Cornell Cooperative Extension Northwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program



Hard Work and Strong Support

Margaret Quaassdorff

The culture of farming: If you get it, you get it. If you don't, you don't. Why do farmers put themselves through what they do? Dr. Michael Rosmann, psychologist and farmer from Iowa, studied this question and came up with the idea known as <u>The Agrarian Imperative</u>¹. This is a purposeful drive that motivates farmers to work incredibly hard, to endure unusual pain and hardship, and to take uncommon risks (Rosmann, 2010). We know that this attitude and drive yields incredible results as we look at our dairy farm families and businesses today. They are always innovating, improving, becoming more efficient, all the while catering to changing weather, markets, regulations, processor and consumer desires. But the stress of constantly living and producing at this level can lead to some heavy emotions. "To farmers, the land is everything. Ownership of a family farm is the triumphant result of the struggles of multiple generations. Losing the family farm is the ultimate loss- bringing shame to the generation that has let down their forebears and dashing hopes for successors."² It is in the deeply rooted culture of farmers to farm at all costs. We see this every day; the attitude that 'despite financial hardships, physical injury and ailments, relationship breakdown, we are going to keep this thing going, there are no other options'. The deeply rooted belief that the farm is innate to who they are is important in thinking about and distinguishing a difference in the way mental health is supported for those involved in agriculture.

A presentation given during this year's World Dairy Expo seminar by Monica Kramer McConkey of Eyes On the Horizon Consulting, discussed the factors that are prominent in the not only stressed, but chronically stressed, ag community as well as some tactics to help combat that stress.

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This Issue





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Hard Work and Strong Support Cont.

Elements that impact the health of our producers:

- Uncontrollable factors
- Weather/Disaster
- **Commodity Markets**
- Uncertainty
- Politics
- Illness/Injury
- Irregular/Uncertain Income
- Isolation
- Competition
- Increased need for competency/new technology
- Transition/Succession
- Long hours
- Barriers to <u>helpful resources</u>³

In her presentation, McConkey points out that "Your farming operation is only as 'ok' as you are", and that oftentimes it can be a direct reflection of how someone is doing.

As anyone going through stressful times, here are some things we can do for ourselves:

 Work on helpful thinking. The battle is fought in your mind; challenge negative thoughts and focus on what you can control

• Choose one thing that gives you joy, and do more of that

 Set boundaries to reserve some time and space for vourself

• Make a plan with some actions steps to shift out of your "emotional brain" to your "thinking brain"

• Practice mindfulness. Doesn't have to be yoga! Take a moment wherever you are and tune into your 5 senses. What are you hearing, what can you smell, what can you physically see, what are you tasting, what can you touch? Take a conscious breath. This helps to bring you back to the present, the only place you can truly be in order to support yourself.

¹Rosmann, M. 2010. "The Agrarian Imperative". Journal of Agromedicine. 2010; 15(2):71-5. https://doi. org/10.1080/10599241003630585

²Rosmann, M. Behavioral Health Issues of the Aging Agricultural Population. A Conference on the Aging Farm Community.

Indianapolis, IN. March 7. 2007.

³NY FarmNet: <u>https://www.nyfarmnet.org/</u>1-800-547-3276

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Will a Cover Crop Catch if Planted in Late October or November After Grain Harvest in New York?

Jodi Letham

Planting cover crops in late October or November after grain harvest can be challenging in New York, but it is not impossible. With the right species selection and management, you can still reap the benefits of soil protection and nutrient retention, even if fall growth is limited. Here are some considerations and species options to ensure success with late-season planting.

Factors to Consider for Late Planting

1. **Soil Temperature and Moisture:** By late October, soil temperatures in New York often drop below optimal germination conditions (45°F+). Moisture levels are also critical, as drier conditions can hinder establishment.

2. Frost Tolerance: Cold-hardy species are essential for late fall plantings. These crops can germinate and grow even in cooler soils and can overwinter, providing spring cover.

3. **Seeding Method:** Drilling is strongly recommended for late fall planting. Direct seed-to-soil contact improves germination rates and provides more consistent establishment.

Cover Crop Species for Late October/November

1. **Winter Rye (Secale cereale):** Winter rye is one of the most cold-hardy cover crops available, with the ability to germinate in soil temperatures as low as 33°F. It establishes quickly and can survive through harsh winter conditions, making it a go-to choice for late plantings.

2. Winter Wheat (Triticum aestivum): Like winter rye, winter wheat is cold-hardy and can be planted later in the fall. Though it may not establish as quickly as rye, it provides excellent erosion control and is easier to manage in the spring.

3. **Triticale (×Triticosecale):** This hybrid of wheat and rye combines the cold tolerance of rye with the spring biomass production of wheat. It is a good option for late planting with decent overwintering ability.

4. **Hairy Vetch (Vicia villosa):** Hairy vetch is a cold-tolerant legume that, when combined with cereal grains like winter rye, can fix nitrogen and

improve soil health. It needs longer establishment time, but even minimal growth can provide benefits in the spring if planted in late fall.

5. Cereal Rye & Radish Mix: For growers interested in adding more diversity, mixing cereal rye with forage radish can be effective. While radishes may not survive through winter, they can help break up compacted soils and scavenge nutrients before dying off. 6. Crimson Clover (Trifolium incarnatum): Another cold-hardy legume, crimson clover, can establish later in the season and provides nitrogen fixation. It may not thrive in the harshest winters but can still offer spring growth and soil benefits.

What to Expect

• Fall Growth: Do not expect significant biomass from these crops when planting this late. The primary goal is to establish enough growth to overwinter and provide benefits in the spring.

• **Spring Benefits:** Many of these cover crops will green up in the spring, offering erosion control, improved soil structure, and nutrient management for the next planting season.

Final Verdict

Even though late October or November planting limits fall growth, cold-tolerant species like winter rye, wheat, triticale, and legumes such as hairy vetch and crimson clover can still establish enough to offer valuable soil health benefits come spring. With proper management, a late cover crop can be an effective strategy for keeping your soil productive





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Milk Quality in the Age of Recycled Manure Solids

Kaitlyn Lutz

I've had a lot of calls lately about milk quality issues and there were a few things that stood out to me. The first is that I usually hear farms sighing a breath of relief as the summer heat dies down and their milk quality becomes easier to manage. However, these farms were all struggling with more chronic streptococcus species, not the typical bump in gram negatives that we see during the summer heat. Secondly, most of these farms were bedding with recycled manure solids.

Recycled manure solids as a bedding material are certainly on the rise in western NY. Although they're easier on equipment than sand is, they certainly have their unique management issues. Risk to udder health is one of the main issues we think of when using recycled manure solids in our northeast climate (much less risky in the southwest). As soon as humidity increases, in the air or because of a cow urinating, defecating or leaking milk in the stalls, bacterial counts rise rapidly. Since we can't control the ambient humidity, we better focus on what we can- keeping the back of the stalls full of clean, dry bedding. This boils down to three things- dry bedding going in, stalls designed to keep manure and urine out, and routine stall maintenance.

Bedding going in:

I've seen a few farms in our region put in a system where lime is added directly to the manure solids as it exits the screw press. This seems to be an effective way to decrease moisture in the bedding. However, there are a few important safety considerations with this system as aerosolized lime is damaging to mucous membranes if it reaches the eyes or is inhaled.

Stall design:

You already know if your stalls are not the way you'd like them to be! If you're building a new barn or revamping certain pens, check out U of Wisconsin's Dairyland Initiative page for stall design parameters: <u>https://thedairylandinitiative.vetmed.</u> wisc.edu/home/housing-module/adult-cow-housing/freestall-dimensions/. If neither of these are in the plans, consider doing routine stall maintenance

(i.e. repairing loops and brisket bars) this winter to encourage proper use of the stalls you have.

Stall maintenance:

Here I'm referring to daily bedding maintenance. Obviously, this changes if you have deep beds or mattresses. I recently learned about a custom-built bedding leveler used by farms in Wisconsin that assists with cow comfort and bedding maintenance. If you're interested, reach out to me for details. Remember that the goal of whatever bedding routine you have is to keep the back 1/3 of the stall as dry as possible. This is hard when recycled manure solids are inherently wet. A study recently done by Cornell found that the dry matter in recycled manure solids ranged from 27 to 36% whereas sand had a dry matter of about 90%. Digested manure solids, according to the Dairyland Initiative, run about 10% drier than those coming from a screw press.



https://thedairylandinitiative.vetmed.wisc.edu/home/housing-module/adult-cow-housing/freestall-dimensions/



Dry manure solids bedding in NWNY. Photo Credit: Kaitlyn Lutz.



Cash Rent Expense For Farm Land – Survey Data Are Available From USDA/Quickstats

John Hanchar

Summary

• Cash rent expenses per acre vary considerably by county in the NWNY Region depending upon productivity, intended use, and other supply and demand factors.

• Results from the most recent survey efforts by the United States Department of Agriculture/National Agricultural Statistics Service (USDA/NASS) are available online via the service's QuickStats application.

• Survey results suggest that for 2024, cash rent expense for non irrigated cropland by NWNY Region county varied from 60 to 172 dollars per acre.

USDA Survey Results Available for 2024 and Earlier Years

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) staff receive calls from individuals asking "What is the going cash rent for farm land in my area?" Callers seek information to make production and land use decisions. Many in the CCE system have ideas based upon word of mouth and perhaps some limited data for the local area that they serve.

Prior to 2008, the lack of a consistent data set characterized the situation. The availability of data by county changed when USDA/NASS responded to customer requests and new requirements of the 2008 Farm Bill. Today, results from initial 2008 survey efforts by the USDA/NASS through the most recent efforts for 2024 are available online. Not surprisingly, cash rent expenses for farm land vary by county and by year (Table 1). Variability in productivity, intended use and other local, national, and global supply and demand factors yield a wide range of cash rent values.

The averages reported in Table 1 were obtained by going to

<quickstats.nass.usda.gov>

and using the query menu on the page to make the following selections

Program: Survey Sector: Economics Group: Expenses Commodity: Rent Data Item: Rent, Cash, Cropland, Non-Irrigated – Expense, Measured in \$ / Acre The pull down menus within the "Select Location" and "Year" sections allow for the selection of desired locations and years, respectively.

Table 1. Cash Rent Expense for Non Irrigated Cropland by NWNY	7
Region County by Year, Dollars per Acre.	

	Average Cash Rent Expense, Non Irrigated Cropland			
County	(Dollars Per Acre)			
	2022	2023	2024	
Genesee		96	103	
Livingston	128	133	172	
Monroe	73	76	81	
Niagara	58	60	60	
Ontario	92	78	96	
Orleans		124	116	
Seneca	74	71	72	
Wayne	68	82	122	
Wyoming	115	104	124	
Yates	98	119	126	

Notes: 1) Source: USDA/NASS. <quickstats.nass.usda.gov>, accessed 2024-10-10; 2) Query results rounded to the nearest whole dollar. 3) Values not reported for Genesee and Orleans Counties for 2022.

Comments

Please note that the values reported in Table 1 are averages. Individual observations likely vary over a wide range of values. Given measures of variability calculated for the data in Table 1, estimates for the 2024 values suggest that seventy percent of the survey responses by county varied from 91 to 115, 160 to 184, 73 to 89, 54 to 65, 88 to 104, 104 to 128, 68 to 75, 115 to 129, 108 to 140, and 112 to 140 dollars per acre for the counties of Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates, respectively.

For valuable resources on renting farm real estate, visit our website at <<u>https://nwnyteam.cce.cornell.edu</u>>. Click on the "BUSINESS" tab, and enter "renting farm real estate" in the search bar. Also, the <u>Ag Lease 101</u> website at <u>https://aglease101.org</u>/ is a valuable resource.

Questions, comments, suggestions? contact John Hanchar.

Looks Like Tar Spot is Here to Stay

Mike Stanyard

I last wrote an article about Tar spot in New York in 2022. A lot has changed, and it has expanded its range, so I thought I better write an updated article. Tar spot was first found in Erie County late in 2021. It moved slowly and was hard to even detect in 2022 and 2023. Unfortunately, we had perfect weather conditions for its spread this year and as of right now in mid-October it has been detected in 23 counties in WNY. The first infected fields were identified on August 13. This was about a month earlier than it had been detected in previous years. It was easy to find in fields that had a history of infection. These fields had early tar spot on the lower leaves working up to the ear leaf. Newly infected fields had inoculum blown into them and the infected leaves were higher in the canopy and the infection was moving down to the ear leaf. It is pretty easy to find right now so go out and take a look at any corn that is still standing. I'm sure by the end of corn harvest there will be a couple more counties added to the list. To see what counties where it has been found go to the Crop Protection Network site to view the tar spot map, https://cropprotectionnetwork.org/maps/tar-spot-of-corn. There are also some great overview resources on tar spot including guidance on fungicide application decision making.

Many of you have not seen tar spot yet. From the picture you can see why it is called tar spot. It does look like small droplets of tar have been spattered on the leaf. This is the later stages of the disease and the black overwintering structures are called stromata. Some insect frass can look similar but that can be wiped or scratched off. Tar spot stromata can't be wiped off! The black stromata also have a shiny sheen and are a little bit raised up. You also can see the black marks on both sides of the leaf. The initial infection can be hard to pick up with just one small legion on a leaf (see picture). The disease will go through multiple generations and spread leaf to leaf, plant to plant and finally field to field.

What about yield loss? Purdue has done the most extensive research on this disease and Indiana has been hit the hardest. Drs. Quinn and Telenko state," a severely infected field can reach yield losses upwards of 60 bushels per acre! Yield losses are often a result of reduced photosynthetic capacity (green leaf area) of the corn plant during grain fill resulting in poor grain fill, kernel abortion, and reduced kernel weight. In addition, severe infection can reduce corn stalk integrity and cause significant lodging later in the season."

How can we manage tar spot moving forward? Unfortunately, there does not seem to be any natural resistance

in our current corn hybrids but some varieties are less susceptible than others. Seed companies are working on tolerance in their hybrids so work with your seed rep on identifying those hybrids. Fortunately, there are many labeled fungicides that are very effective against tar spot. Most are labeled for application from tassel to R2 (blister stage), when our other problematic leaf diseases such as northern corn leaf blight and gray leaf spot are also active. Burying infected corn residue through tillage and crop rotation are good cultural management practices to reduce in-field inoculum but local inoculum can still blow in and affect that corn crop.

What about next year? Well, it looks like we will have plenty of inoculum to overwinter for next year. But remember, the weather patterns have a lot to do with how early and how much tar spot we will see next year. Think of it like white mold. We know there are plenty of sclerotia out in our fields that have had bad infections. In a dry year we don't see much white mold but in a wet humid year, those soybeans could be in trouble. Tar spot likes conditions from 60 to 70 degrees and high humidity. It likes extended periods of leaf wetness so frequent rain showers could contribute to infection. I know we do not have a lot of irrigated corn acres in the region but those who do should be extra vigilant. Tar spot was also found in plenty of sweet corn fields this year which could also add to the inoculum base and sources of infection.



Fully developed tar spot infection in Niagara County on August 20. Photo: M. Stanyard, CCE/NWNY Team



Early tar spot infection on September 25 in Seneca County. Photo: M. Stanyard, CCE/NWNY Team



Tar spot detections in NY Counties as of October 10, Crop Protection Network webpage

Bale Grazing 101

Nancy Glazier

Many livestock farms utilize pasture through the growing season and stored feed through the winter. A technique of feeding bales in run-out or low-fertility pastures is a way to rejuvenate them without complete renovation. Management is important, though, to prevent excessive compaction.

Some of the benefits of bale grazing include the addition of the forage nutrients. This includes the waste hay plus urine and manure are deposited directly. Spacing and the number of cattle depends on the herd size and length of time to bale graze. What works is to subdivide the bales with temporary fence and allow cattle to access enough hay for 1-2 days. This helps reduce waste. Some producers allow more days of feeding time; easier to manage but more waste or more potential for compaction. Keep in mind our winters have been more mud than snow. Keeping the number of days of feed accessible at a time will reduce the odds of too much pugging.

Depending on maturity at harvest, the bales may supply quality grass seed to be deposited. If the hay contains mature weeds, those seeds will be dropped. This is another reason to feed quality hay.

Any twine or netting will have to be removed prior to grazing. The downside may be the bale pulling apart easier with more waste, though some hay will be used for bedding. I have heard some farmers leaving jute twine but do that at your own risk. Entanglement may be a risk.

Some producers will use bale feeders while others prefer to put the hay on the ground. Feeding on the ground may lead to dirty hay, depending on the conditions and management. You may need a lot of hay feeders or a lot of moving the feeders through the pasture; which will be weather dependent.

Calculate how much hay you will need for your herd to bale graze since it may be difficult to place bales in snowy weather. Ideally, the hay has been tested to check nutrition. Since the cattle are outwintering they will need additional calories. Figure at least 20% waste. In high hay-producing years it's less painful on the pocket to waste. There needs to be alternative areas available for cattle. If severe weather comes, they will need a sheltered area to get out of the wind. If it turns too warm and muddy it is advisable to have a sacrifice area/barn-yard to move them.

Don't forget to have water available in the bale grazing area. Even if snow is on the ground cattle need water. Depending on your grazing infrastructure this may present some hurdles of its own.

Like any new practice there is a trial-and-error period so always be conservative and overestimate the cattle's needs. Management and monitoring are key. Give me a call if you have questions or comments.



First growing season after bale grazing. Photo: Nancy Glazier



This is the second growing season after bale grazing. Photo: Nancy Glazier

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Livingston County NWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team 3 Murray Hill Drive Mount Morris, NY 14510

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UPCOMING EVENTS

November 6 & 7 - 8

Hands-On Hoof Trimming Workshop

November 6th - 9:30AM - 3:30PM : Lake Country Holsteins : \$165 (\$120 discount)

November 7th-8th - 9:30AM - 3:30PM : Coyne Farms : \$275 (\$200 discount) https://nwnyteam.cce.cornell.edu/events.php

November 13 & 14

2024 Dairy Feeder School

November 13th - 10AM - 3PM : Reyncrest Farm; Corfu, NY: \$50

November 14th - 10AM - 3PM : DeBoover Family Farms; Phelps, NY : \$50

Registration: https://nwnyteam.cce.cornell.edu/events.php