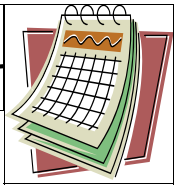
Farm Flashes

April 2007

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County

Mark Your Calendars…



Let's Get Started GRAZING!

Thursday, April 26th, 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. Location – Steve Pick's Farm, Westmoreland, NY. Cost – FREE, refreshments will be provided. For more information, contact Bill Paddock @ 736-3334 or wlpaddock@frontiernet.net. Sponsored by Oneida County SWCD and CCE Oneida County.

Both experienced and beginning grazers are welcome to join the Oneida County grazing group at the first pasture walk of the season. ***Pete Mapstone*** *of Syracuse will be the featured speaker on renovating and improving pasture and turning them into profitable, working, grazing paddocks. We'll also discuss how to determine when to start grazing – so you'll know if you need to run home and turn the cows out! Steve Pick will discuss how often he clips his pastures throughout the grazing season and how his weed control has improved.*

Oneida County Dairy Promotion Annual Dinner

With coronation of the 2007 Oneida County Dairy Princess – Friday, May 4, 7:30 PM. Location – Dibble's Inn, Vernon, NY. For tickets to the Pageant or for more information, call Mary Burkert @ 841-8979.

Farm Fest 2007

(formerly known as "Ag-Citement")

Friday, June 1st, 2007. Location: Taylor's Tayl-Wind Farm, Cassville, NY. Interested in helping or for more information, contact Heather at CCE at 736-3394 x 122.

Morning program (8AM-2PM): School bus trips, educational stations; Afternoon program (2-6PM): The Whole Family's Invited! C'mon Down! Booths and displays Pony Rides, Hayrides, Farm Tours, Hay Maze; Evening: Festivities – Family Fun/Celebrating the Farm Heritage, Barn Dance Square Dancing (featuring Oneida County Square Dancing Club), Traditional Country Dancing, Chicken BBQ and much more!

. **Mary L. Petrie Wrege,** joined Oneida County Cooperative Extension, on March 1st, sharing the Farm Business Manager role with Jim Manning. Growing up on a small dairy/dairy replacement farm in Clinton, Mary brings diverse experience and education back to Oneida County. Her professional career has included public policy and environmental law as it relates to agriculture, animal and plant industry regulation, biotechnology and crop sciences, crop insurance underwriting and rural land development and farmland retention programs. Mary now lives on the family farmstead with her husband Paul, and daughters Natalee and Camille. They also have a small nursery specializing in production and sales of varietal and native tree stock.

"I'm looking forward to using my technical discipline in the biological sciences, integrated pest management, natural resources, education and law to work with those individuals and/or farming operations in balancing their farm, work, and family demands."

Seeking "Silver Cow Award" and Dairy Farmer of the Year" Nominations

The Oneida County Dairy Promotion Committee is seeking nominations for awards to be given at their annual Dairy Princess Pageant on Friday, May 4, 2007. Nominations are being accepted for the Silver Cow Award which is given to a person that has shown exceptional dedication to Oneida County Dairy Promotion, the dairy industry and the promotion of dairy products. Nominations for Farmer of the Year will be taken for an Oneida County dairy farmer who has demonstrated exceptional dedication to the dairy industry and their community.

All letters of nomination will be accepted by Mary Burkert, 7799 Sally Road, Waterville, NY 13480.

Jim Manning, joined Oneida County Cooperative Extension, on February 1st, as the Farm Business Manager. Jim has an MBA from the University of Michigan as well as an undergraduate degree in Spanish from Middlebury College. After a career in magazine publishing and trade shows, Jim returned to the area and has been raising organic vegetables, grass-fed meat and eggs on the Ferris Farm in the town of Russia (Herkimer County). Jim also launched and manages the Trenton Farmers' Market in Barneveld, and is an active member of his town's Planning Board. At CCE, Jim is working with several Oneida County farmers on the Cornell Dairy Farm Business Summary and will be developing other programs over time.

"I'm looking forward to working with the Ag Community in Oneida County. I hope I can bring new business perspectives that will help farms survive and thrive in a difficult climate."

Watch Out For Variability in Ethanol Products

New ethanol plants coming online means more sources of distillers grains. However, that also means more potential for variability in the product. In addition to wet and dry milling, some new ethanol plants are using a new dry-milling process that fractionates the corn prior to the starch entering the fermentation chamber. This substantially changes the composition of the distillers grains. Crude protein goes up, while NDF, fat and phosphorus all go down. This variation in feed composition increases risk and comes with a cost. **Bottom-line: Test before you feed, and when comparison-shopping, ask about the production method used as well as the price.**

Taken from Dairy Alert from Dairy Herd Management, 1/31/2007

Choosing Your Electricity Supplier for Your Farm

Choosing an electricity supplier can be a frustrating, confusing and expensive experience if you're not careful. Larger dairy farms can be fairly sizable users of electricity, but whether you're milking 50 cows or 500 cows, your energy costs take a big chunk out of your bottom line. The Jefferson County Agricultural Development Corporation (JCADC) has worked with a few dairy farms in the past, reviewing electric bills and comparing rates charged by Electricity Supply Companies (ESCOs) and those charged by National Grid for electricity supplied to the farm. In every case, the ESCOs price was higher than what would have been paid to National Grid. Sometimes the price was $.02 to $.03 higher resulting in hundreds of dollars more being paid for electricity supply over a years time.

This week, JCADC received a call from a local dairy farm indicating they had been receiving numerous phone calls from an ESCO indicating it could save the farm money with a cheap introductory rate that would last for a few months time. The farm called JCADC asking if there was anyplace, or anyone to turn to for more information on what ESCOs are available and what their rates are.

Here's what we recommend:

1. Try to request documentation on what rates were charged over the previous year for the same use class as your farm in the same service area. Make sure they provide their standard rates charged after the introductory period expires. Pull out your old electric bills and compare the rates for the same period. Try to do this for at least a one year period. Will they save you money?

2. Does the ESCO offer you a service not available through your current electricity supplier? Some ESCOs offer long term rate stabilization, some as long as two to three years. The rate may not be cheaper, but the fact that the rate will stay the same over a long term may appeal to some farm businesses. Choose what is best for your business needs.

3. Visit the New York Public Service Commissions website for choosing energy suppliers, www.dps.state.ny.us/EnergySupplyChoices.html. The site provides excellent information about choosing energy suppliers for your home or business. Learn what you can about the energy supply system in NY to make better informed decisions.

4. For a list of energy suppliers in your service area visit http://www3.dps.state.ny.us/e/esco6.nsf/ on the Public Service Commission's website. There you can enter whether you're looking for natural gas or electricity and who is your

utility company, National Grid in Jefferson County's case. A list will pop up that provides the names of all the ESCOs covering that area. You can visit each website and learn what advantages one company might offer over another.
5. If you can't access this information over the internet, call the Public Service Commission at 1-800-342-3377. They have an automated phone system so you'll have to listen carefully to the menu options and punch a few numbers in until you get a live voice. We found the person we spoke to was very helpful, once we got the live voice.

6. Go to National Grid's website http://www.nationalgridus.com/niagaramohawk/business/rates/rates.asp to compare rates of what you're paying now to what National Grid electricity supply rates are.

Provided by Jay Matteson, Jefferson County Agricultural Development Corporation

Pasture Management Tips

It's almost transition time, that is, time to transition your animals on to pasture sometime in the next few weeks. Dairy farmers need to be especially careful about transitioning, or milk production may take a hit. Remember that switching from stored feeds to pasture is like changing silos - the rumen bugs need time to adjust to a higher quality feed. Even other kinds and classes of livestock need to make the shift, but you don't generally see the effect of no transition time causing lower production - they usually make up the difference in growth later in the season.

Best bets are to begin the transition when the grass is only 3 or 4 inches tall - unless the ground is so wet that they'll sink up to the hocks. Transitioning at the shorter height sets up your "grazing wedge" - in other words, it begins the process of getting the grass staged to be grazed at the right height throughout the grazing season. If you wait to turn out until it's 6 to 8 inches tall, you've set yourself up for a lot more clipping or haying, because the animals will never catch up with it. The shorter starting height also limits intake, and so helps the rumen bugs adjust over the first week or two on grass.

Struggling to meet your farm's labor needs?

Recently, the New York Farm Bureau reported a strong increase in labor cost trends to attract and retain farm labor throughout New York State. Oneida County is no exception, with local farmers reporting similar concerns. On the other side of the coin, the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees (MVRCR) is currently resettling refugees from Burma in Utica, who are in need of suitable employment. Of notable interest, the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) indicates that 70% of the Burmese population is employed in agriculture and agricultural processing in their native country. The light manufacturing jobs refugees have tended to be placed in are leaving the area and although agricultural operations in Burma differ from those in Oneida County, these refugees' farming experience may make agricultural jobs a viable, alternative for their long-term employment. MVRCR, the Oneida County Farm Bureau and Cooperative Extension have partnered to explore opportunities for our region's farmers to meet their labor needs, while helping Utica's refugee populations meet their employment needs at the same time.

Many of the farmers that we met with so far were aware of the specifics of immigrant labor from Mexico and Guatemala, but had misconceptions regarding refugees' work eligibility. It is important to note that refugees have a specific immigration status that is different from that of someone who enters the U.S. on a student, fiancée, or work visa. Because of their distinct status, upon their arrival in the U.S. refugees are issued official work authorization for full-time employment. They are registered with Social Security within the first week of arriving in Utica and typically receive their SS number within a month. It is also worth noting that, unlike immigrant labor, refugees generally do not return to their native countries. They are trying to establish new lives in the U.S., and after life in a refugee camp (a stay of 10-15 years in a camp is not uncommon), refugees tend to have a strong work ethic and be highly motivated to become self-sufficient.

MVRCR has agreed to identify refugees interested in agricultural related careers, provide interpreting and translation services, job coaching, ongoing cultural orientations, and a host of other needed services for fostering sustainable employment. CCE has agreed to refer farmers in need of labor to MVRCR, and provide farm tours to introduce refugees to Oneida County farming. CCE will also provide tractor safety certification (this certification is a CCE program traditionally offered for area youth), provide financial literacy education, and other programming as deemed appropriate. MVRCR and CCE will work together to identify other services available on an individual basis such as on-the-job training from the Workforce Investment Board and rent subsidies.

We recognize that each farm and each individual refugee will have specific needs and unique situations that will need to be addressed. Such challenges may include transportation, housing, and the language barrier. On a positive note, many farms

have on-site housing available which could help reduce the need for transportation. We are interested in exploring all situations where there is a labor need including the needs of smaller farms that may not require a full time worker, but who can identify a neighboring farm that would be in a similar situation and willing to share an employee.

If you would like to learn more about this opportunity and see if your labor needs may be able to be met through this initiative, you may contact Ron Bunce at Cooperative Extension (315) 736-3394 ext 101 or Daniel Sargent at the Mohawk Valley Resource Center for Refugees at (315) 738-1083 ext 103.

Is BMR Silage Corn for you?

With farmers and growers under constant pressure to manage their operations with respect to milk prices, it is more important than ever to get more milk for your input dollars. There are options to consider when selecting corn hybrids and varieties. There is increased discussion about brown mid-rib (BMR) hybrids on the market. These hybrids can yield lower lignin content, higher fiber digestibility and higher dry-matter intake. The lack of lignin affects rumen digestibility.

Prior to making commitments to BMR hybrids, there are several considerations to keep in mind.

1. Increased management of rations, whether mixed or segregated silages and bunker management, feeding stages of cows.
2. Seed cost is higher than conventional
3. Stand population
4. Site preparation/soil type/droughty soils
5. Rotation of BMR after sod/insect tolerance
6. Lodging of stalks because of reduced lignin
7. Offset yield with increased milk response

For other BMR performance considerations, contact Jeff Miller at 736-3394 ext120

Crop Shorts

By Jeff miller

Weed identification: Many of you know that you have specific weed problems on specific fields. One set of fields might have field bindweed while another group may have quackgrass or nutsedge along with some more common annual grass and broadleaf weeds. Others may not be that familiar with identification of their weed problems. You can always feel free to give me a call at 736-3394 ext 120 to help you identify your weeds, talk to your ag service person, a consultant or purchase a good weed id book. Here are a few of my favorites, they can be found in most book stores or on amazon.com:

Newcombs Guide to wild flower identification by Lawrence Newcomb available through amazon.com at $13.59. Easy key system based on flower type, plant type and leaves , good for identification of weeds you don't normally expect to see in crop fields.

Weeds of the Northeast by Richard H. Uva, Joseph C. Neal and Joseph M. DiTomaso, has many of our common weeds, color plates, pictures of weeds from immature to mature stages, good descriptions. Approximately $29.00

The identification guide to the weeds of Quebec created by Claude J. Bouchard, Romain Neron and Louise Guay. Most of our common weeds, excellent color plates of each weed at different stages of development, reasonable descriptions. Good weed keys and pictures of cotyledons of seedling plants. Produced in Canada: 418-523-5411 easiest to purchase using a credit card because of exchange rate.

How identifying weeds can save you money: If Yyou know what your major weed issues are on a field by field basis you can start to look at specific herbicide programs that will address those specific weed issues. Now I state major weed problems because in any given field you may have some minor weed issues as well that will not impact crop yield. The following are some examples of herbicide combinations that will work on some identified weed situations. I have used in season jug prices for cost comparisons.

If you had just **annual grass and broadleaf weeds** including triazine resistant lambsquarter and velvet leaf you could apply

Prowl 3.3 EC (3.6pts/ac) + atrazine 4L (1qt) pre emergence at	$17.79/ac or
Lumax (2.5qts) + atrazine 4L (1pt) pre emergence at	$39.21/ac or
Steadfast ATZ (14oz) + Banvel (4oz) post emergence at	$25.72/ac.
Roundup Weathermax (220z) + $13 tech fee/ac + 1qt atrazine	$26.94/ac

If you **add nutsedge** to the list of weeds above, you can choose between

Bicep Lite II Magnum (1.9 qt) + Prowl 3.3EC (3.6pt) at	$40.78 or
Lumax (2.5qts) + atrazine 4L (1pt) at	$39.21/ac or
Cinch Lite (2.1qt) + Prowl 3.3EC (3.6pt) at	$35.66/ac
Roundup Weathermax (220z) + $13 tech fee/ac + Yukon 2oz	$29.10/ac

If You have **annual grasses and broadleaf weeds and some perennial broadleaf weeds** you could apply:

Prowl 3.3 EC (3.6pts/ac)+atrazine 4L (1qt) pre-emergence + Banvel post(0.5pt)$34.58/ac (includes $13/ac for second spray application by custom applicator)

Steadfast ATZ (14oz) + Banvel (4oz) post emergence at $25.72/ac.

Roundup Weathermax (220z) + $13 tech fee/ac + Banvel(4oz) postemergence $24.92/ac

If You have **annual grasses and broadleaf weeds and quackgrass** you could apply:

Steadfast ATZ (14oz) + Banvel (4oz) post emergence at $25.72/ac.

Roundup Weathermax (220z) + $13 tech fee/ac + Banvel (4oz) postemergence $24.92/ac

* Note that these two options will probably result in suppression of the quackgrass not control. The best time to control quackgrass is a fall application. Higher rates may be needed depending upon the age of the quackgrass.

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BROADLEAF																								
ANNUALS																								
Wild Buckwheat		E	G	P	P	P	F	P	E	E	E		E		E	E				G				E
Common Lambsquarter		E	G	P	P	F	E	E	E*	E*	E		E	P	E	E	G	F	G	E	P	F	P	E
Wild Mustard		E	G	P	N	P	F	G	E	E	E		E	G	E	G	N	G	F	F	F	G	F	E
Redroot Pigweed		E	G	G	G	G	F	E	E	E*	E		E	G	E	G	G	G	G	P	G	G	P	E
Common Ragweed		E	G	P	P	P	P	F	G	E	E		E	P	E	G	G	E	P	F	E	P	F	E
Velvetleaf		F	F	N	N	N	G	E	G	E	G		G	P	F	G	G	G	E	G	E	G	E	E
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Crabgrass		P	G	E	E	E	E	F	E	E	E		F	F	P	N	F	P	N	N	N	N	N	E
Foxtails		F	G	E	E	E	E	N	E	E	E		G	G	F	N	G	F	N	N	N	N	N	E
Fall Panicum		P	G	E	E	E	E	N	E	E	E		G	F	P	N	G	F	N	N	N	N	N	E
Witchgrass		E	G	E	E	E	E	N	E	E	E		G		F	N			N	N	N	N	N	E
Corn Tolerance		E	E	G	G	G	G	G	G	G*	G		G	G	G	G	F	G	G	G	G	G	G	?
Wirestem muhly																								E
Quackgrass													E	E	G	N	F	E						E
Nutsedge (yellow)				G		G			G	E			G	F	F	N	F	F			E			G

This chart shows the ratings of how well some common herbicides control a list of common annual grasses and broadleaf weeds plus a few common perennial grasses.

Timing of Roundup (glyphosate) / When to add residuals for corn weed control: Russ Hahn, Cornell University weed scientist has run a number of plot studies to help answer this question. Many growers have significant acreage of corn and may not be able to spray all fields at the ideal time to obtain optimal weed control with glyphosate alone. Russ notes that if a grower can spray all of their acreage when annual weeds around 4" tall that they will achieve good weed control with little or no impact on yield. When growers cant achieve these objectives he suggests starting spraying activities earlier (when weeds are 2-4 inches tall) and adding half rates of pre-emergence combinations to the full rate of glyphosate to obtain optimal weed control in RR corn production. Russ recommends switching to glyphosate only when weeds are 4" tall.

What do you have to know about the different Glyphosate products. Russ Hahn, Cornell Weed Specialist, did 2 years of research where he evaluated weed control by a number of glyphosate products under normal field conditions and under conditions where weeds were stressed. Glyphosate the active ingredient in products like Roundup, Touchdown Total and Credit Extra is taken up by weeds and moves within the systems of the plant until it reaches the point where it has its action. If the weeds are stressed, uptake and movement of the active ingredient may be affected ultimately

Glyphosate Products						
	lbs	Annual weeds			Ground	
	active	In corn	rainfast	Add AMS	Appl. Equi	
Product name	gal	Rate/ac ounces	period	Lbs/100gal	Gals/ac	surfactant
Roundup Original	4	24	6hrs	8.5-17	3-40	yes
Roundup Original max	5.5	16-22	1-2hrs	8.5-17	3-40	Yes+
Roundup Weathermax	5.5*4.5	16-22	?	8.5-17	3-40	Fully loaded
Touchdown Total	4.17	24-48	30 min?	8.5-17	3-40	Fully loaded
Touchdown High Tech	**5.	10-36	?	8.5-17	3-40	NO
Credit	3	#	#	#	#	
Credit Extra	4	24	6hrs	8.5-17	3-40	yes
*Actual rate of application increases with increasing size of annual weeds and is higher for perennials						
**Weatherrmax salt vs. acid equivalents, high Tech Only acid equivalents						
Price comparisons should be made on a per acre basis						

reducing the effectiveness of control.

The results of Russ's trials showed that all of the products worked well under optimal conditions. He noted that the fully loaded products like Touchdown Total and Roundup Weathermax killed the weeds quicker than the other glyphosate products but ultimately there were no differences in yield.

To assess which of the glyphosate products may be the best buy you can look at the chart. Find out the price of the product per gallon. Divide that by 128 oz per gallon and multiply the price per oz by the recommended rate in oz/ac to find out the cost per acre.

One additional thing to note in the chart. All of the glyphosate products recommend the use of spray grade AMS (ammonium sulfate). It is a really good idea to add this when using glyphosate to optimize its effectiveness. In addition if you are currently applying glyphosate in 20 gallons of water per acre seriously consider buying a set of tips to deliver it at 10 gallons per acre (40 ft boom approximately $125 to replace tips) this will significantly improve weed control.

Can you reduce tillage and maintain crop production? Growers say yes !!! Farmers who have switched from conventional tillage (moldboard plowing, disk, harrow) to strip tillage say that they have reduced labor, machinery and fuel costs without impacting yield. What is strip tillage and why is it working for local growers? A strip tiller is a piece of equipment that has the ability to break through pans developed by tillage or fragipans located within 20" of the soil surface while loosening up soil at the surface in a strip approximately 8" wide by 4" deep where your seed is to be planted. This is accomplished in one pass with a strip tiller.

The strip tiller is composed of row cleaners at the front of the unit that can clear heavy residue to create a bare soil zone that warms up quicker than soil under heavy residue. The row cleaners are followed by a series of large wavy coulters that cut through any remaining residue and till up the seed zone in a strip 8" wide by 4 " deep. The coulters are followed by a straight shank that can be set to a depth a few inches below

the pan in your soil, breaking the pan, creating a channel to improve drainage and providing a place for roots to grow down into the soil. The shank is followed by a pair of disk blades positioned to catch any soil thrown up by the shank to keep all soil within the narrow strip and finally followed by a rolling basket that breaks up any remaining clods in the strip creating a good seedbed for planting. Suggested power requirements for a strip tiller with a 24" shank are 40 horse power per shank.

SWCD of Madison County is providing access to a six row strip tiller to a few farmers in the Oneida Lake watershed this season. I will be working with them on a few demonstrations (at least one at planting and one near harvest) this year. I will provide readers with notice of the events. Yield, cost of production and labor requirements will be compared for large field production under strip till vs conventional till. In addition we will be assessing placement of liquid N with N preservative at 8" depth with the strip tiller at the time planting.

NYSDEC Update: At a recent meeting John Gracey from NYSDEC said that one significant update pesticide applicators should be aware of is the labeling of containers. He stated that NYSDEC is taking the view that **sprayers and nurse tanks that contain pesticides on vehicles that leave your property** must now have a label attached to them. That means that you should duct tape a copy of the labels of the products that are in the tank to your tank. You also have to write the total quantity of each herbicide in your original mixture in the tank on the label. As an example if you mixed enough Lumax 2.5qts /ac and atrazine 4L 1pt /ac in a 500 gal tank to spray 25 acres you would write 15.6 gallons on the Lumax label and 3.1 gallons on the atrazine label that were duct taped to the tank. When you changed over for Roundup applications you would tear off these labels and replace them with a Roundup label and the quantity of it that you mixed in the tank. The labeling only has to be done if you are traveling on the roads not if you remain on your own property. Please be aware of this change.
If you need to print a label you can go to this webpage and enter the name of the product and after a series of steps print out the full label.
http://pmep.cce.cornell.edu/pims/current/PNL.html

Fertilizer Prices are Up: MAP (monammonium phosphate) 13-52-0 is going to be your highest priced fertilizer per ton this season exceeding $500/ton; an increase of 42% over last season. The good news is that if you have been applying manure and/ or triple goods on your fields for years you probably have built up an ample supply of phosphorus. Several years of research on several sites across NY by Cornell showed that if you have very high levels of soil test phosphorus (STP) determined by Cornell's soil test then you don't need to add any P fertilizer and if you have high STP and apply manure you also don't need to add any phosphorus fertilizer. Taking soil samples and applying P based on soil test recommendations can save many $$$ on your fertilizer bill.

A recent round of calls indicate that N fertilizer prices are also up significantly with Urea priced near $500/ton (29% increase over last year), Nytan priced above $300/ton (21% increase), and ammonium sulfate at about $260/ ton. Management of N is more important than it ever has been. Some things to consider:

- Set realistic yield goals and base total N needs on those goals
- Account for other sources of N that may be contributing toward crop needs
- Manure analysis, rate per acre
- Crop history, crop residue contribution
- Soil organic matter contribution

- Calculate fertilizer N needs after accounting for other sources and apply rates that meet crop needs
- Determining which fertilizer is most cost effective that fits your system
- Consider an N preservative if economical

Corn N: Corn N requirements can be calculated: Corn bu/ac x 1.2lbs of N per bu = Corn N requirement

Example for a field with a yield of 125 bu/ac: 125 (bu) x 1.2 lbs of N per bu= 150lbs of N

For silage the calculation is tons of corn silage(35%dm) x 7.2 lbs of N per ton of corn silage= N requirement

Example for a field with a 20ton/ac yield: 20 (tons) x 7.2(lbs/ton) = 144lbs of N

Not all of the fertilizer you apply is taken up by the plant. Each soil has its own efficiency in use of fertilizer N. A lima soil has an efficiency of 70%. So for 67lbs of N to be taken up by the plant you need to apply 67lbs/ 0.70 efficiency = 95 lbs of N as fertilizer.

67lbs of N needed / 70% fertilizer efficiency = 95 lbs of fertilizer N required.

Example field: 20 acre field, lima silt loam 4th year corn, 15 tons/ac of manure (daily spread). How much fertilizer N needs to be applied?

Potential yield is 140 bu/ac so…. 140 x 1.2= 168lbs of N required

N from soil: 70lbs	(research based information: N supplying capacity by soil type: website: http://nmsp.css.cornell.edu/index.asp
N from sod: 0	(table in last farm flash)
N from manure: 31	(from manure sample 6lbs of organic N /ton x 35% available in first yr x tons)

168lbs of N needed – 70lbs N soil=98- 31lbs of N from manure=67lbs of N

Does it pay to apply nitrogen on grass fields: Ev Thomas of Miner Institute did some research recently where he showed reed canarygrass yields with no N at 0.92 tons/A, and with 100 # N/A, 1.86 tons/acre. From a yield standpoint alone, assuming $120/ton for good quality grass hay, thats 0.9 tons or $108.00 for an investment of about $50 of urea. That's better than a 2:1 payback. But then there's quality: CP with no N was 11.6%; with 100# N it was 19.6%. Ev said that you'd have to ask a ruminant nutritionist what another 8 points of crude protein is worth, but he figured that the total payback for 100 lbs of N is three times the cost. Dale Dewing did some similar research where reed canarygrass had economic yield responses to 100lbs of N at greenup and 50lbs of N after each harvest.

FSA update: A reminder that Oneida county has been designated a disaster because of high snowfall rates and damage that occurred in February. If you have any damage to farm buildings as a result of those storms please contact FSA at 736-3316. Make sure you take pictures of the damage.

Do you need NYSDEC pesticide credits or want to learn more about soybean production? Cooperative Extension is looking for farmers that grow soybeans and want to learn more about best management practices in soybean production and soybean pest management. We will meet 4-5 times during the growing season on participants' farms to hit timely topics and identify potential problems. Participants will earn 8 NYSDEC credits. A grant will provide weekly scouting for one of your fields throughout the growing season and immediate reports of any problems. If you are interested contact Jeff at 736-3394 ext 120.

TO WILL OR NOT TO WILL?
THE GOOD, BAD, AND THE UGLY!

We hope that you will live to a ripe old age, but accidents do kill people everyday. It could happen to anyone, even you. When a person dies, you leave a variety of assets, such as real estate, household effects, jewelry, furs, paintings, antiques, clothing, rugs, furniture, china, silverware, automobiles, cash and securities. Without a will, you leave trouble, costly legal expense, higher estate and inheritance taxes, and more likely, chaos. With a will, you leave peace of mind and tranquility.

DISADVANTAGES OF NOT LEAVING A WILL

1. You lose the privilege of naming your executor. This could hurt and also be expensive.
2. You lose the privilege of naming a guardian for your children, according to most state laws. This is important, especially if your spouse is not living.
3. Your children may have to wait from 1 to 5 years to get what is left.
4. You lose the benefit of reducing your estate and inheritance taxes.
5. Your survivors may become involved in unnecessary and costly probate matters.
6. Your estate could be more complicated to settle and this costs money.
7. Your wishes, desires and advice cannot be passed on. They go with you.
8. Your assets could go, if there is no immediate family, to persons you never intended to get it.
9. In short, you leave a mess.

ADVANTAGES OF LEAVING A WILL

1. Your wishes, desires and advice are carefully carried out.
2. You save on estate and inheritance taxes.
3. You name your own executor to carry out your orders.
4. Your assets go to the right people-no mistakes.
5. You specify the amounts you wish to give.
6. You save on leagal and probate expenses.
7. Your family is not disturbed with details.
8. In short, you leave everything neat and clean.

EXECUTOR vs. ADMINISTRATOR

If you leave a will (Testate) the person or bank you name to settle your estate is called – EXECUTOR.
If you leave no will (Intestate) the person or person or bank appointed by the State to settle you estate is called – ADMINISTRATOR.
Do you want an Executor or an Administrator? It's your decision to make. For your family's sake, act now! Make an appointment with your attorney, accountant, banker and insurance agent as soon as possible.

(*Taken from DOME Simplified Home Budget Book by Nicholas Picchone CPA)*

What Else Should You Consider Because of High Corn Prices (Haven't we been here before?)

By David R. Balbian, Area Dairy Management Specialist with the CNY Dairy & Field Crops Team

1. Monitor your margin. Don't get so hung up on trying to have a low purchased feed cost as a percent of milk sales or per cwt. It's the margin that's important! The money left over after paying the feed bill is what's important. That's the cash you have available to pay the rest of the bills. For 2005 the net milk income minus purchased feed cost (for farms buying all their grain) for farms participating in the Cornell Dairy Farm Business Summary was $2,545 per cow per year. 2006 numbers are expected to be down by around $800 per cow. If we use 2006 data as our starting point the DFBS data tells us that the average margin per cow per day would be $4.78. That's for all cows (milking and dry) and includes not only cow grain, but also all minerals, dry cow grain, calf & heifer grain, and milk replacer.

2. Increase Corn Silage feeding rates if your inventory will allow you to do so. This will allow you to cut corn grain in the diet. Be sure you have enough to last until next crop. Running out of C.S. in the summer can really hurt you, so budget your usage accordingly. Of course most people are short on C.S. this year because of last year's growing season. Makes it a catch-22 situation.

3. Plant more corn this year. This may or may not be feasible, depends on your specific situation. Will your CAFO or Conservation plan allow it? Do you have the kind of soils that will allow you to grow more corn profitably? Again, if you haven't already ordered your seed corn you may not be able to get the seed to plant more acres this year!

4. Increase chop height this fall to increase the grain concentration. Another idea that has that "it all depends" attached to it. This can only work if you have excess inventory to play with.

5. Use a kernel processor on C.S. You may utilization some and reduce your reliance on corn grain.

6. Consider growing some BMR corn if you haven't tried it before. This assumes you can get some seed, that you can store it separately, and that you have the acres to do it.

7. Harvest very high quality hay crop this spring. This is the old better quality forage story; however, it will really pay extra big dividends this year. Get yourself ready for spring cropping early and don't' miss those small windows of opportunity. It will pay off big this year!

8. Test your forages frequently, allocate it to your best advantage, and keep rations balanced and fine tuned. Know what you have and feed the best to the highest producers.

9. Scrutinize all "the extras" that you may have added to your ration. They may be paying, but be sure.

10. Evaluate "feed shrink" and do what you can to reduce it. Shrink refers to grain you bought that never reached the cow's mouth. Spillage, spoilage, and simple feeding inaccuracies can all add up to some big numbers by the end of the year.

11. Target your feeding. I'm often surprised to find some farms that don't know precisely how much milk each cow is making. With component fed cows or with a TMR this lack of information can cost you in wasted grain and/or lost milk production
that is not achieved. You need to know what she's making to feed her properly!

12. Ask your nutritionist for help. They may have ideas that you can implement. They may be able to run some "least cost" scenarios that you should consider. Most of the time there are no bargains out there. Ingredient prices tend to track corn and soy prices. Partial diet replacements often end up costing the same per cow per day. However, sometimes
opportunities do arise. Take advantage of them when they come up.

13. Keep your supplier on their toes. It doesn't hurt to do some comparisons with other
suppliers. You may be surprised as to the differences out there. Remember to include the cost of service (and it's value) when comparing prices. A small cash savings may be all lost with no or poor nutritional support.

14. Don't' forget that item #1 is the most important! After doing all the steps, increasing milk production per cow is how you will increase your margin per cow.

Ag Staff Available To Assist You:

CCE of Oneida County has a staff of professionals ready to assist you. We are available to answer questions, consult with you on various issues, problem-solve, provide information and resources, conduct workshops and seminars on a multitude of topics and more. Our goal is to provide you with the information and resources you need to improve yourself, your farm business, your family, and your life.

Jeff Miller, Asst. Director for Agriculture Programming, Agronomy & Field Crops— ext 120, email jjm14@cornell.edu

Heather Sweeney, Dairy & Livestock Production ext.122, email hes7@cornell.edu

Marty Broccoli, Ag Economic Development Program Director ext 121, email mjb83@cornell.edu

Jim Manning Farm Business Manager ext129, email jpm277@cornell.edu

Mary L. Petrie Wrege Farm Business Manager ext 131, email mpw15@cornell.edu

PROGRESS OF THE FARM BUSINESS
Same 60 New York Dairy Farms, 2005 & Preliminary 2006

Selected Factors	Average of 60 Farms* 2005	2006
Size of Business		
Average number of cows	390	405
Average number of heifers	298	324
Milk sold, pounds	9,112,371	9,505,816
Worker equivalent	8.91	9.02
Total tillable acres	777	806
Rates of Production		
Milk sold per cow, pounds	23,377	23,493
Hay dry matter per acre, tons	3.3	3.1
Corn silage per acre, tons	20	18
Labor Efficiency		
Cows per worker	44	45
Milk sold per worker, pounds	1,022,713	1,053,860
Cost Control		
Grain & concentrate per cwt. milk	$4.04	$4.07
Grain & concentrate purchased as % of milk sales	25%	29%
Dairy feed & crop expense per cwt. milk	$5.00	$5.06
Labor & machinery costs per cow	$1,319	$1,333
Purchased input cost of producing cwt. of milk	$13.18	$13.32
Total cost of producing cwt. of milk	$15.02	$15.19
Operating cost of producing cwt. of milk	$11.76	$11.96
Net milk price	$15.31	$13.01
Capital Efficiency**		
Farm capital per cow	$7,317	$7,603
Machinery & equipment per cow	$1,307	$1,328
Asset turnover ratio	0.64	0.54
Profitability		
Net farm income without appreciation	$263,213	$46,008
Net farm income per cow without appreciation	$675	$114
Net farm income with appreciation	$400,426	$147,114
Net farm income per cow with appreciation	$1,027	$364
Labor & management income per operator/manager	$107,177	$-40,093
Rate of return on equity capital with appreciation	17.5%	3.5%
Rate of return on equity capital without appreciation	10.2%	-1.5%
Rate of return on all capital with appreciation	13.2%	4.4%
Rate of return on all capital without appreciation	8.4%	1.1%
Financial Summary		
Farm net worth, end year	$2,002,294	$2,036,408
Debt to asset ratio	0.33	0.35
Farm debt per cow	$2,520	$2,687
Debt coverage ratio	2.00	0.84

*Farms participating both years.
**Average for the year.

Cornell has released the following comparative information for 2006 vs. 2005 for 60 dairy farms participating in the statewide Dairy Farm Business Summary program in both years. (seen on the left) The decline in milk prices in 2006 obviously represented the most serious challenge for many farmers.

Looking forward, while milk prices may improve, farmers will be considering ways to keep costs under control. The increased cost of purchased feed since late 2006 should cause many farmers to look carefully at the costs and benefits of raising more of their own grain feeds. CCE staff can help with that analysis.

Further information from the Dairy Farm Business Summary will be available over the coming weeks as well.

AGRI*CULTURE Map Listing Deadline

May 7

If your Oneida County farm enterprise helps promote or showcase rural lifestyles, landscapes and/or products, and you market goods and/or services directly to the public, you are invited to be included on the Oneida County AGRI*CULTURE road map.

This includes farm tours & demonstrations, farm stands, you-picks, horseback riding, nature trails, event sites, etc. The map will identify your location and provide information about your business FREE of charge. 100,000 copies will be distributed free to the public.

For additional information about the project, map listing, or your

What are the Costs to Grow a Ton of Feed, from an Agronomist's Perspective

by Janice Degni*

Why should you bother to figure out the costs to grow a ton of feed? You have to feed the animals and you'll spend what it takes. That's one way to look at crop costs. Another perspective says you can't manage what you can't measure. It really doesn't matter whether the price cycle is up or down, better decisions can be made when costs are known. If prices are low, then expenses that don't give a payback can be lowered. When prices are high, profit margins will be even greater. An objective of most crop programs is to optimize yield and capture quality from the farm's mix of resources (soil, labor, machinery ...) all at a reasonable cost. We all know the more nutritious and digestible the feed the more flexibility there is when formulating a ration and at a lower overall cost. Containing feed costs is important, maybe critical while we deal with high and climbing grain costs.

What are the costs of silage production?
How do the costs influence farm profit?
What can be done to reduce costs & improve farm profits?

Budgets provide an indispensable tool for guiding expenses. When followed they can help keep expenses within an affordable level. Since none of us have limitless resources, our best decision is to put our money where it will have the greatest benefit. Tracking expenses over time is useful to compare actual expenses to planned expenses, so that budgets can be adjusted in future years. Paper budgets are available, but spreadsheet budgets have the advantage of offering sensitivity analysis, instantaneously calculating the impact of changes in costs or yields.

You can't figure the actual costs to produce a ton of home grown feed without tracking and recording expenses. Out of pocket costs are fairly easy to track. The various receipts from the season's vendors can be collected and compiled. The costs that go into directly establishing a crop – seed, lime, fertilizer and pesticides also known as variable costs because they change according to the amounts of inputs used. Fixed costs such as land costs, taxes or rental are also included in crop budgets. Variable costs give us a starting point, but to gather all costs one has to dig deeper. Machinery costs are the most difficult to pinpoint and quantify. As a first estimate custom rates can be used, but actual costs are likely to be very different. General rules of thumb are not very reliable because lines of equipment vary so much from farm to farm.

The variable crop related expenses of fertilizer, lime, seed, spray and other reported in the 2005 NYS Dairy Farm Business Summary ranged from $31acre to $69/acre and $19 to $20 per ton of dry matter for alfalfa and $115 to $150/acre and $20-$29/ton of dry matter for corn silage.

In a study from the University of Wisconsin, forage production costs were measured using the Dairy Farm Forage System software (DAFOSYM). The estimated costs to produce a ton of dry matter for different crops for a 100-cow farm are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. DAFOSYM Cost Estimates

Crop	Cost /Ton of dry matter
Alfalfa Silage*	$76-$120 average=$85
Corn Silage	$60-$124 average=$74
Dry Hay ⊗	$83-$167 average=$100
Managed Pasture#	$26-$42 average=$30
*The largest cost-machinery, next largest cost-storage	
⊗The major cost-machinery & labor. More cost effective when machinery used for 3 or more cuttings per year.	
#Machinery & equipment ½ cost.	

The equivalent as-fed costs would be $32/ton for haylage and $42/ton for corn silage.

Machinery expenses are a too often ignored cost of crop production. They are made up of variable and fixed costs also. Variable costs change with use (repairs, fuel and lubricants). Fixed costs do not change whether you work 1 ac or 500 acres and include ownership costs like cost of borrowed money, interest, insurance and storage.

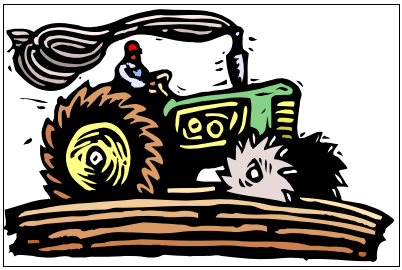
According to information collected by the New York State Dairy Farm Business Summary, dairy farm machinery investment has been approximately 20% of the total farm investment. Table 3 shows average accrual machinery expenses for 215 NY Dairy Farms in 2005.

Table 3. Accrual Machinery Expenses, 215 New York Dairy Farms, 2005

	Average 215 Farms		Average Top 10% Farms*	
Machinery Expense Item	Total Expenses	Per Tillable Acre	Total Expenses	Per Tillable Acre
Fuel, oil & grease	$42,763	$56.81	$89,959	$64.85
Machinery repairs & vehicle expense	$63,925	$84.92	$125,029	$90.15
Machine hire, rent & lease	$21,370	$28.39	$52,897	$38.14
Interest (5%)	$22,809	$30.30	$36,062	$26.00
Depreciation	$65,684	$87.15	$114,665	$82.68
Total	$216,471	$287.57	$418,592	$301.82

*Average of 20 farms with highest rates of return to all capital (without appreciation).

Source: Business Summary New York State 2005. October 2006. R.B. 2006-06.



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Oneida County

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