



North Country Ag Advisor

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CCE North Country Regional Ag Team

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North Country Ag Advisor

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"The North Country Regional Ag Team is a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and the CCE Associations in Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton, and Essex counties."

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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."

Field Crops and Soils

Avoid Additional Alfalfa Stresses this Fall with Good Cutting Timing

By Kitty O'Neil and Joe Lawrence, Cornell University, PRO-DAIRY

The 2020 growing season in the North Country has been dominated by drought and difficult decisions, especially where forage management is concerned. Alfalfa fields in many parts of the region have been seriously water stressed since mid-May and deserve some good fall care, if at all possible, to limit further harm to stand persistence. Current recommendations are to allow alfalfa stands to rest during a critical window prior to the first fall frost. Alfalfa needs at least 900 GDD₄₁ to build sufficient root reserves to enter winter in good stead, or, if we give it less than 360 GDD₄₁ before the first frost, it will not deplete root reserves trying to regrow. Between 360 and 900 GDD₄₁ is the window we want to avoid cutting alfalfa for best persistence. These rest windows were calculated for 25 locations across NNY and are listed below.

County	Town/Village	Avg. First	Range of First Frost (32°F)*	Low Risk of Frost Damage	Frost Damage More Likely	Low Risk of Frost Damage
				Cut BEFORE	AVOID!	Cut AFTER
Clinton	Champlain	5-Oct	19-Sep 21-Oct	18-Aug	↔	12-Sep
	Ellenburg Depot	6-Oct	19-Sep 24-Oct	17-Aug	↔	12-Sep
	Beekmantown	5-Oct	19-Sep 21-Oct	23-Aug	↔	14-Sep
	Peru	11-Oct	19-Sep 3-Nov	26-Aug	↔	18-Sep
Essex	Whallonsburg	6-Oct	19-Sep 24-Oct	24-Aug	↔	15-Sep
	Willsboro	6-Oct	19-Sep 24-Oct	24-Aug	↔	15-Sep
	Ticonderoga	5-Oct	18-Sep 22-Oct	25-Aug	↔	15-Sep
Franklin	Bombay	28-Sep	5-Sep 21-Oct	17-Aug	↔	8-Sep
	Malone	6-Oct	19-Sep 24-Oct	22-Aug	↔	13-Sep
	Chateaugay	6-Oct	19-Sep 24-Oct	21-Aug	↔	13-Sep
Jefferson	Rodman	7-Oct	19-Sep 25-Oct	23-Aug	↔	15-Sep
	Cape Vincent	12-Oct	19-Sep 4-Nov	27-Aug	↔	19-Sep
	Evans Mills	4-Oct	19-Sep 20-Oct	23-Aug	↔	14-Sep
	Redwood	30-Sep	11-Sep 20-Oct	20-Aug	↔	11-Sep
	Antwerp	3-Oct	16-Sep 21-Oct	20-Aug	↔	12-Sep
Lewis	Talcottville	3-Oct	17-Sep 20-Oct	18-Aug	↔	10-Sep
	Martinsburg	4-Oct	17-Sep 21-Oct	20-Aug	↔	11-Sep
	Carthage	4-Oct	17-Sep 21-Oct	21-Aug	↔	13-Sep
St. Lawrence	Gouverneur	27-Sep	11-Sep 14-Oct	16-Aug	↔	7-Sep
	Hammond	28-Sep	10-Sep 17-Oct	18-Aug	↔	8-Sep
	Ogdensburg	3-Oct	16-Sep 21-Oct	14-Aug	↔	12-Sep
	Canton	2-Oct	11-Sep 24-Oct	20-Aug	↔	11-Sep
	Madrid	4-Oct	17-Sep 21-Oct	21-Aug	↔	13-Sep
	N Lawrence	6-Oct	19-Sep 24-Oct	22-Aug	↔	14-Sep
	Louisville	30-Sep	16-Sep 14-Oct	18-Aug	↔	9-Sep
Average		4-Oct	16-Sep 22-Oct	20-Aug	↔	12-Sep

* All frost dates were calculated using the [Climate Smart Farming GDD Calculator tool](#), using a 32 F daily temperature minimum as a threshold. The range and average frost dates were calculated from a 15-year dataset.

Additional resources:

[Late Summer Alfalfa harvest? Take Labor Day off.](#) 2016, J. Lawrence and M. Hunter. Cornell PRO-DAIRY.

[Alfalfa Fall Harvest Guidelines in N – Should They Change?](#) J. Cherney, D. Cherney, and P. Peterson. What's Cropping Up. 22(3).1-5.

[Cornell Field Crops Resources.](#)

[Cornell Cooperative Extension's North Country Regional Ag Team Web Resources](#)

Don't Ignore Marestail this Fall

By Michael Hunter

Marestail (a.k.a Horseweed) is a weed that can be found in many crop fields, fallow areas, ditch banks, and along roadsides in NNY. This is a weed that is becoming a problem for growers in Northern New York since there are now populations of glyphosate and ALS resistant marestail in the North Country. Multiple-resistant marestail is a weed that cannot be ignored and will continue to spread throughout the area.

Marestail is a winter or summer annual weed that reproduces by seeds. Seeds can germinate in the spring, late summer, or fall (see photo 1 and 2). Those seeds that germinate in late summer will overwinter as a small rosette of leaves and grow a flowering stem in the early spring. To successfully manage marestail in no till cropping systems it is important to



Photo 1. Marestail in winter wheat stubble Aug 14, 2020. Photo credit: M. Hunter.

implement control tactics in both the fall and spring.

Multiple-resistant marestail can be a problem to control in corn, soybeans, and wheat. However, it will be most challenging to control in soybeans due to the limited number of effective herbicide options. It will be an even bigger problem in no till and reduced tillage soybeans.

Management options for multiple-resistant marestail in the fall include the use of cover crops and/or burndown herbicides.

- Planting a winter cereal cover crop such as rye has proven to be an effective strategy to suppress the growth of marestail. It works best if the cover crops are seeded early enough so that they can provide the necessary biomass to suppress the emerging annual weeds.
- No-till growers that are not using fall planted cover crops should consider applying a fall burndown herbicide to control emerged marestail. Glyphosate alone will not control resistant marestail. Glyphosate can still be used to control other weeds, but will require the addition of 2,4-D ester or dicamba or Sharpen to control the marestail.

Do not ignore any marestail growing in your fields this fall. Let's be diligent and keep a lookout for potential populations of herbicide-resistant marestail in NNY.

If you are finding higher populations of marestail or are not getting adequate control of this weed please contact Mike Hunter 315-788-8450 or Kitty O'Neil 315-854-1218.





Photo 2. Recently emerged marestail in winter wheat stubble Aug 14, 2020. Photo credit: M. Hunter

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National Dairy FARM Program Update

By Lindsay Ferlito

I recently (virtually) attended the National Dairy FARM Program Annual Evaluators Conference, and I wanted to provide an update on the program.

While each cooperative can decide how they want to proceed, as of the end of August, the FARM Program is still recommending that member coops continue the pause on all on-farm activities related to the FARM Program due to the risks of COVID-19 (ie: no on-farm evaluations for Version 4.0 and no on-farm check-ups regarding Mandatory Corrective Action Plans or Continuous Improvement Plans). While your cooperative member may not currently be visiting your farm in person, that does not mean that the FARM Program itself is on hold. You still need to continue to meet Version 4.0 guidelines, or continue to work on meeting them.

Additionally, Version 4.0 of the Animal Care Program was launched in January 1, 2020, and was supposed to run until Dec 31, 2022, however it has now been extended until Dec 31, 2023. This means that the existing guidelines with Version 4.0 will be in effect for one more year, and some farms (the ones that had a Version 4.0 evaluation earlier this year) will end up having two Version 4.0 evaluations since farms need to be evaluated at least every three years.

As a reminder, Version 4.0 includes some changes from Version 3.0, including that in addition to your annually signed VCPR, you also need to have your herd veterinarian review your herd health plan annually. Additionally, all animals starting at day 3 of age need to have access to feed and water (that means water and some starter for 3-d old calves). Calves should also be disbudded by 8 weeks of age and pain management should be used. Further, Version 4.0 now contains continuing education

requirements. All employees (including family members and owners) must complete annual continuing education in the following areas if they have responsibilities in these areas:

- Stockmanship
- Pre-weaned calf care
- Non-ambulatory animals
- Euthanasia
- Fitness for transport

If you have any questions or need help meeting the Version 4.0 requirements, please reach out to me (Lindsay Ferlito: LC636@cornell.edu or 607-592-0290) and check out these resources:

- CCE NCRAT newsletter article series from this spring
<https://ncrat.cce.cornell.edu/newsletter.php>
- CCE NCRAT YouTube videos
<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCxb3fv12XdCA3GjuDsM3Q>
- FARM Program webpage
<https://nationaldairyfarm.com/animal-care-training-resources/>

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*2015 SNL Financial Report. Based on statutory data.

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Hay or Nay? Should you Provide Hay to Pre-Weaned Dairy Calves?

By Casey Havekes

A common question that we receive from dairy farmers is: “Should I be giving hay to my pre-weaned calves?” I think this question stems from varying opinions from industry experts over the past several decades resulting in conflicting views on whether hay provision for young calves is beneficial or detrimental. For that reason, I reached out to Dr. Emily Miller-Cushon who is a professor of Animal Science at the University of Florida. Emily has spent the past several years intensely researching hay provision for pre-weaned calves. Emily agreed to participate in a podcast interview (click [here](#) to listen on the CCE NCRAT YouTube page), but I wanted to take the opportunity to summarize the information she provided in written form as well.

Emily first acknowledged that providing hay to calves is a controversial topic for dairy farmers and that there are many sources of variation that could influence how calves respond to hay provision. For example, the type of hay, physical characteristics of the hay, the type of solid feed, milk feeding level, and social environment are all areas to consider, and Emily emphasized the point that what works for one farm may not work for another, and that ultimately you have to watch how your calves respond. Furthermore, Emily recognized that many farmers are under the impression that hay will interfere with starter intake. However, this common opinion is actually not backed by recent research. In fact, research in the last 5 years has found the opposite, and has demonstrated that hay provision may increase starter intake, improve feed efficiency, result in higher average daily gain, and promote rumen health. Emily further explained that in two recent studies it was found that calves that had free choice access to chopped hay consumed more total solid feed compared to calves that were not offered hay. Please note that those calves provided with hay actually did not consume any more starter than their counterpart, but because they also consumed the hay it resulted in increased total solid feed intake.

One of Emily’s primary research focuses has been on the behavioral benefits of providing calves with hay and the results from her research are quite fascinating. Emily explained how when provided with hay, calves spend more time eating throughout the day which indicates that they are experiencing more variable foraging behavior and perhaps it gives them something to do with their time. Her research suggests that calves actually enjoy consuming the hay and, in some circumstances, they preferentially select for the hay.

Specifically, during the early milk phase, when fed a mixture of solid feed and chopped hay, calves actually preferred to consume the hay versus the starter.

Even more interesting, however, is that when their nutrient requirements begin to change later in the milk phase, they sort more in favor of the starter and less in favor of the hay. This result implies that calves will sort in favor of the feedstuff that best suits their nutritional demand. The fact that the calves preferred to consume the hay versus the starter during the early milk period may be perceived negatively; however, I think it is important to note that during this time milk is their primary energy source, not starter, and as such this behavior will not interfere with growth or development. An important consideration given these results, is that sorting is a learned behavior. If possible, provide hay separate from starter so that calves don’t learn this sorting behavior early in life.

An additional benefit from providing hay is the reduced non-nutritive oral behaviors that calves perform. We often see calves cross sucking or preforming pen directed sucking behaviors (on buckets, nipples, bars etc.), but providing hay may reduce these behaviors by giving the calves something to chew on or manipulate and this benefit is even more evident as calves approach weaning.

One last benefit that Emily highlighted was the potential impact that hay provision has on cognitive development. Emily explained that exposure to different feedstuffs early in life can promote acceptance of novel feeds later in life, as well as it may facilitate learning development.

As calves develop, we want to make sure that they are able to adapt to a changing environment and that they aren’t set back from small changes that they are bound to experience



Photo Credit: <https://www.anderson-hay.com/blog/bid/98924/Forage-Recommendations-for-Young-Dairy-Calves>

Continued on Page 7...

(diet changes, pen changes, weaning, etc.). While more research is needed on this particular topic there is evidence that suggests providing hay can positively affect calves' learning ability.

Lastly, Emily points out that in her opinion a calf is never too young to have access to hay. According to the FARM 4.0 requirements, calves are required to have feed and water access by 3 days of age and Emily suggests providing hay at the same time (in addition to starter). The calf may not consume the hay right away, but she will at least get used to it and maybe sniff it or play with it. The hay that you provide does not have to be the best quality hay that you have. You can easily get away with feeding low quality hay or even straw, if you have access to it.


In summary, providing hay to calves has many behavioral benefits and it's something that Emily highly recommends to promote behavioral development and even growth. However, there are several considerations that could influence the success of this strategy, including management. If you have further questions regarding this topic please reach out to me (cdh238@cornell.edu; 315-955-2059) .

Cornell Cooperative Extension North Country Regional Ag Team



WEEKLY UPDATE

CFAP DEADLINE, PPD Explanation, Labor Updates, Dairy Podcasts, Field and Crop Updates



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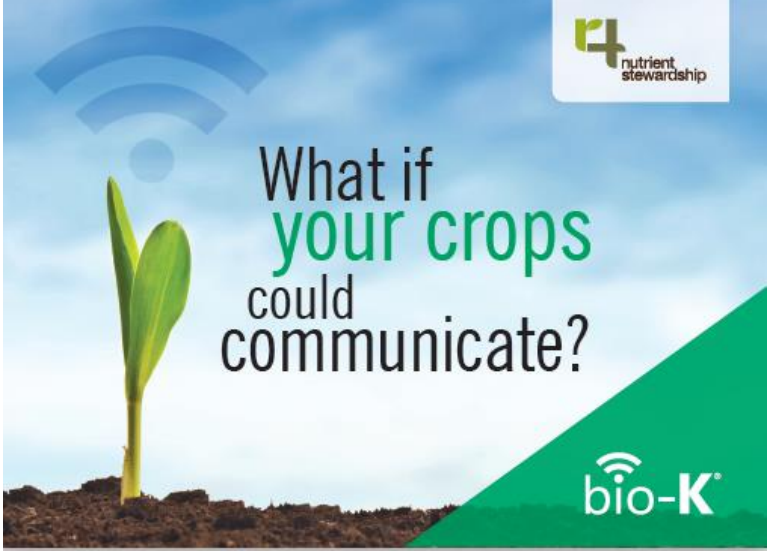
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DIGITAL DAIRY PROSPECTS



A Virtual Discussion Group



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- Includes invited speakers, presentations from student participants, and virtual farm tours and discussions with dairy farmers.
- Students will be required to complete some homework, and participate during the weekly live sessions.
- A computer/tablet and internet is required. Contact us if you need assistance.

Sept 22–Nov 18, 2020
Wednesdays: Jefferson/Lewis
Thursdays: St. Lawrence/Franklin
7:00pm–8:30pm

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Lindsay Ferlito (607-592-0290; lc636@cornell.edu)
Casey Havekes (315-955-2059; cdh238@cornell.edu)
Kelsey O'Shea (315-955-2795; kio3@cornell.edu)

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Farm Business

Changes to NY Farm Labor Laws That Affect Overtime and Day-of-Rest

By Kelsey O'Shea

Note: An earlier version of this article appeared in the NEDPA newsletter. The following article is an updated version.

New York's state government enacted the Farm Laborer Fair Labor Practices Act (FLFLPA) in 2019, which contained major changes to farm labor laws such as overtime and the right to collective bargaining. FLFLPA certainly contained confusing and difficult language that even state agencies, such as the Department of Labor, struggled to interpret in the context of real-world farm employment scenarios. Two major farm organizations, the New York Vegetable Growers Association and the Northeast Dairy Producers Association, believed the legislation was essentially unworkable and successfully filed for a temporary restraining order in federal court. The judge granted a temporary restraining order at that time but it has now been lifted.

Meanwhile, the state government passed additional changes to the state's farm labor laws in the FY2021 Budget Act which was signed into law in April. These changes sought to correct some of the problems in FLFLPA. The changes are retroactive to January 1, 2020, so they are in effect now. In this article I will attempt to explain the changes in the budget act amendment that flow from the definition of "farm laborer" and its effect on overtime and day-of-rest.

The original FLFLPA labor law did not include a definition of the term "farm laborer." "Farm laborer" is now defined in this way: *"Farm laborer" shall mean any individual who works on a farm and is an employee under article nineteen of this chapter. Members of an employer's immediate family who are related to the third degree of consanguinity or affinity shall not be considered to be employed on a farm if they work on a farm out of familial obligations and are not paid wages, or other compensation based on their hours or days of work.*

Essentially, this definition says "farm laborer" includes everyone who is employed on a farm except immediate family members of the owner and only under two particular conditions. Immediate family "to the third degree of consanguinity or affinity" means: parents up to grandparents, children down to grandchildren, brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews. It does include "in-laws" reaching out the same distance and similarly "step" relationships. First cousins, great uncles/aunts, and more distant relations of the owner are at the fourth degree of consanguinity and beyond, so they are not included as immediate family.

Just being related to the owner is not enough to be treated as a family employee under this "farm laborer" definition; the employment relationship must also meet two other conditions. First, the family member must work on the farm out of "familial obligation." This is a tough one, my search for a legal definition of this term was unsuccessful, and even a common definition is not readily available. It will be necessary for the Department of Labor to provide a clear definition of "familial obligation," how it applies to farm family employees, and how employers should document or confirm this part of the relationship.

The second employment condition for farm family members to be excluded from the definition of "farm laborer" is that they "are not paid wages, or other compensation based on their hours or days of work." In other words, their pay must come in a form such as salary, stipend, or allowance that is not directly tied to the hours or days that they work.

So, if a farm employee is a close family member of the farm owners, they feel or are obligated to work at the farm for family reasons, and they are not paid wages by the hour or day, then they are not considered a "farm laborer." Why is this important? Because additional changes in the law now specify that the overtime and day-of-rest provisions of FLFLPA only apply to those employees who are "farm laborers." In the original FLFLPA language, farm "employees" were eligible for overtime pay if they worked more than 60 hours in any calendar week; "employee" is now changed to "farm laborer" in the amended language. In the original FLFLPA language creating the weekly day-of-rest requirement, the term "farm laborer" was already used. So now, overtime and day-of-rest apply only to "farm laborers." Those family members who can meet the definition of family described earlier are not "farm laborers."

There are other important changes to farm labor laws that I will discuss in future articles. For now, farm managers need to consider this change in the definition of "farm laborer" and reflect on how it applies in your business. Consider especially family members of the farm owner(s) and whether they will fit the family exclusion from being "farm laborers."

By Richard Stup, Cornell University. Permission granted to repost, quote, and reprint with author attribution. The post "Changes to New York's Farm Labor Laws That Affect Overtime and Day-of-Rest" appeared in The Ag Workforce Journal.



Cornell Cooperative Extension

AGRICULTURAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

Onboarding Dairy Employees



Safe, Productive and Engaged from Day One 2020

The first days and weeks on the job set the course for a new employee. A successful onboarding program can be an essential tool to help reduce employee turnover, increase employee safety and productivity, and contribute to a farm's success.

Identified as a priority by New York's Ag Workforce Development Council, Cornell Ag Workforce Development is seeking farmers to participate in the second year of an onboarding project funded by the New York Farm Viability Institute.

This project focuses on navigating employment requirements and improving human resource management practices, including enhancing training skills.

Over a three-session Zoom series, participating farmers will gain an understanding of and complete an onboarding template, and be supported by Dr. Richard Stup, Cornell Ag Workforce Specialist, Extension educators, or industry consultants, to implement onboarding materials, trainings and methods.



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College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Diversity and inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage.
We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans and Individuals with Disabilities.

Successful projects have a staff member who focuses on HR a few hours each week.

Benefits for Farms:

- Ensures compliance with basic regulations and policies.
- Provides clarification on work procedures and expectations, which results in better employee performance and safety.
- Establishes a workplace culture based on values, philosophies and traditions.
- Creates connected relationships at work that allow employees to engage and thrive.
- Increases employee commitment and reduces turnover.
- Provides accessible and realistic support for farm onboarding, even when labor and time are in short supply.

Expectations of Farms:

- 1) Establish a farm culture that is safe, productive and engaging. Set Clear, upfront job expectations that employees can fully understand.
- 2) Provide immediate safety training to avoid injuries. Promote compliance with all employment regulations.
- 3) Communicate important farm policies and procedures, especially those that may differ from previous employers.
- 4) Overcome language barriers so that everyone can understand each other.

Sample Onboarding Tools:

Employee Handbooks, SOP's, Training Videos, New Hire Forms, Job Descriptions, Farm Safety Plans, Checklists, Organizational Charts, Mission Statement, Written Policies, and more...

To Participate, Contact:

Dr. Richard Stup, Ag Workforce Specialist
Cornell Cooperative Extension
164 Plant Science Building
P: 607-255-7890 | E: rstup@cornell.edu

agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu

AGRICULTURAL SEASONAL WORKER COVID-19 TESTING INITIATIVE

The Departments of Agriculture and Markets, Health, and Labor are partnering with county health departments, Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York Farm Bureau and community health partners in Clinton, Genesee, Orleans, Ulster and Wayne Counties to offer free COVID-19 testing to agricultural workers.

These counties were selected for this opportunity as the counties that see the highest number of out-of-state workers during harvest season.

WHEN: Starting Thursday, August 20, 2020

WHERE: At locations selected by the farm/local health departments.

WHAT is Required:

- Face masks must be worn at the testing locations.
- Employees will be required to provide their name, DOB, contact phone number, and employer name at the time of testing.
- Farm operators must ensure that they:
 - Have read, understood, and comply with the guidelines.
<https://agriculture.ny.gov/covid-19-operator-checklist-farms>
<https://agriculture.ny.gov/interim-guidance-prevention-and-response-covid-19-farms>
<https://agriculture.ny.gov/covid-19-prevention-tips-farmworkers>
 - Have a plan, including housing available to isolate workers if they are positive and quarantine workers who are identified as contacts to a case.
 - Have a plan to supplement their current workforce, if the need arises.
- Register for this initiative.

REGISTRATION:

<https://app.smartsheet.com/b/form/78fd67f98e104d1c95f533cb8ac9c200>

***Once registered, a representative from the local county health department, community health partner and/or the State Department of Health will contact each farm individually to identify the best date and time for testing.*

CCE North Country Regional Ag Team
203 North Hamilton Street
Watertown, New York 13601

What's Happening in the Ag Community

Due to COVID-19 social distance restrictions, all in-person CCE programs have been postponed until further notice. Check out our CCE NCRAT Blog and YouTube channel for up to date information and content.

Virtual Dairy Prospects Program, 9-Week Online Course starting Sept 30th. Register online at:
<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1C3pqXAvMOJh8PM1CBxIJ4ybNYEDiGtNk?usp=sharing>

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