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# Cornell Cooperative Extension

Southwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program

[swnydlfc.cce.cornell.edu](http://swnydlfc.cce.cornell.edu)



**CROPS  
COWS &  
CRITTERS**  
newsletter

A partnership between Cornell University and the CCE Associations of Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie and Steuben Counties.

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.

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Photo by Kelly Bourne

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**Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chautauqua County**  
Subscription included in minimum of \$65 Program Participation fee.  
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partnership with Cornell University and the five county region of  
Erie, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Allegany, and Steuben and their  
CCE Associations. To simplify information, brand names of  
products may be used in this publication. No endorsement is  
intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not named.  
Every effort has been made to provide correct, complete and up-  
to-date pesticide recommendations. Changes occur constantly  
and human errors are still possible. These recommendations are  
not a substitute for pesticide labeling. Please read the label  
before applying pesticides.

By law and purpose, Cooperative Extension is dedicated to  
serving the people on a non-discriminatory basis. Newsletter  
layout and design by Katelyn Walley-Stoll.

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For accommodations or accessibility concerns, please contact our specialists at least one week prior to the scheduled event. If you need information provided in a different format, call 716-640-0522.

# Reflections From The 2025 Operations Managers Conference

By Katie Callero, Dairy Management Specialist, SWNYDLFC



I had the pleasure of attending the 2025 Operations Managers conference entitled “Empowering Managers: Embracing Diversity, Consistency, and Attitude for Success” hosted by Cornell PRO-DAIRY and Northeast Dairy Producers Association at the end of January. There were many

great sessions in both English and Spanish. For those of you who were unable to make it, I wanted to share some of my favorite takeaways from the conference.

## Leading Through Chaos – Erik Therwanger, Think GREAT

As anyone who has worked on a farm can attest to, there are usually seasons of chaos. Erik Therwanger shared his insights on how farmers can best lead through the chaos. He shared 5 key objectives to focus on amid chaos: be the beacon of positivity, promote forward-thinking, create a sense of urgency, increase accountability, and celebrate accomplishments. He emphasized that great leaders go into the challenge, stay true to their vision, and foster a lifestyle of leadership.

## The importance of data quantity, quality, and consistency for effective dairy herd management – Dr. Julio Giordano, Cornell University

Dr. Giordano stressed that without data it is a lot more difficult to properly manage your herd. To get the maximum benefit for your farm, it is important that you also understand the data that you are collecting. Quantity matters, the more observations in your data set the better conclusions you can draw regarding your herd. Quality of data also matters; you need to ensure that there are clear definitions regarding the data collected that is easily standardized across all personnel. Quantity and quality are great but without consistency they are rendered useless. If you consistently collect mastitis data for 3 months but then slack off on reporting cases after that you may wrongly assume that you had a drop in mastitis cases when in reality you had a drop in your consistency of data collection.

## Right people, right place, right tech – Jessica Pralle-Trimner, Miltrim Farms

Jessica Pralle-Trimner, originally from the same farm as Selz-Pralle Aftershock, is co-owner of Miltrim Farms, Wisconsin’s largest robotic milking facility. They milk about 3,000 cows between their robotic facility and parlor facility. The transition to milk 1,800 of those cows on Lely robots was not easy and came with its own challenges. She left farmers with 5 things to remember in your day-to-day operations: listen to the cows, consistency is KEY, challenge the technology, find the right people, and you set the tone.

## Changing the game on teaching strategies for effective cattle handling – Dr. Jennifer Van Os, University of Wisconsin – Madison

Probably one of my favorite takeaways from this conference was shared by Dr. Van Os. Her research group released an app called “Mooving Cows” which is available in the Apple and Android app stores. The goal with this app was to create an educational training resource that is compliant with the FARM program which educates farm workers on best practices when moving cattle. I had the opportunity to play the game, and it does a great job at teaching cattle flight zones and emphasizing positive handling actions.

In summary, the Operations Manager conference was an invaluable time of professional development and networking with farmers and industry specialists. This conference occurs once every two years and I highly recommend attendance for farmers and farm workers looking to take the next step on their path to becoming a great leader on their farm.



Data quality, quantity, and consistency matter for optimal herd management.



Download the Mooving Cows app on your phone for a fun way to learn cattle handling.



# MANAGING MYCOTOXINS

*A Guide for Livestock Producers*

Join us for an informative session with expert insights on nutritional management and cow care for dealing with mycotoxins on your farm.



**REGISTER AT**  
[tinyurl.com/ssntbh3x](https://tinyurl.com/ssntbh3x)



**THURSDAY**  
02.27.2025



**START AT**  
12:00pm

**John Winchell**



**Alltech**

**Dr. Alex Navarro**



**Perry Vet**

**Cornell Cooperative Extension**

**Southwest NY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Program**

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Mismanaging mycotoxins on your farm can have costly consequences. Join our webinar for best management practices.

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Reach out to Katie Callero for any questions at 607-422-6788 or by emailing [krc85@cornell.edu](mailto:krc85@cornell.edu).

# So You Want To Become A Certified Pesticide Applicator?

By Katelyn Miller, Field Crop & Forage Specialist, SWNYDLFC

Have you ever thought about becoming a Certified Pesticide Applicator but felt intimidated by the process? This article walks through the steps to become a Certified Private Pesticide Applicator, including the necessary training, requirements, and testing as required by the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

## HOW DO I KNOW IF I AM ELIGIBLE?

To be eligible to become a certified applicator, there are experience and/or training requirements that need to be fulfilled. First, all applicants must be at least 17 years of age or older. Additionally, those who want to become certified need to meet at least one of these below requirements:

- have at least one year of full-time experience within the last three years in the use of pesticides in the category or categories that the individual is seeking certification; or
- have completed a comprehensive 30-hour training course, approved by the department; or
- have received an associate degree or higher from an accredited college or university which covers the topics listed in Section 325.18, and related categories in Sections 325.16 or 325.17; or
- have one year of verifiable experience as a commercial applicator in a corresponding commercial category; or
- certification in another state that New York has reciprocity (CT, IN, NJ, OH, PA, RI, VT)

You'll notice the "or's" at the end of each bullet. This means that you do not have to meet every requirement. Of the above bulleted options, you only must meet one of these requirements to be eligible to take the exam. If you do not have experience, there are approved 30-hour courses available to take online.

## HOW DO I PREPARE FOR THE EXAM?

Once you know that you meet all the requirements to become an applicator, you must take the exams. This includes a CORE and a category exam, both of which every individual must take to become certified applicator and purchase Restricted Use Pesticides (RUP). The CORE exam is closed book, meaning that you do not have access to the manual while taking the test. It is recommended that you study for 30 hours before taking the exam. For the category exam, pick whichever category best fits what you are regularly spraying. This exam is open book, meaning that you can use the category manual, and any additional pamphlets that have been given to you such as Article 33 & Part 325.

All manuals can be purchased through the Cornell Bookstore or by contacting your local Cornell Cooperative Extension for assistance. The private categories that you can choose from include:

- 21: Field and Forage
- 22: Fruit
- 23: Vegetable
- 24: Greenhouse and Florist
- 25: Nursery, Ornamentals & Turf
- 31: Agricultural Animal Pest Control

Books typically run around \$50. Exam fees are \$100, which allows you to take up to two exams at one time. Examinations are conducted through the regional offices. In Southwest NY, there are two regions; 8 and 9. Region 8 headquarters are in Avon, while Region 9 is in Buffalo.

## HOW DO I MAINTAIN MY LICENSE?

When you pass the exam, there are fees to maintain and recertification credits that must be attained to maintain it. Private licenses renew every 5 years, with a fee of \$25 for those who are the only applicator, and \$5 for those applicators who are the secondary applicators under a farm/business. Within the five years, you need to get 10 recertification credits. 25% of the credits must be specific to the category you are certified in, totaling 2.5 credits. The remaining credits can be specific to your category or CORE. You cannot get all of the credits within one year. If you do not get the required credits within the given time limit, your license will lapse, and you will have to retest to become certified again.

By meeting the eligibility requirements, completing the necessary training, and preparing for the exams, you'll be well on your way to earning your certification. Maintaining your license through recertification credits ensures that you are up to date on best practices and regulations. If you are looking for exam dates, classes with recertification credits, or a specific product, use the NYSPAD website: <https://extapps.dec.ny.gov/nyspad/?0>. If you have any questions, contact your local DEC office.

*This article is for those interested in becoming a Certified Private Pesticide Applicator. To become a Certified Commercial Pesticide Applicator, different requirements apply. All information has been reviewed by the DEC for accuracy. Every effort has been made to provide complete and up-to-date pesticide recommendations. Changes occur constantly and human error are still possible.*

This article walks through the steps to become a Certified Private Pesticide Applicator, including the necessary training, requirements, and testing as required by the DEC.



By meeting the eligibility requirements, completing the necessary training, and preparing for the exams, you'll be well on your way to earning your certification.

# Proper Stored Grain Maintenance Over The Winter: A Key To Pest Management

By Mike Stanyard, NWNLDLFC

The combination of low grain prices and above average yields have led many farms to leave the grain in the bin and hope for better prices this spring.

Grain storage is an important step in protecting your investment and lots of money can be lost in reduced quality when it's time to deliver. Hopefully, with the intent of keeping the grain stored longer than usual, steps were taken to keep your grain protected. With longer storage time, small grains and corn can obviously be more vulnerable to insect and mold damage. The usual sanitation prior to grain fill is a must every year. All fines and old grain should be swept up, vacuumed up and removed. An insecticide such as Tempo SC should be used inside and outside of the bin to eliminate any existing insects and form a barrier to keep them out. An insecticide treatment on the grain really helps keep that grain protected over the long haul.

Well, it's January now and if you didn't go through all those steps, you still have aeration as a tool to keep insects and molds under control. Dry grain should be cooled to less than 60 degrees as soon as possible after harvest, and between 20 - 30 degrees for winter storage. Temperature benchmarks for stored grain: Chart credit: Dr, Kenneth J. Hellevang, NDSU Extension Service.

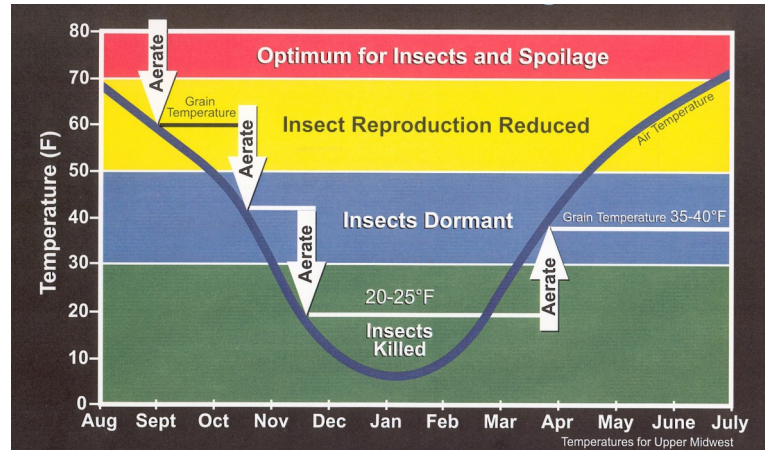
- 80°F: The ideal temperature for insect and mold growth.
- 70°F: Insect reproduction begins to decrease.
- 50°F: Insects become dormant below this temperature.
- 40°F: Mold growth prohibited below this temperature.
- 30°F: Insects begin to die.
- 20-30°F: Grain should be cooled to this range for winter storage.

I was recently asked if you can freeze insects in the grain bin and kill them. Ideally, to kill insects you really need to get that grain below 30 degrees as outside temperatures allow and keep it there for a couple of weeks.

The University of Minnesota has an excellent site on Managing Stored Grain with Aeration. Some of their recommendations for additional mold and insect control are summarized below and the webpage can be found at <https://extension.umn.edu/corn-harvest/managing-stored-grain-aeration>.

Stored grain should be cooled by aeration whenever the grain temperature exceeds the average outdoor temperature by 10 to 15 degrees. Expect storage time to approximately double with each 10-degree reduction in temperature. Grain should be cooled to about 25 degrees as outdoor temperatures get colder. Check the condition of stored grain about every two weeks while grain is cooling, then about monthly after grain has cooled for winter storage.

When the fans are off during the winter holding period, they should be covered (with canvas or plywood) to prevent the grain near the ducts from getting too cold during severe winter weather. Large temperature differences result in condensation in the cold grain. Spoiled grain over the aeration ducts or perforated floor is a common problem caused by not covering the fan during extended off periods. Also look for melting snow on the roof of the bin as a telltale sign of temperature problems



and hot spots which could mean insect activity. Accumulation of fine particles, weed seeds, and other foreign material interferes with airflow. Such accumulations are prime locations for increased mold and insect activity, which result in localized heating and grain deterioration. Normally, these fines collect in the center of the bin as the grain flows toward the walls.

A common practice in bins equipped with center unloading hoppers is to unload some grain from the center "core" to remove some accumulated fines. Fill the bin so it is peaked and unload some of the grain (300 to 1,000 bu, depending on bin size). This removes some of the accumulation and increases airflow in the center if enough grain is unloaded to allow the center core to fill with clean grain.

Another great grain storage resource is from the University of Nebraska, <https://cropwatch.unl.edu/grain-storage-management>. It is a thorough summary of articles written by other University on all topics related to grain storage management. Check it out!

Grain storage is an important step in protecting your investment and lots of money can be lost in reduced quality when it's time to deliver.

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# The MeatSuite Meat Processor Directory is

## Looking for Participants!



Cornell has developed a new meat and poultry processor directory that will be housed on the MeatSuite website. This replaces the searchable map that previously existed on the CCE Livestock page.

The directory will highlight services that you offer farmers such as inspected slaughter, inspected processing, inspected value added processing and custom exempt services. Your contact information and services will be public on this free platform, allowing farmers to easily find you. CCE regularly refers farmers looking for processing options to resources like this, so it's a great way to get your name out there, much like how MeatSuite allows farmers to get their name out to the public. Promotions of this resource to farmers will begin mid-February.

**It takes just a few minutes to sign up! To get started, go to [www.MeatSuite.com](http://www.MeatSuite.com) to create an account and profile.**

## BASICS OF BEEKEEPING

Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Southwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program

A FREE Live Seminar for Veterans

Wednesday,  
February 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

6pm – 7:30pm

Online webinar via Zoom

Registration is REQUIRED by visiting [tinyurl.com/FarmOpsBees](http://tinyurl.com/FarmOpsBees) or call Kelly at 585-268-7644.



### Find out if beekeeping is right for you!

Are you curious about the art of beekeeping and its vital role in our ecosystem? Join us for an engaging seminar where we'll explore the basics of caring for bees, from hive management to harvesting honey. This session, led by experienced beekeeper and livestock management specialist with Cornell Cooperative Extension, Amy Barkley, will equip you with valuable insights to start your beekeeping efforts.

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Farm Ops

Farm Ops aims to support military service members and veterans who desire to explore and/or pursue agricultural vocations. Visit us on the web at [smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/farm-ops/](http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/projects/farm-ops/)

This event is for NYS & NJ Veterans.

## FENCING 101

Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Southwest NY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program

A FREE Live Seminar for Veterans

Wednesdays,  
March 19<sup>th</sup> and  
March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2025

6pm – 7:30pm

Online webinars via Zoom

Registration is REQUIRED by visiting [tinyurl.com/FarmOpsFence1](http://tinyurl.com/FarmOpsFence1) or call Kelly at 585-268-7644.



### Learn The Basics of Choosing and Installing the RIGHT Livestock Fencing for Your Farm or Homestead!

How do you choose fencing that's right for you and your animals? How do you know which products you'll need to purchase and install? Join Cornell Cooperative Extension Specialists, Amy Barkley and Katelyn Walley, to learn more about fencing type, installation, maintenance, cost and product evaluation, and time requirements. This is a two part series.

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This event is for NYS Veterans.

If you'd like the link to the video that demonstrates how to sign up for the Meat Processor Directory, reach out to Amy Barkley.

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For questions on the fencing and beekeeping webinars, each out to Katelyn Walley for any questions at 716-640-0522 or by emailing [kaw249@cornell.edu](mailto:kaw249@cornell.edu).

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# FARMER'S MARKET AND MEAT MARKETING WORKSHOP

## A 2-PART SERIES: STAY FOR ONE OR BOTH!

### Beginning at 6:00 PM

#### **Part 1: Creating and Pricing Consumer-Friendly Meat with MeatSuite**

In this session we will cover an introduction to MeatSuite. Then we'll share how to make bulk meat sales more approachable for first-time buyers including a demonstration of MeatSuite's newest tool, Bundle Builder, to easily assemble "bulk bundles" and set prices.

**7:00 PM - A light dinner is served.**

### Beginning at 7:30 PM

#### **Part 2: Farmers Market Sales Data: Using the Customer Experience and Pricing to Improve Market Sales Performance.**

In this session we will cover the results of Cornell research on customer spending and prices at farmers markets. Learn practical ways to increase customer spending and daily sales. This session is appropriate for farms selling, fruit & vegetables, meat, dairy, and eggs as well as other farm products.

*These workshops will be presented by Matt LeRoux from Cornell's Dyson School*

## MARCH 2025: CHOOSE A LOCATION



### Tuesday, March 4

Town of Aurora Senior Center 101 King St.,  
East Aurora, NY 14052  
<https://tinyurl.com/FarmMarketingEA>



### Tuesday, March 11th

JCC, Carnahan Building  
525 Falconer St., Jamestown, NY 14702  
<https://tinyurl.com/FarmMarketingJamestown>

You can also contact Kelly to register at (585) 268-7644  
ext 10 or [klb288@cornell.edu](mailto:klb288@cornell.edu)



FARMERS MARKET  
RESEARCH PROJECT

**COST: \$10/FARM (UP TO 2 PEOPLE)  
ADDITIONAL PEOPLE: \$5**

THIS MATERIAL IS BASED UPON WORK SUPPORTED BY  
USDA/NIFA UNDER AWARD NUMBER 2022-70419-38562.



**MEATSUITE**.com

Learn how to set up your booth for optimal aesthetic and to manage customer flow.

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Using a tool like "Bundle Builder", is a way to manage inventory and avoid leaving less popular cuts at the bottom of your freezer.





## FARM SUCCESSION PLANNING - February 12th at 7pm

The first step is the hardest in creating a succession plan. It takes time, effort, family communication and working with the right professionals. Dave Chamberlain, NY FarmNet Financial Consultant, will provide valuable insights into the complexities of transitioning your farm to the next generation. This webinar will cover key strategies for ensuring a smooth and successful succession, focusing on the financial, legal, and emotional challenges unique to New York farm families.

**There is no fee to participate. Please register to receive the Zoom link:**

<https://cornell.zoom.us/join/9864567890>

Or Contact Kelly Bourne | KLB288@cornell.edu | 585-268-7644 ext. 10



## NY Sheep Shearing School 2025

This 2-day sheep shearing school is great for beginners and those who want to improve their current shearing skills. Doug Rathke, a seasoned shearer, knows what it takes to learn the art of shearing and he knows what it takes to teach it on a level so it can be understood and retained.

This class will give you the confidence to start shearing your own flock or take it to the next level and earn income by shearing for others.

### What you will learn:

- Preparing for shearing
- Understanding & appreciation of shearing gear
- Selecting combs & cutters
- Setting up a hand piece
- Setting up the shearing work area
- Learning the basic shearing pattern and footwork
- Learning how to properly sharpen your tools
- Modifying the shearing pattern for different types of sheep

Training cost: \$315

**Registration:**  
Doug Rathke  
320-583-7281  
[info@lambshoppe.com](mailto:info@lambshoppe.com)



**Students must have their own sheep shearing equipment as this is a hands-on school.**

Questions about equipment? Doug can help guide you.

Learn valuable information on transitioning your farm to the next generation.

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Join the Sheep Shearing School to learn what you need to know to shear your own flock or earn income by providing this service to others.

# Prevention Of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) In Pastured Poultry

By Amy Barkley, Livestock Specialist, SWNYDLFC

## BACKGROUND:

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza is a contagious poultry virus that has caused significant financial losses to the U.S. poultry industry and disruptions to the nation's supply of eggs and poultry meat. The highly pathogenic strain, H5N1, has been circulating in the U.S. since February 2022 resulting in the death and euthanasia of over 148 million birds in nearly 1,500 commercial and backyard flocks. This is the nation's largest animal health emergency.

Waterfowl, both wild and domestic, act as the primary carriers, which can spread the virus to other wild bird and domestic poultry populations. Wild waterfowl populations are monitored, and hunters have the option to send their harvested birds in for testing. Wild waterfowl regularly carry low-pathogenic strains of the virus, but it can easily mutate to a highly pathogenic strain, as we've seen with this outbreak. The disease has spread to mammalian and avian scavengers that feed on the carcasses of dead, infected wild waterfowl. It has also been found to spread to poultry from infected dairy cattle.

## SYMPTOMS OF HPAI

Birds infected with HPAI may show one or more of the following symptoms:

- Sudden death without clinical signs
- Lack of energy and appetite
- Decreased egg production or soft-shelled or misshapen eggs
- Swelling of head, comb, eyelid, wattles, and hocks
- Purple discoloration of wattles, comb, and legs
- Nasal discharge, coughing, and sneezing
- Discoordination
- Diarrhea

A large number of death losses without any clinical signs or indication of predation or weather impacts is known to be an almost sure sign of the virus. In some cases, expect the majority of the flock to die within a few days. Regardless of how the disease presents, a large portion of the birds in a flock will be affected.

## KEEPING YOUR BIRDS SAFE:

While most biosecurity protocols during outbreaks of HPAI recommend keeping birds indoors and under solid cover, this is not an option for many who raise their poultry either on open pasture or in semi-covered mobile coops. However, the guidelines below can be incorporated into

biosecurity plans to help keep your birds safe.

- Protecting against exposure to wild birds or water or ground contaminated by wild birds.
  - Make common-sense decisions about where pastured and free ranged poultry are housed. Fields or other open areas that are frequented by wild birds, especially waterfowl, are going to be a higher risk than those areas that aren't.
  - Keep your birds away from streams/ponds/lakes or other water sources that wild birds frequent.
  - Keep feed and water inside to limit wild bird and rodent access. Rodents don't become infected but can carry contamination on their bodies. Wild birds have the potential to both be infected and transport the virus on their bodies.
- Closing bird areas to nonessential personnel or vehicles to limit the number of people potentially bringing disease onto the property.
- Providing bird caretakers with clean clothing and disinfection facilities and directions for their use. This is especially important if they have poultry or dairy cattle at home or work at another poultry or dairy facility. Clean and sanitized shoes are especially important. If this can't be done, boot covers are helpful.
- Purchasing poultry from an NPIP (National Poultry Improvement Plan) source. Parent flocks on these farms are routinely tested for diseases, including Avian Influenza, and these farms have biosecurity plans in place. The full list of NPIP participant hatcheries and farms by state can be found at <http://www.poultryimprovement.org/statesContent.cfm>
- Establishing an "all-in, all-out" flock management policy, if possible. This means that all birds on a property should be the same age, with no new birds being brought in until the first set is out. If this isn't possible, birds of differing ages should be kept separate.
- Thoroughly cleaning and disinfecting equipment and vehicles, including tires and undercarriage, when entering or leaving the farm.
- Not borrowing or lending farm equipment or vehicles. If this must be done, equipment and vehicles should be thoroughly cleaned and disinfected, using one of the

Numbers of HPAI cases are very high and are expected to increase with the spring migration season in March. At this time, there is no preventative or treatment for the disease.

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Wild birds across the state are carrying the virus, and are the primary way it's moving into domestic poultry populations.

many disinfectants that can be used against HPAI (<https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-registration/list-m-registered-antimicrobial-products-label-claims-avian-influenza>).

- Stopping visits to other poultry farms, exhibitions, fairs, sales, or swap meets. If visits must occur, direct poultry caretakers to change footwear and clothing upon their return.
- Banning bringing birds from slaughter channels (auctions, live bird markets, processing facilities) to the farm.

Many of these tips can be found through the USDA-APHIS Defend the Flock Program: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/avian/defend-the-flock-program/defend-the-flock-program>

**The Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza response in NYS is being addressed by Cornell Cooperative Extension's NY Extension Disaster Education Network**

### **WHAT DO IF I THINK I HAVE THE DISEASE ON MY PROPERTY?**

Report it! If a large number of your birds are sick or dying, it's important to report it immediately so that we can stop the spread to any other flocks.

You can call:

**NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets:  
518-457-3502**

**USDA (United States Department of Agriculture):  
866-536-7593**

**Your local Cornell Cooperative Extension Office or  
Livestock Specialist, Amy Barkley**

**For more information, please contact the NYS Department of Ag and Markets at:  
518-457-3502**

## **Join us for our upcoming Shop Talks!**

### **Drone Discussion**

Are you interested in drones? Local experts will be attending to provide their perspective on the benefits, challenges, and opportunities of using drones in the field crop setting.

### **Dutch Hill Farms - Dave Cobo**

10423 Dutch Hill Road  
West Valley, NY 14171

**Thursday, March 27th, 2025**

**1:00 PM - 2:30 PM**

### **Integrated Weed Management**

Mike Hunter, Field Crop IPM Coordinator, will share his knowledge on managing weeds. The discussion will cover various management practices in both conventional and organic settings, including herbicide-resistant weeds.

### **Town of Wellsville TBA**

**Wednesday, March 19th, 2025**

**1:00 PM - 2:30 PM**

**\*DEC credits requested**

**Call Katelyn Miller to register at 716-640-2047.**

**If you have suspicious flock deaths or illnesses, you can call and discuss them with Amy Barkley to help you determine if you need to file an official report.**

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**Call Katelyn Miller at 716-640-2047 to register for our upcoming Shop Talks.**

## Reflecting on Labor Roadshow VIII

By Grace Dunham

Troy, NY- The 8th Annual New York Labor Roadshow took place on Wednesday, December 11th and Friday, December 13th in Troy, NY and Geneva, NY, respectively. These sessions helped farmers better understand and implement key human resource solutions in national and NYS agriculture. Topics discussed included protecting yourself during an I-9 audit, overtime and payroll compliance, union organizing, managing farm housing, employee benefits and insurance, and opportunities to learn English and Spanish. These sessions equipped farmers with the knowledge to better navigate day to day operations, such as labor payment guidelines and heat safety OSHA regulations.

The Troy session was opened by Dr. Richard Stup, with the quote, “The only constant in life is change.” This was a true testament to the importance of the labor roadshow, which helps farmers stay on top of a changing labor policy and safety landscape. After Dr. Stup’s introduction, the topic of farm employee healthcare was presented by SunRiver Health. Sherry Wyckoff, the Vice President of Operations at SunRiver Health, gave the audience an overview of the value SunRiver can bring to farmers.

SunRiver includes a system of federally-qualified health centers that allows patients to pay what they are able, and offers services including urgent care, dentistry and substance use treatments. These centers see over one million agricultural workers and their families. In addition to SunRiver, a New York Health Navigator explained the NYS health plan marketplace that covers a third of people in NYS and includes free preventative care, providing an additional healthcare option for farmers to connect their employees with.

In addition to healthcare benefits, farm provided employee housing is a topic that is top-of-mind to many farmers. Attendees heard directly from a panel of producers sharing their individual experiences of transitioning into providing farm employee housing.

“It takes time to make that transition,” said Randy Walker of Landview Farms. He went on to emphasize the need for buy-in from employees, noting that his family assists employees with doctor visits, celebrates employee birthdays, and ensures that any feedback is quickly taken into consideration. He was

joined on the panel by Jim Bittner of Bittner-Singer Orchards, who explained his process of renting apartments for employees. Jay Canzonier, panel moderator and Extension Support Specialist of Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development (CAWD), finished out the housing discussion by introducing a new tool offered by CAWD. The tool is called the Agricultural House Expense Calculator, which aids producers in calculating the true cost of farm provided employee housing.

Another key topic of 2024 was the spread of union membership within agriculture, after the passage of the State Employment Relations Act. The Act allowed farm laborers to bargain collectively. Boris Gautier of the Fisher Phillips law firm helped attendees understand what their role would be if their operation were to be unionized.

He highlighted the fact that employers have a duty to bargain with the union once they are notified (via mail), that their employees have voted to join a union, preferably using a lawyer. It was noted that if a conclusion between employees and employer cannot be reached, the Public Employment Relations Board (PERB) will assign an arbitrator, and their determination will be final and binding. “A government-imposed contract on private parties is unprecedented,” said Gautier of this process.

As the Labor Roadshow came to a close, Dr. David Douphrate provided guidance for preventing heat stress in employees, as well as an H5N1 update. H5N1, commonly referred to as “bird flu”, has made headlines since March 2024, when it was first detected in cattle. Dr. Douphrate explained that 16 states and 720 herds have been affected, as well as over 50 workers testing positive for H5N1. He went on to explain that the USDA would be announcing a federal milk testing strategy, and states were expected to roll out their own protocols.

After Dr. Stup thanked attendees for attending Labor Roadshow VIII and closed out the day, producers and industry representatives lingered to catch up with one another. There was a sense of familiarity and community in the air as people made their way out, a testament to the New York Labor Roadshow’s ability to add personal and professional value to all those tuning in.



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The post Reflecting on Labor Roadshow VIII by Grace Dunham appeared in The Ag Workforce Journal.

12 - February 2025



For more information about any of the topics that were discussed in the Labor Roadshow, please contact Katelyn Walley by calling 716-640-0522.

# Carbon Monoxide: The Silent Killer

By Jay Canzonier, Cornell University



Every year in the United States hundreds of people perish, and tens of thousands are treated in emergency rooms for accidental carbon monoxide poisoning. In recent weeks, there have been reports both locally and nationally where carbon monoxide poisoning has been the cause for tragedies that could have been avoided with awareness, and preparation.

Carbon monoxide is a poisonous gas released from incomplete combustion of fuels from man-made sources, such as vehicle engines, and from natural occurrences such as forest and brush fires. It is nearly undetectable by humans because it is colorless, odorless, and tasteless.

## DANGERS

Carbon monoxide, when inhaled, prevents oxygen from attaching to the blood, and disrupts the release of oxygen already in the blood, preventing oxygen from entering tissues. This severely effects the organs that need oxygen the most like our brains and hearts. Immediate medical treatment is critical. Even low doses of carbon monoxide over a period of time will produce symptoms that mimic a cold or flulike symptoms. If you feel better once you are away from the enclosed area (home or workspace) carbon monoxide poisoning should be considered.

If you witness someone suffering from any of these symptoms, CALL 911, and use extreme caution so you too do not become a victim.

- Altered level of consciousness
- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Headache
- Impaired judgement
- Nausea and vomiting
- Seizures

It is up to you to make carbon monoxide safety a priority – awareness and preparedness are the best defense against tragedy.

## SOURCES

- Machinery and vehicles with engines.
- Fuel burning appliances such as furnaces, water heaters, stoves, and fireplaces.
- Gas, oil, and propane fired space heaters.

## PREVENTION

- Proper ventilation when using carbon monoxide producing appliances.
- Never use cooking ovens or stovetops for home heating.
- Have all heating systems and chimneys inspected and serviced annually.
- Follow instructions and warnings for indoor heaters.
- Do not run engines in a building without proper ventilation.

## DETECTION

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends carbon monoxide detectors be installed:

- On every occupiable floor including the basement
- In each bedroom, or outside the bedroom but within 15 feet of the bedroom door.
- In every bedroom that contains a fuel burning appliance (fireplace, gas fired heater, etc.)
- At a height of at least five feet from the ground or floor level
- Always check for additional local requirements.

Print these safety sheets from NFPA to increase awareness on your farm.

ENGLISH



SPANISH



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Act now to ensure your family and employees are safe from this terrible threat.

# Demystifying Ag Value Assessments: A Summary for Landowners and Farmer Renters

By Katelyn Walley, Farm Business Management Specialist, SWNYDLFC

Farming comes with plenty of challenges, and property taxes is a pretty big one of them. In New York, the Agricultural Assessment Program helps lower property taxes for land used for farming. Every year, if you own or rent farmland, this program can save you money. Here's what you need to know to take advantage of this benefit AND connect with rented landowners to ensure they're receiving this benefit.

**WHAT'S THE POINT?** The Agricultural Assessment Program provides a route for reduced property tax bills for land in agricultural production. Land included in an ag assessment is taxed based on the land's agricultural value rather than the full market value. This helps lessen the tax burden of farming which is a land heavy activity. It is also a great tool for rental negotiations as non-operating landowners can receive the tax benefits without owning a farm of their own.

**WHO QUALIFIES?** In general, to be eligible for Ag Assessment, farms must be at least 7 acres in size and generate at least \$10,000 in annual sales of agricultural products for the preceding 2 years. Some things to note:

- The \$10,000 in sales of agricultural products is SALES not PROFIT.
- The qualifying value is also AVERAGED over the preceding two years – so you may still qualify even if you have a year under \$10,000.
- If the farm is LESS THAN 7 acres, it can still generally qualify with more than \$50,000 in annual sales (greenhouses, nurseries, etc.).
- Commercial Horse Boarding can qualify if there are at least 10 horses boarded and the operation earns more than \$10,000 annually.
- Beekeeping is limited to 10 acres of eligibility.
- Up to 50 acres of farm woodland can be included if the farm is active in agroforestry efforts.
- Land that also includes processing areas, home residences, or retail areas separate from agricultural production will not be included.
- Beginning farmers can qualify as soon as they have one documented year of more than \$10,000 in sales.

**CAN RENTED LAND QUALIFY?** Land rented for agricultural purposes is eligible for an agricultural assessment. As long as the land is associated with a farm business who qualifies, the landowner can apply to receive ag assessment with proof of a 5+ year rental agreement.

**WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE \$10,000 IN SALES?** In cases of natural disasters, adverse weather conditions, or farm depopulation due to public health concerns, farms

may experience years where they do not reach the minimum sales values required. Cornell Cooperative Extension staff is able to assist in certifying losses with proper farm documentation.

**WHAT ABOUT AG DISTRICTS?** The Ag Assessment Program is outlined in NYS's 1971 Agricultural Districts Law which was enacted to protect and promote the availability of land for farming purposes. However, it's important to note that Ag Districts and Ag Assessments are two different things! Land that is in an Ag District might not qualify for Ag Assessment. Land that is NOT in an Ag District can still receive Ag Assessment.

**HOW DO I APPLY?** The initial application for an Ag Assessment is completed by the landowner. First, visit your county's Soil and Water Conservation District office. For a small fee (typically \$20 or so), they will run a Soil Group Worksheet. This classifies your farmland based on soil productivity class and will calculate acreage within each category.

Next, the landowner will complete Form RP-305. This form is available online or through your county's Office of Real Property. Information collected includes contact info, parcel numbers, acreage uses and sales values. In rental situations, it is helpful for the farmer to assist the landowner with the initial application.

The Soils Worksheet and RP-305 are then submitted to the town assessor or county office of real property. Typically, the annual due date is March 1<sup>st</sup>, but check on your local requirements.

**DO I HAVE TO APPLY ANNUALLY?** Annual renewals are required but are completed on a simplified application form, RP-305-r. Many county offices and/or town assessors will directly mail these forms annually.

**ARE THERE PENALTIES?** If land that receives an Ag Assessment is removed from agricultural production, the landowner may need to repay the tax savings from the previous 5 – 8 years. Non-use is NOT considered conversation, but actively changing the land use will trigger a penalty. If the land is sold or transferred, the new owners need to be made aware of any previous assessments.

**WHERE CAN I LEARN MORE INFORMATION?** The Agricultural Assessment Program is overseen by New York State Agriculture and Markets and New York State's Department of Taxation and Finance. They have an official fact sheet that is available on their website. Additionally, Cornell Cooperative Extension and Farm Bureau have done multiple fact sheets, webinars, and informational efforts. Reach out and we can help connect you with information!

It's Ag Value Assessment Season! This program is an important tool for controlling costs and realizing farm related tax benefits.

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Ag Value Assessments are an important negotiating tool when talking to landowners about rental rates. Rented land qualifies!

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ARE SPENDING ON  
**Marketing**  
& HOW IT  
IMPACTS SALES

PRICE  
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FOR EVEN BIGGER  
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THE RETURN ON  
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This material is based upon work supported by USDA/NIFA under Award Number 2023-70027-40447.

If you sell your products through a farmers market, this is for you! We will have local events and zoom options throughout our region.

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For more information, contact  
Katelyn Walley by calling 716-640-0522.

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