

Washington County Ag Report
May 4, 2004

Contributors are Sandy Buxton, Colleen Converse, Aaron Gabriel, Laura McDermott, and JJ Schell.

Quote

“You learn in life that the only person you can really correct and change is yourself.
– Katharine Hepburn

Announcements

EARN A PESTICIDE RECERTIFICATION CREDIT BY SCOUTING CROPS WITH ME FOR ONE HOUR. Learn insect, disease, and weed ID, action thresholds, and control measures for hay & corn.

Tuesday, May 11, 11 a.m. at the Keith Stewart Farm @ the shop, Rte 40 Greenwich.

Tuesday, May 18, 11 a.m., at the Black Creek Farm, Don McEachron, Rte 30 Salem.

Meet at the shop behind his house.

Monday, May 17, 7:30 p.m. – The **Southern Adirondack Beekeepers Assoc.**, will have their regular business meeting at Cornell Cooperative Extension in Saratoga County, 50 West High Street in Ballston Spa. A program re: the treatment of Foul Brood by Mark Berninghouse, a NYS inspector, will follow. Call 377-9317 for more information.

FYI:

NEW YORK CORN GRAIN AND SILAGE CONTEST – call our office for info. AG

The www.NYFarms.info website is now available as a resource for those in the farm and food industry in NY. NY Farms! members can add profiles with links, photos, employment opportunities, etc. There is also a calendar. Membership is \$35 a year.

"Farmers and their Innovative Cover Cropping Techniques." Is now available. It features 10 vegetable and berry farms in 5 northeastern states (MA,NH,NJ,PA,VT) that have experimented with and refined a wide variety of creative cover cropping practices. 70 min. video \$15 (802) 656-5459 or www.uvm.edu/vtvegandberry (videos) for more info.

Midwest Commodity Prices - from the Wall Street Journal

Corn per bushel	\$3.09/bu	Cotton Seed Meal per ton	\$215/ton
Soybean per bushel	10.22/bu	Corn Gluten Feed	84/ton
Hominy Feed per ton	72/ton	Wheat, soft white	4.39/bu
48% Soybean meal per ton	322/ton	Tallow per pound	.205/lb

These prices are provided only to show where the general market trends are moving and to help you determine appropriate ration ingredients. Local prices will vary due to shipping, processing, and discounts.

Weather Data – 2004 and average of 1999 - 2003

	Argyle		Easton		Whitehall		Jackson	
	2004	Average '99 – '03	2004	Average '99 – '03	2004	Average '99 – '03	2004	Last Year
Rain Past Week	0.80	0.55	0.45	0.48	0.15	0.86	2.27	1.78
So far this month	0.78	0.35	0.35	0.30	0.13	0.34	0.27	0.45
Total since April 1 st	2.68	2.12	3.24	2.40	2.26	3.42	3.44	2.51
GDD Base 41 Growing Degree Days = [hi temp + low temp]/2 – 41								
Past Week	112	69	127	71	147	89	123	120
Since April 1 st	219	202	293	245	340	275	269	261
GDD 86/50 [hi temp + low temp]/2 - 50 High's >86°F are set to 86°F, low's <50°F are set to 50°F								
Past Week	79	46	80	51	90	58	78	88
Since April 1 st	165	152	214	193	223	193	212	207

Soil temperature at 9 am on 5/5 was 47 °F.

DAIRY NOTES: As new and more potent dewormers become available to the dairy industry and as the industry strives to become more efficient, it is important for the individual dairy producer to have a deworming strategy in place. Strategic deworming is becoming a routine management practice in many dairy operations because it is far less expensive to deworm cattle than it is to buy the feed that is wasted due to internal parasites.

For deworming to improve the efficiency of an operation, the right dewormer needs to be given at the correct time to ensure the greatest economic benefit while achieving maximum long-term parasite control. Deworming cattle after a high parasite burden has developed is primarily a practice of the past for progressive operations. Deworming strategies are now designed to control parasites by correctly timing the use of dewormers to interrupt the parasites' life cycle and prevent reinfection before measurable economic loss has occurred. The amount of exposure dairy cows have to parasite contamination will determine the deworming program that should be used.

The first step in designing a deworming program for lactating dairy cows is to determine the approximate exposure level to parasites throughout the year and the necessary treatment. Treatment at calving and again six weeks following calving (0-6 program) is recommended for several reasons. The length of the life cycle of gastro-intestinal parasites in the adult cow is approximately six to seven weeks. The six-week treatment is timely since one of the goals of strategic treatment is to remove any new infections acquired during early lactation when high-producing dairy cows are milking near maximum production and to prevent further worm egg shedding. Dairy cows that are exposed to moderate to high levels of parasites should be dewormed as a complete herd in late fall after the first hard frost and again approximately six-weeks after spring green-up (or six weeks following spring turn-out). Dairy herds that are exposed to low levels of parasites need to be treated as a herd once a year, preferably in late fall. In practice, the best overall deworming strategy for dairy cows may, in fact, be a combination of both herd and individual treatments. Producers that haven't maintained adequate parasite control in their herds in the past, for example, should begin with a whole herd treatment followed by

individual treatments as their cows begin to calve. Another example, in northern U.S. and Canada, a whole herd treatment in late fall with an effective dewormer will render the herd parasite-free until the following spring. Beginning in the spring, producers can individually treat their cows as they calve, and then continue this program until late fall or early winter when the whole herd treatment is given again. The individual treatments stop until the following spring.

BIRD CONTROL ON DAIRY FARMS: Working with a local farmer, we tried using an owl decoy (\$20) to scare birds away from his bunk of corn silage. (One day he measured 1500 lbs of feed loosened off the bunk face.) The decoy worked for the 4 days that it was up. Birds often become adapted to scare devices after a few days. With pigeon on another part of the farmstead, they became adapted to the decoy in just one day. I guess some birds are more intelligent than others. More work needs to be done. If birds are a serious problem, I would use an owl decoy and a variety of other scare devices for birds and alternate them every few days. You can find devices to scare birds in most vegetable trade magazines, since bird damage is a constant battle for vegetable growers in sweet corn and melon crops. AG

RECYCLED ASPHALT FOR BUNKER FLOORS: After 12 years of using (new) asphalt for five of their bunker floors, Ev Thomas (Miner Institute) is happy with the performance. He comments that “the key to asphalt for bunker silos-and any use of asphalt for that matter-is to provide excellent drainage away from the silo area so that water can't get under the asphalt and freeze. Also, you need a concrete apron for all working edges, since while asphalt has excellent horizontal strength it has poor vertical strength. Silage acids have absolutely no effect on asphalt, so as long as you can prevent bad things from happening under the floor, it should last for 20 years or more.”

Now, I (Aaron) have no personal experience using recycled asphalt, but have heard good comments about its use for roads. Work has begun on the Northway, and road millings will be available. You might consider recycled asphalt for projects around the farm. Road millings (recycled asphalt or RAP) must be delivered immediately from the road deconstruction site to the farm. A vibratory roller must be used to roll it. It should be at least 6 inches thick. RAP will be more rough than new asphalt. Perhaps use RAP for a base and new asphalt on top. Recycled concrete may be another alternative. I have no experience with this either, but hear that it packs well.

Two companies that are in the Compost Network have RAP and recycled concrete available. Contact Bob Cox at Pallette Stone Corp. (584-2475) and Torrey Dorsey at Jointa Galush 857-1364. Call me (Aaron) if you have questions. **If anyone has experience with recycled asphalt or recycled concrete, please call me and share your comments. AG**

FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: Communication is a crucial issue in any relationship but for employers and employees it is even more important. The success or failure of a business can actually come down to how well everyone involved can communicate with each other. Communication is not just talking to each other; the goal is to exchange information and advance the business. Keep in mind that different methods will often make it easier to encourage accuracy and visibility. Chalk boards or memo boards that are checked regularly provide an excellent area to pass along info about repairs, issues, questions and animals. Some employees are more comfortable with written forms and other times it is good to know that you don't have to spend time finding someone to pass along a message. Teaching and supporting everyone so

they will develop a useful communication system is central to having valuable discussion in your business.

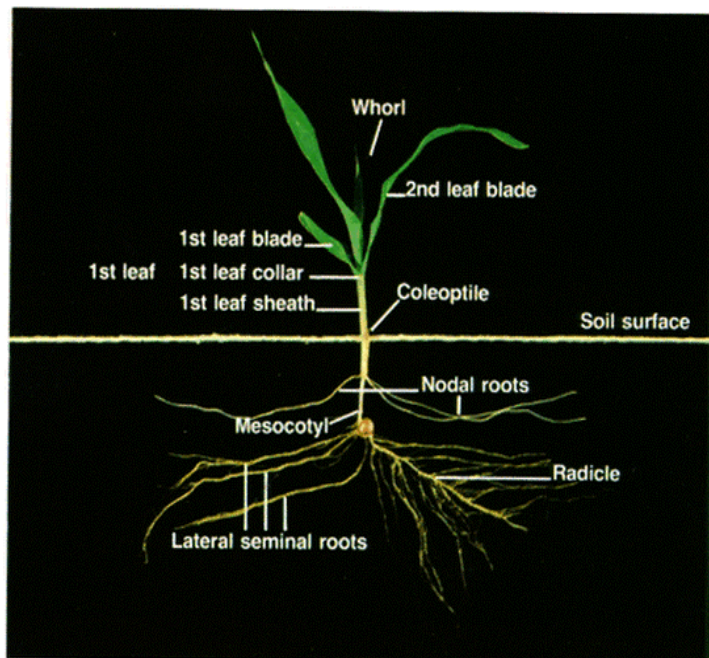
CROPS

Beneficial Insects: While sweeping alfalfa, I have been catching syrphid flies in the insect net (also called flower flies and hover flies). These adult flies lay eggs on plants that will hatch into small greenish maggots. The maggots will eat other soft-bodied insects like aphids. The adults look like bees, but they have only two wings, not four; and they hover, unlike bees. (Pictures from Oregon State University)



Alfalfa: Overall alfalfa is looking good, up to 16 inches tall. I did see some heaved plants in the wet spot of one field. No alfalfa weevil adults or larvae yet, although adults are probably out. Currently disease levels are low. I am seeing leaf spots, probably Lepto leaf spot. Dark round spots surrounded by a yellow halo. It is favored by cool, moist weather. Maturity of alfalfa is influenced mostly by temperature. Growth correlates with growing degree-days (GDD) at base 41^oF. Below 41^oF alfalfa does not grow. When 700 GDD accumulate, typically alfalfa is at 40% neutral detergent fiber – optimum of dairy cows.

Field Corn: Corn was planted for a couple of days last week. Some is just beginning to germinate. Corn grows when the temperature is above 50^oF. At 86^oF it is growing as fast as it can. Therefore we use the 50/86 formula for GDD in corn. It takes about 100 GDD for corn to emerge after planting. **Planting depth is a critical decision and management chore.** Plant no less than 1½ inches deep and up to 2 inches. Check planting depth throughout the day and especially when you plant a different soil type. If corn is planted too shallow, the roots develop improperly and yield suffers. Notice how the **nodal roots**



in the picture are above the seed (courtesy Iowa State Univ.). They become the major workhorse of the three root systems in corn (nodal, seminal, and brace). If the seed is too shallow, you can see that the nodal roots will not develop properly. Be sure to use an insecticide and fungicide for seedling insects and diseases.

Grasses: Unlike alfalfa, maturity of grasses is influenced mostly by daylength (or calendar day) and a little by temperature. However, temperature will influence the fiber content of grass. So, although grasses may mature on pretty much the same day each year, the quality at a given maturity will differ from year to year. One way to predict when to harvest grass at optimum quality (50 – 55% NDF for dairy cows), is to send in a fresh sample for analysis a week or so before boot stage. This will give you an idea on how much fiber has accumulated in the plants to that point. I have been taking forage samples every spring and reporting it in the Ag Report. Stay tuned. **Bromegrass** has some leafspots on it, but I have noticed them only on low fertility sites. Potassium especially is important for plants to resist diseases.

Pasture: Pastures are growing well. Graze bluegrass down to one inch. Other grasses (orchard, timothy, etc) should be grazed down to 3 inches or so. Having some leaf tissue left is important for fast regrowth. Begin grazing when grass is about 6 inches high. The height to begin grazing will be higher as the season progress (8 – 10 inches high). When installing **locust fence posts**, remove all the bark. Bark on the post will accelerate decomposition and reduce the life of the post.

VEGETABLES

The presentations and pictures from the 2004 Produce Marketing Conference in Grand Rapids, Michigan are now available at <http://hortmgt.aem.cornell.edu/events/index.htm>, or <http://hortmgt.aem.cornell.edu/resources/presentations.htm>. (Wen Fei Uva, Cornell University)

Several Newsletter items have been placed on the Web at the Vegetable MD web site at the News Article/Disease Alerts section. They include the following:

Cucurbits-

[Plectosporium Blight: A New Destructive Disease of Pumpkins and Summer Squash in New England \(April 2004\)](#)

[Insect and Pumpkins Don't Mix - The Insect Link to Pumpkin Diseases \(March 2004\)](#)

[Spray Recommendations and Cultural Practices for Disease Control in Cucurbits \(March 2004\)](#)

Peppers - [Pepper Disease Control - It Starts with the Seed \(April 2004\)](#)

(Tom Zitter, Cornell University)

Benefits of Limestone: Often limestone is a secondary thought in a fertilizer program. Limestone applications should be a primary production practice for all vegetable growers. Growers should maintain the pH of their soils between 6.0 and 6.5. A good liming program will provide the following:

- Crops make more efficient use of applied nitrogen fertilizers
- Soil phosphorous availability is maximized

- The nutrient holding capacity of the soil is improved
- The micronutrient molybdenum increases in availability as pH of soil increases. Molybdenum is a very important micronutrient for cole crops, lettuce, onions, spinach and beets.
- Supplies calcium and magnesium, which are essential to plant nutrition
- Soil organisms that contribute to the general health of the soil are most active
- Better root growth improves crop tolerance to drought
- Toxicity of aluminum and heavy metals is reduced

Liming doesn't cost it pays! (LI Fruit and Veg Update)

Solanaceae: Apply Herbicides in A Timely Fashion: In years when the planting season is delayed and often goes into the month of May, herbicides on the early planted potatoes are applied at the ground crack stage and injury is noted. Growers should be sure herbicide applications are applied prior to the ground crack stage to avoid injury. As we “move into” a dry spell growers should keep in mind that herbicides are much less effective if applied to very dry soils, especially if rain does not occur within a few days after application. (Dale Moyer, LI Fruit and Veg Report)

Sweet Corn: Seedcorn Maggots are possibly a problem for corn, beans and other crops, particularly in soils with high organic matter. While maggots usually feed on the organic matter, they will also eat seeds or seedlings. Plants that do emerge may be spindly with few leaves. Germinating peas and beans are favored hosts, followed by corn and many other large-seeded crops. Following is some information from Joanne Whalen at Univ. of Delaware (edited for NY use) on control options: In peas and beans, a hopperbox treatment with Diazinon 50W (1/2 oz/bu) has reportedly performed well. Add graphite to prevent bridging in the planter. Joanne noted that this product will only be available until July 2004 or possibly Nov. 2005. KickStart Vitavax (restricted-use is also labeled as a seed treatment. For sweet corn, seed treatment options include permethrin (Kernel Guard Supreme, KickStart VP), diazinon/lindane (KickStart Vitavax, Agrox Premiere; both restricted-use) and Gaucho 480. Soil-applied insecticides include Warrior T, Force 3G, Counter Lock'n Load (all restricted) and Lorsban 15G. (*DG, U. Del. Weekly Crop Update, 3/12/04*)

Weeds: The Stale Seedbed Technique for Weed Control: Prepare the final seedbed two to three weeks before planting. Allow the weeds to emerge and then control them with RoundUp (3 days before planting), shallow cultivate (less than 2”) or with Gramoxone prior to planting or crop emergence. When planting, disturb the seedbed as little as possible. Many of the weeds will have germinated in the initial 2 weeks after the seedbed is formed and few are stimulated to germinate if the soil is not disturbed. Sometimes, if the soil is dry or crusted, an irrigation and some extra weight on the seeder will help place the seeds properly. Sometimes two applications of Gramoxone, before and after planting, will be needed for larger difficult to control weeds like lambsquarters and wild radish. Research has shown that either herbicide can provide adequate weed control using the stale bed technique, at least until the crop becomes large enough to compete against weeds. (LI Fruit and Veg Update)

Greenhouse: This past week I have identified thrips on lettuce seedlings. **Western Flower thrips** are the vector for two major viruses: **Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus (TSWV)** and **Impatiens Necrotic Spot Virus (INSV)**. Thrips create a windowpane type of injury on the leaves and a streaky look on flower petals. High populations will also leave a black frass near the lesions. Monitoring for thrips is critical. Use sticky traps – the blue cards are the most effective at catching thrips, but it maybe more difficult to see the insect because of the dark background. The first step in control is to discard infested material. For orgainc control, there are a number of parasites of thrips that could be used successfully in a greenhouse situation. For more information about thrips detection and control give us a call. I have sticky cards that I can let you trial in a monitoring program.

Another recent problem that I initially thought might be Botrytis, that was slightly controlled with the use of Mil-Stop, turned out to be a nutritional disorder of geraniums. The lesions were unusual for what we believe is actually **Iron toxicity**, but acidifying the water has helped. This recent episode continues to affirm my belief that nutritional problems are much harder to identify than pest related problems.

Landscape: Phenology: Amelanchier in bloom, Star Magnolia finishing bloom, Apple trees beginning bloom, a few crab cultivars blooming, Forsythia finishing bloom.

Several interesting problems with woody plants this past week as well. **Red Pine** samples brought in by a landscaper were covered with **sooty mold**. We were able to see a very few **scale crawlers** under the scope, but absolutely no evidence (except for the sooty mold) of adult scale or an aphid population. My feeling is that this major damage may have begun last year and was just noticed now. An application of oil would certainly help, but this will probably require a pesticide application to get under control.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Gabriel
Extension Resource Educator
Crops and Soils