

Cornell University Cooperative Extension NWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team



Agricultural plastics recycling is taking off, big time!

By: Joan Sinclair Petzen & Nate Leonard, Cornell Recycling Agricultural Plastics Project

R ecyclers working with Cornell University's Recycling Agricultural Plastics Program (RAPP) are now able to process virtually all types of used farm plastics.

Much of this old plastic is turned into new products by manufacturers right here in NYS. Waste plastics previously used on NYS farms—primarily bale wrap, bunker covers, mulch and greenhouse film — are being transformed into sheets of plastic 'plywood', plastic sidewalk pavers, household and industrial-size garbage bags, and diesel fuel, as well as into new plastic containers, films and twine that will once again be used on farms.

RAPP will showcase an array of these products, as well as supplies and equipment for storing and compacting used plastic, at Empire Farm Days, August 5 - 7, 2014. Find RAPP at Booth #500, just outside the main entrance to the Cornell Building. Empire Farm Days.

Here in Western New York a number of farms are pioneering efforts to recycle plastics. Bunk covers and bale wrap are the primary products the program is compacting for recycling. In Wyoming County, farmer ingenuity is helping the project lead the way in recycling about 30% of the plastic films being used. The process begins by farmers saving plastic and keeping it relatively clean,



Ryan Burley has built homemade covered bins for collecting bale wrap right where their farm is feeding out round bales.

free from gravel and grit, and dry.

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By law and purpose, Cooperative Extension is dedicated to serving the people on a non-discriminatory basis.

Mission Statement

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

When a farm has enough plastic saved to compact into a bale, 1000 to 1200 pounds, they contact either Cornell Cooperative Extension or Soil and Water Conservation District in Wyoming County to alert them the farm is ready to have plastic baled. That information is relayed to the baler operator. The next time the baler will be making its rounds through that farm's part of the county, the baler operator contacts the farm and alerts them of the schedule. The farm provides workers to help bring the plastic to the baler and the operator loads the baler and operates the compactor. The compacted plastic cube. 40"x40"x40", is then stored for pick-up at a later date

With a little experience, local farmers have developed innovative ways to store used plastic in preparation for baling or compacting. For bunk cover, one method that is working well for farms is to remove the plastic in strips and fold it approximately the size of the baler chamber, 40"x40", and store it on a pallet out of the weather or use a larger piece to cover the stored plastic to keep it dry outdoors. The pallet





At Almeter's Breezyhill Farm storing folded bunk cover on a pallet saves labor moving plastic to compactor when the Recycling Agricultural Plastics Program arrives to bale plastic.

can then be moved to the compactor and the bundles of plastic slid into the chamber. This really saves on the manual effort required to load material into the compactor.

For bale wrap, Ryan Burley at East Hill Farm, used old roofing materials and pallets from around the farm to assemble bins with a cover that can be placed out in the pasture were large bales are being fed out. He made a wooden weight that can slide down inside the bin to 'settle the plastic down ' by forcing air out. This allows him to collect more plastic in a bin. With a pallet being used for the base of the bin, it is easily moved from the feed out location to a central place on the farm for compacting. Each bin has one removable side to allow easier access for sliding plastic from the bin to the compactor.

You can access fact sheets about best management practices for saving and storing agricultural plastics for recycling on the web at: http://environmentalrisk.cornell.edu/

best_management_guidelines.html or call Debra Welch at CCE - Wyoming County to have a copy of the fact sheet mailed to you.

For those who simply want to see the BigFoot plastics baler work its magic, stop by at 2:00 pm any day of Empire Farm Days for a demonstration. It's quite something to watch this baler transform a mountain of plastic into a dense, 1000-lb, four-foot cube in just about half an hour.

It's Never Too Early to Begin Bull Development

By: Nancy Glazier

I ran across some interesting journal articles working with the NY All Forage Fed Bull Test stressing the importance of good nutrition for bull development. It has been found that the first 2-6 months of age is a critical time period, an age that is usually overlooked. Significant herd improvements or declines can be made with the herd bull!

Many farms in the Northeast have a restricted breeding season. This breeding cycle calendar needs to be matched with the bull's sexual development, if a young bull is to be used herd sire. This is economically sound reasoning since less feed expense is associated with an older bull. In young bulls, scrotal circumference (SC) is positively correlated with testicular weight, sperm output, and fertility [Bagu, et al. 2006]. At times young, immature bulls have poor semen quality and low sperm production. A breeding soundness exam is essential prior to breeding season. Part of the exam includes scrotal circumference measurement which estimates testicular size. The amount of scrotal fat also has an effect on the circumference. Overly highenergy diets tend to increase this amount of fat; generally gain less that 3.5 lb per day is reduces excess fat deposition. Too small of a circumference may mean poor fertility. A low conception rate within the herd is definitely not an equal trade-off for using a young bull!

The first months of a bull calf's life has pronounced effects on LH (luteinizing hormone) secretion and sexual development. This development involves a transient rise in circulating gonadotropin concentrations between 2 and 6 months of age. The role of LH secretion during this time of gonadotropin rise is determines age at puberty and testicular size. Puberty is defined when a bull can ejaculate 50 million sperm and with 10% motility. Semen quality and quantity is essential for sperm motility. This effect of LH has been verified with a number of studies. The early post-natal increase in mean serum LH concentrations was greater in bull calves that reached puberty early as compared to late [Bagu, et al. 2006]. Interestingly, exogenous (added) LH did



Young bull consigned to the NY All Forage Fed Bull test.

not bring on commence early puberty. Improved nutrition after this period will not compensate that early critical period. Bull calves fed at a maintenance level after this period will still benefit from the early high plane of nutrition [Brito et al. 2007].

Nutrition during this early development period is critical. Low levels of nutrition may delay maturity. Whether this is due to the cow or feed may depend on each operation. First-calf heifers may have lower milk supply and/or pasture or feed may be of poorer quality are two possibilities. Many farms will graze cow-calf pairs with little attention paid to the pastures through the season; nutrition is usually not addressed until post-weaning. This reinforces the importance of rotational grazing and always having quality forage available to the pairs. The animals may have plenty to eat, but if they have to expend more energy finding enough is less energy for growth and development. Creep feeding is an excellent way to provide additional supplementation growing calves, and in some cases to supplementation may be beneficial to the cows.

The NY All Forage Fed Bull Test will be evaluating bulls again this winter at the Cornell University Ruminant Center in Dryden. Please contact me if you are interested in additional information.

Let me know if you'd like to take a look at the article references.

What Can High Beef Prices Do for Your Dairy?

By: Libby Gaige

Dairy farmers are pretty happy right now with what they're getting for cull cows and bull calves. But can these strong beef prices help your dairy in other ways? If you're trying to maximize internal herd growth for expansion, then you most likely aren't going to want to sell any more animals, for beef or otherwise. But if you can't add any more cows, and especially if you are already weeding out lower grade heifers to sell as dairy animals, then there is another option to consider.

Some dairies are regularly breeding a percentage of their herd to beef bulls. Bull studs like Genex and ABS have programs set up to help farmers breed and market these animals. Genex's Breeding to Feeding Program uses Limousin semen on dairy cows

(preferably Jersey) and the Minnesota-based Wulf Cattle Company contracts to buy back calves and raise them. ABS's InFocus program markets beef semen and tracks offspring to select the best bulls for mating with dairy cows.

Dairy cattle sold for beef lack physical characteristics that make good beef cows. But if

dairy calves are bred and raised for that purpose, they can result in much higher quality beef animals. Although no studies have been done on the economic benefits, breeding lower quality cattle to beef and selling the offspring should increase income over what would be received for straight dairy animals.

According to Mike Baker, Beef Cattle Extension Specialist at Cornell University, this is very achievable with Holstein steers. Holsteins do marble easily; if measured side by side with a beef steer of the same level of backfat, the Holstein steer would actually have *more* intramuscular fat, a good thing in the beef industry. Baker does cite some negatives to using Holsteins for beef: their Rib eye muscling tends to be oblong instead of the round shape that



A Limousin Jersey cross. Source: http:// www.breedingtofeeding.com/WulfGenetics/

consumers prefer, they generally have a lower dressing percentage (the difference between live weight and carcass weight) due to lower overall muscle mass, and they are also less feed efficient than beef animals. If they aren't put on a high energy diet, straight bred Holsteins end up big and lanky: not ideal when marketing for beef. Using a properly selected beef sire will complement the Holstein cow in producing a calf that is more moderate in size, has the muscle size and shape desired in the market and is capable of handling a high forage diet during much of its growing phase.

If you have the facilities, crossbred calves can be raised with heifer calves, at least through weaning. They can then be raised to feeder weight (400-800 lbs.) on pasture or refusals or finished to market weight. An important consideration is whether you have the capacity to raise animals separately for

finishing or if you would prefer to sell them as feeder calves.

Another notable question is what kind of market you have in your area for beef. With the increased interested in local foods, forming a partnership with a local beef farmer could be an option to sell feeder calves. Raising calves to 400

pounds or so and then selling them at a local livestock market is another. Of course the ideal situation would be to market a large number of high quality crossbreds, perhaps through a partnership between dairies and a feedlot.

The idea of breeding dairy cows to beef bulls has been around for a long time, but has yet to be put to the test by a significant number of dairy farmers. With the current and forecasted high beef prices, now is the ideal time for some to give it a little more thought. Baker says that while "beef prices may moderate in the future, there's lots of grass and many empty dairy facilities" across the state, just waiting for an opportunity to become productive again.

Risk Management to Play a Prominent Role in the 2014 Farm Bill

By: John Hanchar

<u>Summary</u>

- Risk management related provisions are prominent in the 2014 Farm Bill
- An understanding of risks and their management should be helpful to producers as they make decisions regarding farm bill related risk management options
- The NWNY Program's website, <www.nwnyteam.org> contains risk management resources that enhance producer's understanding of agricultural risks

<u>Background</u>

Risk management will play a prominent role as the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) implements 2014 Farm Bill provisions. A June 30, 2014 USDA press release reads, "Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack today announced continued progress in implementing provisions of the 2014 Farm Bill that provide new risk management options for farmers and ranchers. These improvements to crop insurance programs will provide better protection from weather disaster, market volatility and other risk factors to ensure farmers aren't wiped out by events beyond their control."

As implementation details associated with the 2014 Farm Bill emerge, producers will face decisions regarding risk management options. An understanding of agricultural risks and their





management should be useful as producers make decisions.

The remainder of this article draws heavily from the following publication -- USDA. <u>Introduction to Risk</u> <u>Management – Understanding Agricultural Risks:</u> <u>Production; Marketing; Financial; Legal; Human</u> <u>Resources</u>.

Agricultural Risks

Risk is variability in outcomes. Risk is present when outcomes are not known with certainty. Often, outcomes can be expected to occur over some range. Production, market (price), financial, legal, and human resources are five sources of agricultural risks.

Risk management strategies can be grouped as follows: retain, shift, reduce, self insure, avoid.

- Retain no protection from downside risk, as in holding an unpriced good.
- Shift -- a contractual agreement where someone else takes on some of the chance of a negative outcome in exchange for a premium, for example, crop insurance. The more risk you shift, the greater the cost.
- Reduce for example, keeping fences in good repair to keep livestock off the highway, and a marketing plan that locks in some level of guaranteed return.
- Self insure emergency reserves funded from previous year's returns.
- * Avoid not selecting a particular enterprise.

Some additional information on production, market, and financial risks follow.

Production risk involves variability in yield and harvested units. For example, when making planting decisions, producers do not know with certainty yield and harvested acres outcomes due to weather, pests, diseases and others factors. Strategies for managing production risk include: enterprise diversification, crop insurance, evaluation and implementation of new technologies and, or practices.

Marketing or price risk is variability in output and input prices. Unanticipated forces, such as, weather or government action, can lead to changes in output and input prices. Suggested strategies for managing price risk include: developing a marketing plan, including the use of various marketing tools including cash sales, storage, futures contracts, options and others.

Financial risk is variability in: the cost of debt capital; the ability to meet cash obligations in a

timely manner; and the ability to grow equity through the operation of a profitable business. Strategies for managing financial risk focus on sound financial planning and control. Annual business summary and analysis using the balance sheet, cash flow statement, and income statement are keys.

Resources

The team's website, <www.nwnyteam.org> contains risk management resources for farm business owners. Type "risk management" in the "search our entire site" bar on the home page. The first two items, "Alternative Risk Management Strategies for Today's Farm Business Owners," and the publication <u>Introduction to Risk Management</u> should help to improve understanding of basic risk management concepts. This understanding, combined with information that will be forthcoming regarding risk management options should provide a sound basis for making decisions regarding risk management options of the 2014 Farm Bill.



AG FOCUS AUGUST 2014 WWW.NWNYTEAM.ORG

Cover Crop Options

By: Mike Stanyard

Winter wheat and oat harvest should be just about wrapped up. That leaves a lot of open ground out there to plant some cover crops. We also ended up with quite a few prevented planting acres this spring. Some of that ground will go into winter small grains like wheat, rye and barley this fall. If you do not grow these winter grains in your rotation, it is a good opportunity to get that ground covered up. Some farms may have already put some cover crops in the last week of July. The past couple of years have shown us that the first half of August has been the optimal planting window for success. Even if it's dry, get it in the ground. The rain will come.

There are a lot of options when it comes to choosing a cover crop species. You have to ask yourself, "What do you want to accomplish?". Is it soil conservation, increase organic content, a trap crop for nitrogen, comply with conservation payments or weed control. Some other things to consider is cost (See table below). Do you want a species that winterkills or overwinters? Is compaction an issue? Do I need some extra forage?

Do I need some extra forage?				
Cover crop Species	Drilled	Broadcast	Price/lb.	Winterkill?
Annual Rye Grass	10-20 lbs.	20-30 lbs.	\$.96/lb.	N
Sorghum - Sudangrass	30-40 lbs.	30-40 lbs.	\$.76/lb.	Y
Crimson Clover	12 lbs.	20 lbs.	\$3.06/lb.	N
White Clover	5-9 lbs.	7-12 lbs.	\$4.50/lb.	N
Red Clover	7 lbs.	10 lbs.	\$2.86/lb.	N
Field Peas/Austrian Winter Peas	120/50 lbs.	140/60 lbs.	\$.70/.96/lb.	Y/N
Hairy Vetch	15-20 lbs.	25-30 lbs.	\$2.88/lb.	N
Forage Radishes	8-10 lbs.	12 lbs.	\$3.00/lb.	Y
Forage Turnips	4-7 lbs.	10-12 lbs.	\$4.50/lb.	N
Oats (Spring or Forage)	80-110 lbs.	110-140 lbs.	\$.43/lb.	Y
Triticale	80 lbs.	110 lbs.	\$.36/lb.	N
Wheat	70 lbs.	100 lbs.	\$.33/lb.	N
Cereal Rye	60 lbs.	85 lbs.	\$.30/lb.	N

We have seen cover crops planted with many different drills, airflowed, and broadcast. All can be successful, however proper calibration can be tedious



and frustrating. Most planters do not have settings for some of these non-traditional plants. Take the time to work it out! You do not want to waste your time by putting on too little and you do not want to waste money by putting on way too much.

Forage radishes need some nitrogen applied at planting (30-50 lbs.) or they will stunt, yellow and not get to full size. Volunteer wheat (which is a good cover crop) will also steal available N! A history of manure application will help. Clover and peas planted in the same plot will provide some N to the radish.

We know radishes do a great job of loosening up the soil. However, there is some concern that we may not get the nitrogen back that we put into them. Radishes degrade very quickly in the early spring. Is the N gone by the time the corn is ready for it? It might be more beneficial to plant an overwintering species with the radish to pick up that N and keep it around longer so the corn can utilize it when it needs it most.

There has been a lot of interest in planting cover crops into standing corn and soybeans. Cover crop interseeders have been gaining attention in PA and now into NY. There will be a demo plot this year

at Empire Farms Days (August 5, 6, & 7). Come check out the interseeder and take a look at cover crops planted into standing corn!



Services Included:

Dairy Farm Walkthrough Review with Farm Management – what to expect if you are inspected. **'Farm Safety Program' Consultation** – provides information and materials that will help you prepare your farm for an OSHA inspection.

On-Farm Safety Trainings – English and Spanish trainings on topics that are important for OSHA inspections.

NYCAMH Farm Safety Experts and Trainers will be available in your region this spring – call the Dairy Safety Hotline for more information: 1-800-343-7527.

DETAILED CONSULTATION ON THE DAIRY DOZEN – Areas of common hazardous activities on dairy farms:

Manure Storage Facilities and Collection Structures Dairy Bull and Cow Behavior Electrical Systems Skid-Steer Loader Operation Tractor Operation Guarding of Power Take-Offs (PTOs) Guarding of other Power Transmission and Functional Components Hazardous Energy Control (Lock-out) Hazard Communication (Chemical Safety) Confined Spaces Horizontal Bunker Silos Noise

Need to know more?

Go to www.NYCAMH.org Or call 1-800-343-7527

Getting Ready for Corn Chopping

By: Jerry Bertoldo

Making quality silage in our area always has the weather "if" attached. Unlike haylage, you only get one shot at the corn silage crop each year. Of course having the forage harvester and corn head ready to go is key. Getting a harvester in the field quickly when the crop is ready and then minimizing expensive downtime and costly repairs during harvest is a basic goal.

Here are a few tips on the crop side with a bit of help from Dr. Bill Weiss, long time forage guru at The Ohio State University:

- Fermentation requires water too much or too little leads to abnormal acid production and instability at feed out; check dry matters during chopping; it is the number one quality factor
- Packing density is important increasing density from 12 lbs/ft³ to 15 lbs/ft³ raises your storage capacity 30% by weight while decreasing your shrink 2-4%
- Sealing bunkers with plastic returns \$8 per \$1 invested – lining walls, covering ASAP after the last fill and pack, putting enough weight to hold the plastic securely makes a big difference
- Oxygen barrier plastics improve quality and dry matter loss over standard plastic – there is a significant cost benefit particularly in the top 12-18"
- Chop length is critical for density and feed quality – check processed and unprocessed silage periodically with a shaker box during chopping; make chopper adjustments if needed
- Kernel processing does not make mature corn into normal stage silage – plant fiber digestion (digestible NDF) decreases 10% between ½ milk line and black layer stage (10-12 days elapsed time); this equals 3 lbs less dry matter intake capacity and 5 lbs less milk production potential
- Silage inoculants work better on corn that in not too wet (immature) or too dry (mature or frozen)inoculant bacteria require water to grow and move efficiently through the silage mass
- * L. buchneri inoculant provides improved feed out



stability at a cost of extra dry matter loss during fermentation – buchneri consumes sugars and produces acetic acid as well as water, alcohol, propionic acid and carbon dioxide unlike L. plantarum that produces mostly lactic acid, no water or carbon dioxide

From the machinery side of things there is a comprehensive maintenance checklist in an article to be found in Progressive Forage Grower at <u>http://www.progressiveforage.com/forage-production/</u>equipment/mechanics-corner-corn-chopper-head-maintenance or go to the NWNY website.

An important key to producing high-quality silage is the ability to harvest corn as close to the right time as possible during its growth cycle weather permitting. Having a forage harvester in top shape to begin chopping at a moment's notice is critical. Equally important is avoiding downtime when the harvester is working in the field. No matter what harvester is involved, it is always best to refer to the manufacturer's owner's manual for detailed information and to follow the safety recommendations listed. Be productive and stay safe!



ARTIFICIAL INSEMINATION

DAIRY SKILLS TRAINING





Topics of discussion include:

anatomy & physiology of the cow hormonal regulation estrous synchronization intro to AI techniques heat detection basic cattle handling semen handling & thawing techniques care & maintenance of the nitrogen tank loading the insemination gun

> Actual practice of Insemination Techniques!

Tues. September 9 & Wed. September 10

This class is being offered by the NWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops team in collaboration with Genex, and CCE of Wyoming County

The cost of this Module is \$150.00

SPACE is limited.



For information or to register, please visit: http://wyoming.cce.cornell.edu/dariy-institute or 585.786.2251

Cover Crops for Northern Climates and Interseeding Demonstration

This is a new demo at Empire Farms days this year. Hear from Cornell assistant professor Mathew Ryan and Penn State researchers as they talk about the seeding of cover crops into standing corn and soybeans. Researchers will discuss how the interseeder works and its benefits. Come and see a demo cover crop planted into corn. The demo will run every day at 1:30 and is located in Lot 928. This year's program can be found on the EFD website at http://www.empirefarmdays.com/.



Photos by: Matt Ryan

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2014 NY Corn and Soybean Growers State Yield Contests

E ven though we got off on a slow start, there is some really good looking corn and soybean fields out in the region. The combination of timely July rains and warm temperatures has led to some really good growing conditions. We are heading into August with adequate soil moisture reserves which will only help during the grain fill stage. Will there be some record grain yields in NY this year? I hope so.

If you have never entered the state corn or soybean yield contest, maybe this is the year to do it. The National Corn Yield Contest deadline was August 1. The New York Corn Growers Grain Yield Contest rules and entry form can be found and downloaded from the NY Corn & Soybean Growers Association web page at:



http://www.nycornsoy.org/.

Entry forms have to be *postmarked by August 18* and sent to Mike Stanyard at 1581 Route 88 N, Newark, NY 14513. Cost is \$30 per entry. The prize for the top corn and soybean entry win an all expense trip for two to the 2015 Commodity Classic in Phoenix, AZ. Good Luck!





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Save the Date...

August 2014

- 1-3 Niagara County Fair, 4487 Lake Avenue, Lockport, Contact: 716.433.8839
- 1-3 Monroe County Fair, Northampton Park, Hubbell Rd. (near ski hill & lodge) Ogden, Contact: 585.262.3247
- 5-6 **Stockmanship & Cattle Handling for Beef and Dairy Producers,** To register contact the NY Beef Council at: 315.339.6922 or cgillis@nybeef.org
- 5-6 & 7 Empire Farm Days, Rodman Lott & Son Farms, 2973 State Route 414, Seneca Falls, Free Admission, Parking \$10
- 9-16 Wyoming County Fair, 70 Main Street, Pike, Contact: 585.493.5626
- 11-16 Wayne County Fair, 250 W. Jackson Street, Palmyra, Contact: 315.597.5372
- 14 **NY Corn & Soybean Crop Tour,** 9:00 a.m. 4:00 p.m., Swede's Farm, 1054 Peoria Road, Pavilion. To register: www.nycornsoy.org, for questions contact: Julia Robbins at: 315.583.5296 or juliacrobbins@gmail.com
- 19 Soil Health Workshop "Improving Crop Production, Soil Health and the Environment, see how they all work together" 3:00 - 8:30 PM, Donn Branton's Farm, 6536 E. Main Rd (Rte. 5) Stafford, DEC/CCA credits available. For information contact Dennis Kirby at Orleans Co. Soil & Water: 585-589-5959, email: dennis.kirby@ny.nacdnet.net

September 2014

23 **Yates Farm Safety Day,** 8:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Benton Fire Department, 932 Route 14A, Penn Yan. For information or to register contact: Henry Martin at: 315.536.4736



Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. We are a recognized employer and educator valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities.