

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County's

Farm Flash



Zone Building: A local field crop producer, Bob Pawlowski, from Verona has used zone building as his only tillage to plant 80% of his 400+ acres of corn. (please see article on page 7)



Livestock Issue

March 2009



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CCE of Oneida County Farm Flash
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March Events

Combine Workshop: Mar 10th, 11-2pm, Whites Farm Supply in Sangerfield. A company rep will demonstrate combine set-up for small grains, maintenance and repair. NYS DEC credits available. To preregister call Julie Crawford at 697-2214.

Carbon Credits and Trading Workshop: March 11th, CCE Farm and Home center in Oriskany, 12:30-2:30pm. Learn what farm activities may qualify for carbon credits and how you may participate in carbon trading. If you have an interest in attending this workshop. Please call Mary Wrege at 736-3394 ext 131.

Crop Congress: Mar 18th, 10:00am- 3pm, VFW on Franklin St in Clinton, Zone tillage, Weed control in corn and soybeans, Sprayer set-up, maintenance and calibration, crop records and cost of production. Lunch provided by Clinton Tractor. NYSDEC credits available. To pre-register call Michele at 853-6151.

Farm and Home Day: Wednesday, March 25th, 2009, Seymours Diner and Grill, Rte 233, Westmoreland, 9am-3pm
Sponsored by: Hank Brown 5 Point Compass News, Seymour's Diner and Grill and Cooperative Extension An opportunity for local farmers to meet with several of their local supporting Ag businesses: Cornell Cooperative Extension Staff, Farm Service Agency, NRCS, SWCD, Performance Premixes, Sauquoit Valley Insurance, Cazenovia Equipment, AAA pick and pay, Carbone Auto Group

Grain Storage / Grain Dryer Workshop: Monday, March 30, 2009, CCE Farm and Home Center in Oriskany, 12:30-2:30pm. John Gnadke, 44 years of experience with grain drying and storage systems from Pioneer Hybrids, will join us by video conference from Nebraska to discuss your major concerns about grain storage, grain drying, material handling, dryer and storage problems. To preregister call Cindy at 736-3394 ext 124 by March 10th.

March Events

2009 Swine School Features All Day Small Farm Session

The Small Farms Program is pleased to co-sponsor an all day Small Farm Swine Session at this year's Cornell Swine School. The session will take place on Saturday, March 28, 2009 – 9am to 4 pm at Morrison Hall, Cornell University and Cornell Swine Farm

The morning session will feature a presentation by Bill Henning and his wife, Kathleen, who steward a diversified 80 acre farm. They have a growing natural swine enterprise utilizing heritage breeds. Bill will present on the topics of farm scale, high welfare production, cost-saving considerations, marketing, and simplified financial evaluation. Also on the speaker roster is Craig Haney, Livestock Manager for the Stone Barns Center for Food and Agriculture. One of Craig's responsibilities is the management of the swine herd in the wood lot – the environment pigs are best adapted to. Craig will address "Nature as a Model" with an emphasis on stable group farrowing in the woods. Finally, travelling all the way from Iowa, Alan Hoefling will speak about natural Farrowing Systems. Alan and his brother Bob operate a 200-sow hoop house farrow-to-finish operation. They have also developed the patented Nesting Box® that allows sows to successfully demonstrate their natural instincts in unheated buildings.

Space is limited, so register early! Early registration fee of \$5.00 is due no later than March 24, 2009, Cornell University, 128 Morrison Hall, Ithaca, NY 14853

At door fee is \$15.00.

For a registration form or more information, please contact Tro Bui at 607-255-4505 or e-mail tvb2@cornell.edu

Maple on the Web – For those of you looking for something to do during the month of March or simply having an interest in the outdoors, there is a new maple page on the CCE web site under the Agriculture section. It includes information for the beginner to advanced maple producer as well as regulations and recipes made with maple syrup. To view this information, go to www.cce.conell.edu/oneida.

March Events

Upcoming livestock events at the Cornell Cooperative Extension-St. Lawrence County Learning Farm and Education Center

Although it's a bit of a hike from Oneida County, you might consider a visit to the Cornell Cooperative Extension Learning Farm and Education Center to take advantage of these upcoming events. You can find more information about the Learning Farm at www.nnyagdev.org/facilities-canton.htm. To register for any of these events, call CCE St. Lawrence at (315) 379-9192.

Basic Pasture/Grass-fed Beef Producers Meeting – will be on March 13th at 6:30 pm at the Extension Learning Farm. Topics include pasture basics, USDA grass-fed regulation, marketing ideas, matching pasture quality and nutrient requirements of different classes of beef cows and some plant basics from the agronomists. Charge is \$5.00 and there will be food available. Mike Baker, Beef Cattle Extension Specialist, will be at the meetings.

Horse Parasite Management – March 17th at 7:00 pm Dr. Dorothee Jensen will present a talk on managing horse parasites. Bring a fecal sample for examination at the meeting. De-wormers should not be used except when needed and then the correct amounts of the right chemical. Learn to do a better job controlling parasites on your horse operation. No charge, donations accepted for refreshments.

Basic Pasture/Grass-fed Lamb Meeting – will be on March 25th at 6:30 pm at the Extension Learning Farm. Topics include pasture basics, USDA grass-fed regulation, marketing ideas, pasturing tips specific to sheep and goats, and some plant basics from the agronomists. Charge is \$5.00 and food will be available.

Goat Health Basics Meeting – April 4th at 10:30 am we will have a meeting on the basics of goat health. Topics will include vaccinating, preventive practices, what to look for and how to help your vet help you. We hope to have a vet present to cover more advanced topics like mastitis and CAE. No charge, donations for refreshments appreciated.

Hoof Care Hands-On Workshop Tuesday, March 10, 2009 Hosted by Collins Knoll Farm, Chadwicks

Hoof care concepts presented will include cattle hoof anatomy, hoof growth and wear, manageable causes of common hoof disorders and basic treatment strategies for each disorder. Participants will learn to identify early-stage lameness and the art of picking out lame cows in a group. With instruction and guidance from a professional hoof trimmer, participants will learn how to properly use hoof trimming tools and treatment materials as they work on cadaver cattle feet and practice treating common disorders.

March Events



14th Annual *Maple Weekend*

On March 21- 22 & 28-29

from 10am - 4pm, about 110 of the finest maple producers throughout New York State, from Buffalo to Albany, Rochester to Binghamton and Jamestown to Plattsburgh, will open their

sugarhouses to demonstrate the making of maple products "from the tree to your table." Four producers from Oneida County and one from Madison County will be opening their sugarhouses for this event. they are Dave's Sugarhouse-Oneida, Link Maple Farm, Taberg (**28 & 29 only**) , Riverdale Farms-Camden, Tibbitts Maple Products–New Hartford (**28 & 29 only**), V.V.S. FFA Maple–Verona.

The event is free to the public.

On *Maple Weekend*, visitors can see all aspects of maple making, from the tapping of the trees to get the sap, to the boiling of the sap into syrup. Some producers will also demonstrate the making of maple syrup into other products including maple cream, maple cotton candy and maple sugar. Most sugarhouses will allow people to sample the products.

Techniques of maple production vary from producer to producer. Some are state-of-the-art and some use traditional methods, so everyone is encouraged to visit several of the participating farms. In addition, many of the producers will have a variety of additional activities including horse and wagon rides, snowshoeing, guided walks in the woods, kids' corners and pancake breakfasts.

For more information contact Remi Link 315-736-3394 ext. 111, www.mapleweekend.com, or www.cce.cornell.edu.



Zone building

By Jeff Miller

The zone builder pictured on the front cover is a single pass tillage tool that has a lead coulter, adjustable straight tine, two wavy coulters and a rolling basket that tills a strip 10-12" wide. The 10" wide strip is tilled down to a 4" depth by the 3 coulters. The straight tine is adjusted to rip a slot to a depth of 2" below the plow pan to allow for better drainage and a place for crop roots to penetrate the plow pan. The rolling basket is designed to break any big clods left in the planting zone. Two thirds of the field is left untouched and that means time, fuel and cost savings.

Bob has used this tool which cost \$16,000 for the past 2 years ('07 and '08) a dry year followed by a wet year. He compared his previous tillage practice which included mold board plowing (3-4 acres/hr) followed by a mulch till finisher (10 acres/hr) with zone building (5-6 acres/hr) by zone building his head lands and conventionally tilling the remainder of a field in 2007. The results 20bu/acre higher yields in the zone built portion of the field. Bob uses the zone builder in the spring on soy fields just prior to planting corn. In 2008 he tried zone building in between last years' corn rows to test its' ability to develop a good seedbed under high residue conditions. His yield in this field was 205 bu/ac; 15 bu/ac higher than an adjacent field with his conventional tillage practices. Another benefit Bob cited was better field conditions during combining with zone built fields being more firm and trafficable when compared with conventionally tilled fields. On the con side, just like any deep tillage practices, you can pick up stones. Bob also noted that the manufacturer suggests 45 HP per row unit x 6 for his 6-row unit is a pretty hefty tractor. Bob said that he can get away with 180HP tractor on loamy soils on the farm but requires the full 240HP on clay soils and in sod fields.

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

Notes from the Ag Outlook Breakfast Feb. 3, 2009

As the dairy industry headed into a dramatically lower price cycle, CCE of Oneida County and Cornell faculty members have been working together to help local producers and agri-businesses understand the underlying economic facts and to develop strategies to manage in challenging times.

On February 3rd, using videoconferencing technology at our annual Ag Outlook Breakfast, five Cornell faculty members presented up-to-the-minute analyses of the situation and discussed the implications with participants. Following are just some of the key points that were discussed at that meeting:

Milk prices: Dr. Mark Stephenson of Cornell's Program on Dairy Markets and Policy reviewed the factors that led to high milk prices in 2007-2008: a combination of "supply shocks" – including high fuel prices leading to diversion of corn to ethanol, reduced production in Australia, New Zealand and Europe – and "demand shocks" – including dramatically increased exports of milk products and a weakening dollar. These factors allowed prices to rise despite a continuing trend of declining domestic demand, as indicated by declining restaurant sales. By the end of 2008 and into 2009, reduced global demand due to recession, a strengthening dollar, and the return to the market of some overseas producers led to an oversupply and dramatically declining prices. Dr. Stephenson projected a milk-feed margin (the amount by which the milk price exceeds the cost of feed to produce that milk) declining to around \$4.00 per hundredweight during these very low-price months. Over the longer term, Dr. Stephenson believes the dairy industry will recover as global economies gain strength and export opportunities return.

Feed grain and the financial environment: Dr. Brent Gloy, Associate Professor at Cornell's Department of Applied Economics and Management addressed the tremendous volatility in feed grain prices and their impact on New York farmers. While ethanol production contributed to this volatility, more significant contributors were the global economic expansion and the run-up in fuel prices. As the economic and fuel-price bubbles have popped, Dr. Gloy anticipates that grain prices are unlikely to reach all-time highs in the near future, but that higher operating costs make a return below \$3/bushel corn unlikely as well.

Dr. Gloy outlined some challenging facts about the financial position of many NY dairy farms heading into difficult economic times. Using data for 249 farms from Cornell's Dairy Farm Business Summary, he noted that in 2007 the average operating cost per hundred-weight of milk was \$13.94, and pointed out that operating costs at this level or higher occur on farms with both high and low milk production per cow and on both large and small dairies.

He also discussed "debt coverage" – a measure of the ability to cover debt payments out of cash income – and noted that in 2007, a time of relatively high milk prices, 40% of the NY dairies surveyed had cash income of less than twice their debt payments. Again, both large and small farms are in this position.

In conclusion, Dr. Gloy emphasized the importance of careful record-keeping, cost control, and being prepared to make hard decisions. He encouraged farmers to build good relationships with their lenders, and to utilize counseling support from both NY FarmNet and Cornell Cooperative Extension in these challenging times.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the presentations, contact Jim Manning: ph. 736-3394 ext. 129 or e-mail jpm277@cornell.edu. Much of the information presented is also now available as a podcast at <http://dairy.cornell.edu> (instructions on how to view the podcast are also available at that site).

**Progressive Small Dairy Discussion Group
By Jim Manning**

CCE Oneida County convened the first meeting of a new discussion group for small dairy producers on February 17th. About a half-dozen farmers joined with ag service providers to launch an ongoing series of meetings to share ideas and to hear from experts on areas of common concern.

Given the current milk-price situation, participants in this first meeting quickly delved into the timely topic of knowing your cost of producing a hundred-weight of milk, with Dr. Nick Chuff offering some useful tools that he has used with clients of his vet practice.

At the next meeting, tentatively scheduled for March 11th or 12th, we will continue the discussion of costs with the addition of benchmark information for comparison from a local financial institution.

If you would like to participate in upcoming meetings, contact Jim Manning, Farm Business Management Educator at 736-3394 ext. 129 or e-mail: jpm277@cornell.edu.

Corn Planter Maintenance Checklist **By Jeff Miller**

- Clean planter from top to bottom, removing old seed, seed treatment, mouse nests, fertilizer etc. Remember to use chemical resistant gloves when working with seed treater.
- Check overall orientation of units mounted on the frame of the planter to make sure that they are all lined up at a 90 degree angle from the main frame and that there placement for example coulter, double disk fertilizer openers, row cleaners, double disk seed openers are in proper alignment.
- Check hoses on fertilizer units for cracks replace if necessary.
- Check fertilizer and seed boxes for cracks and repair or replace as necessary.
- Check to ensure that fertilizer augers are operational.
- Check that transmissions for both seed and fertilizer are operational.
- Check that all seed units and insecticide units (if present) are operational.
- Check tires and valves for wear. Check tire pressure, fill to manufacturers specs. Check for leaks and repair or replace tires if necessary.
- Examine chains for kinks and replace if necessary.
- Lubricate all chains.
- Grease all fittings with grease type recommended by the manufacturer.
- Check fertilizer disk openers for wear. You can note the depth that it had operated at by the wear pattern on the side of the disk. Compare that with the desire to place fertilizer at a 4" depth. Measure the diameter of the disk and compare this measurement with specs for the unit. Replace if necessary.
- Check fertilizer double disk openers for correct orientation. Both disks should meet in the front at about the 8 o clock position and be together for 1.5". You can use two business cards. Slip one business card up from the bottom and one down from the top where the disks come together. Take the measurement between the two cards. Use shims to adjust to meet specs. If when you pull on the unit it has a great deal of wobble then you may have to replace it.
- Check seed disk openers in a similar fashion.
- Check depth gage wheels on the seed unit. When it is raised up with the arm parallel to the ground you should only be able to put your finger up to the first knuckle when it is placed between the opening disk and the wheel.

- Check disk opener scrapers. Replace when necessary.
- Check Parallel linkages: (The frame that attaches the seed unit to the frame of the planter). They are designed to allow the seed unit to move up and down. If you pick up the whole unit and twist it as you pick it up and it has some movement out of that 90 degree up and down motion you may have to replace bushings to take out that play.
- Check closing wheels and replace if necessary. Check bearings and replace if necessary. The function of the closing wheel is to pinch the seam closed over the seed creating good soil seed contact but not compaction so it is very important to have the seed disk opener centered between the closing wheels. You can run the planter for a short distance on a hard surface so that the opener scribes a line that can be used to help note the orientation with the closing wheels so that they can be shimmed to the correct position.
- The meter has several parts that need to be checked.
- The back plate should be checked for smoothness and that it is still square and true
- The dimple on the backplate should be checked for wear and replaced if worn.
- Brushes should be replaced approximately every 200 acres.
- Brushes should be set based on the size of seed being planted tighter on smaller seed lots and more loose on larger seeds.
- Belts should be checked for wear and brittleness and replaced when necessary.
- For vacuum or air planters calculate the pressure required for the seed lots that are being planted this season. Divide the number of seeds ie 80,000 kernels by the bag weight to get seeds/lb and compare that with your owners manual for the correct pressure.
- Seed tubes should be checked for wear and replaced when necessary.
- With tractor hitched to corn planter check horizontal level across the planter from side to side, adjust air pressure in tires if necessary.
- With tractor hitched to corn planter check vertical level on main beam to check that the planter is running parallel to the soil surface from front to back. Make adjustments in the hitch if necessary.

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- Calibrate fertilizer rate: First determine rate of application like 200lbs/ac. Look up drive and driven sprocket setting for a rate closest to the 200lbs/ac. Make change to that setting on the fertilizer transmission. Undo clamps on hoses from fertilizer bins and tie a milk jug to collect the fertilizer that falls from the tube. Mark a distance of 50 feet. Collect the fertilizer for that distance. Weigh each of the milk jugs using an accurate scale. Divide the weight of what was collected in lbs by .002869 to determine the rate of application in lbs per acre. Refer back to the manual if you have to increase or decrease the rate by changing drive and driven sprockets.
- Calibrate seed rate: For air/vacuum planters check seeds/lb on bag and adjust air pressure accordingly. Read manual to determine drive and driven gears on the transmission for the seed rate that is desired. Tie up or disable press wheels. Run the planter with seed for 17' 5" and count the number of kernels dropped for that distance and multiply by 1000 for the seed rate per acre. Go back to the manual and make adjustments in drive and driven gears to make adjustments in seeding rates if necessary. If there are gross differences between units take a closer look at metering device and planter unit for worn and broken parts.

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Pastures for Rent: Town of Verona. 30 acres with 4 rotating pastures. High tensile fence, barn access for shade and weather protection. Water and grain included. May through November. If interested, please call Ken Brewer at 829-4983 (home) or 935-7735 (cell) or email kbrewer286@poisinello.com

Agricultural Tax Facts

Important Filing Dates:

Federal:

March 10th: Watch "Tax Talk Today" a free, one-hour IRS-sponsored program, broadcast on the Web, on current tax issues and policies. Go to www.irs.gov and search: Tax Talk Today at 2pm.

March 16th: Corporations: File 2008 forms as required; Form 1120 or 1120A calendar year income tax return. Form 7004 (Automatic Extension) and deposit estimated tax.

March 16th: S Corporations: File Form 1120S, 2008 calendar year income tax return. Provide shareholders a copy of Sch. K-1.

New York State:

March 16th: Corporations: File 2008 forms as requires; Form CT-3 and CT-4 series, calendar year income tax return. Form CT-5 series (Automatic Extension) and deposit estimated tax.

March 16th: S Corporations: File Form CT-3S and CT-4S, series, Calendar year income tax return.

March 20th: Sales Tax returns for Quarterly, Monthly, and Annual Filers, ST-100 series.

Do you Know Your rights as a Taxpayer?

If you receive a letter asking for information, from either of your friendly taxing authorities do not panic. Did you know you have the right to ask why the agency is asking for the information, how it will be used, and what happens if you do not provide the requested information?

Inquires about a return does not suggest you are dishonest. Inquires may be for information that may result in more tax, your case may be closed without change or you may receive a refund.

You may represent yourself or with proper written authorization, have someone else represent you. If an examiner proposes changes you disagree with there are appeals and judicial processes available. The most important thing is to acknowledge the letter, ask for help if needed and resolve the issue being addressed.

To learn more on your taxpayer rights, visit www.irs.gov and refer to Publication 1: "Your Rights as a Taxpayer," and <http://www.tax.state.ny.us/> and refer to Publication 38.

Legumes Can Boost Calves' Gains On Grass

Adding legumes to grass pastures can add gain for less cost than nitrogen-based fertilizer, says Bruce Anderson, University of Nebraska Extension forage specialist.


In fact, Anderson explains that average daily gain was about 0.40 lbs. higher for calves grazing bromegrass/legume pastures when compared to calves grazing bromegrass fertilized with 50 lbs. of nitrogen. That comes from a five-year study in eastern Nebraska.

"That much faster gain for the full season produced an extra 51 lbs. of beef/acre; with no nitrogen fertilizer. Adding the value of heavier yearlings plus reduced fertilizer expenses resulted in more than an extra \$50/acre profit," Anderson says.

February and March are good months to start adding legumes.

"Red clover is the easiest to establish because seed can be broadcast on pastures even if covered with several inches of snow," he explains. "As snow melts and temperatures fluctuate in early spring, the seeds will get worked into the soil, germinate and start to grow. With a little attention to controlling competition from the existing grass, new red clover plants can start increasing your pasture production by summer."

Bottom line, Anderson says, "Don't become trapped by the never-ending cost of nitrogen fertilizer. Use legumes to reduce costs and increase production."



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DAIRY OF DISTINCTION 2009 New York Application

Purpose of Program

Attractive dairy farms give the consumer greater confidence in the wholesomeness of milk and stimulate milk sales which encourages public support of the dairy industry. The award gives recognition to the dairy farmer for maintaining a well-kept farmstead.

Eligibility

All Northeast dairy farms producing milk for sale are invited to submit an application for the award. Dairies receiving the 10 highest scores in each of the 10 districts will receive an 18"x24" Dairy of Distinction sign to be displayed in front of their farm.

Application

Your name _____ Farm Name _____

Mailing address _____ Zip _____

Phone number _____

Cooperative or Handler (where milk is shipped) _____

Location (driving directions for judging team) _____

County where farm is located _____

I hereby apply to the Northeast Dairy Farm Beautification Committee to have my dairy scored in accordance with the rules of the program for the purpose of obtaining a Dairy of Distinction sign to be displayed on my premises (No producer will be charged for scoring or sign expense).

_____ Date _____
Signature of owner/operator

_____ Please check if rented or leased

Application must be **postmarked by April 15 to:**
Carol Ainslie
591 N. Winfield Rd.
West Winfield, NY 13491

Oneida County Livestock in the 2007 Census of Agriculture

The USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service released the results of the 2007 Census of Agriculture in early February. Livestock other than dairy cattle represent just a small portion of Oneida County's agriculture; nonetheless, it's interesting to examine these numbers, especially to see whether they reflect the widespread interest in local, pasture-raised meats and eggs.

For purposes of this census, a farm is defined as any place from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced or sold, and clearly many of the livestock farms included in the following numbers are very small operations. We can probably also assume that there are a number of small operations that did not participate in the census.

The largest number of livestock farms in the County raise beef cattle, with almost 2,000 head; while the number of farms (163) is unchanged since the last census in 2002, the number of animals has increased by 25%.

Next largest, in terms of number of operations, are farms with laying hens, over 100 with an average of just two dozen layers each. Included in this group are 3 operations with between 100 and 400 birds. Farms raising meat birds, while still few, have more than tripled, from 6 to 21, and the number of birds on each farm has more than doubled to about 33.

The number of farms with hogs or pigs has more than doubled since 2002, to 60, with the average size of these operations increasing from less than eight animals to over 12.

The number of sheep farms in the County has actually decreased somewhat since 2002, although the number of animals has increased slightly. No information is provided on goats for 2002, but in 2007 65 farms were home to 401 animals.

Oneida County Cooperative Extension is interested in developing more resources and programming for small livestock producers, especially those who are looking to build a profitable small business. The numbers in the census suggest that our mailing lists may not include all of the farms involved in these operations. If you want to make sure you are notified about livestock programs at CCE and elsewhere around the state, or you know someone who is not on our lists but should be, please e-mail Jim Manning (jpm277@cornell.edu) or call 736-3394 ext. 129.

Oneida County Livestock - 2007 USDA Census of Agriculture

	<u>Year</u>	<u># farms</u>	<u># animals</u>
Hogs & Pigs	2007	60	723
	2002	27	205
Beef cattle	2007	163	1,952
	2002	163	1,555
Sheep	2007	38	1,302
	2002	42	1,255
Laying hens	2007	106	2,478
	2002	57	2,590
Broilers and other meat chickens	2007	21	709
	2002	6	101
Goats	2007	65	401
Alpacas	2007	28	313
Bison	2007	9	296
Llamas	2007	14	56
Mules, burros and donkeys	2007	44	107
Rabbits		44	282
Other livestock	2007	18	n/a



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USDA lowers meat output, exports, & price forecasts
 By Janie Gabbett on 2/10/2009, MeatingPlace.com

USDA reduced its forecasts for beef, pork and broiler production, but also dropped its exports forecasts for all three and lowered its price projections for cattle and hogs.


Beef - In its monthly World Agricultural Supply and Demand Estimates report, USDA noted fewer numbers of cattle are forecast to be placed on feed, leading to lower beef production in 2009 even with a slight offset due to a higher expected cow slaughter, reflecting dairy herd reductions in the latter part of the year.

USDA lowered its beef production forecast to 2.611 billion pounds from 2.654 in January. It lowered its beef export forecast to 1.88 billion pounds from 1.92 billion. USDA dropped its projected annual average price for Choice steers (Nebraska, Direct, 1100-1300 pounds) to a range of \$86 to \$92 per hundredweight from last month's range of \$91 to \$97 per hundredweight.




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Beef—TO DO March/April

By Heather Sweeney

- A. Calving season is here or fast approaching. Do you have the following items:
1. Frozen colostrum
 2. Calf pulling equipment.
 3. Stomach tube, thermometer, dry towels.
 4. Ear tags, navel dip (7% iodine).
 5. Selenium, Vitamin A&D injections.
 6. Castration and dehorning equipment.
 7. Therapy for scours and respiratory problems.
 8. VETERINARIAN'S PHONE NUMBER.
- B. Practice good calving management:
1. Provide clean dry area for calving. Clean, frozen or snow covered pasture protected from the wind works well.
 2. If calving in a barn, keep area well cleaned and bedded. Barns, while comfortable for the manager, are a great place to harbor disease organisms that increase throughout the calving season.
 3. Make sure calf consumes 1.5-2.0% of its body weight (1-2 quarts) of colostrum within 4-6 hours.
 4. Be prepared to provide fluids to scouring calves that become dehydrated. Consult veterinarian for advice.
- C. Plan spring fertilizer needs. Mid to late April is an excellent time to apply nitrogen to grass. Consult Field Crop agent at your local Extension office.
- D. Prepare for pasture season. How will you control flies this year: tags, pour-ons, back rubbers? It is not recommended to use insecticides furnished in feed or minerals.
- E. Get ready for breeding season;
- If you use A.I. order semen and check your equipment. Be sure breeding corral is in working order
 - If breeding naturally, make sure you have enough bulls: 10-15 cows per yearling bull; 20-25 cows per 2-year old bull; 30-35 cows per mature bull.
 - Have phosphorous source in form of free-choice mineral mix; phosphorous is important for maximum fertility.
 - Yearling British heifers should weigh a minimum of 700 lbs. and continental heifers a minimum of 750 lbs. before being bred.
 - If lactating cows are thin and not cycling, feed more energy.
 - Consult your veterinarian for a vaccination program that meets your needs. At a minimum consider vaccinating for IBR, BVD, BRSV, PI3 and Leptospirosis.

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

By Jim Manning

Farming is a risky business. The ups and downs of the commodity markets serve as a constant reminder of this often-heard statement. But price variations are only one type of risk that a farm manager faces. The farm business manager also faces production risks, financial risks, legal risks, human risks, and strategic risks.

Because some risks faced by the farm business manager are so common, several alternative methods for reducing the impact of these risks have been developed. To reduce the effect of price uncertainty, producers can use forward price contracts, futures contracts or options to transfer the risk of price fluctuations to others. Variations in the crop yields can be insured against by the purchase of crop insurance. Human and legal risks are also frequently managed through the use of insurance, such as life insurance, health insurance, and liability insurance. Financial risk arises from the additional financial obligation associated with debt financing or leverage. This source of risk is often managed by implementing operating strategies to insure that adequate cash reserves are maintained or overall debt levels are kept low.

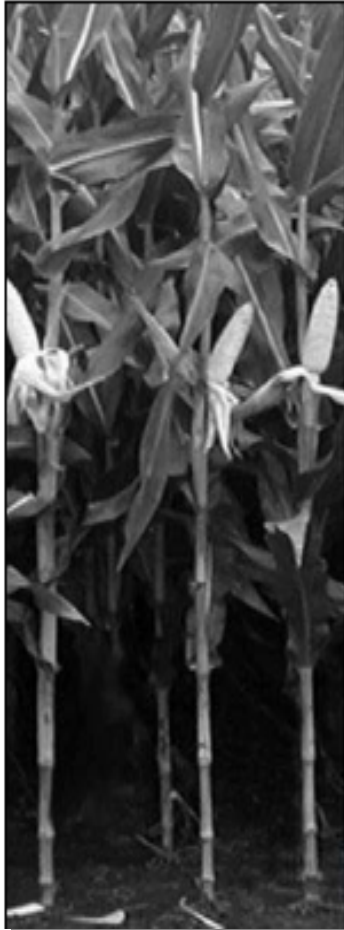
Strategic risk is more difficult to manage. Such risk arises from the forces that are shaping the changes that are occurring in the industry. Unlike the other risk types, there are no tools or techniques for transferring these risks to others. Managing strategic risks requires creative strategies. An on-going assessment of trends and the continual monitoring of the ability of the business to take advantage of these trends is central to the management of strategic risks. This on-going process provides a method for the early detection and response to a change in a trend's direction. The development of contingency plans for alternative future situations helps the farm business manager maintain flexibility and adapt to changes that occur in the political stability of the world's economies; federal, state, and local policies; industry dynamics; and social trends.

Indicators of Strong Risk Management Skills:

- Establishing appropriate levels of liability, life, and health insurance.
- Developing contingency plans.
- Collecting information about important trends in the world economy.
- Understanding the size of the financial, human, and legal risks that the business faces.

Developing backup management that could replace the principal manager in the case of an emergency.

(This is the eighth and last in a series adapted from a publication of Purdue Extension; to get a copy of the full publication, contact Jim Manning at 736-3394 ext. 129 or jpm277@cornell.edu)



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Bulls growing and gaining on the NY Bull Test

From: NYBPA Genetic Improvement Committee, Jeanne White

Each year, beef producers analyze their bull calf crop, picking out their best male calves to be competing in the New York Genetic Improvement Bull Test Program. Producers from New York and surrounding states are eligible to consign one or more bulls to this program. After weaning and a preconditioning health program, they are delivered to Erwindale Farms, in Waterloo, early November.

Upon arrival, the bulls are weighed, tagged, health checked and co-mingled with their contemporaries. They are fed as a group with a "start-up" period prior to the official start of the test. The test runs for 112 days, with the bulls being weighed every 28 days.

The 2nd weigh period was on 1-17-09. There are 39 bulls on test: 16 Angus, 2 Hereford, 12 Red Angus, and 9 Simmentals consigned by 18 different producers. The 39 bulls gained an average of 4.07# each per day during the last 28 days on feed, with an average weight per day of age of 3.01#.

Boasting the highest rate of gain so far is an Angus bull by Rito 112 of 2536 Rito 616, consigned by Equity Angus with a total Average Daily Gain (ADG) of 5.50#. The second high ADG was also an Angus sired by AAF Complete Design 131D consigned by JJK Angus, with a 4.79# ADG. Highest in each breed were Red Angus at 4.73# ADG sired by Perks Chateau 309R consigned by Shepard Settlement Farm; Simmental at 4.70# ADG, sired by LECC Dice P3 (Perfect Timing) consigned by Ladybug Farm; and JKW Polled Hereford Farm's Dr World Class 517 10H son with a 3.29# ADG.

Another "measurement" of production is their Weight Per Day of Age (WPDA). All bulls averaged an impressive 3.01# WPDA. Highest WPDA was the Ladybug Farm's LECC Dice P3 son with a 3.71# WPDA. Coming in second was a Red Angus consigned by Erwindale Farm and sired by Foster's Wind Ridge 564, with a 3.58# WPDA. High performing Angus was tied with 3.27# attained by Excelsior Farms' SS Objective T510 OT26 son; and a McCracken Vu's Southern Panhandle 3432 son. The high WPDA bull in the Hereford's was JKW Polled Hereford's Dr World Class 517 10H with a 2.91# WPDA.

There will be a sale on April 25, 2009 at the Empire Farm Days facilities offering "The Cream of The Crop". Be sure to watch for more results as they get closer to graduating from this test. For more information, you can contact Jason TenEyck, 315-246-1359 or James Brown 315-549-8318, Test Managers. And you can view the individual animal's results at the New York Beef Producers' web site: www.nybpa.org

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Crop Shorts

By Jeff Miller

Weed control in corn after grasses have emerged: You may be diligent and apply your pre applications soon after planting and never encounter this situation. Nonetheless, let's say that after planting there is a deluge of rain for days and wet soil conditions prevent you from spraying your fields in a timely manner and grasses start to emerge. Russ Hahn's research trials would identify that impact or steadfast can be applied with half rates of your normal pre program for successful grass burn down and broad annual weed control. If crabgrass has emerged then callisto can be combined with half rates of your pre program. In RR corn glyphosate combined with half rates of pre programs can provide the burn down to control emerged grasses while supplying a residual to control annual weeds that may emerge after application.

Seeding rates for corn grain production: The results of a 3 year study conducted by Bill Cox indicates that seeding rates of 30,000 seeds/ac optimized corn grain yields in our moderately drained silt loam soils. If you have more productive soils consider bumping the population up a few thousand seeds/ac and if you have droughty soils consider dropping back populations by a few thousand. Bill also suggests discussing seeding rates with your seedsman because of subtle differences among hybrids.

Table 1. Harvest populations and grain yield of one hybrid at four seeding rates in 2006, 2007, and 2008 and pooled across years at the Aurora Research Farm in Cayuga Co., NY.

RATE	HARVEST POPULATION				GRAIN YIELD			
	2006	2007	2008	Avg.	2006	2007	2008	Avg.
	-----plants/acre-----				-----bu/acre-----			
~27500	23874	23700	24820	24131	144	130	187	154
~29,600	25888	25825	26187	25967	156	134	189	160
~32,100	28904	28480	29378	28921	150	132	188	157
~34,200	31691	29830	31698	31073	157	133	197	162

Seeding rates for corn silage production: Dr. Cox started a 3 year study of seeding rates in silage production in 2008. This table shows his results for the exceptional season we had in 2008.

Table 2.					
RATE	SILAGE YIELD				
	Pioneer	DeKalb	Leafy	BMR	Avg.
	-----tons/acre-----				
~25,000	27.6	28.6	25.1	24.4	26.4
~30,000	29.8	28.9	27.2	26.2	28.0
~35,000	30.0	29.1	29.5	27.3	29.0
~40,000	31.4	29.1	28.8	26.5	28.6

The single yield results from 2008 indicate that a seeding rate of 35,000 seeds/ac will achieve optimal yields with most hybrids.

Cruisermass seed treatment impact on soybean plant populations and yield: A 2-year study conducted by Bill Cox (2007+2008) showed that cruisermass treatment can improve plant populations significantly but may not enhance yields. In the 2-year study Bill tested two varieties with and without cruisermass on 4 sites. The results show a significant effect on plant populations with an average of 25,000 more plants per acre but this only resulted in a significant yield difference (2bu/ac) on one site.

Table 1. Final stands and yield of 92B33 and AG2406 treated or untreated with CruiserMaxx seed treatment at Cayuga and Livingston (Living.) Counties, AG2406 treated or untreated with CruiserMaxx at Jefferson (Jeff.) County, and 92B33 treated or untreated with CruiserMaxx at Onondaga (Onon.) County in 2007.

SEED TREATMENT	FINAL STANDS					YIELD					
	CAYUGA	LIVING.	JEFF.	ONON.	AVG.	CAYUGA	LIVING.	JEFF.	ONON.	AVG.	
CruiserMaxx	143,907	257,081	191,093	125,506	179,397	32	53	22	39	36	
Untreated	145,435	240,552	141,078	97,788	156,213	32	54	18	36	35	
LSD 0.05		NS	12,316	13,785	11,199	9,974	NS	NS	2	NS	NS

Bill suggests using cruisermass under higher stress situations like early planting or planting into high residue. He also suggested that growers run their own seeding strip trials with lower seeding rates with treated seed to determine if they could lower seeding rates and preserve yields.

Ag value assessment

Complete instructions on how to qualify for the ag assessment are at the Office of Real Property Services website <http://www.orps.state.ny.us/pamphlet/exempt/agassess.htm>.

You need to be able to demonstrate (to the satisfaction of your assessor) gross sales of agricultural products of \$10,000 per year. You can do this even if you are not the farm operator, e.g. if you rent out land that produces ag income.

The steps are: provide tax maps to Soil and Water Conservation so they can map the soils on your land; you then provide that information along with the forms (from the Office of Real Property Services website) to your local assessor who will establish the ag assessment value. Each soil type's assessment value is set each December; the assessor will have that information. Assessed values are generally set on March 1, so you need to do this each year before that date. There are penalties for converting ag-assessed land to non-agricultural use, so people need to read that section of the rules carefully.

Important March 16 Crop Insurance Deadline

To be eligible for crop disaster payments in 2009, most crops must be enrolled with crop insurance or NAP (FSA's Non-Insured Disaster Assistance Program). The higher the coverage level, the higher the guarantee. The upcoming March 16 deadline for purchasing or modifying crop insurance policies applies to:

Most Spring Planted Field Crops (including corn, dry beans, green beans, barley, oats, soybeans, fresh market sweet corn, grain sorghum, potatoes, spring forage seeding, processing beans, processing sweet corn)

Adjusted Gross Revenue-Lite (AGR-Lite) for first time buyers.

For perennial producers who missed fall enrollment deadlines, AGR-Lite enrollment by March 16 may restore eligibility for crop disaster payments. For corn and soybean producers, Crop Revenue Coverage (CRC) has new features for 2009 that should be evaluated:

◆ a premium price discount from up to 80% premium subsidy for producers who qualify for separate insurance units but elect to consolidate their units into a single enterprise unit

new price change limits up to double (200%) the base price, with no down price change limit if the market declines and no additional premium for the increased protection

USDA Extends Comment Period for Regulation on Payment Limitations and Payment Eligibility

Syracuse, New York, Feb. 6, 2009 – Mark Dennis, Acting Executive Director for the USDA's Farm Service Agency (FSA) in New York announced today that following Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack's announcement that the comment period for the regulation defining actively engaged participation in a farming operation has been extended for an additional 60 days, FSA is seeking a diverse range of comments from different areas of the United States and farming communities.

With this extension, the public may continue to submit comments until April 6, 2009. The extension document is available at <http://www.fsa.usda.gov/FSA/federalNotices?are=home&subject=lare&topic=frd-ij>.

The regulation, published Dec. 29, 2008, invited comments on the interim rule for implementation of key eligibility requirements for many FSA and Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) programs. The regulations were revised as mandated by the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 (2008 Farm Bill) to make changes in payment eligibility, payment attribution, maximum income limits and maximum dollar benefit amounts for participants in CCC-funded programs.

Back to Basics: Feed Costs Revisited

By Jim Paulson, Extension Educator – Dairy; University of Minnesota

With the big drop in milk price since mid-2008, profitability is going to be a challenge in 2009. With feed costs representing 40-50% of the costs of producing milk, now is a good time to revisit your feed costs.

There are two basic ways to measure feed costs: cost per cow per day or cost per cwt. Both are dependent on costs to feed your herd. It is most likely different from other farms as it depends on amount and types of forage fed, amount of home raised feeds and purchased feeds, milk production level, and the base factor being your forage quality.

Once feed cost per head per day has been determined, we can calculate daily milk income and income over feed cost or IOFC. Most producers have a good idea of the bulk tank average per cow every time the milk gets picked up. For computing IOFC, include all milking cows, not just those whose milk is going in the tank, since we are feeding all of them. Milk income is simply the tank average milk in pounds times the milk price per pound. For example, a tank average of 75 pounds per cow per day with a net milk check price of \$13.00 per cwt equals \$9.75 per cow per day. If feed cost is \$5.00 per cow per day, this leaves an IOFC of \$4.75 as the gross margin to cover the rest of our costs. We expect to see the IOFC in a range of \$5.00 to \$7.00 per cow per day. Additionally, we still have to account for the feed costs of dry cows and heifers. This makes the margin shrink even more.

Where will IOFC be for you in 2009? What is your strategy for dealing with the lower milk price in 2009? One of the first things we usually look at is purchased feeds. Is there anything we can cut out? If so, why have we been feeding it in the first place? Most likely, it is there for a reason. Maybe some of the ingredients were used for a specific feeding problem and now that has changed. But reducing feed cost will not necessarily increase IOFC if by doing so, it reduces milk production. The lowest cost ration may not necessarily be the most profitable.

What can you do to either reduce costs, increase milk production or both? Here are some things to consider:

1. Always strive for maximizing dry matter intake. One more mouthful may mean another pound of milk. This means fresh, palatable feeds, feed pushed up often so they can reach it, no sorting, mangers cleaned daily, cool comfortable cows, and the list goes on.
2. Watch days in milk. Really work at getting cows pregnant. Our target for days in milk is 150. Late lactation cows just don't milk as much. With margins squeezed, we may want to cut vet checks, breeding programs, etc. but that can come back to haunt us.
3. Concentrate on feeding high quality forages. That may start with your cropping plans for this spring and in the future. What is your cost for corn silage and haylage? Should you look at a different forage mix? Work with your nutritionist as you consider different options and get their input on amounts, varieties, with the goal of feeding more forage.
4. Look at all other costs and purchases in addition to feed. Are there other costs that are out of line?

You can use this simple form to help compute feed cost per cow per day. This form is also available on our dairy extension web site at: <http://www.extension.umn.edu/dairy/management/nutrition.htm>. Look for "Feed Cost Calculator". It is a downloadable spreadsheet for your use free of charge.

Feed Cost Calculator (determines feed cost per cwt milk)					
Enter numbers in box provided and calculator will automatically determine your feed cost.					
Homegrown Feeds	Avg. lb/cow		\$/lb		\$/cow/day
Hay	5	x	0.10	=	0.50
Haylage	45	x	0.03	=	1.35
Corn Silage	50	x	0.02	=	0.78
Corn	12	x	0.06	=	0.72
Other:		x		=	0.00
Other:		x		=	0.00
Goal: > 60% of total			Subtotal (a)	=	3.35
Purchased Feeds	Avg. lb/cow		\$/lb		\$/cow/day
Soybean meal	3	x	0.18	=	0.54
Mineral	1.5	x	0.40	=	0.60
Distillers	5	x	0.07	=	0.35
Cottonseed	2	x	0.15	=	0.30
Other:	1	x	0.20	=	0.20
Other:		x		=	0.00
Goal: < 40% of total			Subtotal (b)	=	1.99
Feed \$/cow/day (a + b)					Feed \$/cwt milk
5.335	+	80	x	100	= 6.67
					Goal: < \$6.00 per cwt
by Jim Paulson U of MN Extension Educator-Dairy					
UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA EXTENSION					



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