

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County's

# *Farm Flash*

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## **Farm Fest 09**



**Oneida County Farmers  
invite you to join them for some  
good old fashion fun and  
festivities that the  
whole family will enjoy**

(see page 3 for details)

*May 2009*



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**CCE of Oneida County Farm Flash**  
**Table of Contents**

Page 4-5      Five things you cannot cut from your reproductive program  
 Page 6-7      Measuring the Cost of Producing Milk  
 Page 8          Sprayer Calibration  
 Page 10—11    Impact of the Stimulus Bill on NY Agriculture  
 Page 12—13    Operator Checklist for Boom-Sprayers  
 Page 14        People in Agriculture—Training Employees  
 Page 15        Slow Moving Vehicles—Continued from last month  
 Page 16—17    A NY Crop Insurance Advisory  
 Page 17—18    Farmland Lease Agreements  
 Page 19—23    Crop Shorts

## Upcoming Events

### Farm Fest '09

Friday, June 5, 2009

4pm to 9pm Rain or Shine

Finndale Farms,

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**Fun & Festivities the whole family will enjoy:**

**A day and evening full of learning & fun:**

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Hay Rides

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*For more information please visit our website*

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### *FARM FEST*

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Oneida County Dairy Promotion

Pecoraro Dairy Products, Inc.

Lois V. Lane

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Clinton Tractor

Lillies Country Compliments/Holland Patent Agway

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Growmark F.S.

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GEA NORBCO, Inc.

First Pioneer Farm Credit, Sangerfield

Farm Family Insurance

Tractor Supply

HP Hood

Stewarts

...and a special thank you to **Finndale Farms**, our host for 2009.

Farm Fest continues to receive donations from the farm and agribusiness community and our list of supporters continues to grow. All supporters will be recognized on our thank you banner titled "Impossible Without You!" If you would like to contribute to Farm Fest, please contact Terry DiNitto at (315) 768-3120.

## **The Five Things You Just Can't Cut From Your Reproductive Program**

(Adapted from Dairy Cattle Reproductive Council, DCRC;

Taken from Lewis County Dairy Digest, 4/09)


By Heather Sweeney

In times when the cost of production is greater than milk income, each input cost is closely inspected for the value it provides to the dairy. While there's no easy way to determine what must be cut first, it's often easy to put reproduction on a back burner since results won't be realized for a few months. But when milk prices cycle back again and surpass cost of production, unbred animals in late lactation and fewer replacement heifers can cause real problems. That makes reproduction absolutely critical. Below is a list of five areas you just can't forget, regardless of economic conditions.

1. **Absolute compliance.** Keeping protocols in place is especially important to ensure the right cows are bred at the right time. Reduced reproductive performance almost always can be attributed to compliance issues on the farm.
2. **Transition management.** Continue to focus on the transition period as it will have a direct impact on future lactation performance. If cows are not managed or fed properly during the transition, multiple reproductive problems can result. Here are a few ways to help keep the transition smooth:
  - Maintain dry matter intake (DMI).
  - Minimize overcrowding and stress.
  - Group cows to fit herd needs
3. **Quality A.I. sires.** The use of A.I. has cumulative benefits, including the opportunity to choose sires that are proven to transmit superior genetics. The resulting heifers will be the future of your operation, which makes your breeding decisions absolutely critical.
4. **Trained employees.** The training and experience of your workforce will ultimately impact how well your cows perform at breeding.
5. **Knowledgeable veterinary services.** Continue to work with a herd veterinarian who has experience in reproduction and is working on your Dairy Profit Team to meet herd reproduction goals. Veterinarians are especially important for the following:
  - Pregnancy status.
  - Uterine health disorders.
  - Changes in protocols.


As you make economic decisions about the management of your dairy, avoid the initial knee-jerk reaction to pull back your herd reproduction program. While it may seem as if it's on the back burner today, having a crop of genetically superior heifers and maintaining a highly efficient reproductive program can help keep your herd running optimally through all economic environments.

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## Measuring the Cost of Producing Milk

By Jim Manning

There was some confusion last month about the numbers in the Farm Flash "centerfold". The numbers in that table are the preliminary results of Cornell's Dairy Farm Business Summary (DFBS) for 2008, based on 54 participating New York dairies of all sizes. This was explained in a paragraph that appeared a few pages earlier in the same issue, but not surprisingly some people didn't see that paragraph. Sorry for any confusion.

This does give us the opportunity, though, to talk some more about calculating costs, particularly costs per cwt. As simple as the concept is, in practice there are a number of ways to look at costs of production, and different methods will tell you different things.

In fact, in the package of preliminary DFBS 2008 results that last month's numbers were drawn from, you would see the following averages for these 54 farms:

Operating cost of producing a cwt.:	\$15.12
Purchased input cost of producing a cwt.:	\$16.49
Total operating expenses per cwt.:	\$17.48
Total cost of producing a cwt.:	\$18.49
Total expenses per cwt.:	\$19.06

You would also find that the 2008 average "net milk price" for these farms was \$18.52. Judging by four of the five cost measures listed above, the average farm made a profit on milk in 2008 - in fact, a pretty good profit (\$3.40 per cwt)., assuming "operating cost of producing a cwt." is the relevant cost measure.

But if the relevant measure is "total expenses per cwt." (\$19.06), then the average farm was losing 54 cents per cwt, despite the fact that most people would say 2008 was a pretty good year.

The obvious question would seem to be: is there a "right" way to measure cost per cwt, and if so what is it?

To answer this question, we need to understand which components are included or excluded from each of these possible cost measures.

### **1. Operating Cost of Producing a cwt. (\$15.12, for these farms in 2008)**

This measure includes all operating costs except *depreciation* and *costs attributable to non-milk receipts*.

- Operating costs INCLUDE the cost of expansion livestock.
- Non-milk receipts are DEDUCTED from operating costs, on the assumption that costs=revenues for non-milk receipts.

### **2. Purchased Inputs Cost of Producing a cwt. (\$16.49)**

This measure adds to number (1) above:

- Machinery depreciation,
- Building depreciation, and
- Any extraordinary expense

### **3. Total Operating Expenses per cwt. (\$17.48)**

This measure adds back to number (1) above the costs associated with non-milk receipts, but excludes expansion livestock, depreciation and extraordinary expenses.

### **4. Total Cost of Producing a cwt. (\$18.49)**

This measure adds to number (2) above:

- Value of unpaid family labor,
- Value of the operator's labor and management, and
- A factor for the opportunity cost of equity capital (5%)

### **5. Total Expenses per cwt (\$19.06)**

This measure adds the same factors (labor, management, cost of equity capital) to number (3) above.

So which measure of cost-of-production should you use?

In most cases you should probably only consider measures that separate costs directly related to the dairy enterprise from costs related to other products you sell - for example, livestock or crops. That narrows the choice down to options (1), (2) and (4) above.

To evaluate the true profitability of your dairy enterprise, you will probably want to include the cost of depreciation; although this is not a cash cost, it is a true expense of doing business. This further narrows the choice to options (2) and (4) above.

Finally, when you want to look at your dairy enterprise as a business you choose to engage in as an alternative to other jobs, enterprises, or potential investments, you need to include the factors added in item (4) above. After all, the time, skills, and tangible assets that you (and other family members) commit to the enterprise have value in the market. By including them in your evaluation of costs of production, you are saying you want the dairy to compensate you at least as well as you would be compensated by deploying your assets somewhere else.

On the other hand, there are often non-financial reasons why you might choose to farm even when you can't be certain of covering "total costs" (number 4 above). In that case, you might choose to set the bar at "purchased input costs (number 2 above).

And in any case, understanding the various ways of calculating costs, and making sure you have adequate records to regularly review your performance on these cost measures, allows you to make informed choices and set realistic goals.

Participating in the Dairy Farm Business Summary is one way to commit to putting these numbers together in a format that will allow you to compare your operation with others across the state. If you are interested, contact Jim Manning (x129) or Bonnie Collins (x104) at 736-3394.

## Sprayer calibration

By Jeff Miller


- ◇ Check for leaks and broken parts, repair or replace
- ◇ Add in line filters to each main hose from the tank to the boom
- ◇ Measure distance between spray tips
- ◇ Check chart on distance to run for the distance between your spray tips
- ◇ Mark off that distance with flagging or paint on a fence in a field
- ◇ Fill your sprayer half full with water and run the length of the course at a speed reasonable for the field conditions. Get up to that speed before you hit the first marker and measure the time it takes to get to the second marker. Do this 3 times and calculate the average time.
- ◇ Park the sprayer. Adjust the pressure to within the range for the nozzles you have on the boom ie. 30 psi. Use a flow meter to check the rate of application from each nozzle. There should be no more than 5% difference between any of the nozzles. Check nozzles with greater than 5 % difference, clean and recheck and replace if they still remain greater than 5% different than other nozzles.
- ◇ Use a graduated cylinder or other container with accurate ounce graduations to collect the output of a few nozzles collecting for the average time to traverse the course. What you measure in ounces is the number of gallons/ac for your application rate.
- ◇ If your rate of application is way off the rate you want to apply you may have to purchase a new set of nozzles. One example is you want to apply roundup at 10 gallons per acre and the nozzles you have on the boom were selected to apply pre-emergence herbicides at 20 gal/ac at 35psi and no matter what you do you cant get down to 10 gals/ac at a comfortable speed. If your rate is close to your targeted rate you can use a combination of adjusting speed or pressure to obtain your targeted rate.

Distance for each nozzle to spray 1/128 acre			
Nozzle / row spacing	Travel distance	Nozzle / row spacing	Travel distance
18"	227'	30"	136'
20"	204'	32"	127'
22"	185'	34"	120'
24"	170'	36"	113'
26"	157'	38"	107'
28"	146'	40"	102'

**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

**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.

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## **Impact of the stimulus bill on NY Agriculture**

(adapted from Andy Novakovic,  
Cornell University Professor of Agricultural Economics)

The stimulus package contains \$28 billion for programs under the jurisdiction of the US Department of Agriculture (this is about 3.5% of the total spending in the bill). Of this amount, about \$20 billion is specified for food stamps (now known as SNAP or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) and a bit for other food assistance programs. The remaining 30% is divided across a variety of programs. Just under \$4 billion is for rural development, with the lion's share going for the development and installation of rural broadband, with most of the rest for water and water treatment projects. A little over \$1 billion is for the US Forest Service. If one adds up generously, perhaps \$1 billion is for programs that have something directly to do with agriculture, but none of that is for what most would consider to be mainstream agricultural support or investment programs.

So it appears that the foci of the economic stimuli are on 1) homeowners, 2) consumers, and 3) labor, with a big assumption that helping banks and manufacturers will ultimately create jobs and/or encourage consumption. Agriculture, per se, does not appear to be a priority.

It is clear that the Secretary and the President would like to refocus dollars spent on supporting agriculture to ensure that price or income support dollars go to smaller scale farmers, probably by limiting payments according to gross or adjusted gross income. The 2008 Farm Bill implemented tighter restrictions than the 2002 bill; however, there was a strong push in both the House and the Senate to tighten up eligibility or payment limits even more. In the end, the final bill did not go anywhere near as far as critics had proposed. President Obama, like President Bush before him, supports tighter restrictions, but important agricultural leaders in the Congress have expressed opposition to his proposals. It remains possible that budget events will still result in a re-opening of 2008 Farm Bill, but I would not characterize it as likely. Thus, the current indications are that farmers, farm prices, and farm incomes are not going to be a direct focus of any stimulus, either currently in place or in the future. If concerns for farm incomes do become a greater priority, then it is likely that this will re-open the debate on parsing out supports more judiciously to support lower farm incomes rather than broad price supports or direct payments (price supplements). Whether this would result in

any changes to the Dairy Price Support Program or the Milk Income Loss Contract payments is possible but perhaps not likely. Payment limitations and income eligibility rules are typically directed to grains and other major or "program" crops. The DPSP is expressly unlimited, albeit set at a low level (about \$10 per cwt) and MILC is limited by total pounds produced. Of course, NY residents will benefit from the increased allocation to SNAP. Of the bits and pieces in other programs, I do not know precisely what might be available to NY. My understanding is that the program for rural broadband has rules to target the development in very low population density areas, more typical of the West.



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**Operator Check Sheet – Boom sprayers**

Owner: \_\_\_\_\_ Operator: \_\_\_\_\_ Make: \_\_\_\_\_  
Model: \_\_\_\_\_ Serial No: \_\_\_\_\_ Reg No: \_\_\_\_\_  
Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Hours/mileage: \_\_\_\_\_  
Key: Checked/Completed  Needs Attention   
Adjusted  Not Applicable

**Mechanical**

- Is the attachment to tractor secure?
- Is the chassis and structure free of cracks and rust?
- Are the wheels and tires in good condition?
- Are guards, inc. PTO shaft guard, secure and undamaged?

**Hydraulic system**

- Are they free from leaks under pressure?

Are the hoses and connections worn or cracked?

**Electrical system**

- Is the wiring undamaged & are all connections properly insulated?

Do all the lights work properly?

**Pneumatic system**

- Is the system free from leaks when working under

**Controls and valves**

- Are the master on/off switches working correctly?
- Are left & right section switches functioning?
- Can you read the pressure gauges easily?
- Are all labels appropriate and legible?

Is the pressure adjustment/stable?

- Pressure gauge reading zero?

**Chemical induction system**

Are the system and controls working properly?

- Is it free from leaks under pressure?

Are all labels appropriate and readable?

Is the rinse system and container wash system

working properly?

**Tank rinse system**

Is the system functioning properly?

operating pressures?

**Sprayer tank**

Are the tank/chassis fasteners secure?

Free from leaks?

Does the lid fit securely and free from leaks?

Is the contents gauge clearly legible?

**Boom**

Is it properly latched when folded for transport?

When unfolded, is it straight and level?

Does the height adjustment and suspension work properly?

Does the boom return to level when displaced to left and right?

Are the break-backs functioning freely?

Are the mountings and linkages secure and not worn?

**' Spray lines'**

Are they free from leaks under pressure?

No hoses and connectors worn or cracked?

Are all valves and filters in good condition?

**Nozzles**

Are all fittings and turrets in good condition?

Are all nozzles correctly orientated?

Are all check valves working properly?

Is the spray/distribution pattern visually correct?

**Periodical**

Jug test all nozzle outputs

Date Completed .....

Formally complete and file check sheet  
Independent test due .....

**Comments/Notes/specific items**

**Requiring attention**

**Andrew Landers, Cornell University,**

**NYSAES, Geneva, NY 14456**

## People in Agriculture Training Employees

By Bonnie Collins

Employees are of great value and cost to any farm. Building and nurturing employee/ management relationships in the industry will have great intrinsic value on the health and productivity of our business.

Richard E. Stup (2008) from the Penn State Dairy Alliance has presented information on instructional design for training employees.

Stup suggests some steps to undertake prior to training. First, knowing your objectives should be set, producers should be able to identify the knowledge, skills and attitudes that are important in the jobs for which employees will be trained. Second, these objectives need to be specific, and measurable. Thirdly, management must understand why training is an essential part of performance.

Producers need to be looking for competency in employees. What attitude or state of mind needs to be in effect for the best performance by the employee? Does the employee understand the concepts of milk production? The relationship between feeding, cleanness, and the welfare of the animal? What physical abilities are needed to get the job done?

Training is about making first impressions, making the employee feel welcome, presenting the goals, quality and team work needed to get the job done. Supervisors should allow time without interruptions for practice and questions and be able to adapt to the learner's pace. Dr. Stup suggests a learning method of "Tell, Show, Do, Review". Supervisors should continue to build knowledge and attitudes, which builds confidence. Supervisors should be seen as a coach, who can identify and develop the strengths and improve on the weakness of individual employees. Supervisors should allow for advancement and greater responsibility for employees who build commitment and show motivation for the farm.

Training is never ending. Supervisors need to take the time to evaluate, using observation and conversation with employees. Employee conversation can advance improvements in work procedures and/or the training plan. Well thought out training allows for consistency, prevents misunderstandings and helps avoid performance problems.

Let Cooperative Extension of Oneida County help you put together training manuals. Let's build some consistency with producers, job descriptions and managing our labor force.

## Slow Moving Vehicles continued.....

By Bonnie Collins

As the nature of governmental statutes and regulations make it impossible to stay current of state and federal law. One of those laws we can point to is the proper use of the slow moving vehicles (SMV) emblems. The use of SMV emblems when required is for the safety of all using public highways and it can begin with us.

A slow moving vehicle is a vehicle that is designed to have a maximum travel speed of 25 miles per hour or less and is required to have a SMV emblem.

The SMV emblem must be mounted, pointed up in a plane perpendicular to the direction of travel, centrally at the rear of the vehicle (far left if it cannot be centered), two to six feet above the level ground, and with a suitable permanent mechanical fasteners. The SMV emblem CANNOT be used to replace warning devices such as tail lamps, reflectors (as seen on mailboxes and driveways), flashing lights, warning flags or flares. It cannot be used as a clearance marker for wide loads or equipment, or on stationary objects, on the highway.

Sergeant Bernard Kennett and Officer Karl Brenon of Troop D, Oneida, presented a program, sponsored by Women Farming Today, on Commercial Drivers Licensees (CDL) on March 26, 2009 at the CCE office. In addition to the information presented in last month's Farm Flash on slow moving vehicles. Sergeant Kennett has provided his contact information to help with specific question you may have. He can be reached at 315/366-6036.

For questions referencing "Farm Operation" as listed in the Definitions from Agricultural District Law Section -301(11)(Farm Operations) the contact at the Department of Agriculture and Markets-Division Counsels Office is Mr. John Rusnica at 518-457-1059.

Contact number referencing for "Youth Operating Agricultural Equipment" is 1-866-487-9243. Ask for Fact Sheet #40-Federal Youth Employment Laws in Agriculture.

For Drivers License Information/Class Information- Google New York State Department of Motor Vehicles, click on public forms and look at forms MV500C, CDL-101, and MV-141N.

New York Farm Bureau has available "Farmer's Guide to Truck & Farm Implement Laws & Regulations", see their website at [www.nyfb.org](http://www.nyfb.org).

# A NY Crop Insurance Advisory

May 2009

## ***Acreage Reporting for Spring-Planted Crops***

Upon completion of planting, certify your acreage with your FSA office. Then file your crop insurance acreage report using the figures from the FSA certification. The acreage report should include any added land, any crop acreage by unit that you were prevented from planting, and all farm serial numbers. If unable to plant your intended acreage, you may qualify for a **prevented planting** payment. Contact your crop insurance agent.

## ***New Deadline of May 18 for 2008 SURE Enrollment***

The Stimulus Bill passed in February changes the eligibility requirements for 2008 disaster payments under SURE (Supplemental Agricultural Disaster Assistance) enacted by the Farm Bill and administered by the Farm Service Agency. Farmers who did not purchase crop insurance for 2008 now have until **May 18, 2009** to pay the fee through their county FSA office to become eligible for SURE.

Producers who take advantage of this extension must agree to purchase crop insurance at levels of 70/100 or higher for the next year for which crop insurance is available. Those who purchased less than 70/100 crop insurance for 2008 or those that paid the FSA fee, either previously or within the new extension period, will be considered to have purchased a 70/100 policy for the calculation of the SURE guarantee. Producers who purchased 70/100 crop insurance or greater for 2008 will see their payment factor (as a basis for calculating the SURE guarantee) increased from 115 to 120 percent.

Exceptions to the 2008 fee requirements include producers who qualify as socially disadvantaged, limited resource or beginning farms. For further details, contact your county FSA office or go to [http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA\\_Notice/dap\\_304.pdf](http://www.fsa.usda.gov/Internet/FSA_Notice/dap_304.pdf).

## ***Crop Insurance As Foundation for Pre-Harvest Crop Marketing***

You can put your 2009 crop insurance protection to work to secure an operating loan or line of credit (assignment of loss proceeds) and as the foundation of your crop marketing program. Most experts agree that the yields on which your insurance guarantees are based are the least risky bushels for pre-harvest crop pricing. We recommend that you develop a written marketing plan so that you are prepared to act when market rallies occur. The February "base" prices for the crop revenue protection policies CRC, GRIP and IIP are **\$4.04/bu.** for corn, **\$3.56** for grain sorghum and **\$8.80** for soybeans.

### ***Report Crop Damage Promptly***

If you should experience damage on insured crops, you need to file a report of damage with your insurance agent immediately 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 authorized in writing by a loss adjuster.

## ***New York Crop Insurance Education Program***

Risk Management Agency USDA  
New York State Department of Agriculture & Markets

### **Farmland Lease Agreements**

By Jim Manning

In Oneida County, like elsewhere in the Northeast, much of our productive farmland is not farmed by the person that owns the land. In some New York counties, in fact, more than half of the active farmland is rented. Many of these rental agreements go back a number of years, and many of them are "handshake deals". But in this age of complex ownership structures, multiple partners, and costly litigation, it's more important than ever to think through the risks and responsibilities of rental agreements.

Whether you are the renter or the landlord, and even if your existing agreement is based on an exchange of services rather than cash rent, it is worth considering putting in place a written lease agreement. A good lease should, among other things, mitigate the risks of the rental relationship. Risk can be defined in many different ways in different contexts, but the best way to think about it is the probability of a "loss" occurring (a personal injury, damage to an asset, financial harm to another, etc.) occurring times the financial value if that event occurs.

To mitigate risk for a landowner, a lease agreement may require that the renter maintain a certain level of farm liability insurance, with the landowner identified as "additional insured".

From the renter's perspective, the lease establishes the term of the rental agreement and protects him from unexpected changes in landowner requirements, or even in the availability of the land. As part of risk mitigation, the renter may also ask the landlord for the right of first refusal should the landlord opt to sell the property.

A well-written lease agreement should include:

(Continued on next page)

- 1) Description of the land and buildings to be rented, and equipment if applicable. An accurate assessment of the conditions at time of rental is a good idea, including photos to document such.
  - 2) Rights of each party: owner and tenant access and use. Spell out any restrictions.
  - 3) Improvements that will be made and who pays for these. If buildings are involved, specify who pays for improvements like roofing, painting, etc. that are normal infrastructure, versus improvements made specific to the farm enterprise.
  - 4) Agricultural practices to follow – outline organic or agronomically sound practices to be used, specify that fields be planted to a cover crop after use, list prohibited practices.
  - 5) Condition of land at end of lease - common practice calls for land to be left in the same condition as when first rented. However, land that was not been farmed for some years prior to the lease may actually be left in better condition. In this case consideration should be given to the cost of those improvements.
  - 6) Payment terms under normal growing conditions and in the event of a crop failure. Payments should be based on the value of the property for farming purposes only (not for development).
  - 7) Lease payment: leases can be paid in cash, in crop or livestock shares, or in some cases, landowners are willing to forgo fees if the tenant makes improvements.
  - 8) Bringing land back into production - if land has not been actively farmed in many years, the cost of bringing land back into farming is considerable. Consideration needs to be given as to who should pay for these costs. The owner benefits in the long run from improvements that are made.
  - 9) Length of the agreement and terms of renewal. A one-year renewable lease might be a good starting point for annual crops, or if planting perennial crops, a 3-5 year lease is preferable.
  - 10) Options for early termination, whether initiated by the owner or tenant, and the consequences.
  - 11) Insurance requirements, and who is responsible for payment (typically the owner for land, buildings, equipment; the tenant for crops/livestock and production related improvements made by tenant).
  - 12) Property taxes – generally the responsibility of the owner.
  - 13) Provisions for arbitration in the case of disagreements.
- For copies of sample lease agreements, checklists, etc. contact Jim Manning (x129) or Bonnie Collins (x104) at Cooperative Extension ph. 736-3394.

*(adapted from Cornell's "Guide to Farming in New York State, available at [www.smallfarms.cornell.edu](http://www.smallfarms.cornell.edu))*

## Crop Shorts

By Jeff Miller

**Dry Spring:** As of the writing of this crop short on Apr 27 '09 our spring has been relatively dry providing an opportunity for area farmers to till fields, plant new hay seedings, spin clover and spray nitrogen on wheat fields and spread manure. Yesterday temps reached mid 80's and today we may see 90F. Unusual temps that are helping to dry soils and push hay growth.

**Corn nutrient management:** Plenty of questions on the use of manure to meet corn crop nutrient requirements. Start with a soil test to see how much N,P, K and other nutrients are required for your crop. **P requirements** are 70#/ac when soil test P is very low, 60#/ac when low, 40#/ac when medium, 20#/ac when high, 0#/ac if you spread manure or 0#/ac when high. P is involved in developing the primordial (fruit production) and energy transfer within the plant so is very important to the plant especially by the 5<sup>th</sup> leaf stage. P is taken up primarily in the ortho phosphate form which is its form in the commercial fertilizer you apply. So if your soils are low to very low in P you should apply P in the band at a minimum of 20-40# P/ac and meet the remainder of the need with manure. For soils that are med to high, all of the crop P need can be met by manure applications on a one-to-one basis. For example if your manure contains 5# P /ton and your soil test shows a med level of P and a crop requirement of 40# P/ac then you can meet that need by applying 8 tons /ac.

**K requirements** can also be read directly off your Cornell soil test report. K requirements increase as your soil type goes from clay to silt or from silt to sand. There are less negative charges on more coarse soils(sands) to hold K in the soil available for crop up take so you have to supply at higher rates on coarse soils. On our predominant soils (the silt loams) you need to supply 60# K/ac when soil test K is very low or low, 40#/ac when soil test K is medium, 20#/ac when high and 0#/ac when very high. Corn crop K needs parallel the growth of the plant so needs are very low when the plant is germinating and growing slowly but expands rapidly when corn hits the 5 leaf stage and growth rate explodes. All of the K needs of a corn crop can be met through manure applications on a one-to-one basis.

**N requirements** can be met with manure applications but timing and method of application play a big role in determining how much of the different sources of N in your manure will be available to

meet crop N needs. Manure N is in two main forms in manure: organic N and ammonia N. The ammonia is readily available for conversion to nitrate and uptake by plants. Unfortunately if surface applied most if not all of this N form can be lost to volatilization in as little as 3 days. If you incorporate this spring applied manure by injection, plowing, chiseling or aerway then 65% of that N will be available for uptake by your crop reducing your need for purchased N. If you fall apply manure or don't incorporate then 35% of the organic fraction of the N in your manure will be available for uptake by your corn crop. That means that even if you have 9# organic N/ton that your crop will only have 3#/ton available to them in this growing season ie 20 ton/ac rate = 60# N/ac. Corn N requirements also increase as the continuous corn rotation continues up to the 4<sup>th</sup> consecutive year and levels off. For most of our soils that means 10-30# n/ac are required the first season after sod, 60-100# N/ac second year, 80-120# N/ac in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year and 90-130# N/ac in the 4<sup>th</sup> and continuing years. Why is there such a big range? Ie 60-100 # N/ac in the first year? Because of differences in organic matter (OM) ie on continuous cropped fields without manure that might have 1.5 - 2% OM vs fields with continuous manure application that might have 5% OM. The availability for use of that organic N is also a factor. On wet soils much of that organic N may be lost to denitrification.

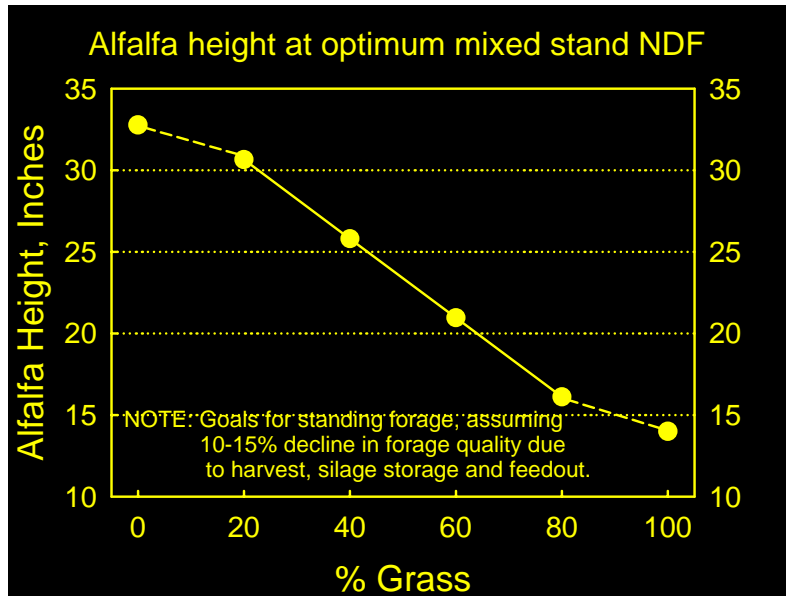
**Other considerations** now that fertilizer prices of N,P + K have been inverted. N was always the highest cost element and many of us applied manure at rates to meet crop N needs over supplying P+K in Corn production years and using that P+K in alfalfa production years. You should take soil tests in hay fields in the spring of the 3<sup>rd</sup> year of production to check the need for K. You may be able to reduce the purchase of high cost K fertilizer with manure K at modest rates ie 5 ton/ac semi-solid manure or 3000-4000 gals/ac. Be sure to apply manure within 1-3 days after harvest to reduce damage to alfalfa crowns. Another important consideration is soil pH. Corn requires a minimum of pH of 5.8. Atrazine performance is optimized at a pH of 6.5. Essential nutrients for corn production are most available at a pH of 6.5.

#### **Making High Quality Forage:**

##### **Cornell Cooperative Extension Hay quality monitoring program**

will begin the first week in May. Each Monday hay samples will be obtained from 4 or more local farms and sent overnight to Dairyone for analysis. The results will be posted each Wednesday including: NDF, crude protein, NEL etc. Additional information will be provided on each site: location, elevation, percentage of alfalfa, and alfalfa height. We report the increasing NDF at each site with the intention of providing local growers with an early warning system to help them time their individual harvest to optimize quality of the forages they harvest. If you would like a weekly report call me at 736-3394 ext. 120 and give me your fax number or email address.

Another way to estimate the time of harvest for your mixed alfalfa grass stand is to use this chart developed by research conducted by Jerry Cherney, Cornell University and field staff throughout New York. Estimate the percentage of grass in your stand, measure the height of the alfalfa in the stand and compare it to this chart:



**Corn Planting:** A number of local farmers attended a corn planter workshop co-sponsored by FS Growmark and Cooperative Extension this winter. Bruce Wright from SUNY Cobeskill showed participants how to evaluate the condition of all of the parts of the planter, when replacement was required and how to set up the planter for optimum performance. Jeff Case and Doug Wiegand discussed corn seed meter testing and corn meter precision parts. There was a corn planter maintenance checklist

**Hay in a day:** Rob Collins, Collins Knolls Farm in Chadwicks shared how his family has changed their method of hay harvest to improve the quality of their hay crop silage. First they make sure that the conditioner is set wide open to allow the forage to pass through the rollers without being crimped. A fresh cut alfalfa stem is like a straw that will allow a quicker rate of moisture loss from the stem if left uncrimped at least to 65% moisture. The Collins family also have changed their method of mowing for hay crop silage production. They have widened the swath to lay out a thinner mat of hay that is exposed to more light and heat increasing the rate of drying. They pick up the wide swath with a row merger and place 2 or more windrows together for pick-up by their chopper. This merging of windrows has saved them both time and fuel because the chopper isn't chasing every individual windrow in each field.

**Scouting alfalfa:** There are already reports from western NY of alfalfa weevil. You should check your better alfalfa fields for this pest. Alfalfa weevil feeding is indicated by pinholes in alfalfa leaflets. The standard procedure for scouting is to take 50 stems of alfalfa at random as you zig-zag across your field. If you have 20 of the 50 stems with even a single pinhole in them you should consider early harvest if you are within 10 days of harvest or use an appropriate insecticide. While you are out in your alfalfa fields you can check for crown heaving, suffocation, phytophthora and brown root rot.

**FSA Updates:**

**Disaster Buy-In Waiver Extension**

Producers who did not obtain crop insurance or Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) coverage for 2008 can pay a buy-in fee through May 18, 2009, to become eligible for 2008 disaster assistance programs authorized by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008.

Farmers have an additional opportunity to become eligible for several programs if they suffered 2008 agricultural losses due to natural disaster.

If you have not already taken the necessary steps to become eligible for the Supplemental Revenue Assistance Program (SURE), Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-Raised Fish (ELAP), and the Tree Assistance Program (TAP), you are required to complete the following steps by May 18, 2009:

Pay a \$100 "buy-in" fee per crop. The maximum fee is \$300 per county, per producer, not to exceed \$900 for multi-county producers.

In the case of each insurable crop, excluding grazing land, agree to obtain a policy or plan of insurance for the next insurance year for which crop insurance is available; coverage level should equal 70 percent or more of the yield at 100 percent of the price.

In the case of each non-insurable crop, agree to file the required paperwork and pay the applicable administrative NAP coverage fee by the applicable state application closing date for the next available year.

Those who choose to "buy in" under this provision will be considered, for insured crops, to have obtained a policy or plan of insurance for the 2008 crop year at a level of coverage not to exceed 70 percent of the yield at 100 percent of the price. For non-insurable crops, producers will be considered to have a level of coverage equal to 70 percent of the yield. These levels of coverage will be used to calculate the 2008 SURE guarantee.

<b>Selected Farm Loan Interest Rates for April 2009</b>	
Farm Operating Loans — Direct	2.25 %
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct	4.125 %
Farm Ownership Loans — Direct Down Payment, Beginning Farmer	1.50 %
Emergency Loans	3.75%

#### **IMPORTANT DATES**

Ongoing	CCRP \$ SAFE sign-ups
Ongoing	Farm Storage Facility Loans
May 31st	MAL Commodity Deadline
May 25th	Memorial Day
August 14th	2009 DCP & ACRE Deadline

#### **Acreage Reporting**

Acreage reporting time will soon be here. Filing an accurate acreage report for all crops and land uses, including failed acreage and prevented planting acreage, can prevent the loss of benefits for a variety of programs.

Failed acreage must be reported within 15 days of the disaster event and before disposition of the crop. Prevented planting must be reported no later than 15 days after the final planting date. Acreage reports are required for many Farm Service Agency programs. For crops other than NAP (Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program) crops, acreage reports are to be certified by the June 15th deadline on small grains and a July 15th deadline on all other crops.

If the crop has NAP coverage, the crop must be reported by the earlier of the reporting dates above or 15 calendar days before the onset of harvest or grazing.



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