Agronomic Crop Production in Oneida County

Oneida County is a large county in the Mohawk Valley region of Central New York. Agricultural land is dispersed throughout much of the county, but most concentrated in the southern and western portions of the county.

Oneida County has a variety of surface topography. The top northern sections of the county have high elevations (nearly reaching 1800 ft above mean sea level) and sandy soils and are associated with the Adirondack Highlands and the Tug Hill Uplands. An arm of the Erie Ontario lowlands cuts through northern Oneida County as part of the Black River Basin and is associated with a belt of high lime soils.

The north central portion of the county is comprised of soils of variable drainage. The central portion of the county consists primarily of a lowland valley along the Mohawk River with highly productive silt loam soils high in lime and a longer growing season. The Erie Ontario lowlands located in the west central portion of the county are remnants of glacial Lake Iroquois. Because of the sorting of soil particle sizes allowed by water this area is characterized by flat fields with variable drainage. Many producers have open ditch or tile drains in these fields to improve their productivity.

The southern portion of the county is part of the Appalachian Plateau with elevations that increase to the highest part of the county Tassel Hill, which is 1944 feet above mean sea level.

The combination of bedrock: limestones, sandstones, shales, conglomerates an some small amount of gneisses and quartzites in the northeastern portion of the county and topography gives Oneida County a rich combination of soil types with over 200 variants mapped. Most of the soils in Oneida County are silt loams, which have good water and nutrient holding capacity. They tend to be erodible so hillside fields are farmed in strips to prevent erosion.

The county enjoys a growing season ranging from 113 to 153 days with the last frost generally coming between May10-30th and the first frost occurring between September 20th and October 10th. Most farmers in the area have escaped the drought that has stricken other areas of the country. We enjoy the lake effect precipitation with precipitation from rainfall averaging about 45 inches per year and distributed throughout the growing season with dry conditions in the months of July and August.

The predominant agronomic crop is hay with about 44,000 acres planted and about half of that acreage planted to alfalfa timothy. The next most common crop is corn (35,000 acres), which is half planted for silage and half for grain. A number of dairy producers continue to plant a nurse crop of oats when establishing a new hay seeding with some chopped and put in silos and some combined for grain. A few crop producers plant winter wheat (2,000 acres) as a cash crop, similarly a number of producers grow soybeans (5,000 acres) as part of their rotation to help control weeds and improve corn yields.

<u>Crop Yield Ranges</u>
Corn Silage 12-25 tons/acre
Corn Grain 80-200 bushels/acre
Soybeans 45-55 bushels/acre
Wheat 55-85 bushels/acre

For More Information on Oneida County Soils or Crop Production
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