



Ag Focus

Considerations for Working with Immature Corn Silage

By: Dr. Larry Chase



In some parts of New York, the 2013 corn crop may not reach normal maturity. There may be small ears, poor grain fill or even no ears on the corn plant at the time of harvest. We have seen this same situation in previous years. The following points may be helpful as you work with immature corn that will be harvested for corn silage.

Nutrient composition: Immature corn will usually be wet (<25-30% DM), higher in crude protein, higher in fiber, higher in sugar and lower in starch than “normal” corn silage. However, energy value may be 85-95% of the energy value of normal corn silage. Remember that corn silage is really grass forage with an ear attached. In the early growth stages, the plant can be a highly digestible source of fiber since lignin (as % of the total fiber) will often be lower than in mature corn silage. The

energy in immature corn silage is mainly from the digestible plant rather than the grain. In 2000, we sampled some immature corn at the Cornell T&R Center. Most of this was in the dough stage and had starch levels between 5 and 20%. Normal corn silage is 25-40% starch. The predicted energy values for these samples were 80-95% of normal

maturity corn silage.

Harvesting considerations: The biggest challenge is the moisture content of immature corn silage. It is not uncommon for these plants to be < 30% DM when they are ready to harvest. Key points to think about are:

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Mission Statement

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

- ◆ Enhance the profitability of their business
- ◆ Practice environmental stewardship
- ◆ Enhance employee & family well-being in a safe work environment
- ◆ Provide safe, healthful agricultural products
- ◆ Provide leadership for enhancing relationships between agricultural
sector, neighbors & the general public.

- If at all possible, wait until whole plant dry matter is > 32-34% dry matter. Harvesting wetter increases runoff from the silage and makes it difficult to get a good fermentation.
- Store any immature corn silage in a separate storage facility if possible.
- Take some samples during harvest and have them analyzed to provide a base of information on the nutrient content of the crop.
- Check chopper settings and particle size of the material coming out of the chopper. If using the Penn State box, target 10-20% on the top screen and < 40% in the pan. This may require increasing length of cut.
- Since ear and kernel development is poor, kernel processing is probably not needed.
- Follow normal silage management practices of filling fast, packing and covering the top with plastic or the new oxygen limiting silage covers.
- Immature corn silage should be high in sugar content to provide readily available carbohydrates to support fermentation. However, it may be lower in the normal bacterial population coming into the silo from the corn plant. The addition of a lactic acid based inoculant may be beneficial to stimulate fermentation.
- If possible, give the silo 3-4 months after filling before beginning to feed the silage out.

Forage analysis: Since there can be many factors that influence the nutrient composition of immature corn silage; an actual analysis of your specific corn silage is needed. This information can be used in both determining the price of this silage and also in balancing rations. A wet chemistry analysis may be better than NIR since calibrations for normal corn silage may not fit with immature silages. You may want to discuss this with the forage laboratory. Make sure that starch, NDF digestibility and a fermentation analysis are included.

Yield: Yield will be highly variable and difficult to estimate. Dr. Greg Roth at Penn State suggests that silage yield for corn plants without ears or poorly pollinated ears may be 1 ton of wet silage yield (70%

moisture) for each foot of plant height. An older study at Cornell by Dr. Bill Cox indicated that silage yields at the dough stage were 65 to 70% of yields at the milk line stage. In the same study, yields at the silk stage were 40 to 45% of those obtained at the milk line stage.

Economic value: The actual price will depend on a combination of yield, nutrient composition and dry matter content. Dr. Bill Weiss at Ohio State indicates that immature corn silage is worth about 85% of the economic value of normal corn silage at the same dry matter content. This is based on a number of runs over the years using the Sesame program. A major factor influencing the final price is adjusting for differences in dry matter content. The following example indicates how this pricing approach can be used to determine the value at the time of feeding:

Value of “normal” corn silage = \$70/ton (35% DM)

Value of immature corn silage = \$70 * 0.85 = \$59.50 (still assumes 35% DM)

If actual dry matter is 27%, then the adjusted price = \$45.90/ton

(27/35 * \$59.50)

If you want to “estimate” the value of the standing crop, use 70% of the adjusted price. This would be \$41.65 in this example.

Feeding considerations: Work with your nutritionist to determine the best way to use this silage on your farm. In some cases, it might be logical to use the immature corn silage for specific groups of cows or heifers. This will depend primarily on the nutrient profile, dry matter content and fermentation characteristics. It might be best to limit the use of this silage in rations for close-up dry cows and fresh cows if possible. Immature corn silage will often have higher acetic acid content after fermentation. This may decrease dry matter intake. The addition of sodium bicarbonate added to the ration at 0.75% of total ration dry matter may help intake. This is about 6 – 10 ounces per cow depending on the level of dry matter intake.

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Dairy Acceleration Program Announced

Plan for Environmentally Responsible Growth

Governor Cuomo, in partnership with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, has announced the Dairy Acceleration Program.

This program is designed to enhance profitability of New York dairy farms and to maintain a commitment to environmentally responsible growth. The program will be delivered in collaboration with Cornell PRO-DAIRY and Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Eligible projects assist New York dairy farmers to develop business plans for successful and environmentally responsible growth. Funds may be used for creation of strategic business plans focused on growth, design of new or remodeled facilities, or development of environmental and farmstead plans. Farms must have lactating dairy cattle.

Eligibility:

- ★ Must be a dairy cattle farm
- ★ Must have complete financial records for business planning
- ★ Preference is given to farms with under 300 cows
- ★ Must complete and submit an application

Dairy Acceleration Program funding covers 80% of a project's cost. The farm is responsible for 20% of the project cost, which is paid directly to the service provider, including any in excess of established limits.



Funding may include:

- ★ Up to \$5,000 per farm to write a business plan or to develop a combination of a business and facility growth plan
- ★ Up to \$6,000 to develop a new Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) for farms under 300 cows
- ★ Up to \$4,500 to update an existing CNMP for farms under 300 cows
- ★ Up to \$3,600 for an initial and combined evaluation of financial and environmental needs of the farm for farms under 300 cows


Business planning to account for the cost of environmental improvements associated with growth of the dairy is encouraged.

Agri-business personnel who wish to provide services for the Dairy Acceleration Program should contact Caroline Potter for more information at cjh42@cornell.edu.

For more details visit the DAP Web site at: http://ansci.cornell.edu/prodairy/dairy_acceleration/




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2014 NY All Forage Fed Bull Test – Where Does Your Bull Fit In?

By: Nancy Glazier

Work is gearing up for the second year of the NY All Forage Fed Bull Test. The inaugural 112-day test was a success with an average gain of 2.1 lbs; predicted gain using modeling was 1.5 lbs on a diet of good quality second cutting hay and minerals. Six consignors of the 14 bulls consisting of five breeds participated. Monthly updates were provided to consignors and other producers with the information posted to: <http://ansci.cornell.edu/wp/beefcattle/>. The young bulls were body conditioned scored and weighed every 28 days. Hip heights were measured to determine frame scores. Breeding soundness exams were performed at the conclusion of the test.

New York is well positioned to take advantage of the growing demand for pasture-finished beef due to its rich grazing resources and proximity to large urban markets. One of the keys to profitable production of pasture-finished beef is the use of genetics that will result in a quality product within a feasible timeframe. Raising animals through a second winter presents challenges both from an economical and production standpoint. Consequently, the ideal scenario for producers is to combine appropriate genetics and sound management to achieve good carcass quality within 20 months. This will allow producers to calve on pasture in the spring (~May) and finish animals prior to the onset of a second



Graduate of the first year's test, 13 months of age.

winter feeding season (~December). The forage based test is a cost-effective option to help breeders and buyers assess and compare bull cohorts raised under commercial conditions.

The goal for the upcoming test is 30 bulls. An optional 112 day pasture test will be added. The 2014 program will begin with bull delivery in early January. The stored feed test will end in early May and the pasture portion will begin after a short transition period. Dates of birth need to be from Jan. 1, 2013 to June 15, 2013. If you have questions or are interested in consigning a bull(s), contact Nancy Glazier: 585.315.7746, nig3@cornell.edu or Mike Baker: 607.255.5923, mjb28@cornell.edu.

Upcoming Webinars:

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New “Tools for Teams” Workshop Scheduled for Dairy Profit Teams

Because of the success of their earlier “Tools for Teams” hands-on workshops, Penn State’s Extension Dairy Team in cooperation with Cornell Cooperative Extension’s NWNY Team and PRO - DAIRY Program is offering a workshop on **October 8** at the Byrnclyff Resort and Conference Center in Varysburg, from 9:45 a.m. to 3 p.m. The program has been valuable in increasing dairy profit teams’ effectiveness by offering team members insight into using whole farm and management tools to ensure optimum use of farm resources.

The workshop will highlight the use of PA Dairy Tool, Income Over Feed Cost Tool, Cash Flow Planning Tool, Dairy Analysis Tools, and Cornell’s Monthly Dairy Profit Monitor and Annual Dairy Farm Business Summary to help teams improve success.

According to Joan Petzen, farm business management specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension’s NWNY Team, “In New York, Dairy Profit Teams have proven successful at helping dairies evaluate production practices and make the wisest investment of limited human and financial resources to improve the bottom line of their businesses. Effective teams rely on performance data to monitor progress once a goal is established for a production area.” The tools provided can help advisors, who are part of teams, to consistently monitor farm progress.

Participants can try out tools on their own following the workshop, then access previously recorded



Doug, MaryAnn and Robert Calkins, Varysburg, NY rely on their Dairy Profit Team for assistance with strategic planning for their farm business.

follow-up webinars to get more detailed information about some of the tools. Webinars can be accessed at: <http://extension.psu.edu/animals/dairy/courses/tools-for-teams/webinars>.

Instructors will be Dr. Lisa Holden, associate professor, Penn State Department of Animal Science; Rob Goodling, Penn State Extension associate; Virginia Ishler, Penn State Extension specialist; Rebecca White, Penn State research associate and Betsey Howland, Cornell University PRO - DAIRY Program extension support specialist.

Fee is \$35 per person. Scholarships are available for those willing to share data with instructors. Participants may bring a second person from their business at no additional charge. Pre-registration is necessary to ensure adequate workshop materials are available.

For additional information or questions, contact Dr. Lisa Holden, toll-free, at 888-373-7232 or lholden@psu.edu. Registration may be done toll-free at 888-373-7232. On-line registrations will be accepted at: <http://extension.psu.edu/animals/dairy/courses/tools-for-teams>.



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Bennington Beefalo to Host Pasture Walk

By Joan Sinclair Petzen

On Thursday, September 19, Bennington Beefalo in Attica, New York will host a pasture walk at 5:00 p.m. Participants will have the opportunity to learn about rotational grazing, marketing grass fed meats, using small grain sprouts to enhance egg quality during winter months and enjoy a light supper featuring grass fed meats and local products.

The pasture walk is organized by Cornell Cooperative Extension's Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team with support provided by the New York State Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative and Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education Program.

In 1981, Bob and Kathy Ott started pasture feeding and marketing grass fed beef. Rotational grazing started in 1985 with the first installation of high tensile and temporary fence. Beefalo came along in 1994. Their herd consists of 12 brood cows and offspring.

Kathy handcrafts Grandma K's soaps from their tallow and sells them along with the meat products.

In 2004, they added pastured broilers to their mix of products. Chickens are raised from May through October, finishing the season with roasters.

Apprentice Ryan Kehl joined the Ott's in 2012 to learn about grazing and marketing. This summer they are dabbling with "piggies" and planning on grazing pigs next season. Ryan brings nearly 29 years of pig experience to the mix.

Bennington Beefalo sells at farmers' markets and to direct order customers. Communication with customers is a key to their success. Come learn how they use post cards, the internet, and farmers' markets to attract customers.

In addition to learning about rotational grazing, participants will hear how neighbor Tom Geitner markets eggs from pasture raised chickens. Last winter, he experimented with sprouting and feeding wheat and barley sprouts to improve his winter egg



Bob Ott and Ryan Kehl with Beefalo herd.

quality. He is pleased with the results and will share his experience at the pasture walk.

Mr. Ott will show off the inexpensive livestock handling system he developed to safely and efficiently handle cattle while preventing injuries to both the handler and the animals.

Registration is required by **Monday, September 16**, for the pasture walk to prepare educational materials and for the light supper. The fee is \$15 for an individual or \$30 for a family. A discount of \$5.00 will be given to attendees who are enrolled with Cornell Cooperative Extension in the ten-county Northwest New York Region. To register contact Sharon Wolcott at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wyoming County, 585-786-2251 or e-mail smw25@cornell.edu. Registrations are being accepted on-line at www.nwnyteam.org. Payment is appreciated at the time of registration.



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Planting Tips for Winter Wheat

By: Mike Stanyard

What a great year for winter wheat. Harvest started a little later than usual as grain moistures were slow to drop below 20%. When combines starting rolling, there were some pretty impressive yields. Many producers reported their all-time high farm averages above 90 bushels/acre. I have also never seen so many individual fields go over the 100 bushel mark. We still had some problems with Fusarium Head Scab. There were some definite hot spots where conditions at flowering infected wheat heads just at the right time. Unfortunately, some fields were above the 2 ppm limit and some tested as high as 6 ppm.

Winter wheat production for New York is estimated at 7.48 million bushels, up 40 percent from the 2012 crop of 5.36 million bushels. Acreage for harvest is up 29 percent to 110 thousand acres. Yields are expected to average a record high 68 bushels per acre, 5 bushels more than a year earlier (Blair Smith, State Statistician of USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service, New York Field Office on 8/12).

Planting Dates. Ideally, September 15 has been a good starting point for western NY. This has been traditionally based on the timing of the average first frost that would eliminate any Hessian flies. Fly-free dates can vary based on feet above sea level and distance south of Lake Ontario. Starting dates can range as early as September 6th at 1500 ft. in Seneca County to September 17th at 400 ft. in Niagara County.

Variety Selection. Cornell has released the yield results of the 2013 red and white winter wheat trials from across the region (Monroe and Livingston counties locally). These results can be viewed at our team web site, www.nwnyteam.org, or send me an email and I'll get a copy to you.

Seeding Rates. Seeding rates should increase as the season gets later and should also be adjusted based on soil conditions (See chart). Seeds should be drilled 1-1.5 inches deep for good emergence. See



examples below on how to calculate million/pounds of seed per acre.

Live seed % = Recommended rate / Percentage of live seed = Rate/acre

Example: 1,350,000 seeds / .90 live seeds = 1.48 million seeds/acre

To figure out how many pounds per acre, use the following formula.

Seeds per acre / # seeds/lb. = lb./acre

Example: 1,450,000 / 13,000 = 111.5 lb./acre

Starter Fertilizer. At this year's Soybean and Small Grains Congress, Peter Johnson emphasized that you should not be growing wheat without a starter fertilizer. He said that if you are not then you are leaving 8 bushels on the table. He stressed that phosphorus was most important for wheat. He used the example that while soybeans only need 1 pound of P and corn 5 pounds for strong seedling establishment wheat needs 15 pounds. Follow your soil sample recommendations and remember wheat grows best at a pH around 6.3. I have seen an increase in the number of fertilizer boxes and liquid applicators going on drills.

Soil	Sept. 15	Sept. 25	Oct. 5	Oct. 15	Oct. 25
Good	1.33M	1.45M	1.57M	1.69M	1.8M
Average	1.45M	1.57M	1.69M	1.8M	1.93M
Poor	1.57M	1.69M	1.8M	1.93M	2.06M

Million Wheat Seeds Per Acre Based on Soil Conditions

Broadleaf Weed Management. Winter annual weeds are the most prevalent weed competitor for our winter wheat. Chickweed, purple dead nettle, shepherds purse, corn chamomile and others in the mustard family emerge right along with the wheat crop in the fall and can really pull down yields. Many producers spray with Buctril or Harmony Extra in the fall so they are starting clean in the spring. This is also the best option if you plan to underseed your wheat with clover in the spring.

Annual Grass Weed Management. Annual and roughstalk bluegrass and cheat populations continue to increase across the region. These grasses also emerge in the fall right along with the wheat. Osprey herbicide was registered last year for annual grass control in wheat but a little too late for growers to get it applied at the optimal timing this spring. Russ Hahn did some field research last year with Osprey and preliminary results show better weed control when applied in early spring versus the fall.

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Planning for Succession:

Managing Business Transition to a New Generation

By Joan Sinclair Petzen

Farm Businesses face many crossroads. Few are as critical as determining future leadership and ownership as generations of operators move into, grow and thrive and exit the business. Managers of prosperous farm businesses groom successors to provide continuity in the management of the business and farming operations. For many in agriculture, their first love is nurturing livestock, tilling the soil or operating a machine. Often the delicate dance to bring all the actors and activities together to keep the business running like a well-oiled machine is very challenging. The skills needed to orchestrate the dance are ones that can be learned even if they take one outside their personal comfort zone.

Western New York is home to many flourishing farm businesses. For these businesses to thrive for future generations, a management succession plan must be developed along with plans for the transfer of assets to future generations. Gone are the days of being able to simply prepare a will and have the next generation pick up the reins once the former operator has died and is buried. Today, businesses are much larger. Farm owners are living longer. Income and estate tax laws are more complicated and much less forgiving. Geriatric health care is expensive and must be planned for to protect farm assets for future generations.

These issues will be addressed in a workshop series being planned by Cornell Cooperative Extension's Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team later this fall. "Planning for Succession" is a three workshop series. It will be held at Cornell Cooperative Extension in Seneca, Monroe and Wyoming Counties. We trust this will allow families from across the region to attend. Members of all generations involved in the farm business are encouraged to attend along with people seeking ways to transfer their farm business to another party or family member.

During the workshop series participants will learn:

- ♦ Skills needed to integrate successors into management of a farm business
- ♦ How to exchange ideas
- ♦ Who to involve in farm decision making
- ♦ The hopes and fears of all parties involved in running a business in management transition
- ♦ Steps to successfully transferring both management and assets
- ♦ How to run effective family business meetings
- ♦ About tools that can help you to plan and manage the transfer of your farm business
- ♦ Where you can get help with the transition of a farm business to new owners
- ♦ Effective methods to use in different situations to facilitate a transfer of resources from one party or generation to another

We are presently working on bringing together an all star cast of facilitators and presenters for these workshops. Dr. Bernie Erven, Professor Emeritus, The Ohio State University is coming to talk about running effective family business meetings and communication among the generations. Dan Welch with NY FarmNet will help folks to understand how a farm business transition team can help frame the process and keep the transition moving. Joan Sinclair Petzen will talk about evaluating the financial sustainability of your business and facilitate a discussion of the issues of concern to families considering transition.

Plan to attend in Seneca Falls at 7 pm on Wednesdays, November 6, 20, and December 11 or in Rochester on Thursdays at 1:00 pm, November 7, 21 and December 12 or in Warsaw on November 7, 21 and December 12 at 7:00 pm. For questions or sponsorship opportunities, please call Joan Petzen at 585-786-2251, X122. To register, please contact Cathy Wallace at 585-343-3040, X138.

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Beef Cattle Comments...

Michael Baker, Beef Cattle Extension Specialist
Cornell University

TO DO SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER

- ✱ Consider marketing options for feeder cattle:
 - Special feeder calf sales, contact local sale barn for details
 - Retained Ownership, contact Mike Baker, 607-255-5923
- ✱ Continue to monitor body condition of first and second calf heifers. If they drop below 4.5, they should receive supplemental nutrition.
- ✱ The breeding season should last no more than 60 days. Make plans for keeping bull separate before and after the 60 day breeding season.
- ✱ Line up supplies for fall roundup and weaning. Consider the following:
 - ◆ Enroll your herd in the Cow Herd Appraisal Performance System (CHAPS) record keeping system, <http://www.chaps2000.com/>. This program provides important data on the productivity of your cows based on the performance of their calves.
 - ◆ Buy ear tags to identify replacement heifers and cows.
 - ◆ If deemed necessary (consult your veterinarian to do a fecal egg count) worm cows and bulls.
 - ◆ Apply lice and grub control before November 5.
 - ◆ Vaccinate calf crop for IBR, BVD, PI3, BRSV, 7-way Clostridial. Also consider Histophilus somnus, and Mannheimia haemolytica (formerly Pasteurella haemolytica) and Pasteurella multocida (leucotoxin). If using a modified live vaccine, this must be done after calves are weaned unless otherwise labeled. Killed vaccine products can be used on nursing calves.
 - ◆ Treat calves for worms and grubs and supplement with Selenium.
- ✱ Pregnancy test and cull all open cows.
- ✱ Cull problem cows and marginal producers. Production data is easily obtained using CHAPS.
- ✱ Take forage sample for nutrient analysis. De-



pending on your locality, hay may be in short supply or of poor quality. Allocating the best feed to younger, higher producing animals will stretch out your supply. Contact local Cornell Cooperative Extension office for information.

- ✱ Consider taking soil samples and top dressing fields requiring lime, phosphorous and/or potash.

EVALUATE YOUR GENETICS

NY Feedlot and Carcass Value Discovery Program

- ✱ Purpose: Teach cow/calf producers the value of their calves based on performance in the feedlot and on through the packing plant. Calves are accepted in November and fed till their most optimal profit potential.

NY All Forage Bull Test

- ✱ Purpose: To develop and evaluate the performance and quality of young bulls on a typical commercial forage diet. As the predominant feedstuff used in a cow/calf operation is forage, the data collected will assist producers in selecting bulls raised in conditions similar to the environment under which they will be expected to perform.

If you are interested and/or have questions, please contact me at 607-255-5923 or mjb28@cornell.edu. Details are also available at <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/beef>



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Summary:

- Immature corn silage will vary both in nutrient composition and dry matter content. Typically, it will be higher in crude protein, NDF and sugar but lower in starch than “normal” corn silage.
- Dry matter content will usually be low (<30% DM) in immature corn plants. Ensiling wet corn silage can result in unusual fermentations and the resulting silage may cause decreased dry matter intake when fed to cows.
- Try to hold off on harvest until whole plant dry matter is > 32-34%.
- Forage analysis is essential to characterize the immature corn silage on your farm and determine how it can best be used in dairy rations.
- The energy value will probably range from 80-95% of normal corn silage.
- The economic value will be about 85% of normal corn silage **before** adjusting for dry matter content.

Website Watch Makeover!



Our website just had a makeover!
The site has been redesigned and content has been updated. The web address remain the same. Stop in and take a look -- www.nwnyteam.org

In addition to helpful content, we have links to our

Facebook page:
(<https://www.facebook.com/NWNYTeam>)

Youtube channel
(<https://youtube.com/user/CCENWNY>).

Let us know what you think!

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Betsey Howland at BLH37@cornell.edu or (607) 592-6222.

Applications Due October 10, 2013



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- 9 **Webinar: New Concepts in Mastitis Control.** <http://www.hoards.com/webinars>
- 19 **Pasture Walk, Bennington Beefalo**, 5:00 p.m., 1990 Stedman Rd., Attica. Cost: \$15.00 per person or \$30.00 for families. Registration: 585.786.2251
- 24-25 **New Strategies for Farm Succession Planning**, NYS Fairgrounds, Broadway Bistro Room, Syracuse. Registration cost is \$100 and includes meals & educational material. RSVP by: September 12. For more information contact: 800.547.3276 or aes6@cornell.edu
- 26 **NYS Dry Bean Field Meeting**, 5:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m., 1530 Harris Road, Penfield. DEC/CCA credits are requested - bring your card. \$5 for current Cornell Veg Enrollees; \$10 for all others. To pre-register for supper: Carol MacNeil at 585.313.8796 or crm6@cornell.edu

October 2013

- 8 **Tools for Teams, Workshop** 9:45 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Byrnclyff Resort & Conference Center, 2357 Humphrey Rd., Varysburg. Registration fee: \$35.00 per person. Register on-line: <http://extension.psu.edu/animals/dairy/courses/tools-for-teams> or contact Dr. Lisa Holden: 888.373.7232 or lholden@psu.edu