Cornell University Cooperative Extension

North Country Regional Ag Team's
Ear to the Ground

Field Crops, Forages and Soils Updates for NNY ***7 June 2017***

- NNY Weather Summary for April 1 through May 31, 2017. Weather has been cool and wet all over NNY, but some areas have been cooler and wetter than others. Precipitation totals for April and May at all 24 locations listed below are above normal. Lake Champlain area totals are closer to normal than St. Lawrence and Jefferson locations. Average rainfall so far this growing season is about 48% more than typical, resulting from as many as 10 extra rainy days compared with normal for this 2-month period. Base-50 GDD accumulations are below normal for most sites, but Malone, Peru and Whallonsburg have received above normal heat units so far this growing season. On average, the North Country is about 8% below normal GDD to date.

		- - - - - - - Accumulation Since April 1, 2017 - - - - - - -					
		- - - Precipitation, in - - -			- GDD Base 50F -		GDD Base 40F
County	**Town/Village**	**Total**	**DFN**	**Days**	**Total**	**DFN**	**Total**
Clinton	Champlain	8.87	+0.96	33	240	-23	641
	Ellenburg Depot	8.95	+1.62	39	201	-25	563
	Beekmantown	7.67	+0.83	33	262	-6	666
	Peru	7.13	+1.02	33	276	+12	691
Essex	Whallonsburg	8.43	+1.33	32	282	-+14	714
	Ticonderoga	8.43	+0.95	32	282	-14	714
Franklin	Bombay	10.78	+3.73	34	245	-12	632
	Malone	9.86	+2.77	37	237	+3	623
	Chateaugay	12.01	+4.45	40	220	-17	587
Jefferson	Rodman	11.03	+3.47	32	249	-15	655
	Cape Vincent	9.91	+3.07	33	188	-7	570
	Evans Mills	11.98	+4.74	35	265	-31	688
	Redwood	13.08	+4.81	36	228	-33	623
	Antwerp	11.11	+3.91	33	227	-25	623
Lewis	Talcottville	11.08	+3.33	34	185	-26	558
	Martinsburg	10.54	+3.92	33	223	-30	620
	Carthage	11.02	+3.83	35	241	-19	642
St. Lawrence	Gouverneur	12.27	+4.68	37	209	-22	598
	Hammond	12.27	+4.65	37	209	-22	598
	Ogdensburg	13.53	+5.88	39	208	-28	596
	Canton	12.38	+4.93	36	231	-28	615
	Madrid	12.61	+5.64	35	225	-24	606
	North Lawrence	11.43	+3.84	35	245	-24	636
	Louisville	12.68	+5.36	35	225	-14	607
Average		**10.79**	**3.49**	**35**	**233**	**-19**	**628**

* Precipitation in inches, temperature in Fahrenheit, DFN = difference from 15-year average, Days = days with precipitation. Calculated from ACIS NRCC 2.5-mile gridded datasets.

- First-cutting hay and haylage will be mostly heifer- and dry cow-quality feed. Hay harvest is also well behind schedule and, as a result, grass quality is declining steadily. Grass and mixed fields monitored in our First-Cutting Alfalfa Height project are 90-100% past peak quality. Quality of pure alfalfa stands is still good as most plants are developing buds and no blooms are yet present. Weekly reports on alfalfa height in NNY can be found here.

Ruts left in a wet hayfield in Spring 2017. Photo by Joe Lawrence.

When the weather permits mowing, prioritize alfalfa fields where you can still get optimum quality. If fields are already past their prime when it is feasible to harvest them, move them to the bottom of the list and return to them as time permits. Harvest some good quality forage if you can, then go back to the past-prime fields as time allows. With the likelihood you may have some late cut, low quality first cutting, consider separate storage options for this crop so you have the option to use it for non-lactating animals.

- Corn planting is well behind schedule - May has started out wet which has substantially delayed corn planting. USDA-NASS estimates that 47% of NYS corn has been planted, which is well below last year's 84% as of June 4, which was right about average. Here in NNY, farms range from nearly finished to barely started, depending on soil types and weather patterns. Thought it is tempting to rush, but be patient and wait for good soil conditions. Planting into too-wet soils can result in sidewall compaction in the furrow, surface compaction, poor seed-to-soil contact, which leads to inconsistent germination and restricted root growth throughout the season

Consider switching full season corn hybrids for shorter day varieties if possible. We recommend planting your preferred full season hybrids up to about May 25th. After May 25th start dialing back your relative maturities 5 days for each week that goes by.

Newly emerged corn seedlings. June 5, 2017. Photo by Kitty O'Neil.

It's not too late to plant corn to meet forage needs. It is not yet time to abandon corn planting in favor of annual warm season grasses. Compared to sorghum-sudangrass, millets, cereals and sorghum, corn is still the best yielding option into July. Rather than taking on the expense and risks of planting a crop that is new or less familiar, consider fertilizing all your grass and corn fields well, to reach optimal yields, maximizing returns on what is already planted.

- Scout emerging and seedling corn for Black Cutworm. Extension specialists, farmers and consultants across NYS have reported black cutworm affecting corn fields this spring. Some BCW injury has risen to economically important levels. Look for corn plants that are wilted or cut off at the ground, carefully dig up the soil around the plant to find the BCW. BCW are nocturnal and do their damage during the night. During the day they hide in the soil. Threshold to justify spraying is 5% of plants cut off or missing due to BCW. Mike Stanyard, CCE NWNY Field Crops Specialist, has a video on how to scout for BCW here. Appropriate insecticides for BCW infestations above threshold are here.

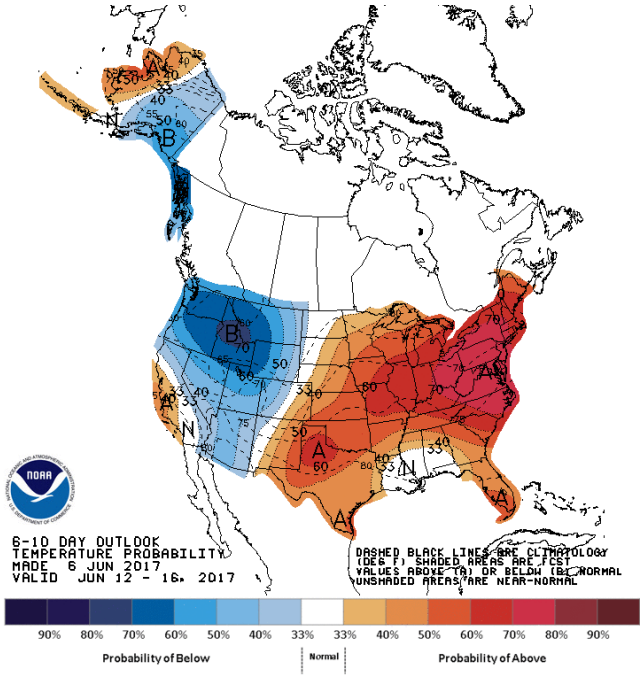
- Scout grass hayfields and small grains for Armyworm. Common or True Armyworms have been found in NNY this spring, though so far, they've been small and numbers have been below threshold. Potential exists for this pest to cause problems, however, as their early arrival this spring will permit multiple generations this season. Armyworm may be found in grass or mixed hayfields, small grains or corn. Pay particular attention to corn seedlings in fields where a small grain cover crop was terminated. The AW may move from the terminated cover crop to the young corn seedlings and there is potential to do significant, yield-reducing damage. In corn, AW will hide down inside the leaf whorls where it's shady and moist. Spraying may be economical if AW are present on 10 percent or more of plants. Control can be challenging if caterpillars are greater than one-inch long.

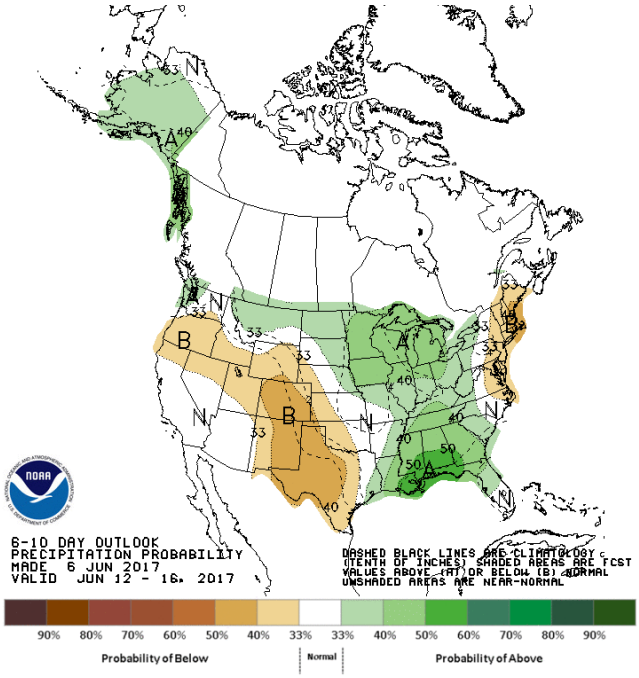
Small True Armyworm collected from a grass hayfield in Spring 2017. Photo by Mike Hunter.

To scout for AW in hay fields, use a 15" sweep net in the early evening or along shady edges during the day – again, they'll avoid sunshine during the day. If you find more than an average of 2-3 armyworms per sweep, the field is a candidate for spraying. If the armyworms are over this threshold, small and field will be mowed within a few days, spraying may not be needed. Additional info about AW is here. Appropriate insecticides for armyworm infestations above threshold are here.

- Delayed preemergence herbicide applications in conventional corn will be tricky. Cool, wet conditions have delayed many intended pre-emergence herbicide applications in conventional corn. With drier and warmer weather in the short term forecast, it appears that sprayers will be able to return to the field soon. It is very important to carefully consider your herbicide choices and make necessary adjustments if the corn, and weeds, are both up at the time of application. With adequate rainfall, pre-emergence herbicides can provide excellent weed control; however, once the weeds have emerged, they will generally need some additional product added to the tank mix. The additional product could be another herbicide or just an adjuvant, such as non-ionic surfactant (NIS) or crop oil concentrate (COC). Specific recommendations for early post-emergence applications of preemergence herbicides for different conventional corn scenarios are detailed in a slide set here.

- Mid-June is predicted to be warmer than average with roughly normal precipitation. See 2 maps below – 6-10 day temperature outlook is on the left and the 6-10 day precipitation prediction is on the right. Warm temperatures are forecast for the Eastern US. Warm weather in June will mean we stand a good chance of overcoming our early spring GDD deficit. Precipitation in NNY may be wetter than average along the St. Lawrence Seaway and drier than normal in the Champlain Valley with the middle sections closer to typical.





Additional resources:

1. Cornell Cooperative Extension's North Country Regional Ag Team Web Resources
2. New York Integrated Pest Management (NYSIPM) Web Resources
3. Weekly Crop Progress & Condition Report. 2017. New York USDA-NASS.
4. Northeast Regional Climate Center

For more information about field crop and soil management, contact your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office or NNY Cornell University Cooperative Extension Regional Field Crops and Soils Specialists, Mike Hunter and Kitty O'Neil.

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Our Mission

"The North Country Regional Ag Team aims to improve the productivity and viability of agricultural industries, people and communities in Jefferson, Lewis, St. Lawrence, Franklin, Clinton and Essex Counties by promoting productive, safe, economically and environmentally sustainable management practices and by providing assistance to industry, government, and other agencies in evaluating the impact of public policies affecting the industry."