

# North Country Ag Advisor

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## Cornell Cooperative Extension North Country Regional Ag Team

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#### Our Mission

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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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<sup>&</sup>quot;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 Spring Weather Outlook 2021 By Kitty O'Neil

The 2020 drought has persisted across New York State and Northern NY. All, or portions of each, of the NNY 6 counties remain in D0 Abnormally Dry and/or D1 Moderate Drought categories in the February 25 update from the National Drought Mitigation Center, as depicted in the Drought Monitor map below. The area affected by these dry conditions has shrunk slightly since the end of the 2021 growing season, but have not been resolved. These areas remain 2-4" of precipitation behind the 90-day normal and 5-10" below the 12-month normal.



We certainly hope not to begin the 2021 growing season under drought conditions, and the 1- and 3-month climate outlooks do provide some hope for relief. The March precipitation and temperature outlooks include favorable chances for warmer-than-average temperatures and above normal precipitation for NNY. This could provide needed soil moisture both in the form of snow melt and additional snow and rain. The 3-month predictions are shown in the maps below – temperature outlook on the top, precipitation on the bottom. They also indicate a good chance of above normal temperatures and precipitation for March-April-May period. Warm temperatures and wetter-than-normal predictions continue into the June-July-August outlooks as well, so there could be some resolution to our residual dry soil conditions throughout the 2021 growing season.



Additional Resources:

- 1. United States Drought Monitor, Current Map. <u>https://</u> <u>droughtmonitor.unl.edu/CurrentMap.aspx</u>
- 2. National Weather Service, Climate Prediction Center. https://www.cpc.ncep.noaa.gov/index.php







## **Beginner Hay and Pasture School**

#### Thursday, March 11th, 2021 7:00pm—9:00pm \$5.00 Registration

This introductory online class, through zoom, will go over the basics of:

- Nutritional Forage Quality Goals
- Forage Sampling & Interpreting Forage Analysis
  - Basics of Grazing & Hay Making
- Pasture & Hay Field Renovation, Reclaiming Old Fields
- Please register for the webinar by following the link below:

Beginner Hay and Pasture School - North Country Regional Ag Team - Cornell University - Cornell Cooperative Extension



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## Advanced Hay and Pasture School

#### Thursday, March 18th, 2021 7:00pm—9:00pm

#### \$5.00 Registration

This is an online class, through zoom, will go over the basics of:

- 2020 Drought-It's still here... How do we manage 2021 and the long term?
- Buying and Selling Hay Pricing, Types, Methods of Advertising, Forage Analysis
  - Pasture/Land Rental/Custom Rates- Where to get some ideas?

Please register for the webinar by following the link below:

Advanced Hav and Pasture School - North Country Regional Ag Team - Cornell University - Cornell Cooperative Extension



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# **2021** Cornell Guide for Integrated Field Crop Management Now Available

The Pesticide Management Education Program (PMEP) at Cornell University is pleased to announce the availability of the 2021 Cornell Guide for Integrated Field Crop Management. Written by Cornell University specialists, this publication is designed to offer producers, seed and chemical dealers, and crop consultants practical information on growing and managing field corn, forages, small grains, and soybeans. Topics covered include nutrient management, soil health, variety selection, and common field crop pest concerns. A preview of the Field Crops Guide can be seen online at https://cropandpestguides.cce.cornell.edu. Highlighted changes in the 2021 Cornell Field Crops Guide include:

- Revised pesticide options for economically important field crop pests.
- Updated corn, forage, and small grain variety trial and research data.
- New information on barley disease control.
- Revised insect IPM information and insecticide tables throughout the guide.



2021 Cornell Guide for Integrated Field Crop Management

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Cornell Crop and Pest Management Guidelines are available as a print copy, online-only access, or a package combining print and online access. The print edition of the 2021 Field Crops Guide costs \$32 plus shipping. Online-only access is \$32. A combination of print and online access costs \$45 plus shipping costs for the printed book.

Cornell Guidelines can be obtained through your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office or from the Cornell Store at Cornell University. To order from the Cornell Store, call (844) 688-7620 or order online at <a href="https://www.cornellstore.com/books/cornell-cooperative-ext-pmep-guidelines">https://www.cornellstore.com/books/cornell-cooperative-ext-pmep-guidelines</a>.



## Dairy Considerations for the Maternity Pen

By Casey Havekes

I recently (virtually) attended American Dairy Science Association's 39<sup>th</sup> Discover Conference on transition cow physiology, health, and welfare. The conference featured many great presentations from industry experts that highlighted cutting-edge research relating to transition cow management. One of the presentations that was of high interest to me was done by Dr. Katy Proudfoot on the topic of maternity pen management. Dr. Proudfoot highlighted some past work that helped build the foundation for what the ideal maternity facility should look like. When thinking of our 'ideal calving facility' it is important to remember that in their natural environment cows will seek isolation and secluded areas to calve, for reasons likely related to survival.

One of Dr. Proudfoot's main research objectives over the past several years has focused on the concept of how we can better design maternity areas in a way that promotes these natural behaviors. One research project in particular that looked at calving preferences for both heifers and mature cows, found that heifers preferred to calve in an area of pasture surrounded by trees and tall grass, whereas cows preferred to calve in the barn. Upon making these conclusions, Dr. Proudfoot's next steps were to try to promote natural calving behaviors while cows were housed indoors in a barn. Specifically, one of her main objectives was to see if cows would seek out a blind/hide to calve in when given the option. That research found that when housed in individual pens, about 80% of the cows preferred to use the hide while calving. However, when cows were paired up, they were actually less likely to calve in a hidden area and preferred to calve in the open area (Proudfoot et al., 2014a,b). Dr. Proudfoot further explained that the reasons for these findings are not well understood, but may be related to social hierarchies and competition. A follow up study conducted by some of Dr. Proudfoot's colleagues in Denmark and New Zealand then looked at how calving blinds would be utilized in a group pen environment (Jensen and Rorvang, 2018, Zobel et al., 2020). The calving blind used in that work was designed in an "L-shape", and it was found that only about 10-20% of cows chose to calve in these blinds, but interestingly the newborn calves used them to hide in within a few hours of birth. Despite these findings, Dr. Proudfoot and her research group were still interested to investigate other ways to adapt the maternity to pen to promote more natural calving behaviors.

In a recent study, Dr. Proudfoot's former PhD student, Dr. Kate Cruetzinger, looked at how a different form of a calving blind (see photo) would impact physiology, calving location, social behavior, and labor length. To make it even more interesting, stocking density was also manipulated in the study making for a total of four experimental treatments: 1)  $100 \text{ft}^2$  lying space/cow with access to a blind, 2)  $100 \text{ft}^2$  lying space /cow without access to a blind, 3) 200ft<sup>2</sup> lying space / cow with access to a blind, or 4) 200ft<sup>2</sup> lying space /cow without access to a blind (Cruetzinger et al., 2020). This study concluded that regardless of stocking density, cows preferred to calve near the blind. It was also concluded that the shortest duration of stage 2 labor (abdominal contractions and amniotic sac visible) was seen in the group of cows that had more space and access to the blind, followed by the group with less space but still having access to the blind. Dr. Proudfoot also made an interesting comment during her presentation that cows completely avoided the pen gateways/doorways and because of this, we should account for this when looking at our total lying/calving space in the maternity area.



Figure 1. Calving blind used in research project led by Dr. Kate Cruetzinger (Cruetzinger et al., 2020).

Dr. Proudfoot finished her presentation by highlighting some interesting areas for future research – one of these areas being the time period immediately following calving. It was thought-provoking to hear Dr. Proudfoot's view on how we view the maternity area/pen for other species (including women!), relative to how we view it for dairy cows. When we think about women, for example, they are often in the hospital for a couple of days following delivery. Cows, on the other hand, are often moved out of the maternity area and into the lactating group very soon (maybe even within hours) after calving. Researchers spend a lot of time and effort studying the three weeks following calving, but Dr. Proudfoot points out that future research should also consider the few hours and days following calving. Lastly, an area that is being explored in Europe is the idea of leaving the calf with the dam following calving. Dr. Proudfoot explains that this is a concept that may gain traction from the consumer's perspective and that we need to be prepared for the possibility of adopting this strategy in North America. There are a lot of unanswered questions in this area, with one of the most obvious being how long should we leave the calf and the dam together. Knowing that calves seek a hiding spot when given the opportunity, do we need to provide calves with a blind, also? Dr. Proudfoot's research group is excited to tackle some of

these research questions in the upcoming year, but in the meantime, I think it's important for dairy producers to get comfortable with the idea and strategize how this may be accomplished on farm.

In summary, Dr. Proudfoot's presentation highlighted some important considerations for how we should manage and design the maternity pen. Building a simple blind as shown in Figure 1, can be an effective way of promoting natural calving behaviors. It's also important to try to maximize calving space. Cows like to distance themselves when calving, so any opportunity to allow them to perform this behavior may result in better welfare and calving success.





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TAX PREPARATION Just as 2020 was a year unlike any other, filing your 2020 taxes will also be different. The financial circumstances brought on by COVID-19 could have a significant effect on the deductions and allowances available to your business. This year, more than ever, you will need a reliable ag tax specialist to help guide you through your unique tax situation. Contact Farm Credit East to keep your business Strong at the Roots. Burrville NY 800.626.3276 farmcrediteast.com/taxprep

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# **Calves 101: Starting Them Right**

## Wednesday, March 24th, 2021

#### 7:00pm — 8:00pm

#### Free!

Veterans and Military Families are welcome and encouraged to attend!

Springtime is a common time of year when we welcome new life onto the farm. When it comes to calves, starting them off right is critical in order to reach their full growth potential. This introductory online class, through Zoom, will go over the basics on best management practices in raising beef and dairy calves from start to weaning.

Please register for the webinar by following the link below: https://cornell.zoom.us/j/92621237561?pwd=RVpUNkxlRk1kVU1SdjZWZ1drVGF5UT09 or call/email Gabby Wormuth at 315-788-8450 or grw67@cornell.edu.



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Cornell Cooperative Extension Jefferson County

# Farm Business

# NYS Agricultural Assessment – COVID-19 Revenue Threshold Exception

By Joan Sinclair Petzen and Libby Eiholzer, CCE Northwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team

Farmland owners across New York State can participate in an Agricultural Assessment to reduce their real property tax costs. Each year <u>an application(RP-305)</u> or <u>renewal(RP-305-r)</u> must be filed for each eligible parcel with the local assessor in the municipality where the property is located in order to receive this benefit. Farms with 7 acres or more and a minimum income of \$10,000, and farms with less than 7 acres and a minimum income of \$50,000, may qualify the property for agricultural assessment. During the COVID-19 Pandemic, the revenue of some farms may have fallen below the qualifying threshold. Affected farms can apply for an exception to the revenue requirement by filing an additional form (<u>RP-305-f</u>) with their application or renewal.

<u>Agricultural Assessment</u> begins with the assessor determining the market value of an eligible property. A value is also established by New York State based upon the productive capability of the soil and average prices received in recent years for agricultural products in New York State. The difference between these two values is applied by the assessor in the form of an exemption. <u>Agricultural values for each soil</u> type are set by a specific formula laid out by state guidelines. Property owners who rent land to a farmer, may also qualify for agricultural assessment so long as they have a <u>five-year lease with a farm</u> that meets the qualifying sales criteria. Farmers often assist their landowners with the application process for Agricultural Assessment to help keep taxes on rented land they operate in check.

Qualifying properties may be granted a reduction on both their municipality and school taxes when they receive an active Agricultural Assessment, renewed annually. The property assessment reduction can result in tax savings ranging from 10 to 40 percent depending upon location, soil type, and agricultural prices in recent years.

If a farm suffered from a reduction in agricultural income putting their total revenue below the sales threshold outlined above, they can still qualify for Agricultural Assessment on the 2021 assessment roll. They must include a completed <u>RP-305f</u>, <u>"Application for Exception from Minimum Average Sale Value Requirement of Agriculture and Markets Law Article 25-AA due to COVID-19 Disaster Emergency for 2021"</u> with their application or renewal for Agricultural Assessment. A completed exception application form must include certification from a Cornell Cooperative Extension Specialist or Educator familiar with agriculture in the county where the property is located. Applications must be filed with the local assessor for the municipality in which the property is located prior to taxable status date (March 1st 2021 in most NYS communities).

To obtain real property forms related to Agricultural Assessment please visit: <u>https://www.tax.ny.gov/forms/orpts/</u> <u>agri\_assessment.htm</u>. Local assessors and County Real Property Tax Offices can be contacted for additional information regarding the administration of the Agricultural Assessment Program.

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## What's Happening in the Ag Community

Due to COVID-19 social distance restrictions, most in-person CCE NCRAT programs have been postponed until further notice. Several virtual programs will be offered through the Winter and Spring. Also, check out our CCE NCRAT Blog and YouTube channel for up to date information and content.

Beginner Hay & Pasture School, March 11th, see page 4 for more information.

Advanced Hay & Pasture School, March 18th, see page 5 for more information.

Calves 101, March 24th, see page 9 for more information.

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