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

NORTHWEST NEW YORK

Ag Focus

Preparing for the Upcoming Grazing Season

By: Nancy Glazier

Last year was sure an interesting year for grazing. Pasture growth started early, armyworms invaded and then the drought hit. Many pastures were grazed hard since hay was in low supply and pricey. Fortunately, the fall turned out pretty well.

There's no way of knowing what this grazing season will bring: we can hope for the best but plan for the worst. Last year's drought was considered a flash drought; it snuck up on us quickly, and then passed quickly. The climate trend for New York is warmer, drier summers, but higher amounts of precipitation annually[1].

March is a great time to assess pastures, if the snow is gone. How was winter survival? If pastures were grazed short in the fall bare spots may be visible. If bare or thin spots account for less than 30% of the pasture, frost seeding can be done to fill in. Legumes are great for this since when established they provide nitrogen to surrounding grasses.

If a pasture needs total renovation, one option would be an annual planting. This would provide forages throughout the growing season, and provide opportunity for weed control. Some choices for this would be sorghum, sorghum-sudan cross, brassicas, forage corn or spring-seeded cereal grains. Winter wheat can be grazed, but watch for bloat. Limit the time livestock are grazing to a few hours at a stretch. If grazed lightly, a grain crop can be expected but at a slightly reduced yield.

Photo by: Bill Verbeten

This may be a great year to hit the grass pastures with nitrogen fertilizer. Try 75 lb actual N at greenup.

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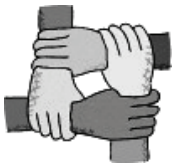

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Mission Statement

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.

Pencil out the costs of nitrogen fertilizers to calculate the cost of N per lb. Find the best bang for your buck. If you make hay from excess pasture, this will give you a yield boost for hay, too. It would be wise to take some soil samples to assess fertility; if fertility is low, a more complete fertilizer would be beneficial. Sufficient fertility will help the grasses stay competitive with weeds. Early spring is a time to think about broadleaf weed control. Unfortunately, weed control will take out clovers as well.

Patience will be critical this spring. Don't graze those stressed pastures too soon; make sure there are 3-4 inches of growth, and graze for short durations. Some pastures may have a slow start this year depending on how they went into the fall due to low root reserves. It will also be especially important to implement take half, leave half; this means don't let the livestock graze more than they leave. You need to encourage deep roots on the pasture plants.

For maximum yield divide the pastures into smaller grazing units if you continuously graze. This allows for shorter times for livestock to be on a paddock and provides adequate grazing. Develop a contingency plan. Do you have a sacrifice area to feed in times of drought or mud? This strategy saves your pastures from taking a beating. Will your farm support the number of livestock in an average summer? Think about culling if you haven't already done so, or at least think about which animals would be the first to go if you needed to cull. Hay will still be in short supply until well after first cutting.

[1]CLIMATE CHANGE FACTS, NEW YORK'S CHANGING CLIMATE. October 2011, Cornell Climate Change Program Work Team.

Tomato / Potato Late Blight Risk on YOUR Farm—An Advanced Forecast Tool

Tuesday, March 19

1:00—4:00 p.m.

CCE—Monroe County, 249 Highland Avenue, Rochester

In 2012 growers and consultants used the advanced Late Blight Decision Support System (DSS) forecast on 12 tomato and/or potato farms for part or all of the season. The email/text spray alerts and broad base of fungicide info made the LB DSS easier to use and more helpful than ever before. It provided scientific information to help them make better fungicide spray decisions, and in some cases safely stretch their spray schedule during the hot, dry weather.

Learn how to use this new late blight forecast tool on your farm at the Tuesday, March 19th online workshop: Tomato/Potato Late Blight Risk on YOUR Farm – An Advanced Forecast Tool. Participation is free but **pre-registration is required by Monday, March 11**. To register contact Angela Parr at aep63@cornell.edu or 585-394-3977 x426. A laptop computer capable of wireless internet access is needed for the workshop. Be sure to tell Angela if you need to borrow one. If you have questions about the workshop or the late blight Decision Support System contact Carol MacNeil at 585-394-3977 x406.

DEC and CCA credits will be available.

Participants will receive usernames and passwords for the Late Blight Decision Support System (DSS) website, will designate the location of their farm/fields on their personal account, and can input their varieties, at the workshop. They can also sign up for email/text fungicide spray alerts. In addition to using weather station data, the system uses point National Weather System forecasts for their individual farm location for predicting blight weather and fungicide weathering several days into the future. The DSS forecasts take into account varietal susceptibility to late blight and the relative effectiveness of a wide range of fungicides growers may choose to use.

Growing Malting Barley

By: Bill Verbeten

With the expansion of microbreweries in New York there is a growing demand for locally produced barley. Western New York farmers have an opportunity to work with local malt houses to supply the barley needed to fill this emerging market. Currently, breweries are required to source 20% of each ingredient from in-state to label their beer as from New York. From 2019 to 2023 the requirement increases to 60% and will further increase to 90% by 2024. Initial evaluation of the agronomic practices and available varieties indicate that there is the potential to productively grow malting barley in New York. While 2-row barley has generally been preferred by breweries, some varieties of 6-row barley are able to meet the quality standards set by the brewing industry. *Figure 1* shows an example of 2-row and 6-row barley.

Figure 1: Two-row vs. six-row barley .Photo credit: Brian Steffenson, University of Minnesota.

Growing Malting Barley

Winter barley production is very similar to winter wheat production. Winter hardy varieties of winter barley should be planted during mid to late September with a drill to a depth of one inch and seeded at 2 -2.5 bu/acre. Banding or mixing 25 lb/acre of phosphorous with the barley seed is critical for root development and winter survival. Work by Peter Johnson in Ontario has shown that broadcasting up to 200 lb/acre of MAP fertilizer onto winter grains does not increase winter survival and yield as much as placing 50 lb/acre of MAP in the seed furrow. Winter survival is also greatly influenced by variety selection. Initial tests by the Cornell variety trial testing program in the winter of 2011-12 showed the varieties had a range of winter survival from 60-90%. Further tests are underway this year to continue to evaluate winter survival and disease resistance of available winter barley varieties.

Photo credit: www.beer101.com

Barley does not like “wet feet,” so heavy clay fields and undrained muck soils should be avoided when planting winter barley. Barley is also very sensitive to soils with pH levels below 6.3, limiting production to areas that have limestone bedrock or have been regularly limed to maintain higher soil pH levels.

Initial tests from the Cornell varietal testing programs indicate that winter barley has comparable yield to winter wheat (over 100 bu/acre), when using 20 lb/acre of nitrogen at planting and 50-60 lb of nitrogen at green-up in the spring. This level of nitrogen fertilization has also generally resulted in barley crude protein (CP) content desirable for malting. Malt houses generally will not accept barley containing more than 12% CP, while some require <9% CP. Overall the 28 winter barley varieties tested in 2012 averaged 11.3% CP, but they ranged from 9.8% to 13.1% CP. Selecting the correct variety and optimizing nitrogen fertilizer application will be very important for winter barley growers.

Selling Malting Barley

Establishing a working relationship with a malt house is critical to successfully growing high quality malting barley. On-farm management has many impacts on the malting process. Varietal selection, optimizing nitrogen fertilization, timely harvest, and proper drying and storage are critical to successfully growing and selling malting barley. Farmers should be able to sell malting barley for equal or slightly higher prices compared to winter wheat to malt houses if the barley meets quality standards. Currently, malt houses that are buying barley from western New York are located in Batavia, Rochester, and Newark Valley.

Contact Bill Verbeten at 585-313-4457 or wdv6@cornell.edu if you are interested speaking with these malt houses directly about growing malting barley.

Agricultura

By: Libby Gaige

Clean Milk Benefits People and Calves

Anyone who handles milk on the farm needs to take pains to keep it clean. Whether the milk will be sold for human consumption or fed to calves, it needs to be handled with the utmost care.

Why is this so important? Infections such as salmonella, mycoplasma and E. coli can be transmitted from cow to calf through manure as well as through milk, resulting in a very sick calf. Although milk sold commercially is always pasteurized for human consumption, milk cooperatives put a big emphasis on keeping it clean. Part of the quality bonus that farms can receive is based on milk testing below a certain level for bacteria counts.

So how do we keep it clean? First, by keeping the cow's environment clean: maintaining stalls free from manure and adequately bedded is a must, as well as regularly scraping alleys. Pre and post dipping teats during milking kills bacteria on the teats before milking and protects the teat opening after milking. It is also important to check the wash system in the parlor routinely to make sure that every surface that the milk touches, from the teat to the bulk tank, is being adequately disinfected. Utilizing these practices will help ensure the milk sold by the farm is high quality.

Cool the colostrum and milk fed to calves quickly to prevent bacteria growth- it only takes 30 minutes for the bacteria population to double in a pail of milk at room temperature! After feeding calves, wash all pails, bottles, nipples, etc. thoroughly using detergent, bleach and an acid rinse. All three must be used to avoid leaving a film of milk on the pail, which would create the perfect growing environment for bacteria. Let these tools air dry until the next feeding.

For more information on keeping colostrum clean, visit www.calffacts.com.

Leche Limpia Beneficia a la Gente y los Becerros

Todas las personas que tocan leche en la granja tienen que hacer lo necesario para mantenerla limpia. Si van a vender la leche por consumo humano o si la van a dar de comer a los becerros, hay que utilizar mucha precaución.

¿Por qué es tan importante? Infecciones como la salmonela, la micoplasma y E. coli pueden ser transmitidos de la vaca al becerro tras el estiércol y también por la leche, lo que resulta en un becerro muy enfermo. Aunque siempre pasteurizan la leche vendida comercialmente para el consumo humano, las cooperativas ponen una énfasis muy fuerte en mantenerla limpia. Una parte del bono para la calidad que las granjas pueden recibir está basado en que la leche resulta con niveles de bacteria debajo de un cierto nivel.

¿Cómo la mantenemos limpia? Primero por mantener limpio el medioambiente de la vaca: mantener las camas libres de estiércol y con bastante aserrín

Clean Milk – *Leche Limpia*

Clean the stalls and alleys – *Limpie las camas y los pasillos*

Clean the teats – *Limpie los pezones*

Put colostrum in the refrigerator - *Ponga el calostro en la refrigeradora*

Wash the bottle – *Lave la botella*

Let the pail air dry – *Deje que la cubeta se seque al aire*

o arena es necesario, igual que limpiar regularmente los pasillos. Pre y post sellar los pezones durante el ordeño mata las bacterias en los pezones antes de ordeñar y protege la punta del pezón después del ordeño. También es importante revisar regularmente el sistema de lavar en la sala de ordeña para estar seguro que cada superficie que toque la leche, desde la teta hasta el tanque, se está desinfectando adecuadamente. Utilizar estas prácticas puede ayudar a asegurar que la leche vendida por la granja es de alta calidad.

Enfríe rápidamente el calostro y leche que van a dar de comer a los becerros para prevenir el crecimiento de bacteria- ¡la población de bacteria en una cubeta de leche dobla en 30 minutos a temperatura ambiente! Después de alimentar a los becerros, lave todas las cubetas, botellas, pezones, etc. con detergente, cloro y un enjuague acido. Hay que usar los tres para prevenir que una capa de leche se forme en la cubeta, lo que sería el ambiente perfecto para el crecimiento de bacteria. Deje que se sequen al aire estas herramientas hasta usarlos en la próxima alimentación.

Para más información sobre cómo mantener limpio el calostro, vaya al sitio www.calffacts.com.

A Practical Retrofit to Improve Cow Comfort

By: Jackson Wright

In dairy cows overall performance is a combination of genetics, environment, and nutrition. In many ways the dairy industry has made great strides in genetics and nutrition; however the cow's environment continues to be a limiting factor. Ultimately, the goal of every facility should be to provide every cow with adequate access resources. Facilities with poor cow comfort limit access to resources such as feed, water, and rest, which in turn increases competition.

One resource that is often overlooked is rest or lying time. To maximize production dairy cows require at least 12 hour a day of lying time. Lying increases blood flow through to the mammary gland which is associated with increased milk yield. In addition, inadequate rest is associated with increased lameness which greatly decreases production efficiency. Three key factors that influence lying time are stall design, lameness, and bedding. Many publications have general recommendations for stall width, length, and neck rail height; however the lying surface may have a greater impact on increasing lying times. Many producers are aware that sand bedded stalls improve lying times; however they may not have the will or capacity to deal with sand as a bedding source. What you may not realize is that lying times can be improved on mattresses if excessive bedding is used. Unfortunately, the amount of bedding required to increase lying times is in excess of 16 pounds of bedding per stall. Using this amount of bedding in a traditional mattress stall would be expensive over time. To overcome this some producers have tried using PVC piping as bedding savers with marginal success. A more successful alternative would be retrofitting a 4x6 piece of lumber, similar to a railroad tie, to the back of the existing stall bed. This can be done by drilling two holes through the lumber and attaching it to the concrete base with rebar. As long as the step up into the stall is less than 16 inches cows seem to have no problem getting in and out of the stalls. It also helps if both edges of the lumber are rounded to facilitate entering and exiting of the stall. Moreover this retrofit allows for each stall to maintain 6 inches of bedding material, creating a deep bedded pack that can improve lying times. In addition, the 4x6 piece of lumber acts as a bedding saver reducing the amount of bedding needed once the stalls have been filled. Fresh bedding can be added to the front of the stalls and gradually worked towards the rear of the stalls, providing cows with a large amount of cushioning around their knees when lying down. This also maximizes the use out of the bedding as the rear of the stall is more likely to be soiled. The other benefit is that because this retrofit can be done quickly and cheaply, it can be a temporary solution prior to a larger renovation or it can be maintained on a more permanent basis. Moreover, this retrofit can be successful with multiple bedding sources including sawdust, Syracuse fiber, or even sand which provides flexibility for producers to source different bedding in the future.

On a recent case study stalls were retrofitted in the manner described. The retrofitted stalls were both too narrow and too short for their cows. The farm retrofitted a small section of stalls to determine if the cows actually preferred the retrofitted stalls. Within a week to cows showed a preference for the retrofitted stalls, with all the retrofitted stalls being used and cows lying down. The farm is now retrofitting all the remaining stalls. The improved lying times should result in an increase in milk production. This may be something to consider if cow comfort presents a challenge on your farm.

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Wheat Management: North of the Border, Eh

By: Mike Stanyard

If you did not attend one of the Soybean & Small Grains Congresses in February, you missed a great presentation by Peter Johnson, Cereals Specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture. He shook things up a bit and challenged the audience to "step up their game" and increase wheat yields in NY. Peter has been a wheat researcher for 28 years in Ontario and challenges his producers to constantly push the envelope and intensively manage their wheat. Ontario grew one million acres of wheat in 2012 and averaged 82 bushels/acre.

Peter covered a lot of information but I asked him to address the top three topics that he felt would increase wheat yields in NY. These topics were: Use of a starter fertilizer at planting, combination of fungicides and increased nitrogen rates, and the importance of early weed control.

Starter Fertilizer: Peter 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. If you do not have a fertilizer box or liquid applicators on the drill, he suggested mixing your seed with 50 pounds of MAP (11-52-0) and running it through the drill. If you go this route, he did caution to make sure you clean out the drill immediately and coat with a light weight oil to prevent corrosion. Peter showed that to get the same effect of P in the band you would have to broadcast almost four times the amount of fertilizer.

Nitrogen and Fungicides: Peter was most excited about this research. He had been working with fungicides for a couple years and typically gained 7 bushels with a fungicide plus his normal nitrogen rates of around 90 pounds. However, when he jumped his N rate to 120 he gained an additional 5 bushels. When he stretched his N rate to 150 pounds with two fungicide applications he was able to increase yields by 21 bushels. Peter feels that fungicides and increasing N rates result in a synergy of 1 + 1 = 3. To keep the wheat from lodging, you need to keep it free from diseases and healthy. He stressed that the most important time for fungicide application was at flowering. This protects the upper foliage as well as preventing fusarium head scab on the developing kernels. He suggested not making a big jump in N rates but go slow and develop a prescription that is appropriate for your soil types. In Ontario Peter is recommending 1.1 pounds of N/per bushel on silt loam soils and 1.3 pounds/bushel on clay soils. He also is a proponent of stream bars and stream nozzles. He favors the five stream nozzles. He likes to see most of the N go on in the stem elongation/jointing stage (Feekes 7) when two nodes are visible above ground.

Weed Control: I have stressed the importance of controlling perennials and winter annuals in the fall. Weeds such as dandelion, purple dead nettle and chickweed germinate with the wheat and compete with the wheat for resources in the spring. Peter recommended spraying earlier planted fields with Harmony or Buctril and later planted fields can be sprayed with a burndown product just before planting. If fall spraying is not an option, then weeds need to be controlled in the spring. Peter emphasized not to use N as a carrier for your herbicide. He felt so strongly about this that he stated he will not work with producers who mix the two. He stressed that if you are burning your wheat you are losing up to 14 bushels per acre!

Forage Management Workshop

Thursday, March 28

CCE—Ontario County

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Hot Topics: Shredlage & Small Grain Silage

There's a lot of buzz in the air about shredlage and small grain silages. Attendees will learn about how shredlage differs from kernel processed corn silage and the effects it has on milk production, intake, and ration balancing. Many farmers in the region have planted oats or winter triticale for silage. Yields, forage quality, and economics of producing these silages will be discussed.

Cost: $15.00 per person

To register: Contact Nancy at 585.394.3977 x427 or email nea8@cornell.edu with your name, address, and phone number.

Pricing Corn Silage: Another Look

By: John Hanchar

The following summary is from "Pricing Corn Silage." (Ag Focus. August 2012. Pages 1 and 3.)

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 current (May, June 2012) alfalfa hay and corn grain prices, price analysis suggests an estimated corn silage price of about $41 per ton.

Given recent market conditions, the first two points still hold, but the third would be revised to read

- 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 current (January, February 2013) alfalfa hay and corn grain prices, price analysis suggests an estimated corn silage price of about $48 per ton.

Changing Market Conditions Since May, June 2012

For the May, June 2012 estimate

- alfalfa hay price was $180 per ton, rounded up from 175 reported by USDA/NASS (Agricultural Prices. Washington, DC. May 31, 2012.)
- the price of corn was $6.50 per bushel, rounded up from 6.18 reported by Western NY Energy ("Corn Bids." June 12, 2012.)

Since the May, June 2012 period, corn grain prices rose to around $8 per bushel and then declined to current levels of about $7.15 per bushel. Alfalfa hay prices have risen to about $250 per ton using the USDA/NASS source.

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 August 2012 article note that the analysis and estimates generated should be helpful to farm business owners looking to price corn silage.

The New York State Agricultural Statistics Service is the source of market year average price and quantity data for the variables listed above for the period 1991 through 2010 (<.http://www.nass.usda.gov/Statistics_by_State/New_York/index.asp>).

Updated Corn Silage Price Estimates

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 ($/ton) = 10.621 + (0.079 x price of alfalfa hay ($/ton)) + (2.448 x price of corn ($/bushel)).

Suppose

- alfalfa hay price is approximately $250 per ton (USDA/NASS. Agricultural Prices. Washington, DC: National Agricultural Statistics Service. January 31, 2013.), and
- the price of corn is roughly $7.25 per bushel (Western NY Energy. "Corn Bids." February 11, 2013. Approximate value of those actually reported.)

Using the estimating equation and the above prices for alfalfa hay and corn grain yields an estimated corn silage price $48 per ton.

Estimated corn silage price is sensitive to alfalfa and corn grain prices. Suppose alfalfa hay price remains at $250 per ton, but corn grain price is $8 per bushel. Then, the estimated corn silage price is $50 per ton. Recent conversations with producers suggest alfalfa hay prices higher than $250. 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.

For more information please contact John Hanchar.

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

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NWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team
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5,7,12 & 14 ***Dairy Skills Training - "Nutrient Management"***, 6:30 - 9:00 p.m., CCE—Wyoming Co. & CCE-Ontario Co. offices simultaneously, one on - farm session Saturday, March 16 location TBA. Cost: $50 per person. To register contact: 585.786.2251

12 ***Estate & Succession Planning for Farm Owners and Operators***, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., Ogden Town Hall, 269 Ogden Center Rd., Spencerport. FREE ADMISSION! RSVP: Susan Davis: 585.292.3028 or sdavis@monroecc.edu

12-13 ***Academy for Dairy Executives***, Beaver Hollow Resort & Conference Center, 1083 Pit Road, Java Center. For more information contact: Joan Petzen 585.786.2251 x122 or jsp10@cornell.edu

13 ***Estate & Succession Planning for Farm Owners and Operators***, 7:00 - 9:00 p.m., Perinton Community Center, Room 208B, 1350 Turk Hill Rd., Fairport. FREE ADMISSION! RSVP: Susan Davis: 585.292.3028 or sdavis@monroecc.edu

14 ***Pre-Exam Training & Test to Become A Certified Pesticide Applicator***, 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., CCE-Wayne Co., 1581 Route 88N, Newark. Workshop cost: $50.00, **Pre-Registration is REQUIRED**. Call: 315.331.8415

16 ***NY Pork Producers' 2013 Annual Mtg.***, 9:00 a.m., Holiday Inn, 2468 NYS Route 414, Waterloo. Pre-Registration is encouraged by March 1. Cost: FREE. Contact: 716.697.3031 or info@newyorkpork.org.

18 ***Pre-Exam Training & Test to Become A Certified Pesticide Applicator,*** 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m., CCE-Wayne Co., 1581 Route 88N, Newark. Workshop cost: $50.00, **Pre-Registration is REQUIRED**. Call: 315.331.8415

20 ***Winter Dairy Management***, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Livingston County Highway Dept., Mt. Morris (see page 10)

April 2013

8 ***Starting a Farm on a Shoestring***, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Riga Town Hall, 6460 Buffalo Rd., Churchville. For more information contact: Nancy, 585.315.7746

22 ***Starting a Farm on a Shoestring***, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Riga Town Hall, 6460 Buffalo Rd., Churchville. For more information contact: Nancy, 585.315.7746

May 2013

6 ***Starting a Farm on a Shoestring***, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m., Riga Town Hall, 6460 Buffalo Rd., Churchville. For more information contact: Nancy, 585.315.7746