



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Northwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

CROP ALERT

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Northern Corn Leaf Blight and Gray Leaf Spot in Corn

A number of farms in northwestern NY are spraying fungicides on corn silage fields that have mild to moderate infections of northern corn leaf blight (*Figure 1*) and gray leaf spot. These fields have susceptible varieties (mostly BMR), are in low lying areas (near the Genesee river and in valleys in Wyoming County), in some cases suffered hail damage (Ontario County), and wet weather is still ahead of us for now. Reduced tillage, 3rd+ year corn, and other crop stress can all increase the chances of disease development. For a current list of fungicides recommended check out this link for [corn](#) diseases authored by Gary Bergstrom of Cornell University.

Figure 1: Northern Corn Leaf Blight



Source: Bill Verbeten

However not every acre of corn should be sprayed with fungicides. For most farmers it will be a \$30-40/acre investment and frankly it doesn't pay on every acre every year. At current corn prices (<\$4.00/bu) and application costs it will take [10-12 bushels](#) of a yield increase in corn grain or close to 2 tons of corn silage (~35%DM) to recoup the fungicide costs. **Make sure you find the early stages of the disease in the field prior to spraying!** Many of the crop consultants are doing an excellent job of scouting and helping their farmers make the call on which fields will be worth spraying (if any) on western NY farms.

Summer Haylage Seedings and Planting Cover Crops

With August comes the beginning of summer seeding of haylage and cover crops. When your fields dry out and you start to plant remember to kill any small grain seed that may germinate through the month of August. Many haylage fields end up with wheat and other small grains competing with the alfalfa if not properly controlled. Tillage and post-emergence applications of the herbicide [Poast Plus](#) (to pure alfalfa stands and not grass mixtures) are generally more successful than an application of glyphosate prior to alfalfa seeding (more

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wheat usually germinates after burndown). Summer seeding of alfalfa should not take place after early September and will have more success in August.

Prior to seeding a cover crop go back and review your herbicide program for this year's crop. Some modes of action will carryover and reduce cover crop establishment. While the heavy rains in recent weeks may reduce the carryover risk of some more soluble herbicides and tillage may dilute the carryover effect, remember the label is the law. For a quick reference check out this [table from Penn State](#) on our website. Also be sure to check out Mike's article on cover crop planting in the August 2014 issue of Ag Focus or his [August 2013 article](#) online (page 15).

CCE Drone Flights Approved for First Farm

We have finally received FAA approval to start our drone evaluations of fields crops in western NY! The FAA announcement is here (http://www.faa.gov/news/press_releases/news_story.cfm?newsId=16834), the NUAIR testing site announcement is here (<http://nuairalliance.org/news/view/141>), and a short project description is available on our website (<http://nwnyteam.cce.cornell.edu/submission.php?id=434&crumb=currentxxprojects> | 16). It also getting a lot of press in the media.

We are using a UAS purchased from [Precision Hawk](#) (Figure 2). Our goal is to be operating in all 10 counties during the 2015 growing season, but we still need to get FAA approval for most of the farm fields we have lined up. Once we get some flight time under our belts we will have demonstrations throughout the region. We are very excited to start scanning corn, soybeans, wheat, haylage, and other crops using visual, thermal, and multispectral cameras. At the end of the day we want to find ways to use this drone (and others) to improve farmer/consultant profit, make crop scouting tasks easier, add more tools to the precision ag toolbox, and find ways to measure how farmers are being good stewards of their environment. The answers won't come overnight and it probably doesn't make a lot of sense to go out and buy a drone unless you're ok just taking pictures and enjoying flying under the radio control aircraft rules. If you do decide to purchase a small drone, realize that it's not going to increase your bottom line until someone figures out when to take the right pictures, with the right camera, at the right crop growth stage, and ground truth the imagery for calibration. Also do not do something that endangers others' lives, property, or prevents them from doing their jobs. There are a lot of people making this process harder than it needs to be outside of our industry by breaking the rules, don't be like them.

Figure 2: CCE Drone



Source: Precision Hawk