

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



## Antibiotic Use – Turning Up the Heat

#### By: Jerry Bertoldo, DVM

n December 2014 the Reuters News Agency issued a special report entitled "Powerful Antibiotic for Cows Often Misused by Farmers". The antibiotic is question is ceftiofur, more commonly known by the trade names Naxcel, Excenel and Excede. The article states that ceftiofur accounted for one-quarter of USDA drug residue violation reports in 2013. 415 or 76% of those involving ceftiofur were found in dairy animals. According to Zoetis, the major manufacturer of ceftiofur products, "the statistics... were taken from a second component of the residue system, the inspector monitoring generated program. The intent of this program is not to estimate the prevalence of residues, but rather specifically target suspect animals and suspect populations of animals." In other words, Reuters used statistics from a biased population of animals tested because they were unhealthy looking and most likely to have been treated with antibiotics. According to the article "about 2 million people in the United states are sickened each year by bacterial infections that resist conventional antibiotics and at least 23.000 die".

A section of the article refers to a study published in 2014 in the Journal of Veterinary Research authored by faculty of several vet colleges. It found a strong correlation between microbial resistance to ceftiofur and ceftriaxone, a cephalosporin used in human medicine, by bacteria isolated from both human and cattle bowel. Both antibiotics are  $3^{rd}$  generation cephalosporins. In cattle the resistance to these drugs returns to pretreatment levels by three weeks post treatment. The worry is that resistant bacteria will contaminate the meat of animals slaughtered before the fading of resistance with the short holdout for ceftiofur.

The preliminary findings of this study compelled the FDA to rule in 2013 that except for the first generation cephalosporin, cephapirin (the antibiotic in Cefa-Lak/Today and Cefa-Dri/Tomorrow) advanced more antibiotics in the family such as ceftiofur were to be used strictly according to label.

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Ag Focus Cornell Cooperative Extension of

Genesee•Livingston•Monroe Niagara•Ontario•Orleans•Seneca Wayne•Wyoming•Yates

Ag Focus is published Monthly by the NWNY Team of CCE / PRO-DAIRY

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Layout/Design: Cathy Wallace

Postmaster Send Address Changes: NWNY Team—Cathy Wallace 420 E. Main Street, Batavia, NY 14020

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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

A veterinarian's privilege to use drugs extra-label (ELDU) was prohibited here. Any use must be restricted to original approval by species, age, dose, frequency, duration, route of administration, organ system and specific pathogens. Preventative use was made illegal as well.

Amidst the factual citations and points about ceftifur's use, the writers sprinkled in phrases that evoke emotional responses and doubt as to the motives and ethics of producers and pharmaceutical companies. "Protect your cows and bottom line", "keep a sick animal alive long enough to sell it", "the use of ceftiofur is a boon to its largest maker" and "generating \$300 million in revenue per year" are examples of the rather callous benefits gained by using a potential life-saving medication. Nowhere in the article does any animal welfare derived from ceftiofur use enter the discussion.

The Reuters article also insinuates that meat itself becomes contaminated with resistant bacteria merely as a result of antibiotic use. This is only possible if there was a systemic infection or fecal matter contaminated the carcass during processing. Inspectors would routinely condemn septicemic animals and precautions taken when dressing out carcasses to prevent fecal contamination are quite rigorous. There is no mention of the important role that proper cooking temperatures play in destroying the bacteria in question.

Ironically, the day before the Reuters article, the New York Times published an article entitled "Superbugs Kill India's Babies and Pose an Overseas Threat". The severe lack of hygiene, sanitary facilities, waste treatment and the overcrowding in dwellings as well as hospitals has led to India becoming the world's highest per capita user of antibiotics. All antibiotics in India are available overthe-counter! It is easier and far less costly than massive public works projects aimed at sanitation. Within the last 5 years these superbugs carrying a genetic code NDM1 have exhibited resistance to even the most powerful, latest generations of antibiotics. One private hospital claims that 100% of babies referred to them have multidrug resistance. Nationally 58,000 newborns died in 2013 a result of superbug infections. These bacteria are known to have spread internationally to Europe, Asia, the Middle East and the US. Most worrisome to health officials is the increasingly untreatable nature of tuberculosis, a rampant disease in India.

Can the abuse of antibiotics in India created in the human population with excessive therapeutic and preventative use of advanced antibiotics be compared with low level inclusion of older antibiotics in food animals here? Can the legal therapeutic use and withholding of antibiotics in food animals combined with good management and excellent meat processing facilities impact the human population here as seen in India? Are the MRSA strains in the US created in our food animals or in the hospitals and nursing homes where cost is not an object, sick people are gathered and the latest antibiotics are repeatedly used? Let's hope that these questions can be answered by scientific means and not by media seeking to get the attention of an emotion driven public.



## Produce Quality Milk to Boost Your Bottom Line

#### By: Libby Eiholzer

While milk prices for 2015 are forecasted to be low, that doesn't mean that it's too late for you to do something about protecting your bottom line. Quality milk is always important, but paying special attention to it in lean years will help your business prosper.

There are many ways to make sure that things are running smoothly in your parlor. One good idea is to have qualified personnel come in to test your milking system regularly. Incorrect vacuum levels, poor pulsation and milking units that detach too late can all lead to teat-end damage and increased incidence of mastitis. Following a regular schedule to replace inflations, hoses and other rubber parts is also important.

While we don't tend to see spikes in mastitis during the winter months, mastitis problems in spring and summer months are often caused by damage that teats sustain during the cold weather months. Postdipping is especially important to help prevent mastitis, but making sure that teats are dry when cows exit the parlor on the coldest days of the year (especially those that have to walk outside) will help to prevent chapped or frozen teats. Using a teat dip with added emollients will also keep teats healthier.

Prevention will take you a long way, but you will almost surely have some mastitis cases to deal with. When you do, sampling cows correctly, culturing them to find the mastitis-causing pathogen and then providing pathogen-based treatment is key to controlling mastitis on your farm. This will help to reduce repeat cases of clinical mastitis, which can add up to a huge cost. If you haven't already, you should work with your herd veterinarian to develop treatment protocols for the different mastitis pathogens so that you can make informed treatment decisions.

**"Garbage in, garbage out"** says Dr. Rick Watters, Sr. Extension Veterinarian with the Western Laboratory of Quality Milk Production Services (QMPS). Dr. Watters presented at the first session of



What happens in the milking parlor can have a huge effect on milk quality.

the Milk Quality Training in January, discussing proper procedures for taking milk and bedding samples. He says that when taking milk or bedding samples to test for mastitis organisms, cleanliness is essential to getting useful data. Dr. Watters outlined the following procedure for collecting milk from an individual cow:

Prepare the cow as you would for milking: predip, wipe and forestrip. Use an alcohol pad to disinfect the teat end, forestrip again, and then fill the milk vial, making sure to hold it at a 45 degree angle with the lid up. Immediately refrigerate if you will be submitting the sample within 24 hours, or freeze if it will be longer. Adhering to all of these guidelines will provide you with a cleaner, more useful sample.

One option to help you keep a closer eye on milk quality is to enroll in QMPS's Bulk Tank Monitoring Program. Participants are entitled to 6 bulk tank milk analyses during a 12 month enrollment period, collected every other month. The samples are conveniently collected through your milk hauler or milk cooperative, and the analyses provide the farm with information on current milk quality and animal health, as well as alert the farm if there are new, recurrent or periodic herd infections. For more information. contact Dr. Paula Ospina at pav@cornell.edu or 607-253-3933.

## If Weather Cuts Yields? Corn Silage Crop Insurance Can Help Feed the Cows.



*"Even in years when prices are lower, it helps out.* 

This year the dollars that were being paid per ton of silage were much higher than a few years before and crop insurance keeps up with the changes. So, it works out very well."

David Woods Saratoga County dairyman Charlton, NY,

Now is the time to look into what corn silage crop insurance can do for you.

## Call a crop insurance agent today.

Agent lists are available at your FSA office or on the web at www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html

## You have until March 15, 2015 to sign up for or modify crop insurance for most vegetables and field crops.



New York State Dept. of Agriculture & Markets

Crop Insurance Education www.agriculture.ny.gov/AP/CropInsurance.html or call 800.554.4501



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**Risk Management Agency** 

## FAQs about Farm Drones Part 2

#### By: Bill Verbeten

This article continues to answer some FAQs about using unmanned aerial systems (UAS), commonly called 'drones,' on farms in western NY.

## What kinds of cameras should a crop scouting UAS have?

Many types of cameras (also called sensors) are available. Most UAS have come with a visual sensor that takes pictures or video just like traditional cameras and cost anywhere from \$500 to \$2,000. Thermal sensors detect heat signatures and will set you back \$5,000 to \$6,000. Multispectral sensors take pictures of multiple colors at the same time (typical NIR or Red Edge, Red, Green, and/or Blue) in order to make NDVI (essentially a measurement of crop vigor) or other maps and have a \$500-\$4,000 price tag. Generally the higher priced cameras will have better image quality and resolution. All of these camera types (and others) can be useful for scouting crops. We will be testing the ability of visual, thermal, and multispectral sensors, Figure 1, to perform a variety of crop scouting tasks in 2015.

#### Which crop scouting tasks can a UAS do?

Prior to the growing season we will be taking bare soil scans with visual and thermal sensors to attempt to map variations in soil OM, drainage, and use a base layer for crop biomass estimates. Using the visual sensor we will attempt to count corn and soybean populations from the air in commercial fields and in population rate trials. NDVI measurements will be calculated from multispectral scans in corn as part of nitrogen rate trials evaluating GreenSeeker technology. Visual, thermal, & multispectral scans will be used to attempt to detect weed, insect, and disease outbreaks. We will also attempt to use the visual sensor to estimate yields near harvest. Calibration and ground-truthing are critical to figuring out how UAS imagery will be useful and we will be providing updates throughout 2015.

Why not just use satellite or airplane imagery? Bottom line: UAS can get higher resolution imagery more often than planes or satellites. Our UAS sensors have 0.5 cm or 2.5 cm per pixel resolution flying at 50 or 100 m (164 or 328 ft.). Satellites typically are not

able to capture imagery more than a few times during the growing season with low resolution (>1 m per pixel),



Figure 1: Multispectral, Visual, & Thermal Sensors Source: Bill Verbeten

however companies like Skybox are increasing the frequency and quality of satellite imagery. That being said some satellites can't take a picture through a cloud, but UAS can fly underneath moderate cloud cover. Note 1000 ft. ceilings (clouds are 1000 ft. off of the ground) are required for safe See operations. the latest **METARs** UAS (meteorological aviation reports), Figure 2, for local ceiling levels. Imagery from airplanes will be better for large scale scanning of crop fields. At most a UAS can cover a few thousand acres a day, while a plane can cover tens of thousands of acres. Even though airplane imagery has lower resolution than UAS imagery, it is well suited for use in precision ag applications since variable rate management generally cannot be done beyond every 10 inches. We hope to evaluate some airplane imagery in comparison with UAS imagery to see where each is most appropriate. Airplane imagery typically costs \$5-10/acre/flight.

## Why should I care about the rules? Who's going to catch me? The fines can't be that bad?

The first priority with any UAS, airplane, helicopter, etc. operation is safety. With proper training you will be able to have enjoyable and (hopefully useful) UAS operations without unnecessarily risking lives and property. The knowledge gained from studying for and passing the private pilot written exam will greatly increase the safety of your UAS operations. Working with a local Academy of Model Aeronautics club to get some experience on radio controlled aircraft will also improve your operational safety.

The FAA will fine individuals between \$500 and \$1100 for each UAS flight in violation at minimum. Additionally the financial liability can be much larger when something goes wrong. For our UAS research we are required to carry insurance that has: 1) NYS workers compensation insurance 2) \$1,000,000 in combined single limit automobile liability 3) a commercial general liability policy with \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate limit, 4) owned aircraft liability of \$1,000,000 5) \$1,000,000 umbrella policy. Standard liability coverage that most farms carry will not cover the costs of damages by illegal UAS operations.

## Why aren't you flying a quad-copter for your research?

The battery life is very short on rotorcraft UAS, under 30 minutes in most cases. Our UAS can cover about 250 acres in an hour, which is required for our

medium scale evaluations.

Smaller UAS also tend to be more difficult to operate in high winds compared to fixed-wing UAS. Sensor quality and resolution tend to be lower for



Figure 2: Cloud Ceiling from METAR Source: Aviation Weather Center

small rotorcraft UAS. As our research evolves we will likely consider UAS that can cover even larger acreage (600 to 700 acres) in an hour in combination with airplane imagery.



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## Calling Beef Producers – Large and Small

By: Sandy Buxton and Joan Sinclair Petzen

re you a beef producer? Is your goal to mow your lawn using animals or do you want to grow a profitable business?

The NYS Beef Farm Business Summary is here to help! To help beef producers, large and small, whose numbers are growing across NYS, Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension are working with customized software developed by the University of Minnesota to help beef farms analyze their financial and production numbers.

Using your records and information, you can learn about and track your growth in net worth, cost of production and income per animal. The final personalized report is designed to help quantify and identify strengths and weaknesses on the farm as well as cost

of production. This information, in turn, is valuable to each farmer as they try to pinpoint optimal marketing channels.

Each farm participant will gain a greater understanding on their costs of raising an animal. All of this information will help producers make better financial decisions and identify goals.

For more info on the NYS Beef Farm Business Summary, in the Northwest New York Region, contact Joan Petzen, jsp10@cornell.edu or 585-786-2251 or across the state Dr. Mike Baker, Cornell University, 607-255-5923, mjb28@cornell.edu. This project is supported by the Hudson Mohawk RC&D Council, NIFA-USDA Benchmarking grant and the NY Farm Viability Institute.

## MANAGING TRANSITION COWS - DAIRY SKILLS TRAINING

## **Topics of discussion** include but not limited to:

- the ideal environment of a pre-fresh cow
- postpartum infectious and immunological diseases
- post-calving metabolic disorders
- monitoring and treatments for Transition Cow diseases
- records, protocols, and tracking tools.

Cost of this Module is \$150.00. Space is limited, register early.

## **Questions?**

From more Information or to Register, visit: wyoming.cce.cornell.edu/dairy-institute or call Anne Wood at 585-786-2251



Presenters will include **Internationally Recognized** Dr. Kathryn Proudfoot, as well as other Transition Cow experts.

February 10, 17, 24, March 3rd 6:30-9:00 PM

**On-Farm Session Date & Time** to be Announced!

\* Lunch is included during the On-Farm Session

#### Locations:

- CCE Wyoming County
- CCE Ontario County



You can also scan this code with your smartphone to register.



**Cornell University Cooperative Extension** Wyoming County and NWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team



## New 2014 Farm Bill Safety Net Programs: Crop and Livestock Provisions

#### By: John Hanchar

T he following article is based upon a USDA/FSA news release, fact sheet, and other reporting on the topic.

#### **Summary**

- New 2014 Farm Bill program provisions replace direct payment, crop programs with new risk management tools for crop, and livestock producers
- \* Advisors strongly encourage farmers to obtain information from the USDA/FSA web site www.fsa.usda.gov, and visit their USDA/FSA office to help with participation decisions
- Farmers follow a three step process to participate
   update, elect, enroll

#### **Programs**

In a recent news release and fact sheet, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) reminds farm owners and producers that opportunities to choose between newly established 2014 Farm Bill programs are underway and continue through March 31, 2015. The new programs, designed to help producers better manage risk, usher in one of the most significant reforms to U.S. farm programs in decades.

For livestock producers, the Livestock Forage Disaster Program is a permanent provision of the 2014 Farm Bill that offers compensation to livestock producers who suffer grazing losses for covered livestock on pastureland due to drought. Covered livestock include beef, dairy, buffalo/beefalo, sheep, goats, deer, equine, swine, elk, poultry, reindeer, alpacas, emus and llamas that are produced for commercial farming purposes. Contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office for details, including deadlines.

Direct payments for program crops were eliminated in the 2014 Farm Bill. Crop producers now can participate in the Price Loss Coverage (PLC) program or Agricultural Risk (ARC) programs.



Covered commodities include: barley, canola, large and small chickpeas, corn, soybeans, sunflower seed, wheat and others. FSA Administrator, Val Dolcini notes, "The new ARC and PLC programs provide a more rational approach to helping farmers manage risk by ensuring families don't lose the farm because of events beyond their control."

#### Steps & Dates

The 2014 Farm Bill asks producers to make some important and difficult decisions. Producers have until March 31, 2015, to choose the program that best fits their operation. Dolcini notes, "USDA is committed to keeping farm owners and producers well informed on all steps in this process to ensure that they have all of the information that they need before making their coverage choice."

Advisors strongly encourage farmers to follow a three step process to participate -- update, elect, enroll. Industry advisors agree on the importance of obtaining information from the USDA/FSA website, and of working closely with the local FSA office to help with participation decisions. The process will help producers boil information down, understand their options and make the best decision on which program – ARC or PLC – is right for them.

USDA helped create online tools to assist in the decision process, allowing farm owners and producers to enter information about their operation and see projections that show what ARC and/or PLC will mean for them under possible future scenarios. Farm owners and producers can access the online resources, available at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc, from the convenience of their home computer or mobile device at any time.

Dates associated with ARC and PLC that farm owners and producers need to know follow.

- Now through Feb. 27, 2015 -- Farm owners may visit their local FSA office to update yield history and/or reallocate base acres.
- Now to March 31, 2015 -- Producers make a onetime election between ARC and PLC for the 2014 through 2018 crop years.
- Mid-April 2015 through summer 2015 -- Producers sign contracts for 2014 and 2015 crop years.
- October 2015 -- Payments issued for 2014 crop year, if needed.



## **Upcoming Webinars:**

## Nail the Big - Dollar Decisions

February 9, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m. *Presented by:* Greg Bethard, CFO for Pagel's Ponderosa Dairy & Dairy Dreams Hoards Dairyman http://www.hoards.com/webinars

## Technology Tuesday Webinar Series: Heat Stress

February 24, 8:30 - 10:30 a.m. *Presented by:* John Tyson, Penn State Extension Dairy Team http://extension.psu.edu/animals/dairy/courses/ technology-tuesday-series

#### Formulating Diets for Groups of Lactating Cows

February 26, 1:00 p.m. *Presented by:* Dr. Bill Weiss, The Ohio State University http://www.extension.org/pages/29156/upcomingdairy-cattle-webinars#.VL6jyth0yUm

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## Cornell Beef Farm Account Book

The Cornell Beef Farm Account Book is once again available. The accounting record book is designed specifically for beef producers. A complete and accurate set of financial records helps producers develop accurate tax returns but as important gives them the data to analyze their business. Using this accounting record book the farm manager will have the data needed to complete the Beef Farm Business Summary. The Farm Business Summary is a confidential analysis of business records to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the beef enterprise. This allows for better decision making to increase farm profitability.

To purchase a copy of the Cornell Beef Farm Account Book, contact Cornell Cooperative Extension Yates County at 315.536.5123 or stop by the office at 417 Liberty St, Suite 1024, Penn Yan. The cost of the book is \$10.00, which covers the cost of mailing. Nancy Glazier, Small Farms Specialist for the Northwest New York Dairy,



Livestock and Field Crops Team also has copies for sale. Her number is 585.315.7746 or email nig3@cornell.edu.

To learn more about participating in the Beef Farm Business Summary, contact Nancy Glazier or Mike Baker, Beef Extension Specialist, 114 Morrison Hall, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY 14853, 607-255-5923, mjb28@cornell.edu.



## 2014 NY Corn & Soybean Growers Association Yield Contest Winners

The annual corn and soybean yield contests are sponsored by the New York Corn & Soybean Grower Association. Congratulations to our 2014 NY Corn Champion, Matt Kludt and our NY Soybean Champion, John Mizro. Both win all expense paid trips to the 2015 Commodity Classic in Phoenix, Arizona in February.

| NYS 20        | 14 Cor      | n & Soybean Y | ield Contest  | Winners             |       |              |             |             |        |  |
|---------------|-------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|-------|--------------|-------------|-------------|--------|--|
| Rank          | Ent         | rant Name     | Town          | County              | H     | ybrid Brand  | Number      |             | Yield  |  |
| Corn C        | ontest      |               |               |                     |       |              |             |             |        |  |
| 1             | М           | latt Kludt    | Kendall       | Orleans             |       | DEKALB       | DKC 52-04   |             | 282.35 |  |
| 2             | Bob         | Pawlowski     | Verona        | Oneida              |       | Pioneer      | P0993AM1    |             | 261.53 |  |
| 3             | Ac          | lam Coots     | Savona        | Steuben             |       | Pioneer      | P0533AM1    |             | 255.12 |  |
| Soybeau       | n Conte     | est           |               |                     |       |              |             |             |        |  |
| 1             | Jo          | hn Mizro      | Auburn        | Cayuga              |       | Pioneer      | 92Y51       |             | 83.30  |  |
| 2             | Jo          | hn Mizro      | Auburn        | Cayuga              |       | NK Brand     | NK S17-B3   |             | 80.06  |  |
| 3             | Tra         | vis Walton    | Linwood       | Linwood             |       | Asgrow       | 2431        |             | 74.98  |  |
| West &        | Finger      | Lakes Region  | al 2014 Corn  | <b>Yield Contes</b> | st W  | inners       |             |             |        |  |
| Rank          | Ent         | rant Name     | Town          | County              | I     | Iybrid Brand | Number      |             | Yield  |  |
| West R        | egion       |               |               |                     |       |              | _           |             |        |  |
| 1             | M           | latt Kludt    | Kendall       | Orleans             |       | DEKALB       | DKC 52-04   |             | 282.35 |  |
| 2             | Ga          | ry Germeo     | Holley        | Orleans             |       | FS InVISION  | FS 44R22VT3 |             | 248.01 |  |
| 3             | Ror         | n Gruschow    | Lima          | Livingston          |       | Pioneer      | P0157AMX    |             | 243.83 |  |
| <b>Finger</b> | Lakes F     | Region        |               |                     |       |              |             |             |        |  |
| 1             | Ac          | lam Coots     | Savona        | Steuben             |       | Pioneer      | P0533AM1    |             | 255.12 |  |
| 2             | Todd DuMond |               | Auburn        | Cayuga              |       | Pioneer      | P0216AM     |             | 245.16 |  |
| 3             | Norm Vaill  |               | Ledyard       | Cayuga              |       | DEKALB       | DKC 52-04   |             | 241.90 |  |
| West &        | Finger      | Lakes Region  | al 2014 Soybo | ean Yield Co        | ntest | t Winners    |             |             |        |  |
| 1st P         | lace        | Entrant Name  | Town          | County              | 7     | Hybrid Name  | Numb        | er y        | Yield  |  |
| West R        | egion       |               |               |                     |       |              |             |             |        |  |
| Group 0       |             | Dean Macauley | Cuylerville   | Livingsto           | on    | NK Brand     | NK 08-      | -G1 4       | 8.26   |  |
| Group 1       |             | Marc Krieger  | Lima          | Livingsto           | on    | Hubner       | H15-12      | 2R2 7       | 71.25  |  |
| Group 2       |             | Travis Walton | Linwood       | Livingsto           | on    | Asgrow       | 243         | 1 7         | 74.96  |  |
| <b>Finger</b> | Lakes F     | Region        |               |                     |       | -            |             |             |        |  |
| Group 1       |             | John Mizro    | Auburn        | Cayuga              | L     | NK Brand     | NK S17      | '-B3        | 80.06  |  |
| Group 2       |             | John Mizro    | Auburn        | Cayuga              | L     | Pioneer      | 92Y5        | 51 <b>8</b> | 83.30  |  |
| Group 3       |             | Mark Lott     | Waterloo      | Seneca              |       | Asgrow       | 3030        | ) 6         | 66.47  |  |

## Improving Your Feeder Calf Marketing Strategies

By: Nancy Glazier

Many beef producers rely on the auctions to market their feeder calves. With average herd size at 13 cows, this does not provide an offer much in the way of improving prices. Cattle prices are high, and expected to remain that way for several more years. Are there things that can be done to improve the price received?

There is a project underway to provide a marketing opportunity for New York's many small beef farms. There has been lots of research to demonstrate the correlation with lot size and price. This could be done by commingling similar calves. This can be a concern for the buyer and seller; a buyer is looking for uniform lots or units, and combining can be stressful on the calves.

Strategies exist to reduce these concerns. Health and nutrition management are critical. Ideally, producers follow the same weaning and vaccine protocols. West Virginia has adopted this strategy and serves to be a model for New York. My November article reviewed their pooled sales.

So what about uniformity? A group of extension educators (myself included) were recently trained in cattle grading by a USDA grader. Cattle are graded based on muscle, frame and thriftiness. When this system is used, a buyer can have a good idea what the cattle are, sight unseen.



The goal is to begin pooling feeder calves in groups around the state. I will be looking to find 2 or 3 producers interested in improving their prices received for feeder calves and willing to make some changes on the farm to improve the bottom line. There will be some growing pains the first year, but the objective will be to increase feeder calf price of \$0.10-0.15 over the sale barn price for cattle sold the same day. Now is the time to learn about this project and consider positive changes to your operation. Contact me if you are interested: nig3@cornell.edu or 585.315.7746.



## Strategic Planning 101 – Part 1

By Timothy X. Terry, Dairy Strategic Planning Specialist, Harvest NY

#### **Strategic Planning 101**

I've been handing out a number of business cards in recent weeks as I reconnect with many of the people and organizations of the western NY region. A quick review of the card is usually followed by a quizzical jerking back of the head, a furrowed brow, and/or scratching of the head. "What's a strategic planning specialist?" is often the next question. Many of you are probably already doing strategic planning, just not in such a formal manner or with the big, fancy title.

#### What It Is Not

Perhaps the best way to explain what strategic planning is, is to first minimize any confusion with what it is not. First, it does not answer the question, "How?"

- $\rightarrow$  How will a certain task be accomplished?
- $\rightarrow$  How will business resources be allocated?

Second, it is not the tactics or day-to-day decisions you make. Although the strategic plan will certainly exert some influence here.

Rather, strategic planning answers the question, "What?":

- → What will determine the nature and direction of our organization?
- → What policies and key decisions will have a *major* impact on our financial performance?
- → What decisions will involve significant, irreversible resource commitment?

Ideally, then, the strategic plan will help you take a systematic approach: *first* you set the direction, and *then* you develop the day-to-day tactics to get there. For example, if we had to go to Albany to see our legislator from western NY our strategy would be to head east. Our tactics then would probably be to select the car or pick-up truck, get to I-90 east, get off in Albany, and then take Western Ave. to the capitol

building. (Oversimplified, I know, I've been in downtown Albany, but you get the idea.)

#### **Plan Origins**

The strategic plan should flow quite naturally out of your mission statement, and, for a quick review, your mission statement should be answering questions like:

- → Why do we exist? or Why do we do what we do?
- $\rightarrow$  What is our business?
- → How does the family fit into the business / the business with the family?
- $\rightarrow$  Who are our customers?
- $\rightarrow$  What do our customers value?

Now if you're a veg cropper or a cheesemaker and you're direct-marketing through a roadside stand or farmer's market these last two questions might be easier to answer than if you're a dairy or dairy goat farm shipping to a creamery. However, if you think about it a bit, the creamery is your customer -- if your milk doesn't meet specifications (cleanliness, antibiotics) it gets dumped; if it exceeds spec's (components, SCC) then you may receive a premium.

Next time: Bob & Weave



## Step it Up, 2015: Improving Management

2015 will be the sixth year of the Step It Up - Winter Grazing Conference. The agenda will focus on primarily topics of interest for dairy producers. Visit with all of your favorite local industry representatives at the Ag. Exhibitor Tradeshow and get answers to all your questions on the latest technology and innovations!

## Milking Efficiencies with Pasture Based Herds

Dr. Rick Watters, Sr. Extension Associate, Quality Milk Production Services

**Business Side of the Grazing Dairy Business** Bruce Rivington, Red Gate Farm

Grain vs. No-Grain - What's Profitable?

Karen Hoffman, Grazing Dairy Nutritionist, NRCS

Matching Cow Numbers to Your Land Base

Nancy Glazier, NWNY Team

## Farmer/Speaker Panel

## Keynote Speaker: Bruce Rivington



Bruce and Nancy Rivington, along with their family, own and operate Red Gate Farm, which is located in the southern hills of Madison County. The colourful herd of Ayrshire and cross bred cows calve seasonally each spring so that they give most of their delicious milk while receiving fresh grass twice daily during the growing season. Almost two decades of rotational grazing experience enable them to keep the lush paddocks of their all grass farm at their best. All young stock also live on this fine grass throughout the summer. The Rivington family's passion for grazing is evident throughout the hill and valley fields of their beautiful farm. Bruce was also a member of Prograssinators, a national grazing discussion group.

#### Cost:

\$45.00, not enrolled in NWNY Team \*\*
\$35.00, if enrolled in NWNY Team
\$30.00, additional person from same farm/business

\*\* If you do not receive the monthly newsletter Ag Focus either by mail or email you are **NOT** enrolled in the NWNY Team

Please make reservation by: *FEBRUARY 18* by contacting: Cathy Wallace: 585-343-3040 x138 or cfw6@cornell.edu

## Bertoldo Receives Educator Award

Jerry Bertoldo recently received the Extension Educator of the Year award from the NY Beef Producers Association. He has been involved in NY agriculture for 35 years starting his career working as a veterinarian. He became a bovine vet with Attica Veterinary Associates. He left the practice and took a position with Agway. In 2004 he started with Cornell Cooperative Extension as a Dairy Specialist on the NWNY Team, covering a 10-county region.

Jerry crafted the concept and secured funding to establish a dairy training program for Spanish speaking workers that documents and translates standard operating procedures and provides on-farm training to workers on large dairies across a 10-county region. Jerry serves on the instructional staff for the Wyoming County Dairy Institute helping to develop course outlines and providing both lecture and hands - on training through eleven different workforce development modules for the dairy industry workers.

Bertoldo worked with leaders from across the world to bring calf group housing with free choice feeding technology, being employed in Europe, to New York dairies. He organized workshops, demonstrations, symposiums and tours leading to widespread adoption which yielded more robust growth and



reduced the labor once required to care for calves. Most recently he has assumed leadership for the statewide Calf Congress, held annually to share advancements in calf raising technology.

His leadership has established discussion groups for young dairy managers and calf managers in Western New York. These discussion groups provide a forum for dairy farm owners and managers to share information, discover new ideas and reinforce tried and true management practices. Jerry exhibits the enthusiasm, ingenuity and tenacity required of an effective extension educator. His easy going manner and broad knowledge of dairy science make him a sought after resource by the local farm community. He is a team worker and leader as demonstrated when he mentors new staff.



For more information, watch our video at FarmCreditEast.com/Taxes.

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## February 2015

- Save the Date...
- 10 Dairy Skill Training: Managing Transition Cows, 6:30 9:00 p.m., See page 8 for more details.
- 12 *Calf Management Training*, 10:00 a.m. 2:00 p.m., CCE-Orleans Co., 12690 State Highway 31, Albion. To register contact: Kim Hazel: 585-798-4265 x26 or krh5@cornell.edu. See page 13 for more details.
- 17 **Dairy Skill Training: Managing Transition Cows,** 6:30 9:00 p.m., See page 8 for more details.
- 24 **Dairy Skill Training: Managing Transition Cows**, 6:30 9:00 p.m., See page 8 for more details.
- 26 *Calf Management Training*, 10:00 a.m. 2:00 p.m., CCE-Orleans Co., 12690 State Highway 31, Albion. To register contact: Kim Hazel: 585-798-4265 x26 or krh5@cornell.edu. See page 13 for more details.
- 26 Step It Up in 2015 Winter Grazing Conference, 10:00 a.m.-3:00 p.m., Byrncliff Resort & Conference Center, 2357 Humphrey Road, Varysburg. To register contact: Cathy Wallace: 585-343-3040 x138 or cfw6@cornell.edu. See page 17 for more details.
- 26-28 **NY Farm Show**, 8:30 a.m. 4:00 p.m. See page 19 for more details.

## March 2015

- 3 **Dairy Skill Training: Managing Transition Cows,** 6:30 9:00 p.m., See page 8 for more details.
- 17 *Herd Health & Nutrition Conference,* Holiday Inn, Liverpool/Syracuse. Registration information contact: Heather Darrow: 607-255-4478 or hh96@cornell.edu
- 17 *Pesticide Training & Exam*, 12:30 p.m. 4:00 p.m., CCE-Wayne County, 1581 Route 88N, Newark. For additional information contact: 315-331-8415
- 18 *NYS Dry Bean Meeting*, 9:00 a.m. 3:00 p.m., LeRoy Country Club. DEC & CCA credits will be available. Registration information contact: Carol MacNeil: 585-394-3977 x426 or crm6@cornell.edu
- 19 *Pesticide Training & Exam*, 12:30 p.m. 4:00 p.m., CCE-Wayne County, 1581 Route 88N, Newark. For additional information contact: 315-331-8415

Winter Dairy Management - 2015, "Increase Milk Components Profitably"

March 2, CCE-Ontario County, 480 Main Street, Canandaigua March 9, CCE-Genesee County, 420 East Main Street, Batavia

10:00 - 2:30 p.m. Hot lunch & proceedings included Reservations contact: Cathy Wallace: 585-343-3040 x138 or cfw6@cornell.edu \$40.00 not enrolled in NWNY Team

\$35.00 enrolled in NWNY Team & \$30.00 for each additional person from same farm/business

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.