This Issue

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

AG FOCUS

Signing Off

Nancy Glazier

Life is about answering calls. My first call was to be in the barn as a very young girl. We had a small dairy, like all the nearby farms, and I wanted to be out there with my father and grandfather and not in the house. I remember being around during hog slaughter, and my grandfather sticking the hog's tail in my back pocket! My grandfather retired from the farm when I was about 7. The cows were sold and my father took a job at a vegetable/crop farm, but those early years gave me some great but subjective memories.

I answered another call in the spring of 1987 when I started as an Integrated Pest Management scout with Nate Herendeen and Gary Bigger. Back then, it was the Lake Plains Team, and I think George Allhusen was on the team as well. Those three have all passed. As far as I can recall I was hired to work on a pilot project for the TAg Teams – Tactical Agriculture teams – the first time done in the state. Nate would lead on-farm meetings, and I would check a cornfield and alfalfa field weekly for each farm for insects, weeds, and diseases, and provide a report for the farmers. I helped with some of the winter meetings Nate organized, such as Corn Congresses and Soybean/Wheat Congresses. I loved it and would have stayed on after the 3-year grant if funds were available but answered another call. The Mom call was louder than extension!

I came back to work on October 18, 1999, to the team that had doubled in size by combining with the Finger Lakes Team. I worked half time, which gave me the flexibility to still be there for my kids as well as get back into the work force. I worked on grant projects the team had received, such as nutrient management work and writing prescribed grazing plans. The best part was working with farmers across the region and learning from the other team members – Nate, Beth Claypoole, Roberta Crill Wolf, Martha Wright, John Hanchar, and Mike Stanyard, who started three months after me.

Later, a Small Farms Specialist was added to work with the region's small dairies, a role filled by Bill Henning. It was about the time that Nate went part-time when I increased to full time. I continued to take on more responsibilities. Bill retired and in March 2008 I was promoted to Small Farms-Livestock Support Specialist. In 2011 I was encouraged to pursue

Cont. on page 3

NWNY STAFF

A partnership between Cornell University and the CCE Associations in these ten counties:

Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Niagara, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming & Yates

---

Postmaster:
Send Address Changes to:

NWNY Team, Attn: Ashley Fazio, 420 East Main St., Batavia, NY 14020

Direct all inquiries on advertising space/rates to: Ashley Fazio at 585-546-0630 or ak2367@cornell.edu

---

To simplify information, brand names of products may be used in this publication. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not named. Every effort has been made to provide correct, complete and up-to-date pesticide recommendations. Changes occur constantly & human errors are still possible. These recommendations are not a substitute for pesticide labeling. Please read the label before applying pesticides. For more information click here.

Check Out The NWNY Team Blog!

Features Crop Alerts, Dairy Alerts, Bilingual (Spanish) Resources, Upcoming Events: and more from our team members.

https://blogs.cornell.edu/nwny-dairy-livestock-field-crops/

@CCENWNY

https://www.facebook.com/NWNYTeam

https://www.linkedin.com/in/ashley-fazio-36a71526a/

https://www.youtube.com/@CCENWNY

To sign up, employees can text their name and farm name to (585) 549-0630 on WhatsApp.

David Bechtel
Field Support Specialist

865.951.9495
db979@cornell.edu

Ashley Fazio
Administrative Assistant

Genesee County
585.343.3040 x 138 (office)
585.549.0630 (cell)
ak2367@cornell.edu

John Hanchar
Farm Business

Livingston County
585.991.5438 (office)
585.233.9249 (cell)
jjh6@cornell.edu

Jodi Letham
Field Crops & Soils

Livingston County
585.689.3423 (cell)
jll347@cornell.edu

Margaret Quaassdorff
Dairy Management

Genesee County
585.343.3040 x 133 (office)
585.405.2567 (cell)
maq27@cornell.edu

Mike Stanyard
Field Crops & IPM

Wayne County
315.331.8415 x 123 (office)
585.764.8452 (cell)
mjs88@cornell.edu

Signing Off Cont.

Nancy Glazier

my master's degree in animal science. It took a long time, but I completed it in 2020. I earned another promotion. More importantly, I kept learning along the way.

As time went on, I became more involved in statewide activities and projects. I was asked to be on the NY Beef Quality Assurance advisory council. The BQA program helped shape my path and afforded me opportunities that I never would have had otherwise. With Mike Baker's retirement I became one of the co-coordinators for the state. I made many contacts while attending the state coordinators' meetings. I have met Dr. Temple Grandin, Curt Pate, and Dr. Ron Gill, three of the top animal handling experts in the world. I have had a few contacts give presentations on their subject areas via Zoom to farmers and educators, expanding knowledge and connections. NYBQA was a tough responsibility to let go of, though I know the program is in good hands with Chrissy Claudio and Adam Murray.

My path was not the typical extension path. I switched from crops to livestock and was able to make the transition because of my willingness to learn. I had this quote from Teddy Roosevelt hanging in my office, "When you are asked if you can do a job, tell 'em, 'Certainly I can!' Then get busy and find out how to do it." I worked evenings and Saturdays since many of the farmers I worked with were part-time. Zoom helped some since I could sit at my laptop at home but so much is missed with learning this way. In some ways extension is shifting. Many beginners search the internet for resources, but human interactions and sharing can't be replaced!

There are a lot of memories floating around in my head that I will hang on to. It will be difficult to leave the team, colleagues, and farmers but I'm sure I will see some of you around the region.

I continued to work with some of the original farmers. One asked me if I was retiring, since my position description was being advertised. I said yes and I never anticipated working for extension this long. He said, "Well, you did a good job". What more could I ask for.

Do Your Cows Have a Favorite Robot?

Margaret Quaassdorff

As we kick off a new year, it's a great time to set goals that boost efficiency and cow comfort. One surprising insight from recent research https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2025-27269 out of Colorado State University is that cows often have favorite robots! This makes sense as we have witnessed for years certain cows coming from the group in the holding area into the parlor on the same side, and often in the same order, or a cow going directly to be milk in "her" tiestall. Understanding cows' preferences can help you streamline cow traffic and reduce waiting times for better and more efficient milk production.

The study analyzed more than 1.7 million milking events from Holstein, Jersey, and Holstein-Jersey crossbred cows on a large organic dairy using 22 automatic milking units in a 2x per day batch milking system. Milking cows through robots in batches is not very common in New York, but the idea is to bring the cows in groups to the milk center containing what is essentially a "parlor of milking robots" and allow the cows to choose a robot and be milked at that time. See Figure 1 from the study for clarification. This system is less flexible than that of traditional AMS settings, where cows live in same freestall area as the robots. The findings were that cows show consistent preferences for certain robots and even for location within the barn. Holsteins were the most consistent in their choices, while Jerseys showed less selectiv ity. Interestingly, cows that stuck to their favorite robot had shorter waiting times before milking, while those without strong preferences waited longer. That doesn't mean we shouldn't try to train our cows to be flexible in their choice in early lactation. Units near the barn entrance were most popular early in lactation, but this trend evened out over time. Multiparous cows generally moved through the system faster than first-lactation cows.

Why does this matter? In robotic systems, cow traffic is critical. Long waits mean less time for eating and resting, which can hurt production and show the negative effects of disrupted cow time budgets. If some cows linger because they're waiting for "their" robot, bottlenecks can form, slowing down the entire milking process and leading to robot use inefficiencies. Recognizing these behaviors can help you make management decisions that keep cows moving and robots working efficiently. If you are a farm that is switching to milking robots from a parlor, take note of which cows come in on which side of the parlor, and try to match their preference in a how they might enter a robot stall.

Make "smooth cow flow" one of your 2026 goals. Pattern awareness and small changes can lead to big gains in efficiency and cow comfort. Let's start the year by listening to what our cows want to keep milking robots busy and milk (and traffic) flowing.

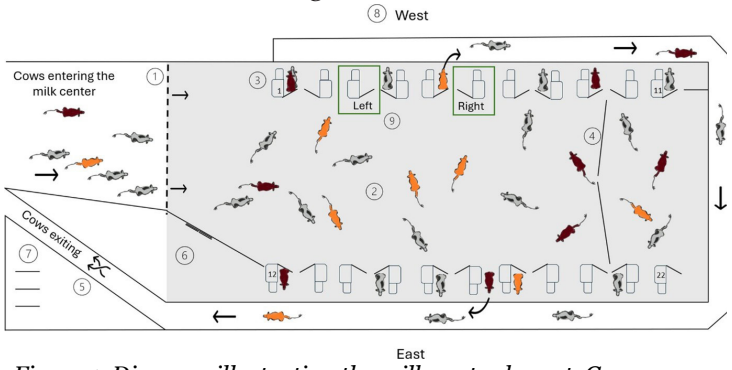


Figure 1. Diagram illustrating the milk center layout. Cows were moved to the milk center twice per day in groups including HO, JE, and HJ cows. A finger gate (one-way gate; 1) allowed the entrance of cows to the waiting area (2) where they were identified by an antenna detecting pedometers affixed to their rear leg. Cows could select their milking visits among 22 DeLaval VMS V300 units arranged in 2 rows (3). A gate was available to gather cows in the North section of the center (4). A sorting gate (5) was used for redirecting cows to the milk center (6) or to the cows' processing area (7). A set of sorting gates allowed for guiding the cows to their respective groups after the milking (not shown). The west and east automatic milking unit rows (8) and left and right arm configuration (9) were considered for cow milking unit preferences. Entrance times for individual cows were recorded when pedometers attached below the fetlock of one hind leg of each cow were detected by a group of antennas positioned along the wall adjacent to the parlor entrance (1). Except when directing fresh cows to the north end of the barn, the waiting area remained the same size because there was no moving crowd gate. Therefore, the space available to the cows in the waiting area increased during the milking of a group, until the next group of incoming cows arrived. Modified from Muñoz-Boettcher et al. (2025). https://doi.org/10.3168/jds.2025-27269

Annual Farm Business Summary, and Analysis Season Underway, a Second Invite

John Hanchar

Summary

• Sound financial planning, and control are keys to successfully managing a farm business.
• The next months present good opportunities to evaluate financial management practices.
• The NWNY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Program has the capacity to work with a variety of producers as they seek to improve their business' financial management practices.

Background

Last fall's AG FOCUS article on the topic of farm business summary, and analysis notes that, "Winter months present farm business owners with opportunities to undertake planning efforts for the purpose of improving results." Analysis is always valuable, but some weeks, months during the year are much less feasible for summary, and analysis given other demands on farm business owners' time. Annual farm business summary, and analysis season is underway. The calendar indicates that adequate time exists over the next months to evaluate your farm business' results for 2025.

Characteristics of Effective Farm Financial Management

Research suggests that financial management practices, including annual farm business summary, and analysis, better position a business for success. Effective farm financial management emphasizes sound financial planning, and control.

Financial planning is using financial information to answer the following questions.

1. "Where is the business now?" Include, "How is the farm business positioned to handle financial adversity, risks, uncertainties?"
2. "Where do you want it to be?"
3. "How will you get the business to where you want it to be?"

Financial planning practices include

• generating financial statements (balance sheet, cash flow statement, and income statement)
• using results to identify strengths, and weaknesses, including identifying strategies to mitigate financial, marketing, and others risks
• developing projections, including those associated with proposed changes to the farm business

Financial control involves measuring financial condition, and performance over time to determine whether or not the business is achieving desired results. If not, then ask, "Why not?" to identify, and implement needed changes.

As a farm business owner, you have financial objectives, and goals. These direct your efforts. Do you measure the financial condition of your farm business using the balance sheet? Do you measure financial performance using the cash flow statement, and income statement? If you don't measure financial condition, and performance, then achieving desired financial results is less likely. The statement "If you can't, or don't measure it, then you can't manage it," with its emphasis on measuring outcomes, underlies the value, and need for sound financial management.

Cornell University's Dairy Farm Business Summary (DFBS) Program

• Objectives of the DFBS Program include: provide producers with opportunities to analyze the business' production, and financial situation, set future goals, and make sound financial decisions; help managers to better understand the business' ability to handle risks, and uncertainties.
• The DFBS also allows producers to compare their business performance to that of other dairy producers.
• The summary, and analysis for each farm includes profitability analysis, balance sheet analysis, analyses of annual cash flows, and repayment ability, capital, and labor efficiency, as well as analyses of the cropping, and dairy aspects the business.

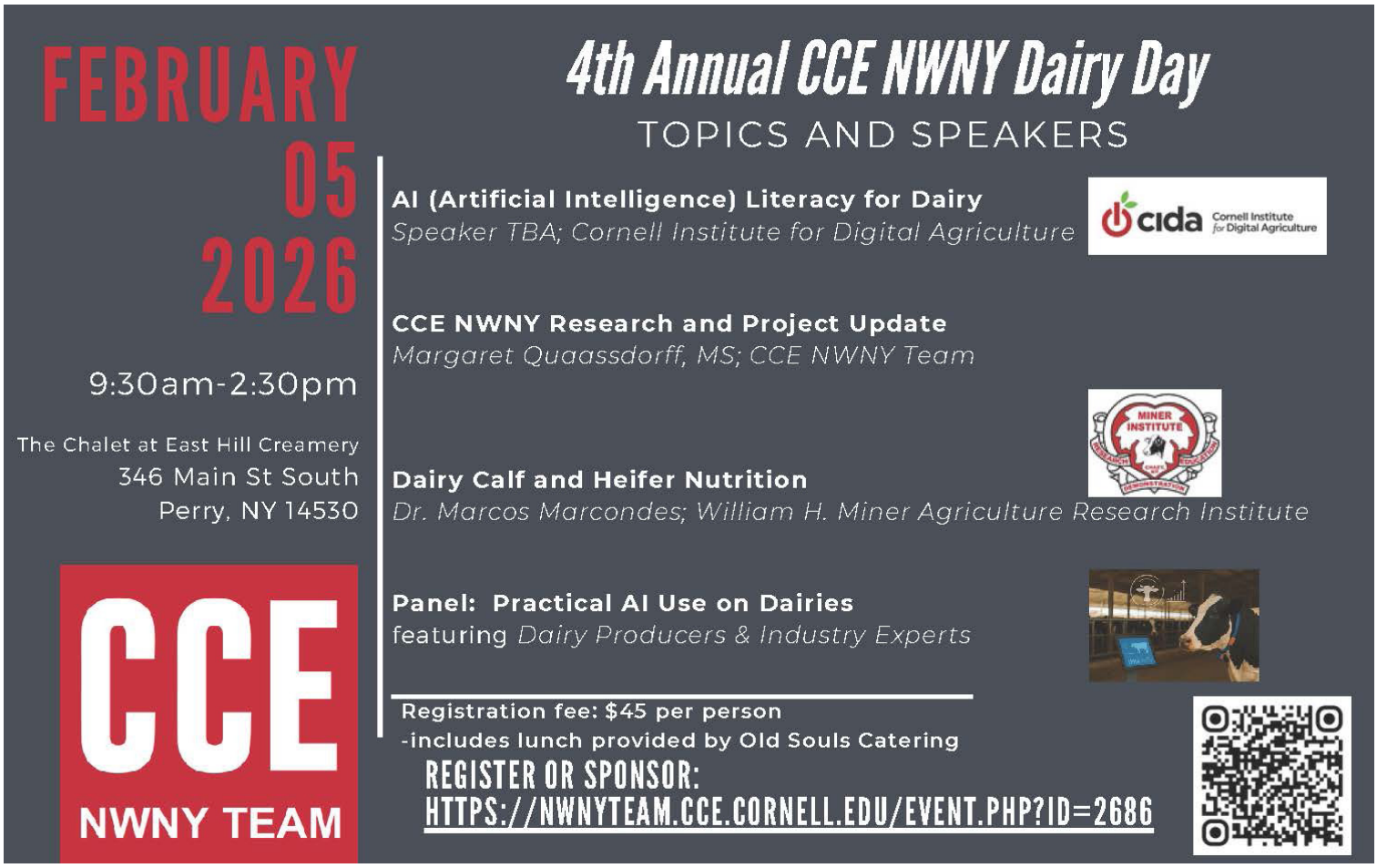
The DFBS program is a preferred financial management tool for summary, and analysis for dairy farm businesses of all kinds.

Financial Statements for Agriculture (FISA) Program

• FISA is a computer based spreadsheet program that can be used by all types of farm businesses to achieve an objective similar to the one above for the DFBS Program.
• In practice, FISA's ability to provide peer to peer comparisons is limited.
• The summary, and analysis for each farm includes profitability analysis, balance sheet analysis, analyses of annual cash flows, and repayment ability, as well as some capital efficiency measures, and analysis. The program does not summarize, and analyze production aspects of the business.

Farm Business Summary and Analysis with the NWNY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Program

If you are interested in improving your business' ability to practice sound financial management, then please contact us to learn more about some of the tools available, and their value and, or to discuss plans for completing a farm business summary, and analysis for 2025. Owners of all types of farm businesses are encouraged to contact us. The NWNY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Program has the capacity, using the above tools, to develop valuable farm business summary, and analysis. The NWNY team has the capacity, and desire to work with a variety of farm businesses -- dairy (small, medium, and large; conventional; organic; grazing; and others), field crop, livestock, and others.



Forages, Nutrients, Soil Health, and Equipment Alignment in 2026

Jodi Letham

As Northwestern New York farmers look toward the 2026 growing season, January remains the most important month for stepping back from the urgency of day-to-day operations and making the kind of strategic decisions that determine agronomic success months before seed ever touches soil. This is the point in the year when disciplined evaluation—rather than routine—should guide plans for forage systems, nutrient management, soil health investments, and equipment readiness.

For forages, growers should be digging into multi-year field records to understand not just what grew, but why it performed the way it did. Weather variability in recent seasons has highlighted where stands lacked functional diversity or where hybrid selection failed to match field conditions. Using January to reassess forage species mixes, hybrid maturities, and cutting strategies ensures that 2026 planting plans are built on evidence rather than assumption. Hybrid selection for corn silage, choices around grass-legume ratios, and timing windows for harvest should all be informed by actual forage quality outcomes, fiber digestibility trends, and the economic value of consistency under increasingly erratic weather.

Nutrient management planning deserves equal attention. Winter is when soil test summaries, yield maps, manure analyses, and application records should be systematically reviewed to recalibrate nutrient recommendations. The goal for 2026 should be stronger alignment between nutrient release curves and crop uptake needs, particularly nitrogen and potassium, which remain the most common sources of inefficiency across forage systems. Field-specific manure allocation, improved timing strategies, and recalculated rates often produce gains in both profitability and environmental stewardship. January is also the time to identify where fields showed declining fertility or widening nutrient imbalances and to adjust crop rotations or amendment strategies accordingly.

Soil health remains the backbone of long-term production, and winter evaluation should go well beyond checking organic matter levels. Compaction diagnostics, infiltration observations, cover crop performance, soil biological indicators, and tillage impacts all need to be re-examined with a 2026 lens. When growers integrate these observations into their management plans, they begin to stabilize yields, improve nutrient retention, and build resilience against increasingly frequent wet springs and dry midsummer periods. The operations that commit to compaction mitigation, strategic cover crop species selection, and reduced disturbance where appropriate will continue to see the greatest agronomic return on investment.

Equipment planning is the final component, and often the most overlooked. January is when every planter, tillage tool, manure spreader, and forage harvester should be evaluated not only for its mechanical readiness but also for whether it aligns with 2026 agronomic goals. Precision equipment that improves seed placement, minimizes nutrient loss, or reduces soil disturbance directly supports the forage and soil health strategy laid out for the upcoming season. Calibrations, upgrades, maintenance, and—when justified—equipment replacement decisions are best made now, when downtime allows for careful consideration rather than rushed repairs under spring pressure.

Producers who use January to critically interrogate their forage data, re-optimize nutrient management, prioritize soil health, and align equipment with these goals will enter 2026 with a system that is more resilient, efficient, and profitable. Winter planning is not simply preparation—it is the foundation of the entire production year.

Several regional educational events in January can help frame your 2026 decisions: https://nwnyteam.cce.cornell.edu/events.php

Resource: https://www.fbfs.com/learning-center/how-to-winterize-your-farm-equipment

2026 SOYBEAN & SMALL GRAINS CONGRESS

ONE DATE

02.11.26

ONE PLACE

DOUBLETREE BY HILTON, HENRIETTA

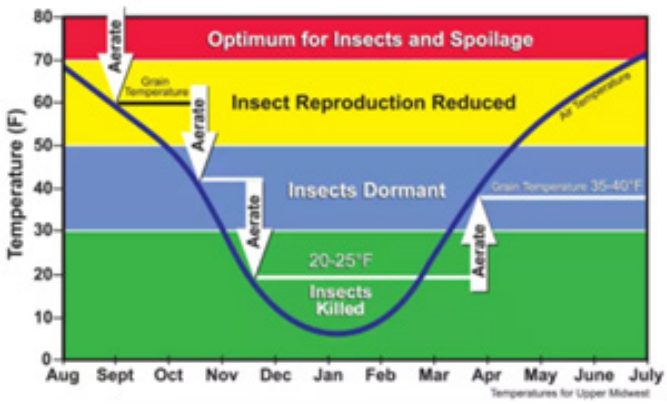
Keeping Stored Grain Quality Over the Winter

Mike Stanyard

Objective of Storage: To maintain quality of stored products after harvest and before end use
Dilemma of Storage: Quality *NEVER* improves during storage!

Grain storage is an important step in protecting your investment and lots of money can be lost in reduced quality when it's time to deliver. Hopefully, with the intent of keeping the grain stored longer than usual, steps were taken to keep your grain protected. With longer storage time, small grains and corn can obviously be more vulnerable to insect and mold damage. The usual sanitation prior to grain fill is a must every year. All fines and old grain should be swept up, vacuumed up and removed. An empty bin insecticide such as Tempo SC Ultra should be applied inside and outside of the bin to eliminate any existing insects and form a barrier to keep them out. An insecticide treatment on the grain at binning really helps keep that grain protected over the long haul. Products containing deltamethrin are effective on corn and wheat.

Well, it's January now and if you didn't go through all those steps, you still have aeration as a tool to keep insects and molds under control. Less than optimal moisture and temperature levels can lead to economic losses. Dry grain should be cooled to less than 60 degrees as soon as possible after harvest, and between 20 - 30 degrees for winter storage. Temperature benchmarks for stored grain: Chart credit: Dr. Kenneth J. Hellevang, NDSU Extension Service.



- 80°F: The ideal temperature for insect and mold growth.
- 70°F: Insect reproduction begins to decrease.
- 50°F: Insects become dormant below this temperature.
- 40°F: Mold growth prohibited below this temperature.
- 30°F: Insects begin to die.
- 20-30°F: Grain should be cooled to this range for winter storage.

I was recently asked if you can freeze insects in the grain bin and kill them. Ideally, to kill insects you really need to get that grain below 30 degrees as outside temperatures allow and keep it there for a couple of weeks.

The University of Minnesota has an excellent site on Managing Stored Grain with Aeration. Some of their recommendations for additional mold and insect control are summarized below and the webpage can be found at https://extension.umn.edu/corn-harvest/managing-stored-grain-aeration.

Stored grain should be cooled by aeration whenever the grain temperature exceeds the average outdoor temperature by 10 to 15 degrees. Expect storage time to approximately double with each 10-degree reduction in temperature. Grain should be cooled to about 25 degrees as outdoor temperatures get colder. Check the condition of stored grain about every two weeks while grain is cooling, then about monthly after grain has cooled for winter storage.

When the fans are off during the winter holding period, they should be covered (with canvas or plywood) to prevent the grain near the ducts from getting too cold during severe winter weather. Large temperature differences result in condensation in the cold grain. Spoiled grain over the aeration ducts or perforated floor is a common problem caused by not covering the fan during extended off periods. Also look for melting snow on the roof of the bin as a telltale sign of temperature problems and hot spots which could mean insect activity.

Accumulation of fine particles, weed seeds, and other foreign material interferes with airflow. Such accumulations are prime locations for increased mold and insect activity, which result in localized heating and grain deterioration. Normally, these fines collect in the center of the bin as the grain flows toward the walls.

A common practice in bins equipped with center unloading hoppers is to unload some grain from the center "core" to remove some accumulated fines. Fill the bin so it is peaked and unload some of the grain (300 to 1,000 bu, depending on bin size). This removes some of the accumulation and increases airflow in the center if enough grain is unloaded to allow the center core to fill with clean grain.

Another great grain storage resource is from the University of Nebraska, https://cropwatch.unl.edu/grain-storage-management. It is a thorough summary of articles written by other University on all topics related to grain storage management. Check it out!

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

2026 FORAGE CONGRESS

01.28.26

The Nunda Ranch

2278 NY-436, Nunda, NY 14517

9am - 3pm

PARTICIPANT REGISTRATION NOW OPEN!

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

Postmaster:
Dated Material
Please Expedite

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Permit No. 298
Rochester, NY

UPCOMING EVENTS

January 14

2026 Corn Congress

9 AM - 4 PM : DoubleTree by Hilton, Henrietta : $60

Registration: https://nwnyteam.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=2637

January 28

2026 Forage Congress

9 AM - 3 PM : The Nunda Ranch : $45

Registration: https://nwnyteam.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=2685

January 17

Pork Producers Connect

8 - 10 AM : Deep Run Winery, 3772 West Lake Rd. : Free

Registration: newyorkpork.org/events

January 21

Converting Old Dairy Barns Into Swine Facilities

6 - 7:30 PM : ZOOM : Free

Registration: https://tinyurl.com/BarnConversion25

February 5

2026 Dairy Day

9:30 AM - 2:30 PM : The Chalet at East Hill Creamery : $45

Registration: https://nwnyteam.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=2686

February 11

2026 Soybean Congress

9 AM - 4 PM : DoubleTree by Hilton, Henrietta : $60

Registration: https://nwnyteam.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=2638

WINTER WEBINAR SERIES 2026

Tuesdays
12:00pm-1:00pm EST

CCE Regional Dairy Specialists
PRO DAIRY
College of Veterinary Medicine

Dates, Topics and Speakers

- **Jan 13-** BREEDING TODAY FOR THE HERD YOU WANT TOMORROW: TOOLS TO SUPPORT SEMEN CHOICE TRADEOFFS
  Dr. Daryl Nydam and Dr. Julie Adamchick
- **Jan 20-** RESEARCH IN PRECISION LIVESTOCK HEALTH
  Dr. Franco Leal-Yepes
- **Jan 27-** EARLY CALF MANAGEMENT: KEY INFLUENCES ON HEIFER DEVELOPMENT
  Dr. Adam Beard
- **Feb 3 -** EVIDENCE-BASED DEVELOPMENT OF BEST CATTLE MANAGEMENT PRACTICES
  Dr. Matthias Wieland
- **Feb 10-** FORECASTING PERFORMANCE: HOW CLUES FROM BLOOD, MILK, AND SENSORS CAN PREDICT UNFORTUNATE OUTCOMES IN MULTIPAROUS COWS
  Dr. Jackson Seminara
- **Feb 17-** ADVANCING MILK QUALITY: INTEGRATING WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT AND ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE IN QMPS RESEARCH
  Dr. Wolfgang Heuweiser
- **Feb 24-** SENSOR TECHNOLOGIES IN CALF HEALTH MONITORING
  Dr. Taika Von Konigslow

REGISTER: HTTPS://CORNELL.ZOOM.US/WEBINAR/REGISTER/WN_KHAYM9A8RSEUDVYF1I8KDG#/REGISTRATION

Helping you put knowledge to work