Washington County Ag Report
June 15, 2004

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"When I was a child, I could remember anything, whether it happened or not."
-- Mark Twain

Announcements

FIELD CROP SCOUTING, COME EARN A PESTICIDE RECERTIFICATION CREDIT BY SCOUTING WITH ME FOR ONE HOUR:

Tuesday, June 22 @ 11 am, Mike Swezey Farm, 327 Gibbs Rd., Hartford.
No scouting again until July 13. Call me on 7/12 for the location.

Sunday, June 20. 11am-4pm, Garlic and Herb Information Day. Held at the Garlic Delight Farm, State Road 170 about 2 miles north of Little Falls, NY, across the highway from the Little Falls Municipal Golf Course. $5. Sponsored by the Mohawk Valley Garlic and Herb Growers. 315/823-4488 or garliceli@aol.com

Wednesday, July 7, 9:30 am – 12 noon – Field Crop Weed Control Field Day at Valatie Research Farm – CCA and Pesticide Recertification Credits. State Farm Rd., off Rte 9 north of Valatie. AG

Wednesday, July 28, 9a.m.-3p.m. – Young Dairy Managers Seminar - SUNY Cobleskill
The program is for youth interested in dairy production and management and will consist of 4 one hour sessions on the topics of cow behavior, fresh cow management, nutrition and hoof care. Lunch will be served and an afternoon pre-departure ice cream and door prize wrap-up session will be held. There is no charge for the workshop. If you have any questions regarding this activity, please contact the Agriculture and Natural Resources Division office at 518 255-5324. Youth are asked to pre-register by either calling or emailing no later than Friday July 25th.

Monday, August 9, See What's New with Manure Management Tour – Ridgecrest Dairy, Genoa; Fessenden Farms; Dairy Support Services (mobile draghose demonstration), and Cornell Manure Compost Facility. See McClanhan sand-manure separator, Integrity liquid-solids separator, dissolved air flotation system, forced-air composting, vermicular processing, and more. Call Northeast DairyBusiness to register ($10) at 800-334-1904, Ext 222. *I will be taking a van out to the tour. Call Aaron for a seat, 800-548-0881. Leave 1st Pioneer in Greenwich at 6:30 am and return at about 9 pm. Bring a couple dollars for gas & dinner money.*

Midwest Commodity Prices - from the Wall Street Journal

Corn per bushel	$2.78/bu	Cotton Seed Meal per ton	$185/ton
Soybean per bushel	8.78/bu	Corn Gluten Feed	73/ton
Hominy Feed per ton	84/ton	Wheat, soft white	4.19/bu
48% Soybean meal per ton	280/ton	Tallow per pound	.19/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	**0.21**	0.79	**0.00**	0.56	**0.34**	1.38	**0.08**	0.77
So far this month	**0.90**	1.92	**0.55**	2.61	**1.05**	2.74	**0.99**	1.00
Total since April 1st	**9.57**	7.70	**9.75**	8.67	**9.28**	9.05	**11.39**	7.14
GDD Base 41 Growing Degree Days = [hi temp + low temp]/2 – 41								
Past Week	**170**	172	**168**	175	**187**	188	**171**	180
Since April 1st	**1063**	984	**1168**	1060	**1271**	1164	**1099**	1016
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	**116**	110	**115**	114	**128**	125	**117**	109
Since April 1st	**712**	650	**800**	733	**833**	768	**768**	708

See the corrrected weather data at the end of this issue. We are sorry for the errors.

DAIRY NOTES: With recent rises in milk price it is crucial to monitor milk quality in order to ensure receipt of quality premiums. Farms that have computerized parlors have an incredible motivation tool according to the June issue of dairy herd management. 8-hour milking shifts are not the most exciting jobs on the farm and can become rather tedious unless managers can make them challenging and fun. Motivation is the key to ensuring the harvest of a quality product in a cost effective and efficient manner. Dairy producers that have these computerized parlors can easily provide credible and relevant feed back specific to the shift for that milker by printing out reports showing the information for that milking or stall. A farmer in Wisconsin uses these reports to train and motivate employees by paying them 10 to 40 cents an hour bonus dependent on certain parameters as well as deducting 10 cents an hour if other parameters are not followed. Now those producers that milk in a older parlor or stanchion barn can still motivate employees by having them monitor the milk filter sock and having them showcase how clean the filter socks to the other milkers creating a little competition to improve milk quality. No matter what system you use to motivate your milkers or other employees, remember that positive feedback needs to be specific, relevant, credible, frequent, timely, and linked to a source of help.

FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: Cash flow budgeting is not a topic most people get excited about when they hear the words or when they think about stuff to work on. But it is something that you have been thinking about lately. Spending money for crop inputs and machinery repairs to get going at a rate faster than the return is all part of the issue. Analyzing the budget allows you to discover when and where shortfalls may occur so that you can take appropriate action. The item that most people do not understand is that a cash flow budget does not provide information on profit or sustainability. The comment reminds us, "you can have money in the checkbook with an unprofitable business, and have no cash flow with an extremely profitable business." How can you use it to help smooth things for the next year?

CROPS

Alfalfa: New seedings look good, except those fields that have been eroded. Seedlings that are several inches tall should begin having resistance to potato leafhoppers if it is a PLH-resistant variety. **PLH** are here in moderate numbers. I have not seen any fields over the action threshold this year. Check new seedings and those fields with susceptible varieties. **Alfalfa weevil** are feeding on regrowth, but I have only seen moderate infestations. Look for the small green larvae (white stripe down the middle of the back and a black head) feeding in the unopened leaves. If you are spreading manure or fertilizer after 1st cutting, then do it within 3 days, before regrowth begins.

Field Corn: Field corn is very variable within each field; from small and yellow to large and green. The recent warm weather is really helping it grow normally. **Will corn have enough nitrogen for the season?** One way to measure the amount of nitrogen left for the corn is to take a "Pre-Sidedress Nitrate Test". Take a soil sample from the field (15 locations) to a depth of 12 inches. Dry the soil immediately in the sun or in an oven at less than 200^{O}F. Use the PSNT soil sample kit available from our office to send it to Cornell ($5). Cornell will measure the nitrate in the soil. If the nitrate level is equal to or greater than 25ppm, then no more nitrogen fertilizer is needed. If it is less than 25 ppm, you should sidedress additional nitrogen. **The PSNT is for corn 6 to 12 inches tall.** You must do the test while the corn is young enough to sidedress without injuring it. If the plant roots are healthy (white and plump) in the yellow parts of a field, I suggest side-dressing more nitrogen to replace what has been lost. Remember that late-planted short-season corn will not use as much nutrients as early-planted long-season corn. So for those last fields you are planting, save a few dollars and apply input appropriately. The first generation of the **European corn borer** is now flying around and laying eggs. Moths are most active on warm humid nights and lay the most eggs then. Look for small holes and feeding damage in the whorls of the oldest corn plants.

Grasses: Each year grass is attacked by various pests, that mostly go unnoticed. So far, I have seen sawflies (hairless caterpillars in the wasp & bee order of insects), slugs, grasshoppers, and one lone armyworm. Yes, a half-grown armyworm. Do not freak out, they are here every year. The best time to find these pests is at night with a flash light. With yet another wet year, and many farms with "wet soils", I am wondering if it the time is right for Washington County to have a grass variety trial – to test the performance of several grasses in our different soils. There are many new grass varieties. Please let me know what you think. If you do not have early ground, then maybe it is time to consider bromegrass or a new timothy variety that hopefully has better feed quality than the older timothy varieties.

Pasture: It is time to clip pastures and kill those thistle. It will take more than one clipping. If you use an herbicide, do not spray then clip. Spray and let the weeds die by taking in the herbicide.

VEGETABLES

From John Mishanec's Pest Update 6/11/04

Locations that had winter snow cover have had the early season insects like flea beetle come on strong while farther south, the ground had a deep ground frost and insects seem not to be as heavy. We will see as the season progresses.

Potatoes

The big news in potatoes is there is already a pretty heavy population of **leafhopper** in fields. Leafhoppers come up from the south on thunderstorms and generally are not found this early. This is not good news for organic growers as there are few good control options except floating row cover. Check your potato fields for hopper. Adult hoppers are about a quarter inch long and nymphs are small, about 3/16 long, pail green in color and jump when disturbed on the plant. If the plants are tall enough to flop over, shake them and then flop the plant to the other side. You will see the hoppers on the ground. Treatment threshold is one adult or 15 nymphs per 50 leaves. Leafhopper is a more dangerous pest than many growers will admit too. They suck on the underside of the leaves and can cause economic yield loss without being visible. Keep an eye on your fields by scouting them regularly.

Potato beetle adults are out and laying eggs. Colorado potato Beetle (CPB) egg masses are being found in fields but I have not found hatched larvae. Scout your fields and flag 10 CPB egg masses that you find. Watch these eggs for hatch. If you are using M-trak, Raven, Novodo or any of the other Bacillus Thruingiensis products, you will want to apply your product when you see the first larvae hatch. This is because those products only work on the small larvae. If you are using a hard product like Provado or Asana, than you can wait till those first larvae are about the size as the hard shell parents. The early adults are not heavy feeders. As the larvae hatch and get bigger, more damage will occur in the field. Because the ground is warming up slowly, adult CPB's are emerging from their over-winter slumber slowly. This will cause an overlap of generations in the field and can be difficult to control without multiple applications of insecticide. This is all the more reason to wait and time the first application for when it will do the most good.

It looks like we are beginning to have a perfect **late blight** kind of year. Cool, wet conditions favor late blight (LB). With that in mind, before things get too busy, it's a good idea to check your potato cull piles. Cull piles are a good source of LB. It can be carried over from the previous year or unsprayed potato plants will be more susceptible. Bury the pile with at least 2 feet of soil or cover with a black plastic tarp. If you think you find late blight in your field, contact your local Cooperative Extension office and have someone come out to positively ID the disease or call me at 518-434-0016.

Eggplant

Eggplant transplants are showing some stress. A purple leaf is a sign the plants are not taking up Phosphorus (P) from the soil. In wet, cool conditions, it is a good idea to increase P in the transplant solution.

Sweet corn

Many growers got their first planting of sweet corn into the ground as early as mid April. I talked to one grower who was convinced he was going to have bare ground sweet corn the second week of July. Unfortunately, the weather has turned cooler and things have slowed down a little. Some areas had light frost and this will also delay the crop. Trap catch for european corn bore (ECB) has been spotty but generally the flight has arrived. If you have row cover or plastic corn, we have found timing a spray with the first spike in the flight will have good results in controlling

the insect. From trap catches, that time is this weekend (6/12) or early next week. Timing two sprays 5 days apart to coincide with the flight only works on row cover corn. Otherwise, wait till your bare ground corn is just coming into tassel for the first ECB spray. From scouting fields, in some locations we are finding what looks like ECB damage, windowing of the leaves and feeding damage, but on closer inspection, the cause is some kind of over-wintering armyworm. When you look at the worm with a hand lens, you will see an upside down Y on the head. I have seen this before and it is not a cause for alarm. When you do your first spray for ECB later on, you will catch the armyworm. They are not doing any kind of economic damage so hold off spraying till it is the right time for ECB.

Crucifers

This week, flea beetles can be found but in very high numbers in most fields. When transplants and seedlings are small, they are more susceptible to serious damage. Look for small, round holes in the leaves. Holes are generally around an eighth of an inch in size. About the best control for flea beetle for organic growers will be row cover applied before the beetles emerged. Do not put row cover over your crops not as this will just trap the beetles with the plants. Growers using harder products can use Sevin and get very good results. Do not spray Sevin early in the morning while bees are around.

Vine crops

Flooding is a serious problem in some vine crop fields. If you have crops in areas of flooding, it is probably better to pull those plants up now and not risk an outbreak of **phytophthora** blight in the field. Clear a buffer area around wet spots with no plants so the rest of the field will be protected.

Cucumber beetle is out but not in too large numbers so far. This could change quickly as the ground gets warmer. Inspect your crops, looking first in the flowers. Wait till you find 5 beetles per plant to apply a control. It is better to wait a little than do multiple early sprays. Growers should do an especially good job keeping after cucumber beetles in pumpkins, melons and cucumbers. These crops are prone to bacterial wilts, which is carried by the cucumber beetle. Check your cucumber fields regularly for beetles. A threshold of one beetle per plant is recommended. In recent years, bacterial wilt on pumpkin has increased greatly in NY. On pumpkins, we used to not worry about the beetles at this stage. Until the plants have 4-6 leaves, they are extremely susceptible to bacterial wilt. Fortunately, not all farms have serious bacterial wilt problems. If you had this problem last year, or, bacterial wilt has been a serious problem in your area, it may be wise to control the beetle at a one beetle per plant threshold. If you have not had a problem with wilt, than you may want to hold off spraying the beetles.

Check your Cornell Guidelines for a list of products for control.

Fungicide: Gavel 2(EE) approval means NY growers have another fungicide for managing Phytophthora blight in most cucurbit crops by Meg McGrath, Cornell University

Phytophthora blight has proven to be a potentially devastating disease in cucurbit crops and a difficult disease to control. Successful management generally requires managing soil moisture. Fungicides can also be a valuable component of a Phytophthora blight management program. It is important to realize that none of the fungicides and experimental materials tested to date in university efficacy studies have worked sufficiently well that they could be relied on as the primary management practice for this disease.

Gavel 75DF was registered in New York State in Sept. 2003 for use on cucurbits as well as tomatoes and potatoes. It is labeled on cucurbits for downy mildew, Alternaria leaf spot, and more recently for Phytophthora fruit and stem rot. Applicators need a copy of the FIFRA 2(ee) Recommendation in their possession when Gavel is used for Phytophthora blight. Gavel can be used on cucumber, melon, summer squash, and watermelon but not on pumpkin because mancozeb is one of the ingredients.

Phosphorus acid, formulated as Phostrol is another fungicide recently labeled for use in all cucurbits for Phytophthora blight that has been registered in NY. Aliette, containing the active ingredient aluminum tris, is also labeled for Phytophthora blight in all cucurbits.

Start applications of Gavel or other fungicides labeled for Phytophthora blight before symptoms have been observed and when cucurbit plants are young (two-leaf stage suggested), repeat at 7- to 10-day intervals or when conditions are favorable for disease for a maximum of 8 applications at 1.5 – 2.0 lb/A.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Gabriel
Extension Resource Educator
Crops and Soils

CORRECTED WEATHER DATA

MAY 25TH 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	**3.81**	1.09	**2.90**	1.12	**3.20**	0.77	**3.37**	0.25
So far this month	**6.19**	3.22	**5.18**	3.00	**5.62**	2.67	**5.53**	2.15
Total since April 1st	**8.09**	4.99	**8.07**	5.10	**7.75**	5.76	**9.30**	4.21
GDD Base 41 Growing Degree Days = [hi temp + low temp]/2 – 41								
Past Week	**154**	107	**157**	116	**159**	128	**161**	120
Since April 1st	**633**	525	**717**	590	**785**	657	**655**	569
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	**96**	66	**100**	74	**100**	80	**100**	89
Since April 1st	**435**	360	**499**	427	**516**	438	**470**	424

JUNE 1ST 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	**0.58**	0.80	**1.13**	0.96	**0.48**	0.56	**1.10**	1.93
So far this month	**6.77**	4.01	**6.31**	3.96	**6.10**	3.23	**6.63**	4.08
Total since April 1st	**8.67**	5.78	**9.20**	6.06	**8.23**	6.31	**10.40**	6.14
GDD Base 41 Growing Degree Days = [hi temp + low temp]/2 – 41								
Past Week	**130**	138	**138**	141	**143**	152	**133**	143
Since April 1st	**763**	663	**854**	731	**928**	809	**787**	712
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	**84**	79	**94**	87	**90**	92	**88**	77
Since April 1st	**519**	443	**593**	516	**606**	532	**558**	507

JUNE 8TH 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	**0.69**	1.13	**0.55**	2.05	**0.71**	1.36	**0.91**	0.23
So far this month	**0.69**	1.13	**0.55**	2.05	**0.71**	1.36	**0.91**	0.23
Total since April 1st	**9.36**	6.92	**9.75**	8.11	**8.94**	7.67	**11.31**	6.37
GDD Base 41 Growing Degree Days = [hi temp + low temp]/2 – 41								
Past Week	**131**	149	**147**	155	**157**	167	**142**	125
Since April 1st	**893**	812	**1001**	885	**1084**	976	**929**	836
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	**77**	98	**92**	105	**99**	111	**93**	87

Since April 1st	**596**	539	**685**	619	**705**	643	**651**	590