

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County's

Farm Flash

CONGRATULATIONS to our five 2009 Dairy of Distinction farms.

The Dairy of Distinction Program is celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2009. The program was established in 1983 to recognize the hard work and dedication of dairy owners and operators who maintain attractive, well-kept farmsteads. The award is based on the idea that attractive farmsteads enhance consumer confidence in the wholesomeness of milk and stimulate milk sales, which encourages public support for the dairy industry.

Those deserving of distinction receive the coveted "Dairy of Distinction" sign to be placed on the roadside of their farmstead.

All active, working, dairy farms in New York State are eligible to apply for the award of Dairy of Distinction. Farmers must fill out an application in the spring, to be entered into the judging to determine if the appearance of their farm entitles them to be called a Dairy of Distinction.

For more information on the Dairy of Distinction Program, call Bonnie Collins at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County.

(Complete story inside on pages 3 & 4)

August 2009



Cornell University
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CCE of Oneida County Farm Flash
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Oneida County Awards New Dairies of Distinction

By Bonnie Collins, Farm Business Manager Educator

I'd like to introduce you to Oneida County's newest dairy farms to be honored as Dairies of Distinction – the Angell Dairy Farm Durhamville, Brouillette Farm Waterville, Finndale Farm Holland Patent, Kubinski Homestead Marcy, and Terry Jones Farm Holland Patent.

Angell Dairy Farm

In 1850 Kevin Angell's great great, great grandfather Christopher Suit's purchased the farm property. Now the sixth generation of Angell's, Kevin, took over the property in 1996 from his parents Neil and Diane.

The Angell's farm have a traditional grazing herd of 45 cows and 40 replacement heifers, on 430 acres of land, including a 35' x 100' cow barn build in 1923. Crops grown include 60 acres of corn, 100 acres of mixed hay and 80 acres devoted to pasture.

Some interesting facts about the Angell Dairy Farm, they have been a member of Dairylea Cooperative for 86 years and a Dairylea TV commercial was filmed at the farm featuring Neil Angell, Kevin's Dad in 1985.

The family investment in the farm has been focused on getting better rather than bigger. In the past 10 years cow barn improvements, new stalls, lighting and tunnel ventilation have added to the welfare of the cows as well as steel roofing, siding, and new signage have brought the old barns back to life.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Angell Families!

Finndale Farms LLC

In 1964, Harry and Artis (Arty) Finn established Finndale Farm with 30 cows. That number increased to 70 cows by the early 70's and to 100 milkers by 1994. With the help of the Finn boys Todd an engineer and Travis and Troy graduates of Cornell, designed and build a 240 x 104, 6 rows, 300 cow free stall, by 1997. From 1998 to 2008 the building continued with a double 20 parallel parlor to milk 400 cows, a 200 x 108, 6 row, heifer facility, and a 120x 32, 60 calf, calf barn, along with other remodeling projects.

The Finn families Harry and Arty, Travis and Debbie, and Troy and Stephanie continue to produce 700 acres of corn and 500 acres of hay to supply their 470 milkers, and 400 heifers and calves. A proud dairy farm family serving this community for 45 years

CONGRATULATIONS to the Finn Families!

Brouillette Farm

Randy Brouillette is a 3rd generation farmer. His Great great grandfather purchased the land in the 1940's. The land has been farmed for over 200 years.

Randy manages 750 acres of land, including the home farm and rented land. He grows approx. 100 acres each of corn, wheat and soybeans. Hay is grown on the remaining land to care for the 150 head of cows including 85 milkers.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Brouillettes!

Kubinski Homestead

In August 1944, Ludwick and Mary Kubinski bought the farm property in Marcy. The original barn held 25 cows and a bull. As young Ted Kubinski would take the milk daily in milk cans to one of the dairies in Utica for processing, Ted found it such a joy to wait in the truck until it was their turn to unload the milk cans.

In 1963, Ted's dad added on the barn to house an additional 20 cows. Then in 1973 Ted took over the farm and continues to tend the 42 cows today. The herd size has not changed however, the original free standing buildings have been replaced with a pole barn to house farm equipment, the milk can has been replaced by a bulk tank and pipeline, two silos were erected, the farm house have been remodeled and the barn has been sided.

Ted stated that his parents would be proud to see their Homestead with the Dairy of Distinction Sign, as they were always proud to be dairy farmers.

CONGRATULATIONS to Ted Kubinski!

Terry Jones Farm

The Terry Jones took over the farm in 1968 from his grandfather, who purchased the farm in 1933. Terry subsequently brought the farm in 1972, with 315 acres and 60 cows.

Today the farm is 734 acres with 102 milk cows and 110 young stocks. Terry, wife Debbie and family members Maryssa and Danneile, both 11 years old, clean stalls, and care for calves as part of their responsibility on the farm. The family raises 185 acres of corn silage and hi-moisture corn, 25 acres of soybean, plus 190 acres of hay and alfalfa.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Jones'!

PERSONAL FIRM STRATEGIES FOR RISK MANAGEMENT
Mark Stephenson, PhD, Cornell University
(Dr. Stephenson presented this information as part of a meeting at CCE Oneida County on June 17 about "Dairy Price Volatility")

Basic price risk management tools available to dairy producers include:

- Hedging
- Put Options
- Cash Forward Contract

Hedging allows you to establish a fixed base milk price. The advantages of hedging as a risk management tool are that it achieves a "specific" price or profit objective; you can get out if the market changes, or use an advanced strategy; and it is not tied to a specific milk buyer. Disadvantages include the use of a margin account, with the potential for margin calls; and that you forgo the opportunity for increased profits if milk prices rise.

Put options allow you to establish a floor base milk price. The advantages of buying a put option include: it protects against a price decline and leaves open the opportunity for higher prices; and there is no margin money or margin calls. The primary disadvantage is that, if prices fall, net mailbox price is usually lower than if hedged because of an out-of-the-money PUT plus premium paid.

Cash Forward Contracting establishes a base milk price for one or more months. Milk plants offer producers two types of cash forward contracts:

1. Fixed base contract: This is a Class III base contract. The producer receives all other premiums and discounts as before. This is similar to if a producer hedged.
2. Floor base contract: This establishes a floor on the Class III price. The producer receives all of the premiums and discounts as before. This is similar to if the producer bought a PUT option.

Continued on next page

The advantages of cash forward contracting as a risk management tool are: it is flexible in terms of quantities of milk protected; you can protect a specific milk price or profit objectives, or a floor mailbox price; it is also simple to use and involves no broker account or margin money. Disadvantages include: you are locked into a specific milk buyer; with a fixed price contract, you can't get out if the market changes, and you forgo the opportunity for higher prices.

Does Contracting Work? A four-year pilot study by the USDA's Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) showed that farms using forward contracting received a slightly higher average price (September 2000 – November 2004); but price variability during the study period was considerably less.

The bottom line is that dairy farmers should have a Marketing Plan!

- ≥ Farms should have a roadmap for action, what I will do if/when

- ≥ Think through a course of action when you have time to think rationally and thoughtfully

A marketing plan is part of and consistent with an overall business plan.

**Humphreys Appointed Chairperson
Oneida County Farmland Protection Board**

The Oneida County Legislature appointed Brymer Humphreys, New Hartford, Chair of the Oneida County Farmland Protection Board. Humphreys farms with his family (Humphreys Farms) in southern Oneida County and serves on the New Hartford Planning Board. He was formerly the New York State Director of USDA Farm Service Agency.

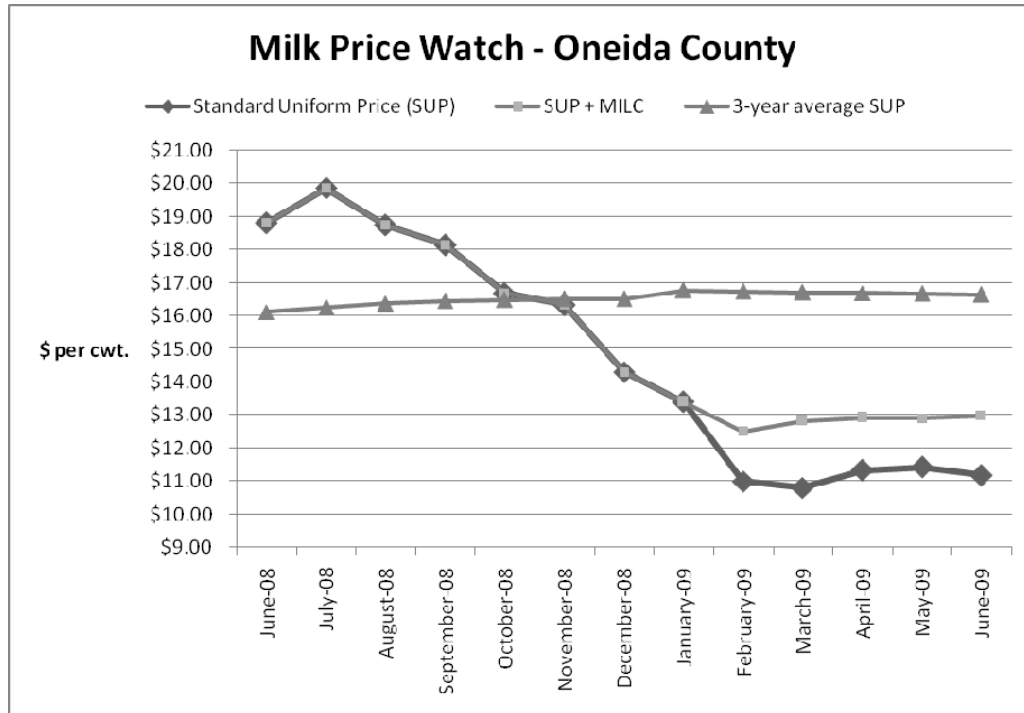
Legislator Brian Miller also serves on the board along with farmers from each district in the county. Clifford Kitchen representing Soil and Water Conservation Service, John R. Kent Jr. from Oneida County Planning Department, Kathy Pilbeam from Oneida County Department of Real Property and Tom Cassidy, Mike Cosgrove, George Gafner, Andy Gale, Paul Kirk from the agribusiness community and Marty Broccoli from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County complete the board.

Agriculture is the largest sector of the economy in Oneida County. The Farmland Protection Board oversees the New York Ag District Laws in the county and advocates for farmers when those laws are ignored.

Currently the board is reviewing pre-applications in anticipation of NYS Ag & Markets next Round of the Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program that would establish and maintain green space and agricultural use of land in areas with development pressure within the county.

Milk Price Watch for Oneida County Thirteen months through June 2009

These prices are adjusted from the Federal Milk Order No. 1 for the Syracuse location, which determines Oneida County prices. When MILC program payments are in effect, this chart also shows the total price after MILC (SUP+MILC) using actual or estimated payments. Remember that these prices do not reflect marketing and hauling charges, and they are based on a standardized component mix (3.5% butterfat; 2.99% protein; and 5.69% other solids). Your actual check will depend on these factors.



PRICING STANDING HAY FOR HAYLAGE

A recent discussion with a local farmer about how to price standing hay raised some interesting questions. There are always a number of situation-specific variables that affect how this question is answered, including the quality of the hay stand, the availability and price of alternative feeds, the risks taken by the party that will harvest the hay, and many others.

In this case, the buyer was harvesting first-cutting haylage off a field with a well-managed, high-quality stand of hay. The field was nearby the buyer's farm, so hauling was not a major cost factor. The buyer had the capacity to weigh each load of haylage at harvest time; in fact, by the time this discussion was happening the harvest had already happened and we knew the total yield as well as the yield per acre. So the biggest question was what price per ton would be fair to both buyer and seller given the feed value of the resulting forage.

As a starting point in calculating a fair price, we estimated that the market price for good quality dry hay is currently around \$130/ton. Assuming dry hay is about 90% dry matter, we translated this to a dry matter value of \$144.44/ton ($\$130 / .9$). Given this dry matter value (which implied a roughly equivalent feed value), haylage at 35% dry matter would be worth about \$50.55 ($\$144.44 \times .35$). Using tables of costs per acre for custom operators, we figured that harvesting (mowing, raking and chopping) should cost about \$61/acre – this figure should reflect machinery costs, fuel, and labor hours. As noted above, we assumed that hauling costs were minimal.


Subtracting harvest costs from the value of the harvest led to a preliminary conclusion that the buyer might consider the value of the harvest to be about \$40/ton. However, recognizing that by taking responsibility for the harvest the buyer was taking on the weather risk, and considering the relative value of haylage vs. alternative feeds, we advised the buyer that he should consider this a high end price. And perhaps most importantly, recognizing that the loss of feed value in storage can be substantial – more than 10% – and that minimizing such losses is largely a result of management practices by the buyer, we concluded that a fair price in this particular scenario would probably more appropriately be in the range of \$25-\$30/ton.

To summarize, this scenario highlighted the fact that the specific circumstances of a buy-sell situation must be taken into account; and that, in these specific circumstances, the value of haylage as it comes off the field may be quite different from the value of stored haylage with minimal potential further loss of feed value.


NOTICE: Dairy Farmers - H.P. Hood in Vernon is still looking for local farmers interested in feeding Whey by-product. If interested, contact Phillip Campbell or Steve Shaw at 829-2350. For more information contact Marty Broccoli, CCE at 736-3394 Ext. 121.


FARM WANTED: Couple looking for 100 – 300 acre dairy farm that has room for vegetable production and/or small greenhouse. Barns to hold 75-100 cows and 50-75 heifers. Contact Keith at 1-410-482-8661



Farm Wanted: Looking for a small dairy/horse farm with 100-300 acres. 40-50 acres tillable, 30-50 pasture and the rest woods for firewood & timber. Tie stall barn to hold 5-10 milking cows & 30-40 heifers. Contact John U. Hershberger, 798-A Five Mile Line Rd., Ogdensburg, NY 13669.



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Cornell Agriculture and Life Sciences - Bioenergy Feedstock Project

VERNON-VERONA-SHERRILL HIGH SCHOOL 2009 SWITCHGRASS DEMONSTRATION TRIAL

Overview

The US Department of Energy's Biomass Research Program selected switchgrass as the model perennial grass bioenergy crop because of its ability to develop an extensive root system, has low nutrient requirements and can produce high yields. Willow, sycamore and poplar were selected as model woody crop species for dedicated use as bioenergy feedstocks. Switchgrass has specific characteristics which allows for efficient growth in hot, dry weather. Although it grows most efficiently in warm weather, certain varieties are cold tolerant and have been grown successfully in northern climates. Switchgrass can grow in soils with low pH and has low fertility requirements. Research trials in other regions of the country have shown that yields of 5-10 dry tons per acre can be achieved in a one-cut harvest management system. It takes 2-3 years for a stand to reach full yield potential. When used as an alternative to fossil fuels switchgrass can reduce greenhouse gas emissions. In addition, the grass can reduce soil erosion and improve soil health and structure. Several varieties of switchgrass are presently under evaluation for performance in various locations around the state. The 'Cavein-Rock' variety of switchgrass is presently one of the highest yielding commercially available varieties in New York. 'Kanlow', 'Carthage' and 'Shawnee' are other varieties with high biomass potential.



Purchasing Seed

Switchgrass seed is available from many commercial seed companies. Seed for our research trials was purchased from Ernst Conservation Seeds, Inc. Meadville, PA (Ernst Conservation Seeds has a very thorough planting guide for the Northeast USA and Canada) and Stock Seed Farms, Murdock, NE. It's important to ask for the highest quality seed available. A high quality seed lot will have a high % germination, high pure live seed (PLS), and low dormancy. The Bioenergy Feedstock Project will be conducting trials on seeding rates in the future. A successful switchgrass stand will have approximately 10-20 plants per square yard. As part of our research effort on establishing switchgrass we are collaborating with a seed scientist at Cornell (Dr. Alan Taylor, Geneva Campus) on seed germination and dormancy issues and will have more information on seed quality as the project continues.

Site preparation and establishment

Warm season grasses take longer to establish than cool season grasses and are often at a competitive disadvantage in the cooler climates. Therefore, site selection and preparation are important for successful establishment. If possible, switchgrass should be seeded in fields with low weed pressure. Roundup (glyphosate) can be applied in the fall prior to plowing and seeding. In the spring we recommend a second application of Roundup (or generic equivalent) if weeds are a concern. The fields should then be plowed and cultipacked before seeding. Switchgrass should be seeded one week before the first date used for planting corn in your region with a cutoff of June 15th.

Planting at the correct seeding depth for switchgrass is critical for successful establishment. Seed should be planted at 1/8 - 1/4 inch into a firm seed bed at a rate of 10 lbs PLS/A divided by % germination.

Management & Harvest

Fertilizer is not recommended in the seeding year. During the second year fertilizer can be applied in accordance with a standard soil test. Mowing once in July at a minimum of 8-10" is recommended to control weeds in the first year. The field can be mowed off in late fall (after a killing frost) of the establishment year. Starting in the second production year, switchgrass is typically harvested in the fall in a one-cut management system with conventional hay equipment.

Markets and utilization

Switchgrass can be used as fuel for direct combustion to produce electricity when co-fired with coal in power plants, for residential and commercial heating as pellets or briquettes, and as a feedstock for gasification or cellulosic conversion to gases and liquid fuels. In addition, switchgrass can be used for livestock bedding, forage and grazing for beef cattle. Chemical compounds called saponins, found in switchgrass cause serious health problems for horses. Therefore horses should be kept out of pastures with switchgrass and it should not be used for feed or bedding.

Purpose

The CALS Bioenergy Feedstock Project is managed by the Forage Breeding Program in the Department of Plant Breeding and Genetics, and is led by Dr. Donald Viands and coordinated by Dr. Hilary Mayton. The project is part of a multi-disciplinary renewable energy research effort supported by the New York Farm Viability Institute, Cornell University, the College Agriculture and Life Sciences, and the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program. The research project was initiated in response to the need for information on planting and managing warm season perennial grass crops for the emerging agricultural energy industry in NYS. An overarching goal of the project is to increase production of perennial warm season grasses in New York.



Additional Information

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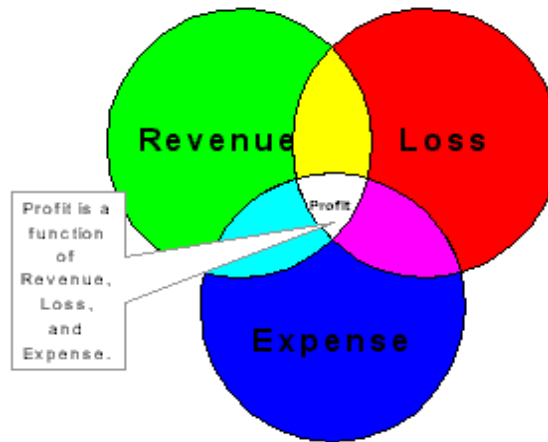
Does Cutting Cost Increase Profits?

It seems like a simple question, however is it? There is much more to profit improvement than just cutting cost. As the profit equations shows focus on all three elements need to be consider loss, revenue as well as cost. Studies consistently show that across the board cost cutting does not lead to long term business success. Business are told to cut and cut some more, but in the end will the cuts be so deep they result in higher


costs? If livestock feed is adjusted, what affect will it have on animal health and production? Will the cost of not training be greater than that of training? In fact in some circumstances, expenditures should be increased to make the case for a return on investment. For example, could a new milking parlor or housing facility reduce labor costs and increase proficiency? The point is expense management should include priorities to increase profits and to look for improved efficiencies in the existing business structure.

The second element, business losses come from items of wasted resources. Time, people, knowledge, work environment, materials and supplies are some of those resources, that when utilized ineffectively can turn into injuries, employee turn-over, and unrealized productivity into losses.

Revenue or income as it is frequently called is divided into two items, one of operating income and the other non-operating income. Operating income is derived from the day to day operations of the business, such as selling milk, beef or crops. Non-operating income is from those out of the ordinary events, such as government grants or sale of equipment. Operating profit is the difference between the ordinary or day to day income and expense, and net profit is the difference between the extraordinary income and expenses subtracted from the operating profit. This third element of the profit equation (Revenue) is normally overlooked. However, examples of operating revenue growth to consider are new products for existing markets, volume growth, and value-added products, plus non-operating revenue such as the sale of unused equipment. Revenue growth should be the focal point to keep any business successful, but not without consideration to loss and expenses. Management's focus should be on profits and what's right for their business in the existing marketing conditions.



Focus on the elements of the profit equation is only half of the business picture. It is clear that a profit and loss statement cannot show the movement of cash in and out of the business, but a cash flow statement can. Next month we will look at cash flow statements and how they are used to meet cash payment obligations.
Adapted from Business Solutions 2009 "Achieving World-Class Profit Improvements"

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Agriculture Districts Information Meeting

The Oneida County Farmland Protection Board and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County will be offering an Informational Learning Session on Agriculture Districts on Tuesday August 25th at 7:30p.m. at the Annsville Town Hall. 9196 Main Street, Taberg, NY. **Free of charge. No registration required.**

The meeting is open to all current and future farmland owners interested in learning about the benefits and the process of being in an Agriculture District. Town and Village staff or elected officials are also encouraged to attend.

Members of the Farmland Protection Board, Oneida County Planning Department, Department of Taxation and Finance and staff from Cornell Cooperation Extension will be present. Information will be available on Agriculture Districts, Right to Farm Laws, Agriculture Zoning and Ag. Value Assessment.

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The sale is facilitated by students enrolled in Cornell University **Beef Cattle Merchandizing** class. Get the best bang from your marketing dollar by enlisting the enthusiasm of 30 students to sell your quality replacement heifers.

There are **requirements** to assure the buyer that the risk of calving difficulty has been minimized and that performance has been optimized. Requirements include being sired by a registered beef bull, a body condition score ≥ 5.0 , negative test for BVD, brucellosis and TB and properly vaccinated for BVD, PI3, BRSV and IBR. Bred heifers are to be veterinarian checked pregnant to a known calving ease EPD sire.

Ultrasound data will be collected on heifers while at the Cornell Beef Teaching and Research Center. **Sale date:** Saturday, October 24, 2009. Cornell Beef Teaching and Research Center, Dryden, NY.

For more information: Mike Baker, Cornell Beef Extension Specialist, mjb28@cornell.edu, 607-255-5923



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Prevent Hay Fires On Your Farm

It's been a real challenge to make dry hay this rainy season, and there have already been reports of fires as a result. The following timely advice on how to prevent hay fires is from an article by Brian S. Aldrich, Agriculture Resource Extension Educator, CCE Cayuga County and Eric M. Hallman, Director, Cornell Agricultural Health and Safety Program.

Risk of Fires Caused by Wet Hay

Farmers who make dry hay face problems in field drying most every season. In some seasons, it is extremely challenging to make dry hay. Frequent showers, constant cloudiness and wet field conditions increase the risk of putting up hay that is not dry enough to cure well in the barn. Spontaneous combustion is a real problem for hay producers and buyers. **To prevent fires in the haymow, it is extremely important to know the weather conditions under which the hay was made, especially if it is hay you are purchasing and did not make yourself!** Stacking small, rectangular bales at 20% moisture or higher, and large or round bales at 16% moisture or more, potentially creates the conditions for a fire. Fires in freshly cut hay usually occur within the first two to six weeks after baling.

How to Tell if You Have a Problem

Some heating in new hay is normal. The quickest way to tell if you have a problem is to drive a long pipe (8-10 ft., 3/8-inch diameter) or an iron or copper rod into the center of the stack. Leave it in for 20 minutes and then pull it out. If it's too hot to hold in your hand, the hot hay should be removed immediately. Another warning sign is that smoldering hay gives off a strong, pungent odor.

If you suspect you have a problem for any reason, monitor the temperature of the haystack. A temperature of **150°F** or higher means that hay is entering the danger zone. The following table provides guidance for actions to take depending on the temperature of the hay. We have put this table together using several published references, and have chosen the most conservative values where there were differences.

Mark Smith
Full Time Forage Specialist
Smith Ag Service
PO Box 1018
Morrisville NY 13408
315-684-7737
315-447-7579 Mobile



Temperature	Action Steps
120°F or below	No concern, no action needed.
120 to 140°F	Check temperature daily.
140 to 150°F	Check temperature twice a day.
150°F	Entering the danger zone! Check temperature every two hours.
150 to 160°F	Begin moving hay out of the structure. At a minimum, stacked hay should be disassembled to allow more air to move around heated bales to cool them.
160 to 175°F	Call fire department; have them on-site before moving hay.
175°F	The danger of spontaneous combustion is rapidly increasing. Hot spots or fire pockets are likely. If possible, stop all air movement around hay. Call 911 to alert of a possible hay fire.
185°F	Remove hot hay. This should be done with the assistance of the fire service. Fire service should be prepared for hay to burst into flame when it contacts fresh air. Move hay away from buildings with bucket-loader or bulldozer.
200°F or higher	Hay is almost sure to ignite. Remove hot hay. This should be done with the assistance of the fire service. Fire service should be prepared for hay to burst into flame when it contacts fresh air. Move hay away from buildings with bucket-loader or bulldozer.

How to Check the Temperature of a Haymow

Commercial hay thermometers are too short to monitor the interior temperature of a haymow. The National Ag Safety Database offers instructions on how to fabricate and use a longer probe to measure temperatures deeper inside the haystack – go to <http://tinyurl.com/hayfire>.

Role of Ventilation Depends on Hay Temperature

At lower temperatures, ventilation helps to disperse the heating that normally occurs in stored hay. But at temperatures of 175°F or greater, ventilation will fuel a fire and should be avoided.

If Hay Starts On Fire

Call 911 immediately if a fire starts in your haymow. Do not wait to see if you can put the fire out yourself. Hay fires can spread very rapidly and soon become uncontrollable. The National Ag Safety Database advises, *“Let firefighters take control of the situation once they arrive. Do not move hay if signs of fire are present. Moving hay exposes the overheated or smoldering hay to oxygen and may cause the fire to burn uncontrollably.”*

Further Information

The National FARMEDIC Training Program has instructors who can train and assist rural firefighters with the best methods for extinguishing fires on the farm. Contact them at 1-800-822-3747 or at www.farmedic.com.

**A NY Crop Insurance Advisory
August 2009**

Report Crop Damage Promptly

If you should experience damage on insured crops, a report of damage must be filed with your insurance agent immediately (no later than 72 hours) upon discovery. Ask your agent for a copy for your records of the damage report to the insurance company. Do not destroy the evidence of damage until a loss adjuster evaluates it. *If you have CRC on wheat, the base price was \$7.29 per bu. Consider price fluctuation between base and harvest price (available soon after 8/14) when determining whether you have a loss.*

Maximizing the Benefits of Your Crop Insurance Policy

A Summary of Protection or Schedule of Insurance will arrive within a few weeks of filing your acreage report. This document will reflect the information on which your 2009 protection is based.

- Compare this Summary/Schedule to your acreage report to make sure that it is correct. ***If there are any discrepancies***, contact your insurance agent immediately to get them corrected. Not doing so could adversely affect your premium bill and/or claim payment.
- Consider the yield/revenue potential of your crops in light of fall harvesting. If a loss is anticipated, remember the crop damage reporting requirements.
- Insurance policies require that written notice be given to your crop insurance agent by crop by unit (farm)
 - within 72 hours of discovery of damage or loss,
 - 15 days before harvest begins**
 - or within 15 days after harvesting is completed but no later than 12/10 for grain and soybeans.
- ✦ **Don't destroy evidence of damage until a loss adjuster evaluates it.**

*****Prior authorization is required to leave sample rows for yield determination.*** If loss adjusting workload does not permit appraising damaged crop acreage before you are ready to start cutting silage, *prior authorization must be obtained* from your insurance company, through your crop insurance agent, before sample row areas can be left for later yield determination. For this reason, it's important that notice of damage be filed with your crop insurance agent as early as you determine that damage occurred so that harvesting is not delayed.

Cutting Damaged Corn for Silage

If you plan to cut damaged grain type corn for silage, it's important that the grain content be determined before harvesting regardless of whether you insure on a tonnage or grain yield basis. If you insured on a grain basis, a loss is determined by comparing the revenue or yield guarantee to the appraised yield (times the October CBOT average price for the December contract for CRC). If you insured and harvest on a tonnage basis and your grain content is below normal (less than 4.5 bushels per ton), the grain content appraisal becomes the basis for quality adjustment which may reduce the amount of silage tonnage that counts against your guarantee.

Insuring Fall Seeded Wheat, Barley and Alfalfa-Based Forage Production.

With higher input costs, consider insuring your 2010 small grain and forage crops. It's also required to be eligible for the FSA crop disaster program (SURE).

Dairy Gross Margin

LGM-Dairy provides protection against shrinking margins of income over feed costs. The policy can pay when actual gross margin is less than projected based on Board of Trade prices. The policy now has a longer period to sign up and authorizes default (or producer's actual) feed to milk ratio. The next enrollment period begins **August 28**.

Record Keeping

A new RMA publication "Keep Good Records...Protect Your Crop Insurance Interests" provides detailed answers to frequently asked questions. It is geared to farmers with widely different levels of familiarity with crop insurance. For those farmers with crop insurance, accurate production reports and supporting records ensure paying the premium needed and no more, qualifying for an indemnity payment in the event of a covered loss, and maintaining the integrity of the whole crop insurance program. The publication is available online at <http://farm-risk-plans.usda.gov/>. Click the Farm Planning Library icon, and you will go to a list of links, including the record keeping brochure in PDF format.

Crop Revenue Coverage (CRC) with Enterprise Units

As part of the enterprise unit structure, you reported your acreage by farm serial numbers or written unit agreements. Your harvest production records should be organized accordingly. If you anticipate a loss, discuss record-keeping requirements with an adjuster before harvest. (With revenue protection, low yield or price fluctuations can trigger a loss.) The adjuster will detail what records you need to provide in order to process a claim. Failure to maintain records as outlined by enterprise unit requirements will result in a denied claim and you will be charged full premium. Contact your crop insurance agent or assigned adjuster for crop specific requirements.

Definitions of Key Crop Insurance Dates

Sales Closing	Last date to apply for coverage
Cancellation date	Give notice if you don't want insurance next year
Production Reporting	Actual production history due
Final Planting	Contact your agent if unable to plant by this date
Acreage Reporting	Submit report of acreage planted to your agent
Payment due	Interest charges will be incurred thereafter
End of Insurance Period	Last date of coverage for current year's crop

Contact a crop insurance agent for more details on any of the above items. Agent lists are available at your FSA office or on the web at <http://www3.rma.usda.gov/apps/agents/>.

New York Crop Insurance Education Program

Risk Management Agency USDA

New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets

BQA UPDATE:

Effects of Age and Method of Castration on Performance and Stress Response of Beef Cattle - Frequently Asked Questions

Why is it so important to evaluate the effects of age and method of castration?

Bull calves are castrated to reduce meat toughness, aggressive behavior, sexual interest and dark cutting. However, the process of castration can be stressful and can lead to weight loss and lowered growth performance. The age and method of castration has a significant impact on growth performance and stress response making it important to choose the right age and method.

How does age of castration affect performance and stress response?

During puberty, the testes produce androgens that promote muscular development by increasing nitrogen retention. After castration, calves lose weight and their average daily gain drops. Studies have found that cattle castrated after puberty lose weight for up to 4.5 months. This weight loss is because of lower daily feed intake as well as the muscular developments of the young bull shrinking because of the natural testosterone withdrawal.

Castration at birth or close to birth reduces this weight loss. Calves castrated at birth achieve similar weights as calves left intact and castrated at weaning followed by a prolonged set back due to late castration. It is better to castrate calves at birth or a short period after birth because they recover quicker because of less stress.

Is it good to castrate bull calves at weaning time?

No. To castrate calves at weaning time which is already a stressful time, often causes calves to succumb to sickness. By castrating well before weaning, stress can be handled better because it is spread over time.

What about the method of castration?

The two most common methods for castrating bulls are surgical and rubber banding. When using plasma cortisol concentrations as a measure of stress response, there is no significant difference between surgically castrated and banded cattle. However, when measuring Haptoglobin levels (a serum protein) to quantify discomfort, the surgical procedure causes higher levels. If done appropriately, banding is the less stressful and safer of the two options.

Is it advisable to band bulls 1-year or older?

Although banding bulls at 1 year of age or older is considered less stressful than surgery, both options cause significant stress to the animal. Rather than fitting the animal to the production system or the market place by castrating, it is often more profitable to change the handling system, feeding environment and marketing system to fit the intact animal, feeding and selling the animal as a bull.

When is the best time to castrate calves?

Calves suffer less when castrated earlier whether it be by banding or surgery. Any advantage to improved growth by leaving them intact as they get older is lost from losses due to stress from castration. As bull calves get older, banding becomes more advantageous than surgery.

Source: Bretschneider, G. 2005. Effects of age and method of castration on performance and stress response of beef male cattle. Liv. Prod. Sci. 97, 89-100

For more information about the content of this document, contact the [Ag-Info Centre](#).

This information published to the web on July 25, 2006.

BQA is a voluntary program focused on increasing the quality, taste and safety of beef. Certification demonstrates your commitment to the principles of BQA. To find out how you can participate, contact Mike Baker, Cornell Beef Extension Specialist, 607-255-5923, mjb28@cornell.edu or Carol Gillis, NY Beef Industry Council Executive Director, 800-292-6922,

Crop Shorts

By Jeff Miller

Corn: The earliest corn planted in our area (late April) is tasselling now (July 24th) about 8 days later than last year. The corn in this field measured 10' to the tip of the tassel. Most of the corn in our area was planted later and is at the v9 stage now at approximately 50" height to the tip of the whorl. Most of the corn in the area that is on well drained fields looks great. Wetter, heavier soils have lost a lot of N through denitrification and are different shades of green to yellow and varying heights. Yields will be off significantly in these fields this year. Quite often when we have a cool wet year we are saved by an extended fall that allows the crop to mature. It doesn't hurt to consider the possibility that we may not have those conditions and in fact have an early frost. What would you do with corn fields planted for grain if they didn't reach maturity. Do you have a secondary market for high moisture grain or corn silage? Could you set up temporary storage? This is the time to evaluate your options.

Corn rootworm scouting

The 2-3 week period of pollination is a time when corn rootworm (CRW) adults are attracted to corn fields to feed on the pollen and silks. When they are in the field feeding they lay their eggs in the soil. The eggs hatch into larva the next season. The larva feed on the corn root system reducing corn yields.

If one of your goals is to save on expenses, corn rootworm (CRW) scouting can help reduce your costs. If you plan on planting corn next year where you have corn this year you can determine if you need to do anything to manage CRW next year. It takes about 30 minutes to scout your corn field and you may have to scout a total of 3 times so that is a 1.5 hour investment of your time per field. So if you scout your field and find less than economic numbers of CRW in your field you can save 13.20/ac on that seed treatment. If that was a 10 acre field you earned \$88/hr for the time you spent scouting.

Here is how you scout for CRW: To scout the field: enter the field approximately 50' from the field edge, quietly walk up to a plant and put your hand around the silks, begin to count the number of northern and western corn rootworm beetles on the rest of the plant, finally release the silks and count the number of corn rootworm beetles on the silks. Move down approximately 10 plants and continue to add to your count the additional number of northern and western corn rootworms you find. Do this again to a third plant keeping a running separate count of the number of westerns and northern counted. Walk to the middle of the field and add the number of northern and western counted on three plants at that location then walk to the far end and add the number of northern and western counted on three additional plants. Northern count as $\frac{1}{2}$ of a western corn rootworm so add up the number of northern and divide by 2 and then add that number to the number of westerns counted and compare the result with the chart on the next page:



On the Left-
Western Corn
Rootworm

On the Right-
Northern Corn
Rootworm



Corn rootworm sequential sampling chart

Plant	N	T	Plant	N T	Plant	N T	Plant	N T
1	****		15	7	29	20	43	34
	**			23		36		50
2	****		16	8	30	21	44	35
	**			24		37		51
3		11	17	8	31	22	45	36
				25		38		52
4		12	18	9	32	23	46	37
				26		39		53
5		13	19	10	33	24	47	38
				27		40		54
6		14	20	11	34	25	48	39
				28		41		55
7		15	21	12	35	26	49	40
				28		42		55
8		0	22	13	36	27	50	41
		16		29		43		55
9		1	23	14	37	28	51	42
		17		30		44		55
10		2	24	15	38	29	52	42
		18		31		45		55
11		3	25	16	39	30	53	43
		19		32		46		55
12		4	26	17	40	31	54	44
		20		33		47		55
13		5	27	18	41	32	55	54
		21		34		48		55
14	6		28	19	42	33	****	****
	22			35		49	**	**

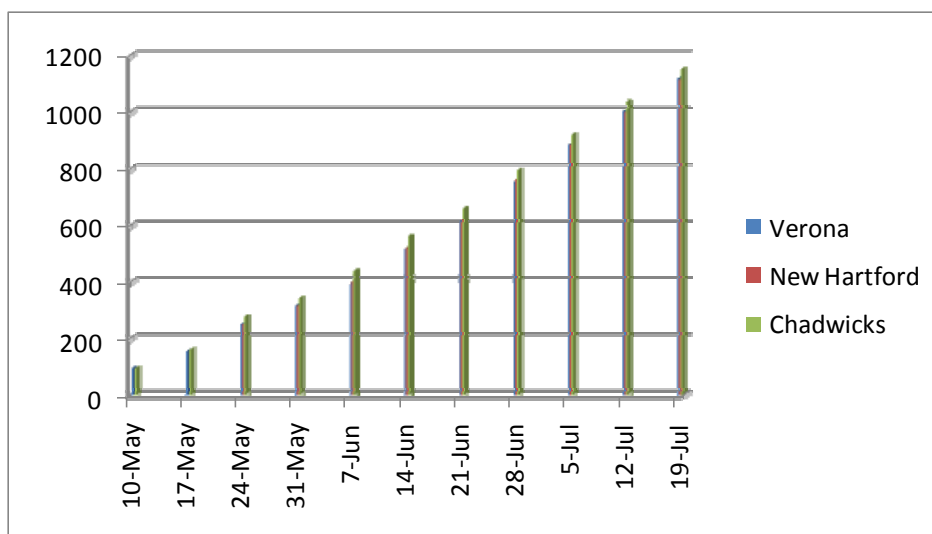
Please see page 20 for chart description

N = no treatment needed, T = treatment required. Example: If you scouted 9 individual plants and found 2 northern CRW which equal 1 western CRW then you would be done scouting for that week because you would be under threshold. You have to check once weekly for 2-3 weeks if you are under threshold. If you found a combination of CRW that added up to 17 western CRW equivalents on those 9 plants you would be over threshold and you would be done scouting that field for the season and you would know that if you planned to plant that field to corn the next season you would have to treat for CRW. If you counted any number of western CRW equivalents between the 1 and 17 you would have to do a count on another plant and add that to the total to see whether you were below threshold, above threshold or somewhere in between which would mean doing an additional plant. You have to continue to count until you come to a decision point either above or below threshold.

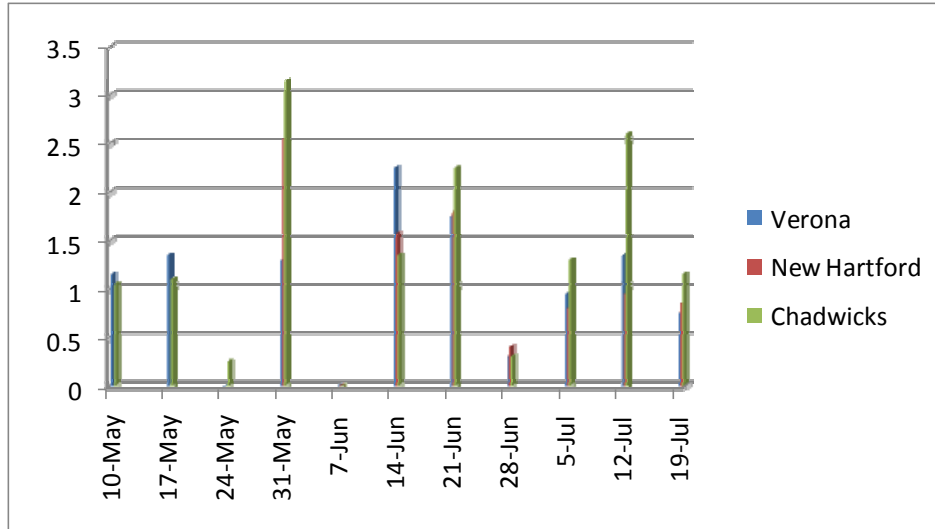
Weather: For the week ending on July 19th

Running total of GDDs base 86/50 starting May 1st for corn development =1127with the addition of 114 GDDs this past week. We were back into cooler weather during this period. We have been averaging 13.8 GDDs/day this year compared to 14.9 and 15.4 GDDs/day in 08 and 07 respectively. We are 8 days behind last year and 2 weeks behind 2007.

Growing Degree days 86/50 2009



Rainfall (inches) May-July 2009



Our current rainfall pattern of hit or miss showers makes it difficult to comment on how the weather has impacted cropping activities during June and July. In general rainfall has not been limiting to crop growth with the exception of wet soils remaining wet causing denitrification of nitrogen and therefore symptoms of N deficiency in those fields. Rainfall has been making hay harvest a challenge. Rainfall is currently holding up wheat harvest.

Soybeans: Recent visits to soybean fields still indicate the presence of soybean aphids that are quite different from one field to the next. Two fields only a few hundred yards apart on the same road with 20 aphids/pl and 120 aphids/pl. Remember that the threshold for aphids is 250 aphids/pl, with numbers of aphids increasing, inadequate predators and flowering to pod fill stage of development. Most of the fields that were visited this week were at the initial to full flower stage. Soybean fields with higher numbers of aphids tend to have the crinkled upper leaves, can have a more yellowish appearance and look thinned when compared to fields with lower aphid populations. Soybean aphids can be identified with the naked eye but are more easily seen with a 10x lens, the shed skins of the aphids can be mistakenly counted if you are not careful. The cost of an appropriate insecticide may only be \$4-5/ac for the material.

Soybean foliar diseases:

There are a number of foliar diseases that you might find on your crop that in most seasons wouldn't impact your yield. Foliar disease has to affect at least 15% of the foliar area before it would have much of an effect.



Brown Spot

Cercospora Leaf Blight

Cercospora kikuchii Starts as a mottled purple-to-orange discoloration that becomes orange or bronze. The leaves become leathery in texture. Usually occurs on topmost three to four trifoliate leaves and on the upper surface of the leaf in warm, wet weather. It usually occurs in mid to late season.



Cercospora Leaf Blight

Soybean insect pests in fields



Soybean aphids

Japanese beetles can be found in most local soybean fields feeding on the leaves of the crop. Defoliation has to be above 35% in the vegetative stages or above 15% in the flowering through pod fill stages to impact yield.

Japanese beetle feeding on soybeans



Hay

Grass: The cool temperatures and frequent rain has favored grass production this year. Mike Hunter, CCE Jefferson County, performed a trial with a local farmer in 2005 where they applied urea on a portion of a grass hay field and didn't on the other half. They weighed yields and found a 118% increase in yield in response to the N fertilizer. If you just took your second harvest of a grassy field you still can increase the yield and protein levels in your third by applying 100 lbs of urea/ac now timing spreading just before a rain.

Alfalfa: Also a cool season plant, is responding well to the cooler temperatures and frequent rains. If you make hay crop silage you are probably doing alright. Commercial hay producers are having a tough time trying to put up a good quality bale this year. The price of hay was about \$120/ton at the end of last year into 2009. It was difficult to move any hay during that timeframe. Recently local hay producers have reported a significant price increase with growers receiving \$180/ton for good grass hay.

Wheat: This years wheat crop is being harvested as I write this report. Soft white wheat is more susceptible to sprouting and local farmers are focusing their efforts on harvesting this crop first to try to avoid sprouted wheat and the punitive prices paid for it. So far, local farmers are reporting yields from 55-65 bu/ac at 17-20% moisture. Last years crop was harvested a week earlier with yields from 60-70 bu/ac at 14% moisture.



Wheat ready for harvest



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