



# Ag FOCUS

## Profitability – Why So Many Measures?

By: Joan Sinclair Petzen

**P**rofitability measures the returns to a business. In agriculture, owners generally are also managers and laborers in their businesses. Most businesses use capital contributed by the owner and debt to finance their operations. So when measuring profitability, different measures are used to sort out how much return is attributed to each of the resources used to generate profits; labor, management and capital, both debt and equity. Let's review the profitability measures typically used in agriculture and what each means.

The simplest measure of profitability is net farm income. Net farm income is simply revenue minus expenses. It measures the absolute return in dollars to the resources used in the business. Net farm income is an accrual measure, meaning it considers both cash and non-cash revenues and expenses. According to the Farm Financial Standards Council, "Net farm income represents your return to your labor, your management and your capital invested in the business. It is the reward for investing your unpaid family labor, management and money in the business instead of elsewhere." Some non-cash revenues might be an increase in inventory, appreciation of assets or changes in accounts receivable. Non-cash expenses could be depreciation of assets, reduction in inventory, or changes in accounts payable.

Sometimes, for the purpose of benchmarking, net farm income is looked at on a per-unit of production



basis, for example, per acre or per cow. This allows comparison among businesses of differing size. Per-unit returns are also useful for looking at the profitability trend over time in a growing business.

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Since agricultural businesses have traditionally been owned and managed by the same individuals, owners often want to get a sense of how much return they are receiving for the time they put into labor and management for their business. Another question owners want to answer is, ‘How does my return from the farm business compare to the return I might get from an alternative investment?’”

To sort this out, it is necessary to assign a return to the other owner contributions to the business to calculate each of these measures. When determining the return to equity or assets a return must be assigned to value of unpaid family labor and management contributed by the owner and their family. On the other hand, when determining the return to owner(s)’ labor and management, a return to unpaid family labor, and equity must be assigned.

The Cornell Dairy Farm Business Summary uses labor and management income to provide a measure farm owner/operators can use to get a sense of how their return compares to what one might earn in an alternative line of work. Labor and management income is calculated by subtracting a charge for the use of owner(s)’ equity capital from net farm income. The charge for owner’s capital is assumed to be five percent of the average equity the owner has contributed to the farm business during the year. For business with multiple operators, the labor and management income is divided by the number of operators to determine the labor and management income per operator.

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{Net Farm Income} \\
 - & \text{Unpaid family labor} \\
 - & \text{Cost of average equity invested in the business} \\
 = & \text{Labor and Management Income} \\
 \div & \text{Number of operators} \\
 = & \text{Labor and Management Income Per Operator}
 \end{aligned}$$

Rate of return on farm assets can be thought of as the average interest rate being earned on all capital (owner[s]’ and creditor’s) invested in the business. To determine return on farm assets a value is assigned to the unpaid labor and management contributed to the business. This measure is calculated starting with net farm income. Interest expense (cost of debt capital) is added to net farm income and a

charge for unpaid labor and management is subtracted to determine the return to assets. Return to assets is then divided by the average total assets used in the business during the year.

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{Net Farm Income} \\
 + & \text{Interest expense} \\
 - & \text{Value of unpaid labor and management} \\
 = & \text{Return on farm assets} \\
 \div & \text{Average farm assets} \\
 = & \text{Rate of return on farm assets}
 \end{aligned}$$

Rate of return on equity capital represents the rate of return to the farm owner(s)’ money invested in the business. Return on equity is calculated by subtracting the value of unpaid family labor and owner(s)’ labor and management from net farm income. Return on equity is divided by average equity invested in the business to determine the rate of return on equity.

$$\begin{aligned}
 & \text{Net Farm Income} \\
 - & \text{Value of unpaid labor and management} \\
 = & \text{Return to equity} \\
 \div & \text{Average equity capital} \\
 = & \text{Rate of return on equity capital}
 \end{aligned}$$

Profitability measures provide farm owners with a way of comparing their return from the farm business to alternative uses of their labor and management talents and equity capital invested in the business. Each owner has different personal and business goals. For many, those goals include providing a living for their family, growing their business to allow additional family members to earn a living from the business and having adequate savings to live comfortably when they retire or want to slow down a bit in their senior years. Setting goals for these profitability measures and evaluating the ability of the business to achieve these goals can help farm managers to achieve their personal and business goals.

Extension farm business management specialists, Joan Petzen and John Hanchar can assist farm managers with evaluating the financial performance of their businesses. If you would like assistance evaluating the profitability of your farm business please contact either Joan or John.

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# An Innovative Approach to Cow Cooling

By: Jackson Wright

As we approach the warmer months of the year, providing adequate heat abatement should be a primary concern for many dairy producers. Holstein Friesians are best suited to colder climates and temperatures greater than 72°F can result in heat stress leading to lower milk production, rumen acidosis, poor reproduction, lameness/laminitis, decreased immune function, mastitis, and transition cow disease. Most notably during the summer months, milk production may decrease by as much as 50 percent and reproductive proficiency of lactating dairy cows is greatly diminished.

Currently, the primary methodologies for heat abatement on dairy operations are the combination of shade, fans, and sprinklers. Sprinklers provide the most effective method for cow cooling as they facilitate evaporative cooling, however many have raised concerns over excessive water usage on agricultural operations. One way to address these concerns while still providing adequate heat abatement measures would be to look to the south. In Texas droughts are common and as a result rainwater collection systems are widely used to maximize the use of this precious resource. Utilizing rainwater as the primary water source for cow cooling systems would offer many benefits as collecting rainwater would reduce demand on utilities during peak summer usage. After the initial installation, water collected would be free to the dairy producer reducing utility bills; utilizing rainwater would reduce pressure on many manure management systems; and because rainwater provides water with zero hardness, this approach would eliminate scale build up on sprinkler heads.



*Polypropylene Reservoir*

In addition, dairy operations inherently have a large roof surface area in order to provide adequate housing to their cows. Moreover, the northeast has relatively consistent rainfall throughout the summer months with western New York averaging 3.34 inches of rain in June, 3.47 inches of rain in July, and 3.38 inches of rain in August. According to the Texas Manual on Rainwater Harvesting, approximately 0.62 gallons per square foot per inch of rainfall can be collected through rainwater collection systems. Conservatively, a dairy operation with 25,000 square feet of roof surface area with 3.3 inches of rainfall

would capture 51,150 gallons of rainwater per month. For feed line sprinkler applications, assuming 500 feet of bunk space with sprinkler heads placed every 8 feet using a 0.5 gallon of water per minute, running 12 hours each day and cycling ON for 1 minute at 15 minutes intervals, the cow cooling system would require 1,512 gallons of water per

day, or 45,360 gallons per month. Similarly, the holding area would be of interest as this area is the most hostile environment on the farm in relation to heat stress. For holding area sprinkler applications, assuming the holding area that is 20' by 100' with a sprinkler system delivering 1 gallon per 150 square feet per minute, running 12 hours each day and cycling ON for 1 minute at 6 minute intervals would require 1442 gallons of water per day, or 43,260 gallons per month. Both applications are below the anticipated amount of collected rainwater, suggesting that utilizing rainwater as the primary water source for cow cooling systems is feasible in the Northeast during the summer months.

Finally, because the water being harvested is used for cow cooling, water quality is not a primary concern.

Therefore for this application a rainwater collection system can be installed relatively cheaply. To harvest rainwater for cow cooling would require reliable gutters that minimize overflow and water loss. A first flush diverter would minimize contamination from the roof surface such as dust, leaves, blooms, twigs, insect bodies, animal feces, pesticides and other airborne residues. A roof washer connecting the gutters to the storage tank would filter leaves and other small debris and minimize mosquito breeding. A polypropylene storage tank will also be needed, and that must be green or black to prevent algae growth, and finally, a water pump. These systems would be most beneficial to producers on municipal water supply or who struggle with hard water or low water supply during the summer months.

If you interested in this application or for more information please contact Jackson Wright at 585.746.3016.

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2002 Volvo VHD428200, 345 HP Volvo VED12 diesel,  
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**Long WB Heavy Spec**

2000 Mack RD688S; E-Z Mack Eng. 460 HP;  
 344,991 Miles; Diesel; 8LL; Eng. Brake; Camel-  
 back Susp.; 22.5 Tires; 285" WB; T/A; 20,000#  
 FA; 46,000# RA; Stk. #3945 - \$36,900



**Heavy Spec Long WB**

1997 Peterbilt 357; C10 CAT 300 HP; 172,300  
 Miles; Diesel; 8LL; Chalmers Susp.; 22.5 Tires;  
 All Steel Wheels; 235" WB; T/A; 20,000# FA;  
 46,000# RA; Stk. #3246 - \$20,900



**Heavy Spec Low Miles**

2006 Kenworth W900L; C15 CAT 475 HP; 165K Miles; 13-Spd.  
 DD; Eng. Brake; Air Ride Susp.; 3.91 Ratio; All Alum. Whls.; 232"  
 WB; T/A; 13,200# FA; 46K RA; FULL LOCKERS; Southern Truck  
 w/No Rust!! Heavy Spec. Low, Low Miles; Stk. #3888 - \$34,900



**20K Front 46K Rear**

2009 Peterbilt 367; C15 CAT 475 HP; 364,365 Miles;  
 8LL; Eng. Brake; Air Trac Susp.; 3.70 Ratio; All Alum.  
 Whls.; T/A; 20K FA; 46K RA; FULL LOCKERS;  
 Stk. #3874 - CALL



**(2) To Lsa Winches**

1998 Freightliner FLC1206AT; 435 HP Cummins N14 Diesel,  
 406,045 Miles; 10-Spd. 6V; Eng. Brake, Air Ride Susp.; 24.5  
 Tires; Alum./Steel Wheels; 218" WB; Tandem Axle; 12K FA; 38K  
 RA; Good Running RIG-UP Truck w/Tandem 45,000# Tulsa  
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 max Susp.; 4.30 Ratio; 22.5 Tires; Alum. Wheels; 244" WB;  
 T/A; 14,600# FA; 46,000# RA; Stk. #3636 - \$52,500



**High HP 46 Rears 354K**

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 Detroit Eng. 515 HP; 354,000 Miles; Diesel; 15-Spd;  
 Eng. Brake; Air Ride Susp.; 4.10 Ratio; 24.5 Tires;  
 Polished Alum. Wheels; 193" WB; T/A; 14,000# FA;  
 46,000# RA; Stk. #3571 - \$49,500



**High HP 46 Rears**

1999 International 9400; N14 Cummins Eng. 460 HP;  
 706,503 Miles; Diesel; 10-Spd.; Eng. Brake; Air Ride  
 Susp.; 22.5 Tires; Alum./Steel Wheels; 206" WB; T/A;  
 14,000# FA; 46,000# Rear; Stk. #3543 - \$27,900



**Hard To Find 20 Steel**

1999 Mack RD688S; E7 Mack Eng. 400 HP; 311,824  
 Miles; Diesel; 18-Spd.; Camelback Susp.; 20' Length; 22.5  
 Tires; Alum./Wheels; 292" WB; 5th Axle; 20,000#  
 FA; 46,000# RA; Steel Composition; Drive Side; Left  
 Hand Drive; Stk. #3983 - \$39,900



**18' Aluminum Box**

1998 Mack RD688S; E7 Mack Eng. 350 HP; 667,157  
 Miles; Diesel; 8LL; Camelback Susp.; 18' Length; 22.5  
 Tires; Alum. Wheels; 246" WB; Quad Axle; 20,000# FA;  
 46,000# RA; Alum. Composition; Drive Side; Left Hand  
 Drive; Stk. #3980 - \$39,900



**273K Miles 16' Alum.**

2006 Sterling LT9522; 14L Detroit Eng. 515 HP; 273,552  
 Miles; Diesel; 8LL; Eng. Brake; Haulmax Susp.; 16' Length;  
 24.5 Tires; Alum./Steel Wheels; 209" WB; Tri-Axle; 20,000#  
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**Low Mile Knuckleboom**

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 Axle; 46,000# RA; 16,700# FA; Stk. #3916 - \$42,900



**Heavy Spec Daycab**

2002 Kenworth T800; C12 CAT 445 HP; Diesel; 10-Spd.,  
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 Alum, T/A, 13,280# FA, 46,000# RA, 456,597 Miles,  
 Very Clean; Stk. #3616 - \$35,900



**Heavy Spec Long Boom**

2000 Sterling LT9513; 300 HP CAT 3306 Diesel; 177,269  
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 All Steel Wheels; 278" WB; Tri-Axle; 18,000# FA; 46,000#  
 RA; 25' Length; Stk. #3313 - \$38,500



**Heavy Duty Winch Truck**

1994 Aurbear ADL64FT, N14 Cummins Eng. 410 HP; 25,043 Miles;  
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 RA; Stk. #3732 - \$13,800



**Big HP Long Heavy Spec**

1998 Volvo ADL640T; 470 HP Detroit 12.7L Diesel; 256,000  
 Miles; 18-Spd.; Engine Brake; Hendrickson Spring Susp.; 4.33  
 Ratio; 22.5 Tires; Spoke Wheels; 266" WB; Tri-Axle; 20,000#  
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# FDA Moves Forward on Antibiotic Restrictions

By: Jerry Bertoldo

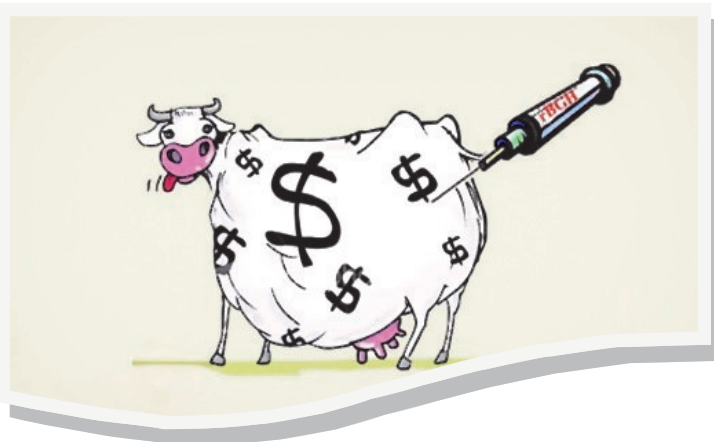
The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) announced on April 5, 2012 that the order of prohibition of cephalosporins originally published on January 6, 2012 is now effective.

The order prohibits certain uses of the cephalosporin class of antimicrobial drugs in cattle, swine, chickens and turkeys. This includes the trade name products Naxcel, Excenel and Excede. According to the FDA it is taking this action to preserve the effectiveness of cephalosporin drugs for treating disease in humans. Prohibiting these uses is intended to reduce the risk of cephalosporin resistance in certain bacterial pathogens. This order excludes cephapirin, the first generation cephalosporin used in the intramammary preparations Cefa-Lak®/Today® and Cefi-Dri® / Tomorrow®). First generation cephalosporins are no longer manufactured for human use in the U.S. so resistance to these does not present a human health risk.

In its order, FDA is prohibiting what are called “extralabel” or unapproved uses of cephalosporins in cattle, swine, chickens and turkeys, the so-called major species of food-producing animals. This order is similar in some regards to the restrictions placed on the antibiotic Baytril®. Specifically, the prohibited uses include:

- \* using cephalosporin drugs at unapproved dose levels, frequencies, durations, or routes of administration;
- \* using cephalosporin drugs in cattle, swine, chickens or turkeys that are not approved for use in that species (e.g., cephalosporin drugs intended for humans or companion animals)
- \* using cephalosporin drugs for disease prevention.

In addition, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration announced on April 11, 2012 that it is “taking three steps to protect public health and promote the judicious use of medically important antibiotics in food-producing animals. Based on a consideration of relevant reports and scientific data, FDA is proposing a voluntary initiative to phase in certain changes to



how medically important antimicrobial drugs are labeled and used in food-producing animals.” FDA claims that it is taking this action to help preserve the effectiveness of medically important antimicrobials for treating disease in humans.

The FDA has publishing three documents in the Federal Register.

- \* A final guidance for industry, *The Judicious Use of Medically Important Antimicrobial Drugs in Food-Producing Animals*, that recommends phasing out the agricultural production use of medically important drugs and phasing in veterinary oversight of therapeutic uses of these drugs. (*This refers to feed additive antibiotics such as tetracycline, but excludes products such as ionophores that have no human use.*)
- \* A draft guidance, open for public comment, which will assist drug companies in voluntarily removing production uses of antibiotics from their FDA-approved product labels; adding,



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where appropriate, scientifically-supported disease prevention, control, and treatment uses; and changing the marketing status to include veterinary oversight.

- \* A draft proposed Veterinary Feed Directive (VFD) regulation, open for public comment, that outlines ways that veterinarians can authorize the use of certain animal drugs in feed, which is important to make the needed veterinary oversight feasible and efficient. *(Presently, veterinarians do not have any authority to prescribe feed additive products in an extralabel manner.)*

“USDA worked with the FDA to ensure that the voices of livestock producers across the country were taken into account,” said Dr. John Clifford, USDA Chief Veterinary Medical Officer, “and we will continue to collaborate with the FDA, the American Veterinary Medical Association and livestock groups to ensure that the appropriate services are available to help make this transition.”

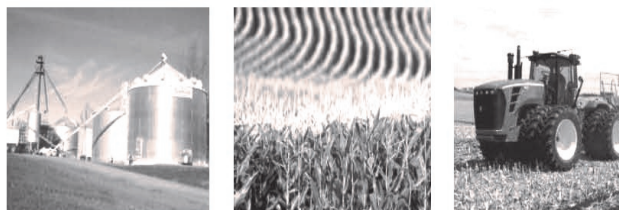
A ban on the use of antibiotics for growth promotion and disease prevention has long been discussed. A VFD has been desired by veterinarians for a long time, but in this scenario will certainly put more responsibilities on the profession if this proposal indeed becomes an order from the FDA.

The dairy industry will not see the impact of feed additive antibiotics as the poultry, swine & beef folks will however, this will change the landscape for medicated milk replacers and top dressed “crumbles” used in young stock programs.

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## Ask Extension...

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### How do I dispose of my on-farm sharps?

By: Nancy Glazier

Sharps disposal, needles and scalpels, can be a large or small farm issue. They should not be disposed of in the trash or dumpster, due to the risk of injuring or causing illness to those workers who handle the trash. This includes loose or container disposal. After medical waste washed up on East Coast beaches Congress took the initiative to enact legislation. The Medical Waste Tracking Act of 1988 defines medical waste as "any solid waste that is generated in the diagnosis, treatment, or immunization of human beings or animals, in research pertaining thereto, or in the production or testing of biologicals." This includes sharps.

#### Collection

The first step in the disposal process is finding a collection container. Commercial sharps disposal containers are available, though they do not need to be purchased. A question to ask yourself, is how many needles are used on-farm, to size your container. An empty laundry detergent, bleach or fabric softener jug would work, as well as a five-gallon pail with a lid. The container should not be breakable or easily punctured, should be sturdy and

stay upright so nothing falls out. To protect others on the farm, the container should be labeled, "CONTAINS SHARPS". Keep away from children! Don't use food (juice) containers as an added safety factor. To save space, syringes may be disposed of separately. Take care not to stick yourself removing the needle from the syringe. A pair of pliers works to do this.

#### Disposal

When the sharps container gets nearly full, it is time to dispose of it. There are some options; some are free while others are fee based. Free ones first.

Sharps are sharps, whether for human or veterinary use. NYS Department of Health has a directory of locations that offer free sharps disposal. Hospitals, nursing homes, some pharmacies are listed by county. This program was established to curtail the reuse of needles to prevent the spread of AIDS. Take advantage of the free service. Here's the link: [http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/harm\\_reduction/needles\\_syringes/sharps/docs/alternate\\_sites.pdf](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/aids/harm_reduction/needles_syringes/sharps/docs/alternate_sites.pdf). This directory was updated February 2012.

NYSDEC website lists municipalities that hold Household Hazardous Waste Collection Programs. These may be annual events; a few are available year-round by appointment. Here's the web listing: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/8780.html>. These are usually free.

Many veterinary clinics for a fee will collect and dispose of sharps. Check with your vet to see if they offer this service.

Some programs are available where a container is purchased and for a fee the container is mailed back for disposal. Follow the manufacturer's instructions for this service. One example is: <http://www.sharpsdisposal.com/>.

One last option here may be to purchase a needle destruction device. Search for that phrase and check out those options.

And as always, if you don't have internet access or if you have questions regarding any of this, give me a call 585-315-7746.

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# Agricultura

*And You Thought Two Languages Were Confusing!*

By: Libby Gaige

If there are Hispanic employees on your farm, chances are that you've come across more than one individual who speaks Spanish as his or her *second* language. Although Spanish is now the official language of Mexico and all Central American countries, numerous indigenous languages were spoken by the native peoples before Spanish was introduced in the early 1500s. With time Spanish was adopted as the common language, but many indigenous languages have survived over the centuries.

To recognize just how complex the situation is, you have to appreciate the number of indigenous languages that are still spoken. In Guatemala (which is roughly equal in size to Tennessee), 23 indigenous languages are spoken today. In Mexico 63 still exist. While the majority of Mexicans (97%) and Guatemalans (93%) do speak Spanish, many people who are raised in indigenous communities don't learn Spanish until they attend school. Most indigenous languages are completely unique and have nothing in common with each other; learning Q'eqchi' won't help you to understand a word of Poqomam!

In general, the upper classes in both Mexico and Guatemala are composed of lighter skinned people of Spanish or mixed Spanish-indigenous heritage, while the lower classes are composed of darker skinned people of predominantly indigenous heritage. This social distribution inherently lends itself to discrimination. The attitudes of the governments in both Guatemala and Mexico have also helped to foster a culture of discrimination towards indigenous people. An extreme example of this is the genocide carried

out by the Guatemalan government during the civil war (1960-1996) in which 200,000 people (mostly indigenous) were killed.

**So what does this mean for your dairy?** If your Hispanic employees come from a variety of backgrounds, there may be some additional communication difficulties for those who don't speak Spanish well. Finding a translator who speaks the specific indigenous language of your employee(s) is not a practical solution because there are simply too many languages. Providing SOPs not only in Spanish, but also with pictures, giving hands-on training and routinely monitoring employee performance are strategies that can help you to ensure that these employees understand their duties on the farm.

While discrimination does not always occur, it is definitely something to be aware of when observing the interactions between Hispanic employees. Two Mexican employees may look very similar to an American employer, and yet they may actually come from very different cultural backgrounds. (By the same token, a Mexican employee probably wouldn't know the difference between a herdsman of German heritage and a feeder of Polish heritage!)

You may not be able to communicate with some employees in their first language, but you're more likely to get through to them using their second language than their third! Please feel free to contact me if you're interested in dairy skills training or employee management services for your Spanish-speaking employees.

Have questions or comments? What would you like to see in [Agricultura](#)? Libby Gaige can be reached at [geg24@cornell.edu](mailto:g24@cornell.edu) or 607-793-4847.



*This map illustrates the distribution of indigenous languages in Guatemala, which is roughly equal in size to Tennessee. Castilian (purple) represents Spanish.*

## BQA in a Day Scheduled in Wyoming County

Beef Quality Assurance is a national program that provides training to beef cattle producers in food safety, proper cattle handling techniques, handling of animal health products, injection sites, and record keeping. The goal of this program is to maximize consumer confidence and acceptance of beef by focusing the producer's attention to daily production practices that influence the safety, wholesomeness, and quality of beef and beef products. Many beef cattle buyers, feeders, packers, and retail outlets are requiring that the beef they purchase be produced by BQA certified cattle producers. Also, most "added value" sale opportunities for feeder and stocker cattle require BQA certification.

The NWNY Team is planning a BQA in a Day training on June 16. Registration for the workshop begins at 9:30 at New Beginnings Fellowship Church, 4377 Rt. 78, Hermitage. The classroom portion of the training will begin at 10 am; time will be available for the test. After lunch the group will relocate to a farm for the chute side portion of the training. The event should wrap up by 2:30 pm.

Cost for the training is \$20 which includes a BQA manual; additional family/farm members are \$10. Lunch is included in the registration fee. Registration is required. Space is limited so register early!

By attending the day's training, a beef producer will be level 1 certified. By having a signed Veterinarian Client/Patient Relationship (VCPR) form, a producer will be certified at level 2. He or she will have the opportunity to purchase a farm sign verifying the BQA certification. To register for the event, send a check payable to CCE and mail to Cathy Wallace, 420 E. Main St, Batavia, NY 14020, or call her at 585.343.3040 x138. For questions, please call Nancy Glazier at 585.315.7746. The Beef Quality Assurance Program is supported by The Beef Checkoff.

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### Nitrogen Miser

*At a cost of pennies per pound, AGROTAIN® nitrogen stabilizer is both cost- and yield-effective*

By Harold Brecht



Harold Brecht

From target-specific herbicides to hybrids with bioengineered traits to yield mapping, corn production has become more high-tech than ever. But sometimes, the best tool a grower can use is an old-fashioned pencil.

Every producer knows it's getting more expensive just to get a crop in the ground. Most growers are willing to spend money to make money — but every crop input must show a positive return on investment. Some inputs, such as nitrogen, are essential to making a crop and therefore, non-negotiable. Others, such as AGROTAIN® nitrogen stabilizer, are optional. That's when it's time to put the pencil to paper to determine if these inputs not only pay for themselves but actually lead to increased yields and profits.

AGROTAIN® stabilizer added to urea or liquid nitrogen, at a cost of just pennies per pound of N, prevents nitrogen loss into the air, known as volatility, that can reach as high as 30 percent. Making a rescue treatment is expensive, but if lost nitrogen is not replaced, yields could suffer. In either case, growers lose money. By contrast, the average cost for AGROTAIN® stabilizer on urea is around 5-6 cents per pound of applied nitrogen. This varies by region.

But even at such a low cost, is AGROTAIN® stabilizer worth the investment? According to research, the average ROI (return on investment) over the past several years has been at least \$3 returned to \$1 invested. Plus, because it's mixed and applied directly with

nitrogen, there are no added costs for equipment or extra passes over the field.

Improving nitrogen efficiency, like most other things in farming, comes at a cost. But this cost pays for itself through reduced loss and improved yields. AGROTAIN® stabilizer is not just cost-effective if nitrogen is a limiting factor. It can be yield effective too.

If you have a question for the Nitrogen Miser or would like to get more information about Stabilized Nitrogen Technology, don't hesitate to contact me at [harold.brecht@kochind.com](mailto:harold.brecht@kochind.com) or 570-245-8675.

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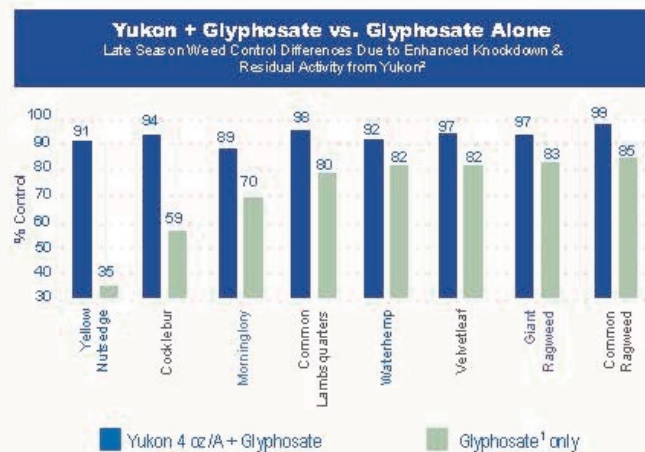
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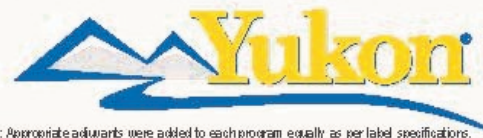
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Cover photo courtesy of Dr. Larry Steckel, University of Tennessee, Plant Sciences. 1. Glyphosate rate in all programs was 0.75 lb/ae/A. Note: Appropriate adjuvants were added to each program equally as per label specifications. 2. Data collected from 31 field trials conducted by 15 Mid-Western land-grant universities. Data are the average across all ratings taken 30 days or more after application where statistical differences between treatments were noted for a given weed species. Yukon® is a registered trademark of Nissan Chemical Industries, LTD. EPA Reg No 81880-6-10163. Always read and follow label directions. AD12-Yukon\_ag-focus

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# May Corn Topics

By: Mike Stanyard

What a crazy spring. As I sit here at my computer on April 16, it is 85 degrees. It is warmer in Rochester, NY than it is in Orlando, FL! Many farmers have begun to plant some small acreages of corn while many more are ready to pull the trigger at the end of the week. Things are happening early and when it all starts it is going to be fast and furious. It is tough to write a timely article for May when we are a couple of weeks ahead of schedule.

At this time of year I try to look at what is going on in the Midwest to get a better idea of what could be coming our way. This can range from possible planting condition hardships to potential pest problems. Here are a couple of topics we may want to keep an eye on.

## *Corn Planting Depth and Chilling Injury*

Planting conditions are pretty good for mid- April. It might be a little dry in areas but ground is working up nicely. Most future weather outlooks are predicting a dry spring. Our normal planting depth is 1.5 to 2" usually based on moisture levels. We want the corn seeds to all imbibe water, swell and germinate at the same rate so that we have even emergence. Our main goal is to get the plants out of the ground at the same time. If you plant at 1.5 inches and have uneven moisture levels across a field and it is dry, the wetter areas could emerge ahead of the rest. You would be safer to plant deeper. Recommendations across much of the Midwest was to plant at 2 inches or deeper in April due to the dry conditions.

Chilling injury is another possible problem with early corn planting. I know there was some corn planted in the region at the end of March. I have seen problems in the past where we have cold weather as corn is imbibing moisture and swelling. Maladies can range from seed that does not germinate to plants leafing out underground. Dave Nielsen from Purdue has a really good article on the physiology of chilling injury and possible effects down the road to maturity (<http://www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/corn/news/articles.12/EarlyCornColdWthr.html>).

## *Black Cutworm*

In 2011, there were many fields that had economic damage from black cutworms. We knew these guys could come up earlier from the south this year and it looks like they did in a big way. The Midwest has been recording huge numbers of adult moths that came up on storm fronts in late March. I guarantee many of those moths have made it to NY and now they have moved to the top of the most-wanted list for corn pests. The early weed growth of winter annuals such as chickweed, purple dead nettle and mustard species has been a perfect breeding ground for these moths. No-tillers should be very careful this year about planting shortly after burndown. Let the weeds completely die before planting. Hopefully, the larvae move off or die from starvation. Scouting is still the best way to determine if economic populations are present and following with an insecticide spray is still the most reliable method of management.

## *Burndown: 2,4-D versus Dicamba*

The white, purple, and yellow flowers of chickweed, purple dead nettle and dandelion have been visible for weeks now. The growth regulator herbicides have been a staple in burndown programs whether tank-mixed or alone. I get a lot of questions on which is better on certain weeds and how long do I have to wait before I plant? Aaron Hager of the University of Illinois gives a nice review at <http://bulletin.ipm.illinois.edu/article.php?id=1606>. Here's a summary.

2,4-D ester formulation is preferred: lower water solubility and penetrates waxy leaf surfaces better

Dicamba provides more control of chickweed, henbit; 2,4-D is better on mustard species. Both are comparable in control of dandelion.

Pay careful attention to label statements of any 2,4-D ester and dicamba containing products used before crop planting. Intervals between application and planting can vary from 0 to 7 days for corn.

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- 16 BQA in a Day Workshop, 9:30 a.m., New Beginnings Fellowship Church, 4377 Route 78, Hermitage, Cost: \$20 includes a BQA manual, additional family/farm members: \$10, Registration: Cathy Wallace, 585.343.3040 x138 or cfw6@cornell.edu

***July, 2012***

- 10-14 Yates County Fair, Old Route 14A, Penn Yan, Contact: 315.536.3830
- 11-15 Monroe County Fair, 2695 E. Henrietta Road, Henrietta, Contact: 585.334.4000
- 16-21 Seneca County Fair, 100 Swift Road (Corner of Swift & North Road), Waterloo, Contact: 315.539.9140
- 17-21 Genesee County Fair, 5056 E. Main Street, Batavia, Contact: 585.344.2424
- 17-21 Hemlock Fair, 7370 Water Street, Hemlock, Contact: 585.367.3370
- 24-28 Ontario County Fair, 2820 County Road #47, Canandaigua, Contact: 585.747.9698