



# Ag FOCUS



## What to Expect from OSHA Inspections

By: Libby Gaige

The Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) is a division of the United States Department of Labor and exists to “assure safe and healthful workplaces by setting and enforcing standards and by providing training, outreach, education and assistance” ([www.osha.gov](http://www.osha.gov)). OSHA jurisdiction excludes businesses that employ fewer than 10 employees as well as family farm workers (farm owners and their immediate family members). Is your farm exempt? Keep in mind that the 10 employee minimum refers to a farm that has employed 10 or more individuals over the past 12 months, though not necessarily at the same time. Therefore, small farms with high employee turnover may in fact be included.

**Why are we talking about it?** Two pretty convincing reasons. One, there have been some changes to the Hazard Communication Standard (formerly called the Right to Know law) which requires agricultural employers to keep workers informed about the identities and hazards of chemicals in the workplace. The new Hazard Classification system will provide specific criteria for classifying health and physical hazards, labels will be changed to make them easier to understand, and Material Data Sheets will be renamed Safety Data Sheets and will have a new specific format. Two, OSHA officials have notified several



*What chemical hazards are on your farm? Have your employees been trained on how to recognize and safely handle them?*

individuals in the dairy industry in New York State that they are planning to focus their inspections on dairy farms in the coming years.

**What can be expected from an OSHA inspection?** By law, OSHA cannot give advanced notice of an inspection.

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The NWNy 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  
NWNy 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.



*Continued from page 1*

They will show up at the farm and expect to carry out the inspection with no more than an hour's delay. The owner does have the right to request a warrant before OSHA carries out the inspection, which could possibly delay the process by a few days. Advice given in a webinar which is now available on Farm Credit East's website (see below) was to always be polite to inspectors, and even if you're planning to request a warrant, take the time to ask as many questions of the inspectors as you can. They may have limited dairy farm knowledge, so getting to know them before the inspection starts will help you to know how to talk to them and how much dairy jargon you can use.

**Start with the Hazard Communication Standard.**

Reviewing the HCS is the best place to start in bringing your farm into compliance with OSHA regulations. This is the area in which farms have generally received the most citations during OSHA inspections. Farms must inform employees of any chemical hazards in the workplace and provide written protocols and trainings on how to deal with these chemicals. Once you meet the HCS, then it is time to prioritize what else needs to be done on your farm in order to come into compliance, which might include making changes to manure storage facilities, adding guarding to machinery or providing animal handling training to employees.

Here are a few good resources to help you make sure your farm is in compliance with OSHA regulations:

- Farm Credit East hosted a webinar in August 2013 entitled "OSHA Compliance: What Farm Businesses Need to Know!" <https://www.farmcrediteast.com/en/Webinars/2013OSHAwebinar.aspx>
- The New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) offers free on-farm safety trainings in English and Spanish. <http://www.nycamh.com/programs/farmsafetytrainings/>

## *Upcoming Webinars:*

### **Economic Benchmarks for Dairies: Eight Rules You Cannot Break**

October 7

presented by Gary Sipiorski, Vita Plus  
(<http://www.extension.org/pages/29156/upcoming-dairy-cattle-webinars>)

### **Crop Year's Over...Now What?**

October 14

Presented by Mike Hutjens  
University of Illinois  
(<http://www.hoards.com/webinars>)

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# Pricing Corn Silage -- Fall 2013

By: John Hanchar

## Summary

- ★ Price analysis suggests that the price of corn silage depends on corn silage quantities, the price of alfalfa hay, the price received by farmers for milk, and the price of corn grain.
- ★ Estimated corn silage price is sensitive to alfalfa hay price and corn grain price.
- ★ Price estimates combined with understanding of relevant supply and demand factors from an individual farm business owner's perspective can aid decision making regarding corn silage price. Given most recently available alfalfa hay and corn grain prices (August, and September/October 2013, respectively), price analysis suggests an estimated corn silage price of about \$42 per ton.

## Determining Corn Silage Price

A farm business owner can examine how much he/she would be willing to supply to a market at a given price. Cost of production analysis combined with consideration of other factors helps to define the supply relationship. A seller can develop a target based upon the above, but actual market conditions provide no guarantee that a buyer will purchase quantities desired at a price that achieves the producer's cost target.

Some farm business owners might approach the problem of determining corn silage price from a value in production, or input demand perspective. The amounts of corn grain and corn stover in a ton of



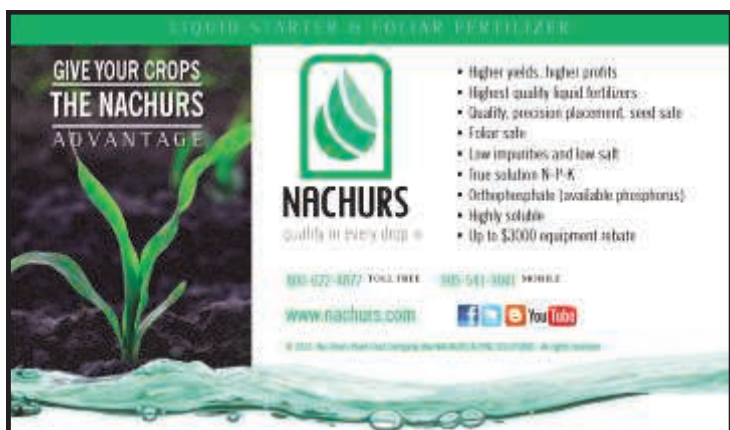
corn silage, relevant prices, and corn silage's place in the milk production process are key variables. A buyer can develop a price target based upon the above, but actual market conditions provide no guarantee that a producer will sell the quantity desired at a price that matches the buyer's willingness to pay.

For more information regarding the two approaches mentioned above, visit the team's website at [www.nwnyteam.org](http://www.nwnyteam.org) and click on the "Forages" tab.

Although factors in price determination, the two approaches described above, by themselves, in isolation don't completely determine market price and quantity. Supply and demand relationships work simultaneously in markets to determine price and quantity. Empirical price analysis brings supply and demand relationships together to determine price.

## Corn Silage Price Analysis

Empirical price analysis suggests that corn silage price is a function of corn silage quantities, alfalfa hay price, the price received by farmers for milk sold, and corn grain price. Ordinary least squares regression provided an estimate of corn silage price as a linear function of the above variables. Even though the analysis is somewhat rough, elementary, readers of the original article describing this work in August 2012 noted that the analysis and estimates generated should be helpful to farm business owners looking to price corn silage.





### **Corn Silage Price Estimates – Fall 2013**

Corn silage price estimates can be generated using the ordinary least squares regression results reported in August 2012, where estimated corn silage price is a function of alfalfa hay price and corn price, other factors (corn silage quantity and milk price) fixed at average levels for the period 1991 through 2010.

- estimated corn silage price (\$/ton) =  $10.621 + (0.079 \times \text{price of alfalfa hay (\$/ton)}) + (2.448 \times \text{price of corn (\$/bushel)})$ .

Consider the following as current market conditions.

- alfalfa hay price is \$205 per ton (USDA/NASS. Agricultural Prices. Washington, DC: National Agricultural Statistics Service. August, 2013.), and
- the price of corn is roughly \$6.00 per bushel (WNY Energy. "Corn Bids." September 10, 2013. Approximate value based upon reported bids for September through October 2013.)

Using the estimating equation and the above prices for alfalfa hay and corn grain yields an estimated corn silage price of \$42 per ton.

Estimated corn silage price is sensitive to alfalfa and corn grain prices. Earlier this year, producers described market conditions very different than those described above. Suppose alfalfa hay price is \$300 per ton, and the price of corn grain is \$7.25 per bushel. Then, estimated corn silage price is \$52 per ton.

Corn silage price estimates combined with understanding of relevant supply and demand factors from the individual farm business owner's perspective can aid decision making regarding corn silage price.

*Thanks to Christian Yunker, CY Farms, LLC/Batavia Turf, for providing valuable comments on earlier versions of this work.*

### **Artificial Insemination Course**

October 22<sup>nd</sup> & 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2013

9:30am – 3:30pm

**Cost: \$200**



**Location: TBA (Ontario County)**

The NWNy Team & Genex Cooperative, Inc. are offering a two day artificial insemination course. Morning classroom sessions will cover topics including reproductive tract anatomy, the estrus cycle, synchronization programs, heat detection and semen handling techniques. During afternoon on-farm sessions, experienced technicians will first teach the participants A.I. techniques using reproductive tracts and then move on to cows. Ample time will be dedicated to hands-on practice in breeding cows.

Spanish- speakers are encouraged to participate.  
(Bilingual educator will be present).

The program fee will cover lunch both days and  
A.I. manuals for participants  
(available in English and Spanish).

NWNy Team enrollees will receive a \$10 discount.

***Registration is required by October 14<sup>th</sup>.***

To register, please contact Nancy Anderson at  
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# Employers Must Provide Health Exchange Notice by Oct. 1, 2013

By: Joan Sinclair Petzen

Employers have until October 1, 2013 to provide employees with the Health Exchange Notice. The simplest way to satisfy this obligation is to choose the appropriate model notice (there is one for employers who sponsor a plan and one for employers who do not sponsor a plan) and distribute a paper copy of it by hand or by mail.

## Which Employers Are Subject?

The Exchange Notice requirement applies to employers subject to the Fair Labor Standards Act ("FLSA"). FLSA generally applies to employers that employ one or more employees who are engaged in, or produce goods for, interstate commerce. FLSA also specifically covers hospitals and resident care institutions for the sick, disabled, and aged; schools;



and federal, state, and local government agencies. Special additional rules and exceptions apply and are summarized at: <http://www.dol.gov/compliance/guide/>

[minwage.htm](http://www.dol.gov/minwage.htm). An internet compliance assistance tool is available at: <http://www.dol.gov/elaws/esa/flsa/scope/screen24.asp>. Using the tool, an employer can answer a series of questions to determine if they are required to provide the notice to their employees.

## Which Employees Must Receive the Exchange Notice?

The Exchange Notice must be provided to **all employees**, regardless of whether they are enrolled in an employer-sponsored health plan, and regardless of whether they are full- or part-time. The Exchange Notice does not need to be sent to dependents of employees.

## Model Exchange Notices

The DOL has issued two model Exchange notices –

one for employers who do not offer a health plan and one for employers who do (either to some or to all of their employees). Part B of the model notices require the employer to enter certain information before use, including: name, Employer Identification Number (EIN), address, contact information about health coverage, whether all or only some employees receive health coverage, whether coverage is offered to dependents and if so, which ones, and whether coverage meets the minimum value (60 percent) standard and whether the cost of coverage is intended to be affordable (all as necessary to avoid excise taxes under the Employer Shared Responsibility Mandate). All three model notices are available on-line at: <http://www.dol.gov/ebsa/healthreform/>

Additional questions on the model notice are optional and are intended to provide employees with the information the employees must provide if they attempt to obtain coverage on the market place.

## Elements of Exchange Notice

Employers are not required to use the Model Exchange Notices. If an employer chooses to prepare its own notice, its notice must be in writing and must:

- ★ Inform the employee of the existence of the Marketplace, describe the services of the Marketplace and provide contact information about the Marketplace;
- ★ If the employer plan does not provide minimum value (i.e., generally, if the plan reimburses less than 60 percent of the costs of a typical employer plan, as determined under other guidance), inform the employee that he or she may be eligible for a premium tax credit by purchasing a qualified health plan through the Marketplace; and
- ★ Inform the employee that, if he or she purchases a plan through the Marketplace, the employee may lose the employer contribution (if any) to any employer-provided health plan and that such contribution may be excludable from taxable income.
- ★ **Timing and Delivery of Exchange Notice**
- ★ If an employee is employed before October 1, 2013, he or she must be provided the Exchange

*Continued on page 9*

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# Need Business Help? Try Annie's Project

By: Nancy Glazier

Many farms have a handle on production practices, or know where to go for help. One aspect of the farm that sometimes gets less focus is the business side, specifically risk management. Annie's Project™ was founded to address those needs. Ruth Hambleton is the founder of the training program. It was named after her mother who grew up in a small town and fulfilled her dream by marrying a farmer. She had no farming background and was unfamiliar with farm life. Ruth followed in her mother's footsteps and married a farmer, but the ag background helped her. She didn't stay on the farm but went on to college to study economics. And during her tenure as a business management extension educator developed a grant proposal and was funded by USDA's Risk Management Education. What started as a training session for 10 women has grown in 10 years to 10,000 participants in over 20 states.

Ruth's goal was to provide educational opportunities for women in a comfortable group setting. Many women come to farming through marriage and are not familiar with the lifestyle. Risk management education is not an attention grabber, but the opportunity for a group of farm women to get together to talk about similar issues and challenges with tools to address them is hard to resist. Many of the groups continue on as discussion groups long after the training series is completed. This is not an exclusive club; it is not for women only. Women are the target audience, as beginning or young farmers are sometimes targeted. The mission statement is to empower farm women to be better business partners through networks and by managing and organizing critical information. Year after year the project has grown.

Ruth retired in 2009 from University of Illinois Extension. When the day came, UIE told her that would be the end of Annie's Project. Ruth could not walk away from the program. There is now a non-profit organization to handle fundraising and grants, ANNIES: Annie's National Network Initiative for Educational Success. The project is now run from



Iowa State University Extension.

The project has been in New York for a couple years, coordinated by CCE educators David Cox and Bonnie Collins. They recently were awarded a Risk Management Education grant to expand the training statewide. Thirteen sites will participate with 3 of the sites in the NWNy region. Each session includes lectures with hands-on activities and plenty of discussion time. A one-day training was recently held in Oneida County to begin to prepare NY staff to participate in the project. Ruth Hambleton was the special guest and trainer. I must admit I was a doubter of the project's successes until I heard Ruth.

## Annie's Project Core Values

*Safe Harbor - All questions or situations are welcome for sharing and open discussion.*


*Connection - The learning environment encourages participants to relate to each other and to presenters.*

*Discovery - Participants experience moments when something makes sense where before it did not.*

*Shared Learning - There is always a participant who knows more about the subject presented than the instructor and is willing to share her experience.*


Stayed tuned as we move forward with setting the training dates and locations in our region.

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(2) 2002 Int'l 5600i. Cums. SM 335 h.p. 9LL trans. 195k miles. McNeilus 10.5 cu. mixers. 20,000# F/A. 46,000# R/A. full locking R/A. 229\"/>



2001 Kenworth T800. Det. 12.7L 500 h.p. diesel. 9LL trans. eng. brake. air ride. 4.33 ratio. 513,560 miles. 24 on alum. 233\"/>



2000 Peterbilt 379. Cums. N14 460 h.p. diesel. eng. brake. air ride. 206\"/>



2006 Volvo VHD42B200 w/16' Steel Dump. Volvo VED12D 395 h.p. diesel. 9LL trans. eng. brake. Turbog. 4.88 ratio. 24.5 tires. 232\"/>



(3) 2004 Freightliner CL112 Columbia. CAT 380 h.p. Jake Brake. 10 spd. manual. 185\"/>



2002 Int'l 2674 w/14' Steel Box. Cums. ISM 350 h.p. 8LL manual trans. 368,612 miles. 18,000# F/A. 46,000# R/A. full locking R/A. good running dump truck. stk# 3576. \$21,000.



2002 Freightliner FLD w/18' Steel Box. Det. 12.7L 470 h.p. diesel. Jake Brake. Nilson auto. 20,000# F/A. 65,000# R/A. 50,796 miles. rubber block susp. 12R24 tires. 244\"/>



2005 CAT 325CL. 9,745 hrs. 42\"/>



2001 Terex TA27. 2,688 hrs. 6x6. artic. dump. good box. good rubber. 27 ton cap. 23.5x25 rubber. stk# 01TA27. \$35,900. Rental Prices: Weekly \$1,850, Monthly \$5,450, call for availability.



2001 Kenworth T800. CAT C12 370 h.p. diesel. auto. eng. brake. 15\"/>



(5) 2009 & (2) 2008 Mack GU713 C&C. Mack MP8 12.8L 485 h.p. 18 spd. Eaton Fuller manual eng. brake. PTO. 8,271 hrs. 20,000# F/A. 65,000# R/A. Camelback susp. 259\"/>



2001 Sterling LT95136 Axle Dump Truck. CAT C12 430 h.p. 9LL trans. eng. brake. air lift 3 self-steering axles. Hendrickson RD suspension. 316\"/>



2000 Mack RB890S w/14' Tenco Center Drop Sander Body. Mack E7 300 h.p. Jake Brake. 9LL manual trans. 255,278 miles. Camelback susp. 20,000# F/A. 44,000# R/A. Dickey John sander controls. plow & wing. rear hitch. w/air hook ups. air operated tarp. stk# 4201. \$39,995.



(2) 1999 Int'l Paystar 5000 w/McNeilus 10.5 Cu.Yd. Mixer. Cums. M11. 9LL trans. -Haulinco susp. D.F. 195,567 miles. rubber 50.75\"/>



2000 Freightliner FL112. CAT C10 300 h.p. diesel. auto. Chalmers susp. 170,945 miles. 22.5 on all steel. 209\"/>



2010 Western Star 4900SA. Det. 14.8L 560 h.p. diesel. 18 spd. Eaton Fuller eng. brake. PTO. 6.75 ratio. 26,000# F/A. 65,000# R/A. walking beam susp. 219\"/>



2000 Volvo ACL64. Cums. N14 435 h.p. diesel. 9LL trans. eng. brake. Hend. susp. 4.56 ratio. 203\"/>



1995 Mack RB688S Dump Truck. Mack EM7 400 h.p. diesel. 9LL trans. Camelback susp. 393k miles. 19 steel body. 244\"/>



1987 CAT D7H. 19,340 hrs. -SU blade with tilt. cab. EOPS. winch. \$57,900.



(5) 2005 Mack CX Day Cab. Mack 350/380 h.p. Jake Brake. 10 spd. manual. 400k. 525k miles. Ask About Our Special Export Price: \$22,500.



1998 Int'l Paystar 5000 w/20' Alum. Body. Cums. N14 460 h.p. Jake Brake. 18 spd. 607,450 miles. 20,000# F/A. 46,000# R/A. in axle. rubber block susp. body has liner & tarp. stk# 3540. \$39,900.



2006 Freightliner CL12064ST Columbia 120. Det. 14L 515 h.p. 13 spd. eng. brake. air ride. 22.5 on all steel. 206\"/>

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Notice **by October 1, 2013**. Any employee hired on or after October 1, 2013 must be provided with the Exchange Notice at the **time of hiring**. Beginning in 2014, the DOL will consider the “time of hiring” to be anytime within 14 days of an employee’s start date. Note that the DOL has not explicitly provided this 14-day window for employees hired between October 1 and December 31, 2013, so cautious employers may wish to provide the Exchange Notice to employees hired during that time on the employees’ actual start dates.

- ★ Theoretically, the Exchange Notice may be provided by hand to employees; however, an employer may run into proof issues about whether the notice was properly delivered.
- ★ The Exchange Notice may be provided by first-class mail. If it is provided electronically, it must comply with the DOL’s electronic disclosure safe harbor, found at 29 CFR 2520.104b-1(c). In general, the DOL safe harbor allows email or other electronic disclosure to employees who have computer access as a regular part of their job functions or who affirmatively consent to electronic disclosure in a way that reasonably

demonstrates the employee’s ability to access the information. **Posting the notice to a company intranet or website will not suffice.**

Remember, employers subject to the FLSA must provide a health care exchange notice to their employees by October 1, 2013 and beginning January 1, 2014 to new hires within 14 days of the date of hire. The US Department of Labor has provided model notices and details of compliance on their web site.

*Source: The Emerling Agency, Williamsville, NY with edits by Joan Sinclair Petzen.*



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# Estimating Corn Grain and Soybean Yields

By: Mike Stanyard

As I look at the corn and soybean crop throughout NWNY, I've seen fields at both ends of the spectrum and everything in between. However, let's focus on some of the great looking crops we have in the region! Those areas that were planted early on well drained ground might have some of the highest yields we've seen in a number of years.

Many growers have been asking about estimating corn and soybean yields prior to harvest to see how much the excessive rainfall has affected their crop. Others want to see how good it could be (especially if you entered the state or national corn contests).

**Corn: The Yield Component Method (YCM)** can be utilized as early as the milk stage of kernel development and therefore, can be utilized to determine if a crop should be allowed to be harvested for grain, or cut for silage.

**Step 1:** Count the number of harvestable ears in a length of row equal to 1/1000<sup>th</sup> of an acre. For 30-inch rows, this would be 17 ft. 5 in.

**Step 2:** Then, on every 5<sup>th</sup> ear, count the number of kernel rows and number of kernels per row and determine the average. Do not include kernels that are less than half the size of normal sized kernels.

**Step 3:** Yield (bu/ac) = (# of ears) x (avg. # rows) x (avg. # kernels) ÷ by 90. The value of 90 represents an average of 90,000 kernels in a 56 lb. bushel of corn. This number can be increased to 95 in years of smaller kernels or decreased to 85 in good years with larger kernels (85 may be more accurate this year).

**Example: (24 ears) x (18 rows) x (30 kernels/row) ÷ 90 = 144 bushels/acre**

Repeat this procedure in a couple of areas within the same field for better accuracy. This is truly an "estimate" and many references state that there can be a plus or minus 30 bushels from actual yields.

See <https://www.pioneer.com/home/site/us/agronomy/tools/corn-yield-estimator> for a handy

online corn yield estimator that you can plug in the above estimates for yields under poor, average, and excellent growing conditions.

## **Soybean: Yield Estimation Simplified**

Yield estimation methods for soybean have been very unreliable due to plant-to-plant variability, row width differences, and pest pressures to name a few. Counting all the pods in 1/1000<sup>th</sup> of an acre is very time consuming and tedious.

Purdue has developed a simplified method for estimating soybean yields for 1/10,000<sup>th</sup> of an acre that is much more reasonable and easy to use. It is based on sampling 21 inches of row. For 30" rows sample one 21 inch row. For 15" row widths sample 2 - 21 inch rows. For 7.5" rows, sample 4 - 21 inch rows.

**The formula is (# of pods) x (# of seeds per pod) ÷ Seed size factor = bu. per acre**

**Step 1:** Count the number of pods over 1" in length in 1/10,000 of an acre (1, 2 or 4 rows based on row width).

**Step 2:** Estimate the average number of seeds per pod. 2.5 is a good starting point

**Step 3:** Select a seed size factor. 18 is a good starting point and that represents 3000 seeds per pound. (See complete chart)

[http://www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/soybean/News/2012/2012\\_0814SOYSimplifiedYieldEstimate.pdf](http://www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/soybean/News/2012/2012_0814SOYSimplifiedYieldEstimate.pdf)

**Example: 55 pods X 2.5 seeds per pod ÷ 18 = 55.5 bushels per acre**

Purdue has also posted a YouTube video that walks you through this yield estimation step by step in the field,  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPwPYwBy8k0>.

Good Luck!



# Fall Tillage Management

By: Bill Verbeten

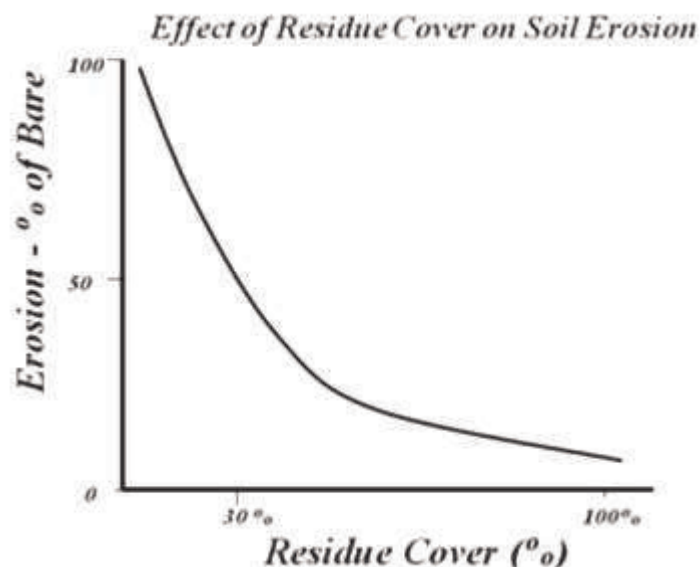
As the crops come off the fields, many tillage operations will take place this month across western New York. Fall tillage operations are often needed to manage residue, smooth out ruts in the field, dry out the soil, in addition to incorporating lime, fertilizer, and manure. A number of best management practices can be used to greatly reduce the risk of soil erosion.

## Plant a Cover Crop

In October winter rye is the only reliable crop that will provide some cover over the winter. Many farmers in the region have successfully planted this crop after their fall tillage operations. Very few growing degree days are left so plant as soon as possible with a drill and increase the seeding rate from 2 bu/A to 3 bu/A. Timely spraying or spring tillage will be necessary to effectively control this cover crop.

## Increase Surface Residue

Increasing the surface residue to 30% ground coverage from 0% results in a **50% decrease in soil erosion**, Figure 1. Smaller decreases in soil erosion occur as more residue is left in the field. Managing low residue levels is easier than large amounts of corn stalks, straw, and other material in the spring while greatly reducing soil loss.



*Figure 1: Effect of residue cover on soil erosion, expressed as the percent of that occurring relative to that for a bare surface. Adapted from Laflen & Colvin (1981).*

## Till on a Contour

If ground must be left open over the winter without much residue or a cover crop, tilling on a contour perpendicular to the direction of run-off can reduce soil erosion. In some parts of western New York strips of crops are still planted on the hill contours to further prevent erosion losses. However there are still soil erosion losses during the tillage operations on the sides of hills. Adopting reduced tillage practices on the hill-slopes will further decrease soil losses.

## Change the Tillage Method

Every piece of tillage equipment has a different impact on soil erosion. Often there is another piece of iron that can meet your needs while reducing erosion. Check out the NRCS's Tillage Guide on our website (<http://www.nwnyteam.org/submission.php?id=39&crumb=soil|7>) for more information. Using shallow tillage at an angle across the field can fill in ruts from previous field operations while reducing the destruction of soil structure. Vertical tillage tools and AerWay machines have become popular in recent years due to their shallow tillage of the soil while preparing a desirable seedbed. Soil with good structure is more resistant to erosion. This is due to root channels from previous crops, some residue on the soil surface, and high populations of earthworms (and other animals) that create channels for water to flow more quickly through the soil ultimately resulting in less soil erosion.

*Author's Note: If you did not receive our "Crop Alert" emails during the growing season contact Bill Verbeten at 585-313-4457 or wdv6@cornell.edu to be added to the list. Bill and Mike Stanyard co-author these "Crop Alerts" in order to quickly get the word out on regional agronomic issues, events, and announcements on weekly basis from April through October.*

# Reducing the Risk of Manure Runoff

By Bill Verbeten

## Supplemental Spreading Guidelines

There are ten factors to evaluate before spreading at any point in time that can be divided into three groups: (1) weather conditions; (2) field conditions; and (3) manure application management.

### Weather Conditions

1. *Forecast shows probability of precipitation? When? How much?:* If weather forecasts for 24 to 48 hours out have a 30 to 50% chance of precipitation, then rain (or snow) will probably fall. The risk for manure **runoff increases** with **increasing rainfall** and will be higher under **wet/frozen soil conditions** than under dry soil conditions, *Table 1*.

*Table 1: Manure Run-off Risk Based on Precipitation and Soil Conditions*

Expected Precipitation	Run-off Risk (dry soils)	Run-off Risk (wet/frozen soils)
≤0.25 inch	Low	Low
0.25 to 0.5 inch	Low	Some
>0.5 inch	Variable	Variable
>1 inch	High	High

2. *Warm front expected to generate significant snow-melt?:* The chances of snowmelt increase quickly when the temperature approaches about **40°F for ≥6 hours**. If nighttime temperatures also remain above freezing, the runoff risk is higher.

### Field Conditions

3. *Soil Type:* **Clay soils** have the **greatest risk of runoff** because they freeze last. Larger 4-wheel drive equipment and drainage improvements may make clay soils accessible for spreading manure, but the runoff risk will still be greater than loams and sands.

4. *Ground cover:* A **good ground cover** intercepts rainfall and **slows down surface runoff water**. Ground cover and vegetated buffers help to trap and filter suspended manure particles and soil. Winter small grains can form very good ground cover when planted early enough in the fall, *Figure 1*.

*Figure 1: Winter Triticale Providing Ground Cover*



5. *Slope:* The risk for runoff is not necessarily greater for steeper slopes because it is more dependent on the soil's infiltration rate. **Runoff risk** on sloping soil **will be greatest** for soils with a **low infiltration rate (clays)** or when soils are **frozen**. The risky locations to apply manure on sloping soils are usually at the base of concave slopes where water often emerges.

6. *Drain tile, surface inlets, ditches, etc.:* Setbacks around surface inlets, ditches, etc. when there is a direct surface connection are especially important when spreading manure under wet conditions. **Spreading manure near and upslope** of surface ditches that **go across the slopes** (i.e., those which intercept water) will be **more risky** than where ditches tend to **run parallel with the major slope**. Spreading manure on fields that have tile drainage, when the tiles are flowing, and discharging directly to a watercourse, is risky.

7. *Nearby surface water:* **Higher risks** are experienced where **surface runoff** from a field is expected to flow **directly** to a **stream** or **waterbody**. This is most likely to occur in fields that are both close to surface water and where the field surface is oriented toward the waterbody.

### Manure Application Management

8. *Manure consistency:* **Liquid manure** is **more likely** to move across the surface as runoff or through soil to tile lines, depending on conditions, than semi-solid or bedded pack manure.



9. *Method of application:* Manure that is **surface applied** and not incorporated presents a **higher risk** because the material is less able to mix and react with soil. An enriched layer of manure on the soil surface increases runoff risk. Where acceptable from a soil erosion control and groundwater protection standpoint, **manure may be injected or incorporated to reduce runoff risk.**

10. *Application rate and total spreading volume:* An operation spreading 3 or 4 tons of manure each day over time does not present the same level of risk as one that may spread **many days worth of manure in one or two days.** High rates of liquid manure applied over many acres at the same time can be very risky in some conditions.

*This article is based on: Supplemental Manure Spreading Guidelines to Reduce Water Contamination Risk During Adverse Weather Conditions by Karl Czymmek, Larry Geohring, Quirine Ketterings, Peter Wright and Angus Eaton. These modifications are published with the original authors' permission.*

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# Use Fall as an Opportunity to get your Farm Winter-Ready

By: Beth Dahl, Dairy Modernization Specialist

September has arrived; and seemingly out of nowhere, the summer heat has mostly dissipated, harvest is upon us, and for many dairies, it's nearly time to pull cows and heifers off pasture. While fall is a busy season, taking time to evaluate your barns and herd before the cold sets in can provide much value later in the year through improved milk production and lower feed cost.

## Make your stalls cow-comfort ready

Before the cows come home, or move back into the barn full-time, take a few minutes to evaluate your facilities. Tackle relatively simple improvements such as leveling mattresses, fixing broken stall loops, water bowls and hardware, and replacing worn mattresses, to ensure each stall is available for cows to lie in, without major cost or time investment. Regrooving worn concrete, adjusting neck rails and modifying stall width are also options to improve cow comfort in your existing barn. Research from the University of Iowa<sup>1</sup> shows cows best use stalls that are sized to their hook-bone width multiplied by 2, and 0.83 multiplied by the rump height, both of the average cow using your stalls. Increased lying time will typically mean more milk in the tank- with each hour of lying gained resulting in 2 to 3.5 pounds more milk per cow each day.

## Put the right cows in your stalls

When space is a concern - whether for lactating or dry cows or youngstock- you will find yourself with two options: overcrowd your barn to some degree or sell excess animals. While this decision-making happens routinely with your milking herd, fall is a good time to evaluate other groups, removing heifers and dry cows that didn't maintain a pregnancy, have been chronically sick or are generally poor-doers. Heifers treated for two or more incidences of pneumonia, those due to calve well beyond your target age of first calving, and genetically undesirable youngstock are easy to remove before incurring another winter of feed costs followed by reduced milking productivity and longevity<sup>2</sup>.

## Identify areas to revisit

With many projects demanding your attention in this hectic season, you will likely postpone more substantial barn renovations and flexible herd analysis. However, identifying areas today that may need more significant work when time and finances permit, and creating a plan to ensure they are addressed in a timely manner, will improve your bottom line in the future. Keep in mind the many resources that exist to aid in this process, and consider initiating a dairy profit team with key people on your farm, to target improvements needed and develop a plan of action.

<sup>1</sup>Anderson, Neil. "Free Stall Design." *Iowa State Cooperative Extension*. Iowa State University, Jan. 2007. Web. <[http://www.extension.iastate.edu/dairyteam/sites/www.extension.iastate.edu/files/dairyteam/AndersonFreestallDimensionsJan\\_07.pdf](http://www.extension.iastate.edu/dairyteam/sites/www.extension.iastate.edu/files/dairyteam/AndersonFreestallDimensionsJan_07.pdf)>.

<sup>2</sup>Stevenson, Jeff. "Heifers Are Still Too Old When They Calve." *Hoards Dairyman* March.10 (2011): 168. *Www.hoards.com*. Hoard's Dairyman. Web. <[http://www.hoards.com/E\\_calf\\_heifer/HF08](http://www.hoards.com/E_calf_heifer/HF08)>.

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- 22-23 ***AI Course***, 9:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., Location: TBA (Ontario Co.) **RSVP by October 14**, Cost: \$200.00 per person. Contact: Nancy Anderson: 585.394.3977 x427 or [nea8@cornell.edu](mailto:nea8@cornell.edu)
- 30 ***Feeds & Feeding Management***, see page 12 for full details

### November 2013

- 2-3 & 7 ***Feeds & Feeding Management***, see page 12 for full details
- 6, 20 ***Planning for Succession: Managing Business Transition to a New Generation***, 7:00 p.m., CCE-Seneca Co., To register contact: Cathy Wallace at 585.343.3040 x138 or [cfw6@cornell.edu](mailto:cfw6@cornell.edu)
- 7, 21 ***Planning for Succession: Managing Business Transition to a New Generation***, 1:00 p.m., CCE-Monroe Co., To register contact: Cathy Wallace at 585.343.3040 x138 or [cfw6@cornell.edu](mailto:cfw6@cornell.edu)
- 7, 21 ***Planning for Succession: Managing Business Transition to a New Generation***, 7:00 p.m., CCE-Wyoming Co., To register contact: Cathy Wallace at 585.343.3040 x138 or [cfw6@cornell.edu](mailto:cfw6@cornell.edu)

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- 11 ***Planning for Succession: Managing Business Transition to a New Generation***, 7:00 p.m., CCE-Seneca Co., To register contact: Cathy Wallace at 585.343.3040 x138 or [cfw6@cornell.edu](mailto:cfw6@cornell.edu)
- 12 ***Planning for Succession: Managing Business Transition to a New Generation***, 1:00 p.m., CCE-Monroe Co., To register contact: Cathy Wallace at 585.343.3040 x138 or [cfw6@cornell.edu](mailto:cfw6@cornell.edu)
- 12 ***Planning for Succession: Managing Business Transition to a New Generation***, 7:00 p.m., CCE-Wyoming Co., To register contact: Cathy Wallace at 585.343.3040 x138 or [cfw6@cornell.edu](mailto:cfw6@cornell.edu)



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