoof compound the problem. These cows become difficult to keep sound and productive.

Silent time bombs

The entry of bacteria into the bloodstream through the "burnt" rumen wall provides the culture for abscesses as well as chemical changes affecting the feet. Unlike other species, cattle tolerate this level of bacteria quite well. The same load of bugs would undoubtedly make us severely ill in the least.

These bacteria travel and set up housekeeping in other places as well in the cow. The lung and liver are two prime spots. Abscesses can develop and enlarge over time. Chronic rumen acidosis can be associated with sudden death from the rupture of these pus pockets. When this occurs in the lungs, bleeding from the nose is a common sign. Other cases wind up being poor doers without a diagnosis.

Cause and effect

With the time span between heat stress and a good deal of the aftermath being long, it is easy to look for other reasons to explain problems that come up in the fall. It is late to do much about heat abatement for this year, but it is not too early to think about what you can do to for next. Keep a mindful eye on the performance of your herd in the months ahead and see if it fits with the heat stress "rest of the story". There is a big dollar opportunity in providing extra cool comfort to cows in the summer.

Winning the Game

Tool Time for Post-Harvest Marketers

What pricing tools are available to grain marketers after harvest? This program will use two different post-harvest marketing plans to illustrate the pros and cons of pricing tools. A corn plan illustrates tools used to sell the carry: forward contracts, selling futures contracts, hedge-to-arrive contracts, and buying put options. A soybean plan illustrates four more tools: selling at harvest, holding un-priced grain, selling at harvest and re-owning with call options, and price windows. Your customers are invited to put these tools to the test in a fast-paced and realistic marketing game.

This workshop is being presented by Penn State Cooperative Extension agent John Berry. Pre-registration is required by contacting the location of your choice. Payment of the ***$30 registration fee*** covers handouts, refreshments and lunch.

Thursday, September 1

10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

CCE - Genesee County

420 East Main Street, Batavia

RSVP:

Cathy Wallace at

585.343.3040 ext. 138 or cfw6@cornell.edu

For more information:

Contact Jim Grace at

607.664.2316 or jwg8@cornell.edu

Friday, September 2

10:30 - 3:00 p.m.

Experimental Station

Jordan Hall, 630 North Street, Geneva

RSVP:

Cathy Wallace at

585.343.3040 ext. 138 or cfw6@cornell.edu

For more information:

Contact John Hanchar at

585.658.3250 ext. 112 or jjh6@cornell.edu

RMA

USDA Risk Management Agency

New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets

Agricultura

Preparation is Key for I-9 Audits

By: Greg Coffta

More and more dairy farms across the country are feeling the chilling effect that ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) can have on a business's operations. Increasingly over the past 18 months ICE has been conducting what is commonly known as a "silent raid" instead of the traditional worksite raids on undocumented employees. The "silent raid" or I-9 audit, involves a thorough inspection of the employer's HR documents, principally I-9 forms and payroll information. The audit can lead to serious consequences for employers and employees alike. Many farms that I work with have been the subject of an audit and its consequences, leaving them in a scramble to solve multiple problems simultaneously. Compliance with paperwork requirements is often the first problem; employers will have to go through the paperwork with a fine-toothed comb to make sure it is free of violations. Another problem is ensuring that managerial staff is uniformly prepared if approached by an ICE agent. Finally, and perhaps the most enduring, is the problem of losing competent and experienced employees. Usually an audit will result in a list of employees that do not have valid documentation, and therefore have to produce the documentation or discontinue employment.

As ICE audits become more and more common, dairy farms should be preparing themselves for the inevitable. First, and of course, seek out legal counsel and representation that you can trust. Try to find a person who is experienced in legal matters regarding immigration and labor. This person can help you avoid the pitfalls that employers can commit when preparing for an audit. They could also help develop an on-farm protocol for employees to follow if an ICE agent visits the farm. If and when an audit does come to pass, you will surely want that person's number on-hand.

It is good practice to have a meeting with all employees, especially managerial staff, to prepare them for dealing with ICE agents. All employees should be trained to tell ICE agents that the company has a very specific protocol for dealing with any matter of concern and that the agent will have to wait to speak with the designated person. Along with that, have a designated person or two on staff that has been counseled by your legal representation.

Employees shouldn't be interviewed by or give any documentation to ICE without first conferring with the designated person. It is also a good idea to keep all I-9 forms and supporting documents in a separate, stand-alone folder. It is prudent to keep information for all farm employees, not just those you think may be in question, in this file. (On a side note, remember that an employer is not required to keep copies of documents that employees present for the I-9 form, but if you do it for one you should do it for all.) If an audit does come to pass, the folder can be given to ICE for the audit. Initially ICE will require the I-9 forms and supporting documents, but later they may request payroll information, a list of current employees, articles of incorporation

and business licenses. Submitting paperwork that is not initially necessary for the audit, submitting paperwork without making a copy and/or giving ICE access to the all of documents in the office are all pitfalls that you should consider.

Along with the preemptive preparation of personnel and paperwork, it is important to know about the process of an I-9 audit and about your rights. Although no search warrant is required for an audit, ICE is required to give a notice three days prior to inspection. This will be presented in the form of a letter called the Notice Of Inspection (NOI).

After the audit, ICE will provide the results. Ideally, there will be no discrepancies, no violations, no citations and no problems and the employer will receive a simple Notice of Inspection Results letter which tells that the farm is compliant. Realistically, ICE will give out notices to the employer. The most common notices include; Notice Of Suspect Documents, Notice of Discrepancies, Notice of Technical or Procedural Failures, Warning Notice and Notice of Intent to Fine. These different types of notices will indicate the severity of the problem and what the employer should do to comply. A Notice of Intent to Fine is perhaps the most severe, but a Notice of Technical or Procedural Failure could result in the discontinuation of many employees. For more detailed information on ICE's process, visit this link, which is ICE's own "Form I-9 Inspection" overview: http://www.ice.gov/doclib/foia/dro_policy_memos/formi9inspectionoverview.pdf

In my experience, the loss of a handful of key employees is the most painful and dramatic of the consequences of an audit. After losing those employees, farms have struggled for months to find a way to replace them. Even a year after an audit some farms are still feeling the effects of losing the employees because they have searched the limited human capital of the surrounding area and haven't been able to find an adequate replacement. Although you'll never know if an audit will come to pass and therefore never know if you'll need to replace employees fast, there are ways to be prepared for this eventuality. First, cross-train your employees and cross-train their positions. Having a team of malleable employees ready to shift into new responsibilities is extremely helpful in the short-term. Another preventative measure is to speak with another area dairy farm to set up a plan for "renting" employees for a short time. If you are going to lose a significant number of good employees, it's likely you'll have to use both of these strategies.

It is my hope that changes will soon be made which will enable a realistic program for dairy farmers to hire on a team of employees without having to worry about the issue of ICE, just as most other agriculture operations do with H2-A and other Department of Labor programs. For the time being, preparation is critical, as well as staying abreast on the issue both nationally and locally.

Greg Coffta is the Bilingual Dairy Support Specialist with the North West New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team. He can be reached at 585.208.8546 or gjc53@cornell.edu

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August 2011

2-6 Livingston County Fair at Caledonia, 310 Leicester St., Caledonia, Contact: 585.538.2168
8-13 Wayne County Fair, 250 W. Jackson St., Palmyra, Contact: 315.597.5372
9-11 Empire Farm Days, Rodman Lott & Son Farms, Route 414, Seneca Falls, Free admission, Parking $10.00
14-21 Wyoming County Fair, N. Division St., Pike, Contact: 585.493.5626

September 2011

1 Winning the Game: Tool Time for Post-Harvest Marketers, CCE-Genesee Co. 10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., 420 E. Main St., Batavia, Registration Contact: Cathy Wallace, 585.343.3040 x138 or cfw6@cornell.edu
2 Winning the Game: Tool Time for Post-Harvest Marketers, Jordan Hall, 630 North St., Geneva, 10:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m., Registration Contact: Cathy Wallace: 585.343.3040 x138 or cfw6@cornell.edu

November 2011

7-8 Silvopasturing in the Northeast, Watkins Glen Harbor Hotel, Watkins Glen, NY

January 2012

18 WNY Corn Congress, Clarion Inn, 8250 Park Road, Batavia
19 Finger Lakes Corn Congress, Holiday Inn, 2468 NYS Route 414, Waterloo

February 2012

8 WNY Soybean/Small Grains Congress, Clarion Inn, 8250 Park Road, Batavia
9 Finger Lakes Soybean/Small Grains Congress, Holiday Inn, 2468 NYS Route 414, Waterloo