Cornell Cooperative Extension Southwest Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Program

A partnership between Cornell University and the CCE Associations in these five counties: Allegany, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Erie, and Steuben Counties.

SWNY Field Crop Finds

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Spring Wet Weather Forage Management Strategies

May has brought us above average rainfall, making field activities difficult. With wet conditions persisting in many areas of the state, it might be time to start thinking about adjusting forage strategies.

Here are some thoughts on how you can pivot from Joe Lawrence, PRO-DAIRY's Dairy Forage Crop Production Specialist.

Pheromone Traps

	BCW	BCW	TAW	TAW
	Farmersville	*Lawtons*	*Farmersville*	*Lawtons*
5/12/2025	0	0	0	0
5/19/2025	1	1	3	1

BCW = Black Cutworm **TAW = True Armyworm**

While pheromone trap counts in my locations remain low, BCW activity continues to be elevated in parts of WNY. We are about halfway to the 300 GDD mark where larvae will be large enough to cut corn plants.

Hay Crop

Most grass hay crops and winter grains are past their optimum for lactating cow quality feed. As weather windows allow, target mixed stands and legumes that are still in the window for optimum lactating cow feed.

Return to over mature fields after all lactating quality feed is harvest and consider alternative storage strategies for over matur hay and finding ways to store it separate from lactating quality feeds so it can be used for appropriate animal groups on the farm.

Corn Silage

The remainder of the growing season will have a significant impact of the outcome of the crop and while adjustments to corn relative maturities often begin by May 20 to 25 it is important to not overreact. While data suggest that yields can begin decline after late May, this is not always the case. When a good growing season follows late planting, performance and weather (yield and silage nutritional value) remains competitive.

One thing that always challenges crop performance is planting into wet soil conditions. Even as we enter late May, waiting a few extra days for optimum soil conditions is a preferred tradeoff to "mudding it in".

If planting delays persist through the end of the May, review growing degree day (GDD) requirements for selected hybrid relative maturities and average GDD accumulation for your location. While it is not possible to predict the remainder of the growing season, using the best available information helps reduces the risk of making unnecessary adjustments.