

Cooperative Extension

# NIAGRICULTURE

October, 2002 Issue

## 2002 - 2003 Events

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|-----------------|--|
| November 6      | <b>"What's Happening in the Apple Industry and Impact on NY Growers"</b> by Desmond O'Rourke, Belrose, Inc., Washington 6:45-9pm @ Wayne Tech. Career Ctr. (BOCES) 4440 Ridge Road<br>Williamson, NY (carpool with Extension 433-2651) register 315-331-8415 |
| November 7-9    | <b>Great Lakes Dairy Sheep Symposium</b> and Charter Meeting of the Dairy Sheep Assn. of N. America – at Cornell, register @ 607-255-2851  |
| November 20     | <b>Pesticide Certification or Recertification Test</b> (1pm). Training & three recertification credits (7-10pm) CCE 4-H Training Center, 4487 Lake Avenue, Lockport. Preregister credits 433-2651 and exam DEC 851-7220                                      |
| November 21     | <b>"Applying the Farm Bill to Your Farm"</b> 1-3pm or 7-9pm at CCE 4-H Training Center, 4487 Lake Avenue, Lockport   |
| November 22     | <b>Western New York Lamb &amp; Sheep producers Annual Meeting, Banquet</b> 6:45pm, Stafford United Methodist Church (Genesee Co.). Reserve by Nov. 14. Call 585-394-3977 ext. 36   |
| December 10     | <b>Regional Small Farm Tax School</b> , Delevan, NY (Register 585-658-3250 with John Hanchar)  |
| December 11     | <b>LPVP Fresh Market Winter Meeting</b> at CCE, 4-H Training Center in Lockport, 8-5pm   |
| January 3,10,17 | <b>Advanced Farm Financial Management Workshop</b> , Orleans Co., location to be announced Register with John Hanchar 585-658-3250   |
| January 8       | <b>Western New York Bedding Plant School</b> , Daemen College, details from Chris Metz 716-652-5400 ext. 160 or e-mail <a href="mailto:cm74@cornell.edu">cm74@cornell.edu</a>  |
| January 20, 21  | <b>Lake Ontario Winter Fruit Schools</b> (Wayne Co. 20 <sup>th</sup> , Orleans Co. 21 <sup>st</sup> )  |
| January 21, 22  | <b>Corn Congress</b> @ Holiday Inn, Batavia (Jan. 22, Waterloo)  |
| January 29      | <b>N.Y.S. Berry Growers Assn. Meeting</b> in conjunction with NY Farmers Direct Marketing Assn., Sheraton, Saratoga Springs  |
| February 5, 6   | <b>Soybean Congress</b> @ Batavia Party House (February 6, Waterloo)   |
| February 11-13  | <b>NYS Vegetable Conference</b> in Syracuse, NY  |
| February 20-22  | <b>NY Farm Show</b> , Syracuse   |
| Early March     | <b>LPVP 2003 IPM Potato Workshop, Dry Bean Annual Meeting</b> in Victor, NY and Muck Crops Advisory Meeting in Batavia, NY   |

## Applying the Farm Bill to Your Farm

Learning the implications of the new Farm Bill is difficult because of the time it takes for the details to be worked out. Nonetheless, James McNeil, Farm Service Agency, Director; Paul Lehman, Cornell Cooperative Extension and Paul Bencal, Niagara County Farm Bureau will provide short presentations and answer questions on some program areas. Attention will be given to dairy, field crops, and livestock programs.

## *Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities*

**Details on conservation programs will be clearer after December. The meeting is from 1-3 or 7-9 on Thursday, November 21<sup>st</sup> in the CCE 4-H Training Center, 4487 Lake Avenue, Lockport.**

### **Cornell Website Directed Towards Small-Scale Farmers**

Did you know that, according to the USDA, ninety-two percent of the 32,000 farms in New York State are considered small farms? Small-scale farmers care for 50% of our 7.25 million acres of farmland. They account for 40% of NY farm product sales.

Small farms support local businesses and communities, maintain our beautiful working landscapes, protect watersheds, and produce a mouth-watering array of delicious, farm-fresh products.

But small-scale producers sometimes have a hard time finding information that is really suited to their needs. Cornell's Small Farms Program aims to solve this problem by making available research, educational programs, and information targeted to the needs of New York's small farms.

As part of this effort, the Small Farms Web Site was launched in 2000 and has been growing ever since. The site is geared for small farm operators, as well as educators and service providers for the small farm audience.

The web site, [www.smallfarms.cornell.edu](http://www.smallfarms.cornell.edu), offers a wealth of information on all aspects of small-scale farming, including production issues, business management, marketing, beginning farmer issues, organic production, and support organizations. An annotated bibliography links you directly to hundreds of online articles, fact sheets, bulletins, and other resources.

Section of the web site include:

- About Small Farms: small farms statistics, contributions of small farms, and other general information.
- Production: information on production systems including agro forestry, alternative crops, dairy, livestock, field crops fruits and vegetables. Also food safety, pest management, health and safety, organic production, sustainable agriculture, and soil and water quality issues.
- Marketing: information on agritourism opportunities, direct marketing including CSA and farmers markets, internet marketing, wholesale, value-added processing, and market trends.
- And more: Management, New Farmers, Working with Small Farms, Grants, Organizational Links and What's New. Take a look and let us know what you think! You can visit the Small Farms web site at [www.smallfarms.cornell.edu](http://www.smallfarms.cornell.edu).

Overseeing the Small Farms Web Site is the Small Farms Task Group, which includes farmers, Extension Educators, Cornell faculty, and representatives of the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, NYS Senate and Assembly, and non-government organizations.

The Task Group's mission is "to support and encourage the sustainability of healthy, thriving small farms that contribute to food security, healthy rural communities, and the environment by encouraging small farms focused research and extension programs, and fostering collaboration in support of small farms." Source: Farm News – Erie, Wyoming Counties

### **Sharing Farm Machinery**

The costs of owning and operating farm machinery on Minnesota farms make up 20%-30% of the annual per acre cost of raising corn and soybean. Keeping the ownership and operating costs low can be an important factor in reducing total crop production costs. One method of lowering machine costs is to jointly own machinery. Spreading the ownership costs over two or more farms can reduce machinery cost per acre.

Joint ownership or shared ownership can also more fully utilize the machine. If shared ownership allows the machine to be used 24 hours per day rather than 12 or 16, ownership cost efficiency should improve.

Machine costs fall into two major categories. The ownership costs include the purchase of the machine (usually called annual depreciation), sales tax, interest, insurance on the machine, repairs, maintenance and housing. Fuel is the most common operational cost.

There are several ways to structure shared machinery agreements. They include:

- Sole ownership with a custom agreement. One person owns the machine. He/she is responsible for all the ownership costs of the machine. He/she signs a custom farming agreement with another farmer for a set fee. The fee may or may not include fuel and may or may not include labor. This type of ownership keeps everything very simple. Everyone involved in the agreement knows what is expected of him or her. Farmer A may own the combine and have an agreement with B to combine his corn for \$20.00 per acre. Farmer B may have the planter and cultivator and agree to custom plant and cultivate for Farm A. They may share labor and work together on the farm or all labor would be provided by the owner of the machine.
- Machinery can be purchased jointly by two or more farmers who wish to work together. If the machine were purchased 50-50, each party would be responsible for making ½ of the interest and principal payments. A working bank account could be established to handle transactions regarding jointly held machinery. A formal partnership could also be used to handle jointly held machinery. Each person using the machine would pay an agreed amount per acre into the account. This fee would be used to pay for repairs, insurance and housing the machine, if one of the owning parties houses the machine, they would be compensated for it out of the joint account. Each party would be responsible for the fuel used on his farm. Seldom will each owning farmer have the same number of acres. To make things equal, the farmer having more acres would pay full custom rates on the excess acres. For example: A has 500 acres and B has 600 acres. B would pay full custom rate of \$23 per acre to the joint account on the extra 100 acres, while each would pay \$5.00 per acre for their first 500 acres. If the joint account falls short or exceeds amounts needed for costs, added assessments or refunds could be made.

- Machinery can be jointly purchased in the same percentage as acres farmed. If A has 750 acres and B has 250 acres, a 75%-25% split of all ownership and operational costs could be set up. Ownership adjustments will be required if either partner changes their acreage, making this a cumbersome method of ownership.

Request rest of article at 433-2651 or find on the internet at <http://swroc.coafes.umn.edu>.

### **Farmer/Grower Grant Program**

The goal of the Farmer/Grower grant program is to develop, refine, and demonstrate new sustainable techniques and to explore innovative ideas developed by farmers across the region. Information gained from these farm-based projects may be used to redirect research priorities.

To apply, you must be a farmer in the Northeast SARE region. You need not be farming full time, but your operation should have an established crop or animal product that you sell on a regular basis. Non-profit farms may apply, but the primary activity of the farm must be to produce and sell food under the kinds of economic constraints that affect commercial growers. Many community-supported farms qualify, but farms where the primary mission is educational normally do not.

The region is made up of Connecticut, Delaware, Massachusetts, Maryland, Marine, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, West Virginia, and Washington, D.C.

For an application: <http://www.uvm.edu/~nesare/FGinfo.html>, Farmer/Grower Grant Program.

The 2003 Farmer Grant Applications must be postmarked by December 9, 2002

Fax and e-mail applications are not acceptable.

Send to: Farmer/Grower Grants, Northeast Region SARE, 10 Hills Building, 105 Carrigan Drive, University of Vermont, Burlington, VT 05405-0082.

To obtain additional copies of the application, and a list of previously funded projects, write us at the above address, or call (802) 656-0471, Fax (802) 656-4656, email [nesare@zoo.uvm.edu](mailto:nesare@zoo.uvm.edu).

Source: <http://www.uvm.edu/~nesare/FGinfo.html>

### **So, Just How Big is Niagara County Agriculture?**

Based on the 1997 Census of Agriculture, Niagara County was 22<sup>nd</sup> out of 58 counties in New York State in market value of agriculture products sold (\$57,726,000). The county is also in the top 10 for 10 different fruit, vegetable and horticultural commodities. Recently, when we looked at some bigger picture numbers from IMPLAN (MIG, Inc.) with Dr. Nelson Bills, Department of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University, the following table was derived for Niagara County.

### Estimated Total Gross Output by Industrial Sector, Niagara County 1998

| <u>Sector</u>              | <u>Gross Output*</u> |
|----------------------------|----------------------|
| Commodity Agriculture      | \$77.5               |
| Agricultural Services      | \$16.6               |
| Food Manufacturing (SIC20) | \$343.7              |

\*Millions of dollars

Total gross output is not limited to farm gate values. Gross output estimate builds on farm gate value and includes some imputations and estimates of government payments received by farm operators. It also includes forestry and forest products although these are not thought to be great in Niagara County (note this is only stumpage value). Food manufacturing includes a range of firm output ranging from apple juice bottling to soft drink manufacturing.

But, on the downside, we know that less than 2% of our people live or work on farms and that there are a lot of other wage and salary earners in the county who earn their living in many ways. Consider:

|                                      |                 |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Niagara County, Personal Farm Income | \$18,187,000    |
| Niagara County All Personal Income   | \$5,261,246,000 |

Personal farm income is less than 1% (.346%) of the total personal income in the county. With a gross of only \$77.5 million, how much net farm income and wages for farm workers (i.e. personal income) can be expected to be earned? The above personal income share shouldn't be surprising.

Total assessed value of Niagara County agricultural land and buildings is at least \$161 million. This does not include Real Property Class 300 vacant land nor class 900, forested.

### Farm Security

By: Melinda Martin

In today's world, there is a constant need to be aware of what is taking place in our communities and around our farm businesses. We can all heighten our awareness by incorporating the following farm security inspection checklist into current management practices.

After evaluating your business with the checklist below, you will have a better understanding of what is taking place in your business. The more you know and are aware of your surroundings, the better chance you have to protect your business from opportunistic crimes.

For more information about crime prevention on your farm, contact your local Sheriff's Office or New York State Police, or your local Cornell Cooperative Extension office.

### **Farm Security Inspection Checklist**

#### **Structures**

- a. Are milk house structures always locked?
- b. Are pesticides always in a locked container?
- c. Are antibiotics always inventoried and stored in a locked container?
- d. Are all outside stored chemicals protected from vandalism and accidents?
- e. Is the water supply restricted?

- f. Are keys always removed from all unattended equipment and locks?
- g. Is lighting provided in all areas of the business?
- h. Are exterior light bulbs of commercial grade and break resistant?

#### **Forms**

- a. Are emergency telephone numbers (including ambulance, police, FBI, spill response) current and prominently displayed at each telephone?
- b. Is there recorded documentation of any unusual incidents?
- c. Are employees trained on how to handle a threat? Written response procedures should be provided.
- d. Do you report any unusual incident to the Sheriff's Department or State Police?

#### **Procedures**

- a. Are background security checks conducted on employees prior to hiring and periodically thereafter?
- b. Do you know why employees have left your business?
- c. Have you taken any precautions to protect your business if you had a disgruntled employee?
- d. Is there a policy in place by which employees scrutinize, question, and limit unwelcome contractors or visitors to the facility?
- e. Are all chemical and other supply deliverers required to show proper identification and to sign in?
- f. Are important facility telephone numbers given to trusted neighbors?
- g. Do you have a plan for someone to watch over your business if you will be out of town?
- h. Is the character of all neighbors considered/evaluated?

### **Landowners Can Use Power of Attorney For Farm Bill Signup**

Landlords who may be feeling overwhelmed by farm bill paperwork can use power of attorney (POA) to allow others to file some of it for them. "The power of attorney option isn't new for farm programs," says Melvin Brees, University of Missouri Farm Business Management Specialist "What is new is that landowners must make a new power of attorney specifically for the current farm programs," Brees says. "Previous power of attorney forms they may have filled out at the FSA Office aren't valid for this signup." Landowners must sign the new power of attorney either in front of a notary public or with a qualified FSA representative as a witness. Out-of-state landowners who cannot be present physically at the appropriate FSA Office should contact their FSA office to learn how to get their POA notarized.