

# Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County's

# *Farm Flash*



Christopher, Patricia & John Hughes

The Hughes family does not plan to sell off their farmland. Right now they work with other farmers interested in the use of their land, and hope to keep farming in the area for many years to come.

Future options? The Hughes family is making plans and at this time all of them are on the table. Learning how to sleep in with out waking up to milk the cows is a first priority.

The Brimfield Farm, a 3rd generation farm, in Clinton NY, was run and maintained as a family farm, home to around 40 cows, and 148 acres of land.

The Hughes family, with the help of Cornell Cooperative Extension and Farm Link decided it was time to sell off the dairy part of their business.

With their son Christopher heading off to college, and a lot of discussion, John stated that "We realized at this time if we were going to stay in the dairy business, then we would most likely need to expand and that was not in our plans at all".



The Hughes farm is located high up in the hills of Clinton, with beautiful scenery and much to offer. We look forward to seeing what they have in store for us next.



*Special Livestock Edition*

*September 2008*



Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension  
Oneida County

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# Mark Your Calendars...



**Ag Question Answered** series start September 2, 2008. The Ag Questions Answered is an educational series from

CCE Oneida County held each Tuesday and Thursday of the month. Each week there is a topic of discussion, with Tuesdays meeting from 2-3pm and Thursdays meeting from 4-5pm.

This series is designed to be flexible and responsive to your specific needs. You can participate regularly, or come once to resolve a specific issue or concern. You can also call in advance with a question and we'll be prepared to cover them when you come.

The schedule of topic is:

Week One	Computer skills
Week Two	Record-keeping
Week Three	Direct marketing
Week four	Managing for success

**Women Farming Today** discussion group begins September 8, 2008. Women Farming Today is a discussion group of women in farming coming together to support each other and to share their knowledge to strengthen their families and their businesses. They meet the second Monday of each month 10am – 12pm, September through May at your Oneida County extension office.

Women discuss current issues for the first hour and the second hour usually they have a guest speaker, chosen by the group, based on topic of interest.

For additional information on happenings at CCE contact Jim Manning at x 129 or Bonnie Collins x 104.

## **Emerald Ash Borer Workshop**

Wednesday, October 8 — 7:00 pm - 8:30 pm, DEC Conference Room, Route 812, Dadville, NY. For additional information, contact Michele Ledoux at CCE - Lewis County at 315-376-5270.

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# Mark Your Calendars...



## **Making Quality Maple Confections and Value-Added Workshop**

Cornell Cooperative Extension Lewis County will host a program titled "Making Quality Maple Confections and Value Added Workshop" on September 22<sup>nd</sup> and September 23<sup>rd</sup> from 6:00pm – 9:00pm both evenings in Lowville, New York.

This workshop will be conducted by Stephen L. Childs who is an Extension Maple Specialist. The workshop will feature training and hands-on experience in making maple confections. This workshop will be suitable for very experienced as well as novice confection-makers. Each participating maple farm will receive a New York State Maple Confections notebook, appropriate tools for measuring the quality of the maple syrup to be made into confections, as well as tools to measure the important characteristics of finished confections. Each participant will need to bring one quart of syrup to be used in the program.

The cost is \$60 per farm. An additional member from a farm can register for the cost of breaks at \$5.00 per person. The registration deadline is September 15th. For information, call Joe Alm or Michele Ledoux, CCE Lewis County at (315) 376-5270.

## **2008 Cornell Sheep & Goat Symposium**

The 2008 Cornell Sheep & Goat Symposium will be held on Friday and Saturday, October 24 & 25<sup>th</sup> in the Livestock Pavilion and Morrison Hall on the Cornell University campus and at the Cornell Sheep Farm near Harford, NY. The symposium features educational presentations on management, a trade show, and practical demonstrations about goat and sheep management. The annual meeting of the Empire Sheep Producers Association will be held in conjunction with the symposium at noon on Saturday, October 25<sup>th</sup>.

The symposium gets underway at 8:30 AM on Friday. Complete information and a registration form can be found at <http://www.sheep.cornell.edu/> or by contacting Victoria Badalamenti at (607)255-7712 or by email at [vb65@cornell.edu](mailto:vb65@cornell.edu). Registration must be received by October 15<sup>th</sup>.

## Oneida County Agri-Culture Map

The debut of the Oneida County Agri-Culture Map was on July 22 at Northstar Orchards in Westmoreland. The map contains over 150 Agri-Business within the county featuring Farm Fresh Products, Festivals, Recreation, Hospitality, Nursery and Tours. The map will be distributed through a number of venues including the Observer Dispatch -6 Pennysaver Editions, Oneida County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Vernon-Verona-Sherrill FFA, OC 4-H - Boonville-OC Fair and the Cooperative Extension Office. If you did not participate in the map and would like to have your information included on the web site, please contact Remi Link at (315) 736-3394 ext. 111 for a map listing form. Additional copies of the map can be picked up at the Farm & Home Center in Oriskany.

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## **Dry Grain Storage Tips for corn : Nate Herendeen CCE**

**How Dry?** Corn for short term storage should be dried to 14 – 14.5 % moisture. For corn that will be stored into next summer, dry to 13 – 13.5 % moisture. With proper bin management, there is no reason to spend extra fuel drying to 12 %.

**Cool It and Chill It:** Insects are cold blooded creatures and go dormant when their ambient temperature drops below about 50 degrees. That's why it is more difficult to prevent population explosions in wheat, barley or oats that are binned at hot summer temperatures. Corn is a different story. It is binned when the temperatures are dropping as days shorten. Take advantage of this and start aeration as soon as the average outside temperature drops a few degrees below the temperature of grain coming out of the cooling bin or dryer.

**Bin Preparation:** In your **bin preparation**, remember the basic principles of sanitation:

1. Clean grain handing equipment (augers, combines, wagons, scoops, and trucks).
2. Clean inside the grain bin (remember to clean under the false floor, if possible). Mice, moths, weevils and much more can survive under the false floor.
3. Clean around the outside of the grain bin. Remove all weeds, spilled grain and debris 6 to 10 feet from around the grain bin. This will remove habitats that can support a grain bin pest problem.
4. Seal all cracks and crevices. Cracks are prime locations for insects to enter grain bins.
5. Cover fans when they are not being used. Insects can enter the grain bin this way also.
6. Use a registered sanitizing insecticide spray in and around the structure after cleaning. Products containing Tempo (cyfluthrin) and Storcide have broad spectrum activity.
7. Never store new grain with old grain.
8. Dry the grain bin before adding new grain. Insect pests need moisture to survive.

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9. Level the surface after filling the grain bin. Moisture accumulates in a grain peak. Microbial activity in the wet area will heat up and attract secondary insect pests.
  10. Do not fill grain bin all the way to the top. Leave a few feet for aeration.
  11. Rake in to the top 4 inches a cap-out treatment of one of the *Bacillus thuringiensis* powder products to prevent infestation by Indian Meal Moth.
  12. Aerate the grain to at least the ambient temperature. The warmer the grain temperature, the faster insect pests can develop. Stored grain insect pests development slows when the temperature falls below 50 degrees F.
  13. Monitor grain for insect pests every 20 days from spring till fall and every 30 days in the winter.
  14. If you discover an infestation of insect pests you may consider an insecticide application. Select a NYS registered product for your stored grain. **READ THE LABEL.**
  15. Keep areas around grain bins mowed to limit rodent hiding places.

**Aeration:** Run the aeration continuously once it is started. Run it until the incoming air and the outflow air are about the same temperature. By mid-November, the average temperature will be such that the aeration can be run to bring the grain down below 40 degrees. Chill the grain out and keep it there over the winter. Check it every couple of weeks.


Remember, **cooling and aeration** are essential. Proper aeration can allow you to store at slightly higher moisture without loss of quality. Fine tune that dryeration, cooling and storage aeration process for storage life and quality.

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## Soil Sampling

**I**n a recent round of calls to local fertilizer suppliers I learned that N,P and K prices have risen since the start of the 08 cropping season and are now at \$0.76/lb, \$1.05/lb and \$0.59/lb respectively and are going up again.

**Soil testing is more important than ever. Soil sampling in the fall, immediately after harvest, is the optimal time. Whether you hire a consultant or take the samples yourself, this is the time to get the job done.**

**If you use the Cornell Nutrient Analysis Laboratory (CNAL), sample bags are available at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County at the Farm and Home Center in Oriskany off Judd Rd. You can also order directly from the laboratory by calling 607-255-4540. You can order on-line at: <http://www.css.cornell.edu/soiltest/>.**

**The 2009 growing season will be a time for using nutrients as judiciously as possible. Soil tests help with savings on the cost of N, P or K. Timely soil sampling can also point out the need to apply lime well enough in advance for successful alfalfa seedings or soybean crops.**

**There is no point to use high rates of nutrients where they are not likely to give an economic crop response. There are many years of research data and field experience behind the recommendations that come from the CNAL system.**

**Many other laboratories do not have the research data from field studies in NY to back their recommendations. They may not give credit for manure nutrients or crop residues, especially legume sod crops. They usually do not consider soil type, either. Take advantage of the nutrients stored in your soil or recycled from manure, crop residues or cover crops in 2008.**

**The information from samples taken in the fall can be summarized to guide best locations for manure spreading and manure rates as well as supply the needed information for early winter fertilizer purchases at discounted prices.**

**If you need help interpreting Cornell soil test results contact Jeff.**

## Oneida County Agri-Business Map

A new Agri-Business Directory can now be viewed on the Agriculture Economic Development web page. It is a detailed listing of the available resources within the county. If you are a business that services the agricultural community and would like to be on this web site or update your information, please contact Remi Link at (315) 736-3394 ext. 111.

## Feast From The Fields

North Star Orchards Saturday, September 13th 2008 Dinner at Dusk

Seated with local farmers, producers and consumers to enjoy the great tastes of Oneida County. Learn where your food comes from, plus raise money for local charities.

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## Milk exports significantly impact dairy producers milk price

Source: Jim Dickrell, AgWeb.com

**U.S.** dairy producers are fast becoming players on world markets. Some 9.5% of U.S. milk solids were exported in 2007. And through the first quarter of 2008, exports surged to 10.7%.

Through May, U.S. dairy exports totaled \$1.78 billion, an astounding 81% increase over the same period in 2007. Even cheese exports, at near-record domestic prices, jumped 49% through May. And through March, butter sales had already surpassed exports for all of 2007 by 12%.

This has been a huge boon to your milk check. With milk production climbing 3% and domestic demand inching up 1% at best (with fluid sales actually declining), export sales are very critical, says Scott Brown, an economist with the University of Missouri's Food and Agricultural Policy Research Institute.

The growing world-wide demand for dairy products and the weak US dollar are mainly responsible for increased exports. But the suspension of the EU export subsidies allowed world prices to rise to the point where U.S. dairy products are now globally competitive. Without that price competitiveness, all the demand in the world wont move product. But long term, there could be trouble. The United States needs to ensure export subsidies are eliminated for U.S. dairy producers to maintain or gain export markets.



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## WANTED:

A grower cooperater with marginal land to grow energy crops.

SUNY-ESF and Oneida County CCE are seeking a site to establish a shrub willow bioenergy crop yield demonstration planting in May 2009. The demonstration trial will be approximately 5 acres and should be available and accessible for future field day events to allow other growers to see a willow crop in production. The desired site will be on land that is less suitable for annual crops and would be better used for a perennial energy crop, such as poorly drained, marginal, or low value pasture land. To ensure adequate weed management during spring willow establishment, removal of existing vegetation and initial site prep must be conducted as soon as possible this fall. A portion of planting expenses will be paid by a grant from NY Farm Viability Institute, but a grower commitment is expected. The success of this demo will be supported with expertise from CCE and SUNY-ESF acquired through years of experience growing willow as an energy crop. Fall site prep would be performed by the cooperater and would depend on the condition of the site, perhaps needing immediate mowing and removal of the hay, a herbicide treatment with Roundup/2,4-D and deep plow. In the spring, the site might need a second treatment of Roundup and disking a few times before planting. ESF would provide the Step planter and probably the tractor for the planter also. Some labor would be needed to load whips into planter and finally, the grower would apply pre-emergent herbicide.

Anyone interested in planting willow should be able to easily estimate their costs using the economic model that SUNY-ESF developed. It is available online at: <http://www.esf.edu/willow/download.htm>

Please contact Mary Wrege (CCE Oneida County) if

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## People in Agriculture

By Bonnie Collins

### Conflict Management

Some conflict is good and some is bad. Advisors and educators are often asked to help when conflict is causing business problems. This article will equip you with tools to help business resolve conflict effectively and learn new tools for harnessing conflict for its productive potential.

**What is conflict?** Webster's defines conflict as a mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands. As conflicts arise in business it usually is due to opposing needs, drives and demands between owners, stockholders, employers, employees, or others who have an interest in the business. Conflict is inner and interpersonal. Conflict and how we view it is affected by how we are raised, the impact of what we see and what situations trigger others and us.

**Examples of causes and sources of conflict include;** people caring and wanting to do their job well, different goals, responsibilities, priorities, misunderstandings, lack of communication, different points of view, or perspectives, people that can't negotiate or are too emotional, too sensitive, or have limited resources.

**It is estimated that 30% of time is lost in dealing with conflict.** If we do not resolve conflict in business we reduce effectiveness at work, relationships are strained, efficiency is loss, turn-over is increased, and there is a higher cost of production.

**Inner conflict begins with us, how we perceive situations and what is our conflict management style.** Do we manage conflict with withdrawal, pretending all is fine, face the conflict head on, or do we seek dialogue and find a solution to a win-win situation?

**Interpersonal conflict begins when felt by at least one participant in a situation.** We vary in our sensitivity to comments and actions of others. The goal of the manager is not to avoid conflict but be slow to take offense, appear unaffected to ensure productive resolution of conflict to

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increase productive relations.

Retaining the best people in our business, reducing turnover, tapping potential, and creating future opportunities for growth and innovation will be beneficial when focus is on finding best solutions and coping with conflict.

Coping with and managing conflict is learning to be exposed to rejection, recognition of our contributions or faults, and the willingness to change. Managing conflicts should include: (Adapted from Leadership Coaching International, Inc.)

1. Improving you conflict management style
2. Using active listening to reduce conflict
3. Discussing the real reasons underlying the problem
4. Dealing with conflict collaboratively
5. Working toward win/win solutions
6. Minimizing recurrent conflict
7. Resolving conflict among your employees

Learn these coping and management skills at our **Conflict Resolution Training Program**. The *Women Farming Today* Discussion Group will be hosting the October 13<sup>th</sup> program at Oneida County Cornell Cooperative Extension, if interested in attending please call to receive an anonymous training survey to complete prior to the program. Additional details to follow or call your extension office x 104.



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## **Are your farm business management skills ready for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century?**

(third in a series adapted from a publication of Purdue Extension)

### **Financial Management**

Financial management is another area important to the success of the farm business. Finance addresses where funds will be obtained and how these funds will be used. For most farm businesses, funds will come from equity provided by the owners of the business and debt capital provided by financial institutions and/or individuals.

For funds acquired through borrowing (leverage), the interest rate, repayment period, and collateral requirements negotiated to acquire these funds will be important. If the return on the invested funds exceeds the cost of the borrowed funds, leverage can enhance the profitability of the farm. However, if the reverse is true, leverage works against the business. The successful financial management of modern farms requires a good understanding of the concepts of leverage, the rate of return on assets, the rate of return on equity, and the cost of debt and equity capital. Financial management also addresses the use of tax management strategies; the use of insurance to protect against financial losses that can arise from fire, loss of life, or health problems; and the use of leases to gain control of assets.

#### **Indicators of Strong Financial Management Skills:**

- Having profitability, liquidity, solvency, and financial efficiency ratios that are stronger than those of your competitors.
- Negotiating competitive interest rates, repayment terms, and collateral requirements.
- Having positive business relationships with lenders.
- Managing the business tax burden for maximum long-term benefits.
- Properly insuring life, health, and property.
- Maintaining a proper level of liability insurance.
- Preparing a multi-year plan for capital expenditures.
- Maintaining effective financial accounting and control systems.
- Making efficient use of working capital.
- Selecting the most profitable alternative for utilizing equity capital.
- Estimating the rate of return on capital investments.

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## **Farm and Retail Price Relationships in New York**

(Summarized from a July 2008 paper by Andrew Novakovic and Esther Washburn of Cornell's Department of Applied Economics and Management)

Food prices in general and dairy prices specifically have increased rapidly since early 2007, increasing some 4-6% on an annual basis. This is far less than the 10-20% inflation of the early 1970s, but it is stunning nonetheless. This has prompted many inquiries and concerns as to the causes, likely duration, and so on. Among the concerns often expressed is the extent to which retail price changes can be justified by or correlated with changes in prices received by farmers for the raw products. Marketing costs, most notably those that are energy-related, are also increasing, but the relationship between retail and farm level prices remains of special interest.

Among the basic findings of this paper are:

- Nationally, farm and retail prices for beverage milk products both increased about 90 cents per gallon from the low point of 2006 to the high point of 2007
- The farm share of the retail price ranged from 38% to 55% during 2006 to 2008

Importantly, in mid- to late-2007, when prices were high, farm share increased to 50-54%. In other words, the retail price moved up to reflect the big increase in raw input costs, but other costs did not increase proportionately. Consequently, the price processors pay for farm milk is a higher percentage of the retail price charged for beverage milk.


This paper includes comparisons of retail prices and farm shares during the recent price cycle in five Northeastern cities – NYC, Boston, Providence, Syracuse, and Philadelphia, and notes that farm shares tend to be higher in the Syracuse market, probably due to lower marketing costs.

For a complete copy of the paper, contact Jim Manning, Farm Business Management Educator at 736-3394 ext. 129 or at [jpm277@cornell.edu](mailto:jpm277@cornell.edu).

## Agriculture staff at Oneida County CCE continue to build an information packed website for local producers

Did you ever spend an unusual amount of time trying to find that batch of receipts to complete your taxes or to find that key tool you need to adjust a tractor or implement. We realize that the same thing occurs related to a key piece of information like what should I charge for standing corn, how much would I expect to pay for custom combining of soybeans this Fall, what are the newest designs for dairy and calf housing, what are the current prices of commodities, or what is the current minimum wage for farm labor . We continue to build the information on our website in the hope that it will help save your valuable time. Visit the website at : <http://counties.cce.cornell.edu/oneida/> and bookmark it so you quick and easy access.

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**Make your Food Dollars Stretch**

Over the next few weeks we will share helpful tips to minimize cost and maximize nutrition with Carol Watkins, Nutrition Educator of CCE of Oneida County.

[Watch Video>>](#)



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**HOGWEED** an attractive but noxious weed.. Have you seen this plant? [More Information>>](#)

**FORESTRY WORKSHOPS TO COME TO CCE OF ONEIDA COUNTY** Sat. Sept. 6th and Sat. Oct. 4th. [More info to come in mid-August.](#)

**MEET US AT THE MARKETS!!!**  
Choose fresh.. Buy Local... Use your card... EBT, Visa and Mastercards will be accepted now at the Utica and Rome Farmers Markets... [More Information>>](#)

**FARMSTANDS AND FARMERS' MARKETS OPEN FOR THE SEASON**  
Fresh fruits, vegetables and other farm products are now available at Oneida County's many farmstands and farmers' markets. [Information Map>>](#)

Join us for "**Feast from the Fields**" on September 20, 2008 at North Star Orchards.

Site search

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News and l

**WEB SEMINAR ON FEED COSTS**

**DAIREXNET** offers a free internet-based seminar for dairy farmers on Aug 18th at 8pm. Topics include Strategies to lock in Milk & Feed Prices, Alternative Feedstuffs for Corn & Soybean, Feeding Strategies with \$7, \$8, or \$9 corn. **Call Bonnie @ x104 for more info...**

**4-H STATE FAIR DROP OFF** Non-perishables-Tues., August 20th 9am-12pm Perishables Wed., August 21st 7:30am-9:20am Any questions

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**USDA EXTENDS APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR  
NONINSURED CROP  
DISASTER ASSISTANCE PROGRAM**

Syracuse, New York, Aug. 1, 2008 – Brymer Humphreys, Executive Director for USDA's Farm Service Agency in New York announced today that the application deadline to apply for coverage under FSA's Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) for crops whose deadline falls before December 1, 2008 has been extended to December 1, 2008 for the 2009 crop year.

"The 2008 Farm Bill created several new disaster programs which require that producers at least have catastrophic coverage for all insurable crops and/or NAP coverage for noninsurable crops," said Humphreys. "Because of the enactment of the Farm Bill was so late in the year coupled with the expected increase in NAP activity for 2009 crops, it was prudent to extend the application deadline."

According to Humphreys, FSA recently announced that crop insurance and NAP coverage requirements will be waived in 2008 for producers who did not obtain crop insurance or NAP coverage by the applicable sales closing date, if the producer files an application for waiver and pays a buy-in fee in an amount equal to the 2008 applicable NAP coverage or catastrophic risk protection plan fee for the crop or grazing lands by September 16, 2008.

**NAP** provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory or prevented planting occurs due to natural disasters.

For more information on the NAP or other disaster programs, contact Donna Purdy or MaryAnn Snider at the Oneida County FSA office at 736-3316.



## LOAN LIMITS INCREASE FOR DIRECT OPERATING AND FARM OWNERSHIP LOANS

Brymer Humphreys, Executive Director of USDA's Farm Service Agency announced that the new farm bill is helping make the goal of farming a reality by raising the loan limits to \$200,000 to \$300,000 for direct farm ownership and operating loans.

The increased loan limits are expected to help farmers whose credit requirements could not previously be met by the FSA loan limits. In addition, some existing FSA borrowers who have already reached the previous limit of \$200,000 will now be eligible to obtain additional credit from FSA.

Direct farm loans are made by FSA with Government funds. FSA also services these loans and provides direct loan borrowers with supervision and business planning so they have a better chance for success. Farm ownership, operating, emergency, and youth loans are the main types of loans available under the direct program. Direct loan funds are also set aside each year for loans to socially disadvantaged and beginning farmers.

Farmers interested in applying for a direct operating or farm ownership loan in Oneida County should contact Linda Whiteman at 736-3316.

For more information about these and other types of loans, visit the FSA's home page at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov> and click on "Farm Loan Programs."

## New Herbicide Products

### Corn

**Impact and Laudis:** Both are post emergence annual grass and broadleaf weed control products. They are both HPPD inhibitors (bleachers) like callisto. Studies conducted by Russ Hahn, Cornell University, indicate that both of these products can be used successfully as rescue treatments on an array of annual and broadleaf weeds: pigweed, ragweed, lambsquarter, velvetleaf, smartweed, mustard, barnyardgrass, crabgrass, foxtails etc. when pre emergence programs fail. He is a little more cautious about making a recommendation that they be used in a total post program like steadfast ATZ because they both have limited residual activity. He stated that if you apply these products early post ie. When the annual weeds are 2" tall you may see break throughs in control because of the shorter residual activity. Russ also noted that when growers make decisions to include a residual herbicide with roundup to extend control that neither Laudis or Impact would be the best

choice because of their shorter period of residual control. Half rates of bicep, lumax, bullet, etc would be better choices.

**Dandelion control:** Many of you who are trying reduced tillage programs are discovering that dandelions are becoming a problem. Russ Hahn, Cornell University, continues to study product efficacy in both spring and fall applications. None of the dicamba products (Banvel, Clarity, Distinct and Status) have shown that they can eradicate established dandelions. Some of the fall applied treatments of Basis showed some promise with a quick burn down but, unfortunately no long-term control of established dandelions. The

## Time to check whole-plant corn moisture content

As I write this note on 8-14-08 the average GDDs from May 1st to August 9<sup>th</sup> are 1686 GDDs for our area. That puts us even with last year and about 180GDDs behind 05 and 06. The 08 corn crop looks great and we are poised for another chance at putting a good crop into storage for use in 08 and 09. With high feed prices it makes it that much more important that we do everything in our power to ensure the quality of the forages we harvest. One of the key factors in stabilizing the feed quality of the corn silage that we harvest is harvesting at a moisture content suitable to our storage units.

Your parents or grandparents probably used a rough guide harvesting corn about 45 days after tassel to get close to the moisture content that gave them decent fermentation in their upright silo. The optimal range of moisture content of harvested corn for placement in upright silos ranges between 60 and 65% moisture depending on the circumference and height of the silo. Bunk silos need corn to be put up closer to 68% moisture for good packing and adequate fermentation.

Bill Cox has monitored corn whole plant moisture after tassel formation and found that the number of days to 68% moisture was from 34-35 days in a drought season and 43-45 days under normal rainfalls from 2003-2005 showing that days after tassel was not a good predictor for timing of silage harvest. Bill has found that GDD's following tassel formation, is not perfect but, is a better predictor of whole plant moisture content and suggests that growers take samples and test their fields when they reach 700 GDDs after tassel formation. As of August 9<sup>th</sup> we are averaging 455 GDDs after July 19<sup>th</sup> when I noted many acres in tassel throughout the county.

We have a koster tester (donated by ILRicher) and a tree chipper at our office and would be glad to test your whole plant moisture for you. Take 10 to 15 plants per field, harvesting them at the height that they will be chopped and bring them immediately to our office. Be sure to call in advance to let us know when you will be bringing in the sample so a person will be here to process it. Call Jeff at 736-3394 ext 120.

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**Jensen: A new soft white winter wheat variety with better scab and sprouting resistance for New York.**

**Wheat**

Jensen a new variety developed by Mark Sorrells, small grain breeder at Cornell, is a top yielder showing comparable yields to Richland and Caledonia over the past 4 years. It has very good test weight and lodging resistance. The biggest advantage it has over other current varieties is improved resistance to fusarium head blight and pre-harvest sprouting. Where other soft winter wheat varieties had over 40% of the plants showing scab symptoms in two years Jensen only had 7% of plants showing symptoms. It has excellent pre-harvest sprouting resistance similar to Cayuga but about 7-8bu/acre better yields.



**Wheat BMP's**

- If you consistently have problems with sprouting look for markets to sell red wheat and consider planting some red wheat which has much higher pre-harvest sprouting resistance
- Timely planting of wheat soon after the fly free date pay dividends in both grain and straw yield (many years of research results from Bill Cox)
- Plant at 1.5 bu/ac when planting early raise to 2 bu/ac seeding rate for later plantings

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## Pricing standing corn for grain or high-moisture

A recent call from a local farmer led us to explore the question of how to price standing corn for grain or high-moisture corn well in advance of harvest. There are good arguments for waiting until harvest time to fix a price, thereby eliminating the guesswork about yields and prevailing prices at harvest time. On the other hand, both buyer and seller may wish to set the price earlier in the season for planning purposes.

Following is an approach that will be useful if you do wish to fix a price early. First, clearly identify the assumptions that you will use to establish a price:

1. The price of the commodity that your corn can be compared to, which is dry shelled corn at 15.5% moisture.

The recent Chicago Board of Trade price per bushel of shell corn was \$5.69/bushel; but of course this price has been very volatile recently. Also, the relevant price is really what you could get for a bushel of shell corn locally on the date when it's ready to sell. That price might be lower due to transportation costs and the time of year... or it could conceivably be higher, based on overall market conditions.

2. The yield per acre stated in terms of 15.5% shell corn that you and the buyer can agree is reasonable to expect. Historical yields on your fields may be a good guide, adjusted as best you can to anticipate the impacts of this year's fertility program, weather, and other variables. You can also estimate this year's yield by taking field samples, but for greatest accuracy, these samples should be taken closer to harvest time. (See the sidebar for a method of estimating yields.)

3. Finally, as the seller you'll need to recognize that the buyer is incurring the cost of harvesting, which should be subtracted from the commodity price. You will need to decide on a reasonable assumption for this cost; on the CCE website we have a list of custom work costs from 2007 as a starting point ([www.cce.cornell.edu/oneida](http://www.cce.cornell.edu/oneida), click on .

### Example:

1. Let's assume that you decide that the commodity price you want to use as the basis for your standing corn price is \$5.50/

bushel.

2. Let's also assume that you believe that your field would yield about 100 bushels of dry shell corn/acre.

3. Finally, let's assume that the buyer's harvest costs will be \$10/ton.

You would then price your standing corn as follows:

Value of the commodity crop: \$5.50/bu. times 100 bushels/acre = \$550.00/acre

Yield per acre (in tons): 2.8 tons (100 bushels times 56 lbs./bu. divided by 2,000 lbs/ton)

Harvest cost per acre: \$10.00 per ton times 2.8 tons = \$28.00/acre

So your price would be \$522.00/acre (\$550.00 minus \$28.00)

**G**iven the risks that your assumptions about yield and price are incorrect, you might want to ask the buyer to agree in advance that the price will be adjusted if the actual yields are considerably better than assumed. To do that, you would do the sampling right around the time of harvest, or actually weigh a few loads, and re-run the price calculation based on that actual yield.

This approach should give you a basis for a fair and reasonable agreement between seller and buyer. If you have questions about how to use this approach in your specific case, feel free to call me at 736-3394 x129 or e-mail: [jpm277@cornell.edu](mailto:jpm277@cornell.edu)

### **Estimating corn grain yields by field sampling**

**I**n order to arrive at a relatively accurate estimate of yields, this sampling should be done within a few days before harvest.

To estimate the yield of corn grain from an acre, pick all the ears in a row length of 17 ft. 5 in. (in plantings with 30 in. row spacing, this length equals 1/1000 of an acre), remove the kernels and weigh them.

**R**epeat this in five separate locations around the field.

**A**verage the five weights and multiply by 1,000 to arrive at the estimated yield (weight in lbs.) of corn grain at the current moisture level.

**I**f you know the current moisture level at time of sampling, you can further adjust your yield estimate to approximate dry shell corn yields (15.5% moisture, the basis on which commodity prices are calculated) using the following formula:

Calculated tons/acre at current moisture level  
divided by (1 minus current moisture percentage)  
times .845

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## **Calf Corner**

### **Grouping Strategies at Weaning Time**



Grouping strategies for weaned calves were investigated by University of Minnesota researchers. Fourteen days after weaning (which occurred at 42 days) calves were grouped by one of three methods: moved from nursery barn to grower barn and into a group of 6 calves; remained in nursery barn and grouped with 6 calves; or remained in individual pens in nursery barn. Calves stayed in these treatment groups for 14 days. On day 15 all calves moved to the grower barn, and individually housed calves were placed in groups of 6. Calves received a 20% protein, textured starter for 7 days, followed by 17% protein whole corn and pellet mix for another week. After this feed transition, calves were fed the grain mix and free choice hay through 6 months of age.

Regardless of grouping strategy, calves gained 2 pounds per day in the first two weeks of the experiment. After the first two weeks, calves moved out of the nursery barn and into groups gained 0.09 pound per day more than calves grouped in the nursery barn and about the same amount as calves housed individually through 6 months of age. Individually housed calves were the most feed efficient during this same time period. These results demonstrate several alternatives for grouping calves after weaning and that many systems can work equally well, provided some basic principles are followed. It is important to notice that all three methods were designed for successful weaning transition with small groups of only 6 calves and gradual feed changes using high quality feeds and forages.

### **Milk Replacer Formulation**

Record-high milk replacer prices in the last year have likely caused you to consider products with alternative protein

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ingredients; after all they often cost considerably less. Two studies presented the results of feeding milk replacer containing wheat protein. The first trial was conducted by Akey scientists and evaluated a 26% protein, 17% fat milk replacer with 0, 6, or 12% of the protein provided by hydrolyzed wheat gluten. Calves started the experiment at 2 to 3 days of age and were weaned after 42 days. As the amount of wheat gluten in milk replacer increased, calf growth and starter intake declined. Average daily gain was 1.4 lb/d for the all-milk treatment and 1.1 lb/d in calves fed milk replacer with 12% of protein from wheat. Weight gains after weaning were not different for the three treatments.

Another trial, reported by Vigortone researchers, compared calves fed milk replacer containing 22% protein and 18% fat with 50% of the protein provided by hydrolyzed wheat protein to calves fed 22% protein and 20% fat with all milk protein. Calves started the trial at about 10 days of age and were fed for 35 days. In this experiment calves fed both milk replacers gained about 1.2 lb/d, and calves fed wheat gluten tended to eat more starter. The trend for improved grain intake may have been due to the lower fat content of the wheat protein milk replacer. The most likely reason for the different results in these two trials is the age of calves.

In the first two weeks of life calves have a limited ability to digest non-milk proteins. The Akey trial included these first two weeks of life, while the Vigortone trial started near the end of that period. Taken in combination, these trials support current recommendations to avoid non-milk proteins for young calves but consider their use for older calves as a strategy to reduce milk replacer costs.

Rice protein concentrate also was evaluated by Akey. The experiment was similar to the one described above for wheat protein, but rice protein contributed 0, 8 or 16% of the crude protein in milk replacer and calves were weaned after 28 days in this trial. Calves fed rice protein concentrate gained less weight and were less efficient than calves fed 100% whey protein; average daily gain was 0.86 lb/d for milk protein-fed calves and 0.39 lb/d for calves fed milk replacer with 16% of the protein from rice. Again, the age of the calves is likely part of the reason for this poor weight gain. These results do not support using rice protein in a 4-week weaning program.



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## **Livestock analyst predicts record cattle prices in next three years**

**By Janie Gabbett on 8/4/2008**

Starting in the fourth quarter of this year, cattle prices should reach record highs and continue to set records in 2009 and 2010, according to Purdue University Extension Economist Chris Hurt.

In a report analyzing current cattle trends, Hurt noted beef supplies are expected to be about 2 percent higher in the third quarter, and then drop by 5 percent in the final quarter of this year. Assuming third quarter live cattle prices average about \$97 per hundredweight, and fourth quarter prices near \$100, Hurt estimates choice steer prices will average \$95 for the whole of 2008, which would be \$3 higher than last year's record.

Hurt predicted that in 2009:

- more acres will come out of the conservation reserve program and return to crop production
- more haying and grazing could be allowed on CRP acres
- and the massive surge in corn ethanol demand will begin to level off
- Beef exports will continue to improve.

All of these changes, if they occur, would be good news for the cattle industry and lead Hurt to expect cattle prices to trend higher over the next several years while also experiencing some relief from extreme feed prices.

Source: <http://www.meatingplace.com>

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## **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](mailto:mjb28@cornell.edu). Watch <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/beef/> for upcoming details.

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## WHAT ARE YOUR BEEF CALVES WORTH: CORNELL VALUE DISCOVERY PROGRAM

Cornell's Feedlot and Carcass Value Discovery Program is designed to help beef producers learn the true value of their cattle based on their performance in the feedlot and on the rail. Producers of these calves will receive feedlot and carcass data such as average daily gain, feed conversion, hot carcass weight, marbling score and ribeye area. Past participants

have used the data to improve the genetics of their herd and to bargain for higher feeder calf prices.



Producers have the option of selecting the conventional feedlot program or the "natural" program which does not use implants or antibiotics. Calves raised under these conditions will be eligible for several natural markets that exist in the Northeast.

Four steers or four heifers from the same sire (recommended) are to be consigned. Calves, weaned for

at least 30 days are to be delivered to the Cornell Teaching and Research Center in Dryden, NY in early November. Minimum (recommended) weight at delivery: 450 lbs. Other requirements include castration, dehorning, and de-worming completed, heifers guaranteed open, and required vaccinations completed.

Consignments are due September 15. For more information, contact Mike Baker, Beef Cattle Extension Specialist, 607-255-5923, [mjb28@cornell.edu](mailto:mjb28@cornell.edu) or go to <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/beef/Forms/VD%20Requirementsfactsheet2008.pdf>.

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**EMPIRE HEIFER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM: VALUE  
ADDED MANAGEMENT AND MARKETING  
PROGRAM FOR NORTHEAST BEEF PRODUCERS**

**Purpose:** A management and marketing program for cow/calf producers to evaluate replacement heifer prospects and offer a marketing opportunity for quality heifers. Weaned and vaccinated calves are accepted in November. Heifers can be bred artificially at the heifer rearing facility, or returned home for breeding. Eligible heifers can be sold in April or in October as bred heifers. Reproductive tract scores, frame score, average daily gain, temperament and ultrasound measurement of ribeye area, backfat and intramuscular fat are just some of the data owners will receive. Past participants have reported fewer calving difficulties, improved growth rate of calves and increased flexibility in their breeding program due to their involvement with this professional development program.

**Eligibility:** All breeds, as well as crossbred cattle, can enroll, with an emphasis on commercial heifers. Heifers MUST be pre-vaccinated\* according to protocol before arriving at feeding facility. Heifers must weigh a minimum of 450 pounds upon delivery. No horns allowed. Only heifers born in 2008 can be enrolled. (fall-calves will be considered, call first)

**Approximate Cost: \$2.00/day per heifer (estimate, until price of corn is known)** Other charges include treatment for illness, semen and AI breeding, reporting and administration.

**Option A:** Heifers returning home after spring repro and ultrasound examinations. Total cost should average under \$350/heifer.

**Option B:** Heifers participate in program and sell at the spring NY-BPA Bull & Empire Heifer Sale. Total cost should average under \$290/heifer. (does not include commission or sale expenses)

**Option C:** Heifers remain throughout the summer AI breeding and pregnancy examination, returning home in August 2008. Total cost should average under \$530/heifer.

**Option D:** Heifers remain throughout the summer and are sold in the October, 2008 Cornell Bred Heifer Sale. Total cost should average under \$600/heifer. (does not include commission or sale expenses)

**Early bird sign-up, \$25/heifer – September 15<sup>th</sup>.** To enroll heifers, or for more information, contact Mike Baker, Cornell Beef Extension Specialist, 607-255-5923, [mjb28@cornell.edu](mailto:mjb28@cornell.edu). Or check out <http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/beef/Forms/EHDP%>

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## TO/DO AUGUST/SEPTEMBER

- a) Line up supplies for fall roundup and weaning.
- b) Consider the following:
  - i) Enroll your herd in the Cow Herd Appraisal Performance System (CHAPS) record keeping system. This program provides important data on the productivity of your cows based on the performance of their calves. Contact your local Cooperative Extension Agent, or call 607-255-5923.
  - ii) Buy ear tags to identify replacement heifers and cows.
  - iii) If deemed, necessary (consult your veterinarian to do a fecal egg count) worm cows and bulls.
  - iv) Apply lice and grub control before November 5.
- c) Vaccinate calf crop for IBR, BVD, PI<sub>3</sub>, BRSV, Pasteurella, Mannaheima, Clostridia spp., and Haemophilus somnus. If using a modified live vaccine, this must be done after calves are weaned. Killed vaccine products can be used on nursing calves.
- d) Pregnancy test and cull all open cows.
- e) Cull problem cows and marginal producers.

Production data is easily obtained using CHAPS. Check with your breed association for herd performance software.
- f) Take forage test for nutrient analysis. Depending on your locality, hay may be in short supply or of poor quality. Allocating the best feed to younger, higher producing animals will stretch out your supply. Contact local Cornell Cooperative Extension office for information.
- g) Consider taking soil samples and top dressing fields requiring lime, phosphorous and/or potash.



## Some Thoughts on Feeding Distillers Grains Summarized from article by Dr. Larry Chase, Dept. Animal Science, Cornell University

Distillers grains (DG) have been available as a cattle and livestock feed ingredient for many years. Traditionally, the Northeast feed industry has been the primary user of the DG from the beverage alcohol industry. In recent years, the rapid growth in fuel ethanol plants will provide an increasing supply of DG for use by the feed industry.

There are some differences in the nutrient composition of the DG produced by the fuel ethanol plants compared with the beverage ethanol plants. This is due to the feedstocks used. The beverage (whiskey, bourbon) plants usually use a "mash bill" that includes more than 1 grain. The fuel ethanol plants typically use only 1 grain as their feedstock. The majority of the fuel ethanol plants currently operating use corn grain as their feed source.

Table 2 contains nutrient composition data for DG from selected fuel ethanol plants. Sample E is a high protein DG being produced by some plants. Samples F and G are wet DG.

**Table 2. Nutrient composition of distillers grains from fuel ethanol plants**

Item	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
DM, %		88.3	92.4	90.8	92.2	30.4	35
CP, %	31.5	31.0	28.3	29.6	43	35	28.5
NDF, %	30.3	34.3	31.6	25.3	18.1	45.8	34.1
Fat, %	11.9	15.2	12.2	10.8	4.3	11.2	13.3
P, %	0.96	0.89	0.81	0.92	0.5	0.44	1.05
S, %	0.72		0.54	1.0	0.82	0.39	0.89

How much variation is there between and within plants? The University of Minnesota took 32 samples from plants in 11 states of dry DG. Table 3 contains the results for these samples. Note the large variation in nutrient content between these samples.

**Table 3. Nutrient content and variation in distillers grains from 32 plants**

Item	DM, %	CP, %	Fat, %	Carbohydrates, %	P, %	S, %
Average	89.2	30.9	10.7	52.06	0.76	0.61
Low value	86.2	28.72	3.52	33.81	0.42	0.31
High value	92.4	33.74	12.83	61.87	0.99	1.05

How much distillers can be included in practical dairy cattle diets? The answer will vary for each farm depending on the other feeds and forages available. It appears that incorporating up to 10% of the total ration DM as DG is possible on many farms with minimal ration adjustments. Feeding higher levels of DG may work but will require some ration adjustments such as lowering the level of other

supplemental rumen active fats that are fed. In addition, it may be necessary to add other feeds that provide lysine to the ration to optimize milk protein content and yield.

A number of New York herds have reported significant milk fat depression (> 0.4 points) when 4 – 6 lbs of distiller's grains have been fed per cow. This is really a ration imbalance issue in which other adjustments weren't made when the DG were added to the ration. Key things to watch in the ration when adding DG include:

- o Provide an adequate level of forage fiber ( >0.9% F-NDF in the ration)
- o Limit the quantity of other rumen active fats fed (whole cottonseed, soybeans, etc.). An older guideline is a maximum of about 1 lb. for a cow consuming 50 lbs. of dry matter for total rumen unsaturated fat.
- o Feed moderate levels of starch (<25%?) in the ration

There are a number of factors that could affect the availability and price of DG as a feed ingredient in the future. These include:

- oWater use by the ethanol plants. It has been estimated that an ethanol plant producing 100 million gallons/year needs as much water as 5,000 people.
- oContinued development of high starch, high fermentable corn hybrids for ethanol production. These will increase the yield of ethanol per bushel of corn. How will they change the quantity and composition of the DG produced?
- oUse of DG as an on-site biomass energy source to replace natural gas.
- oConversion of the thin stillage to methane and then using the methane to provide power for the ethanol plant.
- oPelleting of DG. This will increase the transportability and export potential of DG.
- oCorn oil extraction – There are a number of processes being developed to extract the corn oil and use this for biodiesel. This will lower the fat content of the DG produced. This will decrease the risk of milk fat depression but may also lower the energy value of the DG.
- oIncreased use of DG by the beef, swine and poultry industries.
- oDevelopment of specialized DG by ethanol plants. One plant may focus on a nutrient profile required by the swine or poultry industries. Another plant may focus on a product for the dairy or beef market.
- oThere will be a wider variety of prices for DG. If a plant needs to do extra processing to produce a lower P of fat containing DG, they will need to recover this cost in the marketplace. The days of buying "generic" DG may be over.
- oMany of the plants are contracting with other firms to supply the corn and sell the DG from the plant. This may have an influence on the price paid by the feed industry.

**Summary:**

Our feed industry will have a larger supply and wider variety of DG for inclusion in dairy rations than we have had in the past. With the large number of plants producing DG, there will be a wide variation in the nutrient composition and consistency of the products available to the feed industry. The practical feeding rate will vary depending on the availability of home produced feeds and the nutrient profile of the specific DG product being used. Individual feed companies will need to track the quality and consistency of the various DG products to determine which one(s) to purchase and use in formulating rations. Purchasing and pricing of DG will also be more difficult with the variations that exist in nutrient composition of the various products available on the market.



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