

**Washington County Ag Report  
June 22, 2004**

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

**“Anger is never without a reason, but seldom with a good one.” -- Ben Franklin**

**Announcements**

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

**Tuesday, July 13 @ 11 am, Bob Sill Farm, 6024 Route 40, Argyle (at McDougal Rd. intersection.**

**Thursday, July 1<sup>st</sup> (with repeat on Thursday, August 19<sup>th</sup>), Diagnosing Problems Of Landscape Plants and Turfgrass**, Albany Rural Cemetary, Menands, NY. 6:30 – 8:30 pm. \$5.00/person. Call 765-3512 to register. NYS DEC Pesticide Recertification Credits available. **Tuesday July 6 & 7, 9:00-4:00 Tractor Safety** at BOCES in Hudson Falls. This 14-hour course provides Tractor Safety certification so that 14 and 15 year olds can work on farm and operate basic machinery. Valuable program for ALL AGES. Call for more information 1-800-548-0881.

**Tuesday – Thursday July 20-22, Dairy Tour to Pennsylvania** – a trip to see 8 stops of farms and manufacturing. Pre-registration required, limited space available. Call 272-4210 for more information.

**Tuesday–Wednesday, July 27-28, Northeast Regional Cutflower Meeting.** Pre-Registration is \$50/person. For more information visit <http://www.hort.cornell.edu/cutflower.html>.

**Wednesday, July 28, Cornell Floriculture Field Day.** Pre-registration is \$65/day. For more information visit <http://www.greenhouse.cornell.edu/>.

**Wednesday, July 28 – Friday, July 30, Cornell Landscape Management Short Course For Landscape Managers and Landscape Architects.** Detailed information regarding registration, course tuition and lodging options on our web site:

<http://www.hort.cornell.edu/instruction/short/landscapes/july2004.htm>

Questions? Contact Joann Gruttadaurio at 607-255-1792 or [jg17@cornell.edu](mailto:jg17@cornell.edu)

**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 25<sup>th</sup>.

Recently graduated Cornell student looking for work in horticultural crop production in the Southern Washington and Saratoga County area. Familiar with vegetable and annual diseases,

weed and insect ID. Has experience working with tractors and drip irrigation systems. Please contact the [meh39@cornell.edu](mailto:meh39@cornell.edu) if interested.

**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
<b>Rain</b> Past Week	<b>0.01</b>	0.90	<b>0.15</b>	0.68	<b>0.21</b>	0.52	<b>0.05</b>	0.60
So far this month	<b>0.91</b>	2.81	<b>0.70</b>	3.29	<b>1.26</b>	3.26	<b>1.04</b>	1.60
Total since April 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>9.58</b>	8.60	<b>9.90</b>	9.35	<b>9.49</b>	9.57	<b>11.44</b>	7.74
<b>GDD Base 41</b> Growing Degree Days = [hi temp + low temp]/2 – 41								
Past Week	<b>200</b>	182	<b>198</b>	182	<b>212</b>	201	<b>207</b>	183
Since April 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>1263</b>	1167	<b>1366</b>	1242	<b>1483</b>	1365	<b>1306</b>	1198
<b>GDD 86/50</b> [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	<b>142</b>	118	<b>144</b>	119	<b>153</b>	135	<b>146</b>	123
Since April 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>854</b>	772	<b>944</b>	854	<b>986</b>	905	<b>914</b>	832

**Midwest Commodity Prices - from the Wall Street Journal**

Corn per bushel	\$2.63/bu	Cotton Seed Meal per ton	\$185/ton
Soybean per bushel	9.01/bu	Corn Gluten Feed	65/ton
Hominy Feed per ton	84/ton	Wheat, soft white	4.21/bu
48% Soybean meal per ton	295/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.

**DAIRY NOTES:**

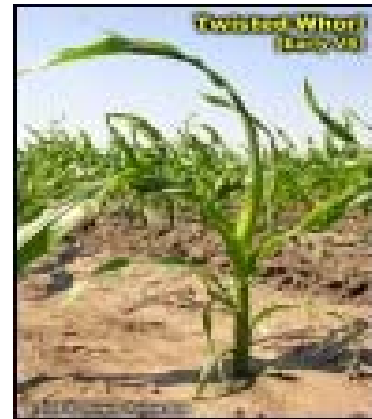
When the temperature reaches 80°F, dry matter intake and milk production start to decline. Cattle sweat at only 10 percent of the human rate, so they are more susceptible to heat stress. One thing we can do is to adjust the ration by adding water to the TMR to increase the moisture level. Provide large amounts of clean, fresh water and maximize ventilation in barns as well as holding areas. Cows will benefit from leaving fans running even after the temperature drops at night. There are ways to determine if your cows are experiencing heat stress. One way is to take temperatures on 10 cows on a hot day. If 8 out of 10 cows are above 102.5° your cows are too hot. Also, if your cows take more than 80 breaths in one minute and if milk production drops more than 10 percent, you need more cooling.

**FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT:** The labor inspections have started. They are getting underway and have appeared to be relatively friendly so far. But it is still important to have all of the correct paperwork that you can pull together in case they stop. Please don't panic, just be ready: Minimum wage poster, work agreements, Workers comp. poster (if needed), W-4's and I-9's.

## **CROPS**

**Alfalfa:** **Potato leafhopper** are on the increase. One new seeding was at the action threshold and fields harvested for second cutting may need to be timed based on PLH infestations. New seedings can be under stress from PLH, weeds, and other factors. Typically we harvest new seedings once the alfalfa flowers. Cutting new seedings in the bud stage may be less stressful than the PLH and weeds. Summer is a good time to apply potassium (K) and phosphorus to alfalfa. K is less available in dry summer soils.

**Field Corn:** The corn crop is looking better overall. Many fields are still erratic in population and plant development. Three factors contributing to these uneven fields includes weather (the main culprit, flooding, leaching, and erosion), planting depth, and possibly some herbicide injury due to weather conditions. Don Specker (Pioneer Hi-bred International) has received report of twisted corn whorls (buggy whipping) from around the state and country. This is due to rapid growth when there are very cool nights and then very warm days. An unfurling corn leaf does not open properly and the younger leaves grow faster than the unfurling leaf. Don provided the following website that has article and pictures from Purdue University,



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<http://www.agry.purdue.edu/ext/corn/news/articles.04/TwistedWhorl-0607.html>.

**Grasses:** Studies at Cornell have shown that topdressing grasses with manure plus fertilizer have given the greatest yields. Many folks are trying to finish up first cutting. I have heard various comments about the challenges of marketing hay. Times have changed. I am not sure if the hay market is bigger or smaller than years past, but here are some thoughts. The hay market has a greater diversity of customers than in the past. Each customer has particular needs. Find out the needs of your customer and meet those needs. The horse industry is growing, and there are at least two different horse hay markets. One is for the racers that like some alfalfa in clean, green grass hay. Another is the pleasure horse owner that wants clean, green hay without alfalfa and with grasses headed out. This lower nutrition hay means the horse must eat more, which helps prevent boredom. A bored horse is a problem, because then they start eating their stalls, poisonous plants, or other bad things. It also allows the owner to feed the horse some grain to help handle the horse without fattening it. Alpaca owners are looking for high quality grass hay. There are also the sheep, goat, and beef producers. The dairy producer needs a processed high-protein hay for a TMR and a low-potassium dry cow hay. So the markets are there, but you have to work harder at marketing and understanding the customer.

**Pasture:** We are going into the summer slump. I am seeing animals on pasture that looks like a golf putting green. This is not good for the animals or the grass. The animals pick up more parasites and the grass gets stressed without a rest period. Give the paddocks a rest of 30 days or more for the summer (depending on rainfall). Burdock and thistles are flowering. Clip weeds

once they flower but before the seeds form. This is a tight window, but optimal to stop biennial weeds from regrowing and preventing seed production.

## **VEGETABLES**

The Department of Food Science at Cornell has released a large binder of **Good Agricultural Practices (GAPS)** with resources to help producers practice **“Food Safety Begins on the Farm”**. For the rest of the season we will include a GAPS tip in the Ag Report. . .

**GAPS:** To prevent contamination of crops from manure and animal contact, all animals should be kept out of production fields including poultry, pets and wildlife (as much as possible).

**From Vegetable Pest Status Report June 17, 2004** By John Mishanec, IPM Veg Program

### **Sweet corn**

Trap catches for ECB are tailing off in most areas. We are beginning to find very early stage larvae on bare ground sweet corn. Row cover corn is more difficult to scout for damage as the larvae are already in the ear zone and do not show the classic window's in the leaves feeding sign. For row cover corn, the best time to spray was probably this past week as larvae were hatching from eggs laid during the flight.

For bare-ground sweet corn, it is very important to scout your fields. Scouting is easy and does not take very much time. Remember, looking for ECB damage is different than scouting for ECB damage. You will always find ECB damage when you are looking for it. When you scout, you are taking a statistical analysis of the field. A true random sample of the field will give you a percentage of damage you can base a spray decision on. If you are just looking and finding some feeding damage, you really don't know the percentage or how widely spread out in the field the damage is. Look for small shot holes, windows and feeding frass on the leaves. When you find a plant with feeding damage, break it off and unroll the leaves and find the larvae to see their size.

Scout your fields to find out how much ECB infestation is present. You also need to know when the corn is going to come into tassel. Look for feeding damage at the center of the whorl. With the high ECB populations, you can know fairly quickly when you are over threshold. Look at 5 plants at 5 different locations in your field. Ten locations is better. If you look at 25 plants and, for example, you find 3 plants with feeding damage, you multiply that number by four and this is your percentage. If you look at 50 plants and you find 7 infested plants, multiply this number by 2 to get the percentage. Once you know your percentage of infestation you can decide if you have to get in and spray. The threshold is 15%. The next important thing to scout for is tassel. When 40% of the field shows tassel, apply your first control spray. The best time is when the flag leaf pulls away from the tassel and the tassels themselves have separated but are still vertical. ECB larvae ride the tassel till it is open. The ECB then drop down. Some larvae will drop on the ground. Some larvae will fall on a leaf and bore into the stalk and some larvae will drop down on an ear. 80% field infestation does not necessarily mean 80% ear damage. Scouting gives you valuable information on pest levels and correct timing for control.

### **Potatoes**

Potato beetle larvae are just beginning to emerge from eggs. If you are an organic grower, now is the time to treat for the larvae. Most of the Bt products only work on first and second stage larvae. Once they get bigger than a quarter inch, Bt's will not work. The organic formulation of Spinosad - Entrust still will work very well against the larger beetles. For conventional growers, remember not to use Provado if you have used Admire at planting. This will speed up resistance.

### **Vine crops**

Cucumber beetle are beginning to be found in large numbers. If you have not used Admire on your transplants, you need to keep control of the cucumber beetles as they can carry bacterial wilt. Check plant at least twice a week for sign of the beetles and spray as necessary. Growers should do an especially good job keeping after cucumber beetles in pumpkins, melons and cucumbers.

**Legumes: Be On The Look Out For Phytophthora Blight In Snap Beans:** Last year in Michigan dying green bean plants with blight symptoms in the crown and upper stems were confirmed to be infected by *Phytophthora capsici*. Growers in the midwest had been reporting the worst Phytophthora blight in cucurbits planted after snap beans and soybean prior to this observation. Look for wilting bean plants about 5-7 days after rain or irrigation resulted in standing water in the field, focusing on low areas. Contact CCE if you suspect you might have blight. (MTM- LI Fruit and Veg Update) Photographs of the symptoms can be found at: <http://vegetablemndonline.ppath.cornell.edu>

**Pesticide:** Hampshire college has started some preliminary testing of organic leafhopper controls. Studies need to be done, but they were impressed by the significant control from Pyganic which contains pyrethrins. For more details and products tested check the June 17 Umass newsletter at [www.umassvegetable.org](http://www.umassvegetable.org)

### **Landscape:**

Maryland Cooperative Extension Service released information that identified the disease causing **Wilting of Wave Petunias** in the landscape as ***Phytophthora crown rot***. Symptoms seen were sudden wilt and death of plants. When pulled out, the plants look like they have a good root system although some crown rot (mushy, tan discoloration in crowns) can be seen. Microscopic examination found mycelium and sporangia of the fungus *Phytophthora parasitica*. This fungus was isolated in cultures from the dying plants. This is of particular importance, because I have received reports from landscapers that this has been happening, although we have yet to send a plant to the diagnostic lab at Cornell.

According to the Maryland researchers, once many plants are infected in the planting, they cannot be revived, and fungicide drench will be futile. It will also be discouraging to re-plant this season with a susceptible crop. Bear in mind that Madagascar Periwinkle (*Catharanthus roseus*) is also susceptible to *P. parasitica*. Also susceptible are flowering tobacco, peppers and tomato. The fungus will persist on plant debris and in the soil. If only a few plants have wilted, fungicide could be used as part of re-planting with petunias. Some other ideas to re-plant a site infested with *Phytophthora parasitica* include the following plants not reported to be highly susceptible: marigold; impatiens; begonia; chrysanthemum; coreopsis; dianthus; geranium (*Pelargonium*); crane's-bill (*Geranium*); phlox; portulaca; *Rudbeckia* and *Zinnia*.

I saw **whitefly** on **Rhododendron** for the first time this season. This can be a big problem for azaleas and rhodies. Insecticidal soap may help, but populations can become huge quickly, so keep this in mind when choosing your control option.

There is a lot of damage from **Pine shoot borer** on **White and Scotch pine** primarily, although all 2- and 5- needle pines can be affected. Because it is difficult to catch the adult in the act, we determine that it is the Eastern pine shoot borer because the larvae create characteristic straight tunnels, with frass tightly packed at either end. The adult female emerges from the pupa located under the lost tree in early May. The larvae feed in the pith creating tunnels that interrupt normal vascular movement and thus the tip droops and dies. Feeding ends by late June, when larvae may girdle the shoot internally. Larvae chew oblong or oval exit holes about 5-10cm above the base of their tunnels. After exiting through these holes, larvae drop to the ground and spin silken cocoons in the duff. Within 2 days they pupate, and remain dormant for the next 8 months.

There is one generation each year. Chemical controls must be in place when eggs hatch and larvae enter the new shoots.

We have also had samples and reports of the pest problems listed below. All three of these pests have been around for many years, but may be particularly obvious now because trees were stressed during the past winter and because we are still seeing the repercussions from the 3 year drought in the mid-90's.

**Ash yellows** is caused by mycoplasma-like organisms which are presumed to be transmitted by leafhoppers or related insects. White ash (*F. americana*) and green ash (*F. pennsylvanica*) are the most frequently affected species. The disease causes crown thinning, poor vigor, leaf yellowing and even witches broom type growth. For more info and great photos, check out: [http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/howtos/ht\\_ash/ht\\_ash.htm](http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/howtos/ht_ash/ht_ash.htm).

**Verticillium Wilt** is a soil-borne fungus that gains entry through the root system and essentially clogs the vascular system. It is a problem for many plants, woody and herbaceous. In trees it can cause a slow death where the crown thins, or a rapid collapse of trees around this time of the year. This disease can be easily cultured in the lab for definite diagnosis. There may be some help from applying a liberal and prompt application of ammonium sulfate fertilizer to trees with mild symptoms. (Studies in Michigan showed that nitrate fertilizers were ineffective.) Maples of all types are very susceptible.

**Pine Bark Beetles on White Pine** – These insects essentially finish off stressed trees. They tunnel right below the bark surface and interrupt cambial flow. We have had lots of reports of problems with this pest on the eastern side of Lake George and in the southeast portion of the county, so I suspect that if you look closely at declining white pines you will see evidence of these insects. Look for exit holes and peeling bark. If you can take a piece of bark off you will see tunneling.

Managers of shade and ornamental trees should consider management strategies which:

- Remove trees with severe dieback, because they can not be rehabilitated.
- Prune out dead and dying branches of trees moderately affected by disease. (This is not true for insect infestations).
- Promote species diversity in tree planting programs, and avoid monocultures of trees along city streets.

- Select tree species suitable to planting sites, and avoid planting certain tree species in drought-prone sites.
- Encourage tree care practices that reduce plant stresses. Watering during drought and periodic fertilization to promote general tree health may be useful.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Gabriel  
Extension Resource Educator  
Crops and Soils