

Farm Flash



What My Farm Does for You!

Kristen Gallagher

Age 10

Hi, my name is Kristen Gallagher and I live on a 60-cow dairy farm that is in the hamlet of Sangerfield and right next to the village of Waterville. Some people may wonder if they really want a farm next to their houses. Today I'm going to tell you what our family farm does for you.

Everyone knows that farmers provide food, but did you know that each American Farmer feeds 144 people each year? Did you know that 140 of these people are from the United States? Our farmers also feed 34 people in other parts of the world.

We also provide fresh local food for the people in our community to enjoy. Until this year, our farm sold fresh vegetables including sweet corn and pumpkins. Many other farms in our area sell vegetables, eggs, meats and other products. Milk from our farm goes to Agrimark Cooperative that makes Macadam and Cabot cheeses. These cheese plants are located in New York and Vermont and provide jobs for many people.

Farms contribute a lot of money to the local economy. I looked on the New York Ag and Markets website and found out that the average NY farm spends



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Mark Your Calendars...



2008 NY Beef Tour to PA

Save the date, October 9-12, 2008 for the 8th biannual NY Beef Producers Tour. This year we will be traveling to Pennsylvania. Planned tour stops include commercial and seedstock cow/calf operations, feedlots, organic beef production and packing plant, grass finished production and marketing, Pennsylvania Bull Test station, the PSU Beef Experiment station and the Gettysburg Battle Field. For more information contact Mike Baker, Cornell Beef Extension Specialist, 607-255-5923, mjb28@cornell.edu. Watch <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/beef/> for upcoming details.

Organic Crops and Dairy Field Day

Sto-Ridge Farm, Cazenovia, NY August 21 (Thursday) 10am-1pm Pioneering organic farmers Hank and John Stoker share their farm and crop experiences with very special guest, Jerry Brunetti. The Stokers produce grain crops for their dairy, while developing a whole farm system incorporating composting, alternative fuel, and intensive grazing. This rare opportunity to learn from Jerry Brunetti will be a highlight of the summer and not to be missed! This workshop is co-sponsored by the NOFA-NY Organic Dairy Transitions Project. \$5 NOFA Members, \$10 non-members.



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Agricultural Safety and Health are important issues to the New York State Agricultural Society. The benefits of a planned and meaningful farm safety program don't end with reducing simple injuries and down time; the rewards often include saving lives of family members and employees. The Society's Farm Safety Award recognizes New York farm operators who have unique and successful farm safety programs for their employees. Applications must be submitted by July 1 and include a summary of farm safety programs and activities. Nominees are evaluated, and up to 2 farms are selected to receive recognition and a cash award of \$500 per farm, sponsored by Cargill, Inc.

To apply or nominate someone, visit www.nysagsociety.org (Awards & Contests, Farm Safety). Applications are available online or can be requested by contacting the Society's Executive Secretary, Penny Heritage, at 518-384-1715.

The Society's mission is to improve New York agriculture through education, leadership development and recognition programs; the organization has been strengthening our state's agriculture since 1832. For more information or to join the Society please visit www.nysagsociety.org

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Embryo transfer using breeders' elite genetics and the recipient cows available in larger, commercial herds offers plenty of opportunity for added income...for both the breeder and the commercial operator. Listen to this panel discussion at the 2008 Empire Farm Days. Come and bring a neighbor. These dairymen will explain how it works for them.

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Oakfield Corners Dairy
Oakfield, NY

Andy Merry

Lismore Dairy
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Itinerary:

November 13 - Early pickups, arrive Toronto, check into hotel. Go to Royal for 2 Holstein classes and R & W Show; Sale of Stars.

November 14 - Full day at the Royal. Depart for hotel after Supreme Champion.

November 15 - Farm visits and lunch. Head home.

Cost: \$500 per couple, \$400 single. Includes bus, hotel and lunch.

Accommodations: Staying at the 4-Star Delta Chelsea both nights, walking distance to great restaurants, Broadway plays, shopping or just relax at the hotel. You can also take in the Royal Horse Show or swim and slide at the hotel's huge water indoor slide.

Cont. from page 1

over \$120,000 each year. This money is usually multiplied 3-6 times through other businesses. For example, we pay our local feed mill. They turn

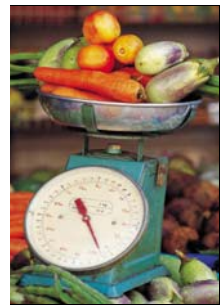
around and pay their workers. The workers then might buy gas and groceries on their way home from work and so on.

Farmers pay a lot of property taxes and school taxes. According to Farm Bureau, farmers pay more in property taxes than they use in government services. Average households use more in government services than they pay in property taxes.

Our farm provides beautiful open spaces that a lot of local people use and enjoy. The snowmobiles have trails going across our land in the winter and hunters use our land in the fall. Lots of people walk daily on the road next to our pastures and enjoy seeing the animals and rolling green hills. A group of people asked permission and used our fields for a dog-tracking contest. The four wheelers from town drive along the edges of our field to get to the trails. One neighbor keeps beehives on our land that helps with plant pollination.

Our farm is also a home to a lot of wildlife. Another neighbor raises baby pheasants and then releases them. We have wild turkeys, deer, small game, coyotes and a lot of birds. We even have a hawk that we call our "Dad's hawk" and its baby from last year that we call my "brother's hawk." Last year we had a screech owl in our cow barn, too.

Our farm works with our school to teach kids about where their food comes from. A team of kindergarten and first grade classes plant pumpkins at our farm each spring and then comes back in the fall to pick them. When they do this, they tour the whole farm and have even named a Holstein calf and are keeping track of how she's doing. We also help with a school garden and sometimes take animals to school.



Our farm is in 2 watersheds. One side of our farm drains into the Nine-Mile Swamp and this ends up in the Susquehanna River. The other side has Big Creek going through which ends up in the Mohawk River. We have fenced our animals out of the creek and we also use land for buffers along the creek and ditches. My Dad figures out where to put our manure so it is used in the best way and doesn't leech into the water.

So you see---living next to our farm isn't so bad after all! We work hard to be good neighbors and add a lot to our community. And when you think about it, would you rather look out your window and see rolling green hills or rolling rooftops?

Thank you.



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Crop Shorts

by Jeff Miller

Wheat

Rainfall and wet conditions during the flowering stage of wheat is associated with a higher potential for fusarium head blight and vomitoxin production. I have been regularly visiting a wheat field in Franklin Springs and noted head emergence on Friday May 30th and anthesis (anthers present) on June 3rd. It was cloudy and overcast on June 2nd, 3rd and 4th but no rain, sunny on June 5th with a substantial rain in the evening and morning of the 6th. With the exception of septoria on the lower leaves this field of wheat up to this point is clean. Many of the plants leaves including the ever important flag leaf are free of disease to this date: 6-6-08. The weather report is for potential afternoon showers for the next 3 days but, that forecast has been the norm for about 2 weeks with very little precipitation. Tilt was the only product labeled for the control of fusarium up to 0.5 head stage and now that has passed. I will be checking for the white heads of wheat that indicate fusarium infection in the upcoming weeks before harvest. Hopefully our local wheat crop will escape the effect of this disease this year and avoid sprouting before harvest. If you note white heads in your wheat stand give me a call at 736-3394 ext 120. Local growers have reduced vomitoxins in harvested wheat by increasing the air pressure while combining to blow out the lighter infected seeds. Local growers also harvest a little early (20-23% moisture) and artificially dry the wheat to avoid sprouting. A representative from The mill Star of the West said that they will be paying a \$0.25 premium per bushel for soft white wheat because they sell the germ to cereaal manufacturers for bran cereals and more then recoup that premium. He also noted that they have installed equipment to help remove wheat kernels with vomitoxin but have to maintain levels below 1 ppm. He noted that this is especially difficult to do when the germ is infected.

Corn

We finally have some heat with a prediction of 90F for the next 4 days June 6, 7,8 and 9th. Soil temperatures were

taken every Monday for the past 4 weeks in hay fields and row crop fields. The most recent results still indicate modest soil temperatures: 42F in hay stands and 51F in row crops. On June 5th one corn field in Clinton that was planted on April 24th is now v4 stage and approximately 7" tall to the top of the whorl. On the same day a field that was planted the 2nd week in May was v1, and a farmer in Sangerfield was planting one of there last fields of corn. Many Local growers may be forced to consider rescue treatments this year because of inadequate rainfall following pre-emergence herbicide applications.

Hay

Potato leaf hopper (PLH) has already been sited in hay fields in the Hudson Valley this year. The most vulnerable fields are your new seedings. These plants don't have established root systems or root reserves to support the nutritional deficit



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To Advertise in the up and coming issues of Farm Flash, please call Cindy at 315/736/3394 x.124 for all the information you will need.

caused by PLH.

Most of this years stands have been slow to develop mostly due to the lack of rain. These stands may be even more vulnerable then normal.

If you planted oats as a nurse crop this season you should check your stands to see how competitive the oats have been to the seeding under these dry conditions. If you normally combine the oats consider chopping the oats off earlier if the stand doesn't look strong.



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A Click in the Right Direction! By Bonnie Collins

Do you have a record keeping system of paper and pen or are you utilizing computer technology to its fullest? I have something that is halfway between these two extremes. It is the "Cornell Account Book" sets up on Microsoft excel, a spreadsheet designed by Steven Richards, Farm Management Specialist, Cornell Cooperative Extension, SCNY Dairy Team.

This spreadsheet is a minimum time effort, discipline-gathering tool for important information. Just like the hard copy of the Cornell Account Book, the figures gathered are to provide a financial snapshot of the entire farm business and an analysis of its strong and weak points.

Go to the attached link and follow the instructions on the tab for *Intro*.

<https://uportal.cornell.edu/uPortal/worker/download/tag.idempotent.worker.download.target.20-69.uP?attachment=0&action=displayMessage>

This information spreadsheet can be used to complement other managerial decision aid tools being used to operate the farm. If you have any further questions, please contact an Ag Business Management Educator Jim Manning or Bonnie Collins 315.736.3394.

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Estate Planning tips

Adapted from Farm Credit of Western New York

If you are among the two out of three farmer who hasn't done any serious planning, your estate will probably be taxed significantly more than necessary. Most others pay no estate taxes at all, while the majority of farm families do. Estate planning cuts across the fields of legal, financial and insurance planning, and calls for an understanding of farm and family business issues. Bringing the next generation into the family business is also a part of estate planning.

The planning starts with conversation, questions, and concerns. Some areas to consider are planning for untimely death and disability, wills, estates, trusts and gifting. Working out a plan is best done with a team- an accountant, lawyer, consultant and insurance underwriter.

Questions to ask about retirement planning begins with do you know how much Social Security you will collect, are you aware or the many options in tax-deferred retirement plans (IRA's, Keoghs, SEPs), the financial options your life insurance may provide, and have you considered the tax effect of leasing or selling real estate after retirement.

Let the Ag Farm Business Management Educators at Extension get you started, by offer information and a worksheet to start the conversation going. Call Jim Manning or Bonnie Collins 736-3394 x 129 and x 104 respectively.



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What is the buzz about Carbon Trading in Agriculture?

On May 20, 2008, there was a Carbon Trading: Market Opportunities for Agriculture Workshop in Albany Co. NY. It is a complex issue, but we'll try to get to the basics. Jeni Wightman and Stacie Edick have been instrumental in developing materials that will soon become available online to help educate the public and agricultural sector. Websites include: <http://agcarbontrading.org> and www.climateandfarming.org

Combustion of fossil fuels for energy has increased the concentration of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the atmosphere. Carbon dioxide is a "greenhouse gas" (GHG) that allows Ultra Violet (UV) light to pass through the atmosphere but traps the heat radiated back from the earth, causing the average temperature of the atmosphere to increase. Carbon trading is a strategy for lessening or "mitigating" the emission of CO₂ and other GHGs through a "Cap-and-Trade" system.

What is Cap-and Trade?

Cap-and-Trade systems are regulatory programs that cap harmful emissions (such as mercury, sulfur and carbon) by limiting them through a permitting system and distributing the emissions permitted to different stakeholders. These rights are called allowances, permits, or credits. Stakeholders can buy and sell the rights to the permitted emissions after initial distribution. (It is like buying, selling and trading air!) The goal of the cap is to prevent further increases in net emissions. For example, a given polluter may find it more economical to reduce emissions well below their cap and sell the resulting "carbon credits" to a polluter who cannot easily modify their operations to meet the cap limit. Once the cap is achieved, regulators lower the cap further, thus systemically reducing net emissions over time. Currently ten northeast states have agreed to the Regional Greenhouse Gas Initiative (RGGI, www.rggi.org), a Cap-and-Trade program that will regulate carbon dioxide emissions from only the electric sector beginning in 2009.

What are the Greenhouse Gases Produced on a Farm?

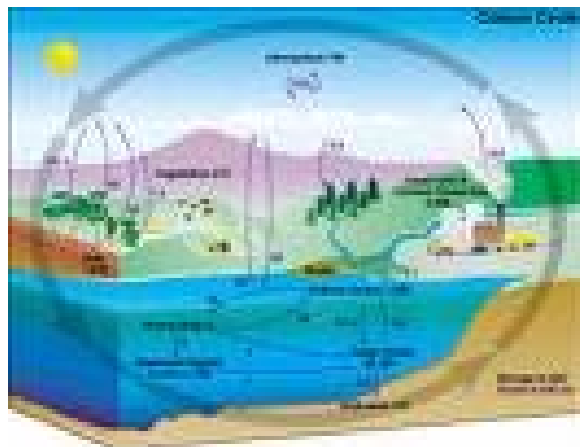
Carbon trading is a somewhat inaccurate term since there are other GHGs that are not carbon-based that contribute to climate change. However, since CO₂ is the major greenhouse gas, the term carbon trading is appropriate and is considered an umbrella term

for the trading of all GHGs. Other common agricultural GHGs are **methane (CH₄)** and **nitrous oxide (N₂O)**. These gases are **much more potent** in their ability to retain heat in the atmosphere. CH₄ has a global warming potential (GWP) 23 times greater than CO₂ and N₂O has a GWP 298 times greater than CO₂. As such, all other important GHGs are multiplied by their conversion factor to obtain CO₂ equivalents, or CO₂e (For example, 23 tons of CO₂ or one ton of CH₄ equal 23 tons of CO₂e). Therefore, using established protocols, measured reductions in GHGs can be traded in carbon trading markets.

Selling Agricultural Offsets

Offsets are GHG emission reductions achieved by non-regulated parties (i.e. agricultural). Offsets are environmental attributes defined by rules and contracts according to adoption of practices that have been demonstrated to reduce GHG emissions and may be monetized. **For agriculture, offsets can be achieved by three main mechanisms: carbon sequestration (storing carbon in forests or soils), by fossil fuel displacement (alternative energy or energy efficiency), by GHG destruction (combusting methane to reduce its GWP).** In the case of RGGE, the regulated parties are large electric power plants. GHG mitigation achieved by non-regulated parties, such as farms, can be purchased as offsets by a regulated power plant to meet a small fraction of their required cap. Opportunities for agriculture will be discussed in future Farm Flashes.

To learn more of the Carbon Credits, Sequestration and the Carbon Cycle, refer to the www.cce.cornell.edu/oneida website and scroll to energy and then farm energy. The websites referred to in the beginning of the article should be available by this mailing of July 2008.



Control flies to control mastitis

Fly-control helps to reduce the spread of certain mastitis pathogens, including *Arcanobacterium pyogenes*, which causes the disease known as "summer mastitis," says Christina Petersson-Wolfe, Virginia Tech extension dairy scientist. "This type of mastitis is very difficult, if not impossible, to treat and therefore much easier to prevent," she says. Flies are also known to carry *Streptococcus* and *Staphylococcus* bacteria, so be sure to implement a good fly-control program on your dairy.

From DairyManagement.com

Come see What's New in Dairy

Join PRO-DAIRY as it sponsors a tour of two new and exciting dairy facilities in western New York on Monday, Aug. 4, 2008, beginning at 1 p.m. The first stop on the tour is at Hemdale Farms in Seneca Castle, N.Y. This dairy, a partnership of Dale and Rene Hemminger and Casey Kunes, built a 227-stall robotic barn in 2007, featuring four Lely robotic units. The robotic barn is equipped with waterbeds, rubber belting, one feed alley with headlocks, and is outfitted with extended day lighting. The manure handling system features a 2-inch slot under the alley scraper cable allowing urine and some solids to drop into an 18-inch tube to be carried by gravity to the discharge end.

Travel north to Wolcott, N.Y., to a new eight-row cross-ventilated barn at Merrell Farms, owned by Jon and Karen Merrell. The barn is 216-feet-wide at the widest section and 823-feet-long with 1,424 stalls. There are 77 fans, baffles, and an evaporative cooling pad to improve cow comfort. Cow comfort is the goal with sand bedding and specially designed stalls. The holding area for the 72-stall rotary parlor houses radio frequency sort gates, a foot-trim lane and a four-row fresh heifer and treated cow area.

The drive-yourself tour begins at 1 p.m. on Monday, Aug. 4, 2008, at Hemdale Farms on Seneca Castle Rd, just north of the village of Seneca Castle. Find directions to Hemdale Farms in the Dairy Seminar Program inserted into the July issue of *Northeast DairyBusiness* magazine.

Special thanks to Dairylea for joining PRO-DAIRY in sponsorship of this event.

**Dairy Profit Seminars set for August 5-7 at
Empire Farm Days**

Seminars begin at 10:30 a.m. at the Dairy Seminar Center on the Empire Farm Days show grounds in Seneca Falls, N.Y.

Tuesday, Aug. 7: Transition Cow Tune-Up

Get the latest information on key areas of transition cow management, with a focus on diet, health and housing. Panel includes Pennsylvania veterinarian Bob Stoltzfus, who formulates a high-fill, low energy straw diet for his clients; Tony Brubacker, Mt. Joy, PA; Eric Clifford, Starksboro, VT; and John Knopf, Canandaigua, N.Y.

Wednesday, Aug. 6: Dairy Facilities - Create a healthy, productive environment for cows and people

This panel brings together in one place some of the Northeast's best minds on dairy facilities, including dairy producers on the front lines of making cows comfortable and long-lasting. Panelists include dairy farmers Tom Barley of Star Rock Dairy, Conestoga, Pa., Lynn Murray of Murray Farms, Copenhagen, N.Y., and Jake Swyers with Adirondack Dairy, Peru, N.Y. Joining these dairy farmers are dairy facilities' gurus: Curt Gooch, a registered professional engineer and PRO-DAIRY's facilities specialist; Rick Grant, president of W.H. Miner Agricultural Institute, Chazy, N.Y., who has done extensive research on cows' time budgets; and Corwin Holtz of Holtz-Nelson Dairy Consultants LLC. You will want to hear what he has to say about deep-straw beds for dairy cows.

Thursday, Aug. 9: The Business of Grazing

Jason Karszes, PRO-DAIRY's business management specialist, will moderate this panel discussion on grazing. Though farmer panel members can surely talk about the nuts and bolts of grazing – fencing, paddock size and substance, supplemental TMR, crossbreeding and the like – the panel will focus on the business side of grazing – and in some cases organic milk production. Panel members include dairy farmers Kathie Arnold, Truxton, N.Y.; Garvin Button, Jasper, N.Y.; Dave

Forgey, Logansport, Ind.; and Jon and Bev Rutter, Bridport, Vt. They will be joined by Rick Kersbergen, University of Maine Cooperative Extension, who has done extensive research on forage systems and organic production. He will present data from a three-year study of the economics of diverse forage systems. He also has cost-of-production data on organic dairying...

In addition to PRO-DAIRY and Northeast DairyBusiness, sponsors for the Dairy Profit Seminars include Advanced Comfort Technology, Alltech Northeast, BASF, Dairy Farmers of America, Dairylea Cooperative, Great American Insurance Group, Interstate Commodities Inc., and Northeast Biofuels.

**Are your Farm Business Management Skills
Ready for the 21st Century?**

(Adapted from Purdue Extension's publication available at <http://www.ces.purdue.edu/extmedia/agecon.htm>)

This publication, designed as a self-assessment tool, provides lists of indicators and similar detailed checklists for each business function farm operators are called on to excel at:

- Production management
- Input procurement and product sales
- Financial management
- Personnel
- Strategy development
- Relationship management
- Leadership, and
- Risk management.

Many of these business functions may be new to the farm manager, reflecting farming's changed business environment. Farm managers need to perform all of these functions if they are to become successful farm business managers. The checklists are not scientific instruments to precisely measure skill levels or accurately predict your chances for success. Rather, they are tools to stimulate your

thinking about the activities farm business managers must perform. Over time, they can help you to track your progress in developing business management skills.

Once you have completed these self-assessment checklists, you might ask others to also evaluate you. If others are in general agreement with your assessment, this will give you increased confidence in your own assessment. If others assess you differently, it might be an indication that you need to take a closer look at yourself and your business management skills. The point is not to get a “high score” on a series of “tests.” The point is to give you information you can use to be a successful business manager in the 21st century.

We will be publishing the checklists as a series in Farm Flash over the coming months.

Production Management – Self-assessment tool

In order to achieve success through the production of agricultural commodities, it is critical for the farm manager to achieve a cost of production lower than the industry average. To achieve this cost objective, farmers develop strong technical or production skills. The continual introduction of new products/technologies for use on farms has provided significant rewards for concentrating on doing things right.

Today, most successful farmers might still best be described as hands-on, walk-around managers. If farming did not provide a means for being physically involved in the production process, farming would lose its appeal for many. Their success comes in large part from their intimate involvement in the operations of the business. They know the production technology, the breeding schedule, the field operations, the operational performance of machinery, and maintenance issues. In essence, these successful farmers have developed a superb understanding of the production processes used to produce corn, soybeans, milk, and other agricultural commodities. By being involved in production processes on a daily basis, these farmers directly observe the production process and identify ways for improving the organization so that work flows more efficiently.

Indicators of Strong Production Management Skills:

- Completing operations in a timely manner.
- Choosing the technology best-suited for a particular

situation, not just the newest or most popular technology.

- Consistently realizing efficiencies that are better than those achieved by others.
- Consistently achieving a volume of business per person that is above that achieved by others.
- Consistently achieving a volume of business per dollar invested that is greater than that achieved by others.
- Organizing production processes so that work flows smoothly.

Rate your skill and ability to:

	Unsatisfactory	Weak	Average	Good	Exceptional
1. Complete planting and harvest in a timely manner.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Select the technology that provides most efficient use of resources.	1	2	3	4	5
3. Use the least cost mix of inputs for the quantity of output produced.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Establish appropriate production benchmarks for evaluating crop and livestock production.	1	2	3	4	5
5. Achieve levels of crop and livestock production higher than established benchmarks of comparable farms.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Quickly identify problems in production performance and take corrective action.	1	2	3	4	5
7. Evaluate alternative methods of acquiring production skills, including technology/production workshops and consultants.	1	2	3	4	5
8. Effectively use production consultants.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Identify influence of production practices on quality and level of production.	1	2	3	4	5
10. Closely monitor stored crop and feed inventories to be sure that quality is maintained.	1	2	3	4	5



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