

**Washington County Ag Report
August 3, 2004**

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

“Nature imitates herself: A grain thrown into good ground brings forth fruit; a principle thrown into a good mind brings forth fruit. – Blaise Pascal

Announcements

Thursday, August 5, 6:30 Vegetable Twilight Meeting at Stannards

Sunday, August 8 at 10 am - noon, Managing Dairy Sheep with the Seasons - Hosted by Karen Weinberg & Paul Borghard at Three Corner Field Farm, 1311 County Route 64, Shushan, NY (Washington County). Free farm tour. Contact the Regional Farm & Food Project at (518) 271-0744 or farmfood@capital.net (Subject: Farm Tours) for directions and reservations.

Thurs, August 12 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Farm Tour and Twilight Meeting at Roxbury Farm Route 9H, Kinderhook, NY Organic mixed vegetables. Peast and disease discussion with Tom Zitter from Cornell University. Two field trials- insect-resistant potato varieties and an investigation of organic approaches to disease management in cucurbits. For more info call call Ted Blomgren (859-5341), Chuck Bornt (859-6213) or John Mishanec (434-0016).

Thursday, Sun., Aug. 12 -15. Northeast Organic Farming Association's Summer Conference. Hampshire College, Amherst, MA. Featured speakers: Eliot Coleman and Vandana Shiva More than 150 workshops for farmers, consumers, and children. www.nofamass.org, 978/355-2853.

Thursday, August 19, 11am – 2 pm – Heifer discussion group meeting – A Technical Specialist from Merrick Animal Nutrition will be discussing the differences between milk replacers and whole milk and its affect on calf growth and development in the upstairs meeting room in the Washington County Municipal Center. The talk will also cover the importance of feeding the calf to optimize health and to prevent the onslaught of pathogens. Lunch will be provided with generous support from Merrick Animal Nutrition. Please call the office at 1-800-548-0881 to reserve your spot.)

Note: If you are interested in checking the intensity of light in your dairy facilities, which has been shown to have a positive effect on milk production please call the office and speak to me, JJ Schell, to set up a visit to your farm. We have a light meter here at the office now to measure different forms of light and their subsequent intensities.

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	1.35	0.72	2.23	0.78	1.17	0.94	1.98	2.07
So far this month	0.00	0.42	0.05	0.62	0.12	0.55	0.00	1.90
Total since April 1 st	18.14	14.45	17.68	14.96	15.98	15.96	17.26	13.82
GDD Base 41 Growing Degree Days = [hi temp + low temp]/2 – 41								
Past Week	225	222	218	223	255	231	214	205
Since April 1 st	2478	2462	2534	2539	2789	2718	2515	2507
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	159	155	154	152	187	162	147	137
Since April 1 st	1698	1676	1771	1745	1916	1859	1748	1719

Midwest Commodity Prices - from the Wall Street Journal

Corn per bushel	\$2.06/bu	Cotton Seed Meal per ton	\$170/ton
Soybean per bushel	5.91/bu	Corn Gluten Feed	63/ton
Hominy Feed per ton	73ton	Wheat, soft white	3.94/bu
48% Soybean meal per ton	201/ton	Tallow per pound	.21/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: On a recent farm visit a producer and I were discussing proper milking procedures and the question was raised on what is the definition of a proper milking protocol. Although every dairy is different in the way they harvest their final product, steps should be taken to minimize mastitis and maximize the production of quality milk from a herd. The production of high quality milk starts with cows that undergo a consistent and non-eventful milking routine. Cows that are exposed to stress release hormones, like adrenaline, that prevent milk letdown and predispose them to increased incidences of mastitis. Second milkers should always check udders and foremilk for signs of mastitis. This is accomplished by stripping three streams of milk into a strip cup or on a paper towel from each quarter and looking for abnormalities. Third teats should be washed with a sanitizing solution or dipped using an effective product. The National Mastitis Council has a fact sheet on all dips they recommend in the prevention of mastitis on their website <http://www.nmconline.org/docs/Teatbibl.pdf>. After thirty seconds of dip contact time dry teats completely and attach milking units within two minutes of udder and teat stimulation to get the most out of milk let down. In milking parlors cows should be prepped in small groups in order to attach units within this two-minute window. For example, in a double twenty parlor, you would prep five cows and attach five units, and then continue down the rest of that side allowing for proper teat dip contact time and milk let down. Periodically adjust units to prevent liner squawk and to ensure proper alignment for optimum milk flow. Finally make sure vacuum is shutoff before removing milking unit and then apply a

disinfecting teat dip. These steps should help prevent the spread mastitis in your herd and allow for the production of a quality and wholesome product.

FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: Ever shrinking farmer numbers continue to drive the point that the people who eat the food you produce have no understanding of its production. Regulations are a constant threat coming from another area of realty and experience. This fact is not going to change and we can see the degree and level of impact increasing. Make sure that you understand some of where the attention is coming from AND be certain that you are not contributing to their feelings of concern or anxiety. Regulations about humane care, safety, environmental stewardship are an increasing focus and cost for everyone.

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) Update: The SPDES General Permit for CAFO's has been renewed and **revised** to reflect new EPA rules. The renewed permit is effective from 7/1/2004 through 6/30/2009. Some differences between the old and new permit are:

- Animal units are no longer used to define farm size for CAFO regulations. Animal thresholds are now used. A large CAFO has 700 or more mature dairy cows or 1,000 or more heifers or beef cattle. Medium CAFO's have 200 – 699 mature dairy cows or 300 – 999 cattle other than mature dairy cows.
- The CNMP implementation deadline has been moved to 12/31/2006.
- The permittee must install and maintain a standard rain gauge near the confinement area and record all precipitation events over 0.3 inches.
- **Small animal feeding operations can seek permit coverage.** That means if your farm is smaller than a medium CAFO, you may apply for a SPDES permit (by completing a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan and other steps) and obtain the protection afforded by operating in compliance with DEC regulations.
- There are several other changes as well; most apply to large CAFO's.

Call me for a copy of the "Highlights of Differences ...".

CROPS

Soil Quality: Can you pull up your corn plants with the roots intact? Some plants that I pull, come up fairly easily (a bad thing), and some I can not pull up because they have a deep root system (a good thing). It is not because I am weak, that they do not come up. AG

Alfalfa: I have swept several fields looking for potato leafhopper. Some are far below threshold, others are above. Be sure to check your new seedings. Some diseases are present, common leafspot and Lepto leafspot. Cutting schedules are important. Give alfalfa a good six weeks between the last two cuttings for it to replenish its root reserves. Late summer is a good time to fertilize with potassium to help alfalfa get ready for winter.

Field Corn: Most corn is looking good and not short on nitrogen despite all the rain we have had. Rootworms adults are about their business eating silks and laying eggs. These eggs will hatch next year and cause problems then. European corn borer damage seems moderate this

year. Although, the past few nights have been hot and humid which promotes egg laying. We do not apply insecticides for ECB. Control is through resistant varieties and planting BT corn.

Grasses: About two days of good sunny weather after several cloudy days can make a big difference in forage quality. The plants will replenish the sugars in the plant so that the sugar content goes up and the proportion of fiber goes down. So, let plant replenish their sugars if you can among all this rain and cloudy weather. Otherwise, just harvest like a maniac and get it in while you can.

Pasture: The weed for today is the plumeless thistle. It is a biennial like the bull thistle and spread by seed. Mowing before seed set a couple years in a row will help (if no new seeds blow in). I cannot give a specific chemical recommendation, because although most broadleaf herbicides will control it, “plumeless thistle” may not be on the label for its use.

The pictures and information are from the Univ. of Nebraska, <http://www.unk.edu/acad/biology/hoback/escape/CARACA.html>. Notice the spiny stem, this is very different than bull thistle, and the leaves are very different than Canada thistle.



Spiny Stem



Leaf



Flower

Weeds: The following excerpt is from Ken Wise (Eastern NY IPM Specialist for Field Crops):

Weed concept of the week: How many seeds can a weed produce?

Have you ever thought about how many seeds a weed can produce? Here is a flavor of what some weeds can produce and how many years seed can survive to grow later.

Common Name	Seeds Per Plant	Years seeds remain viable
Pigweed	Up to 200,000	40 years
Jimsonweed	Up to 25,000	80 years
Velvetleaf	Up to 20,000	30 years
Morning glory	Up to 6,000	7 years
Foxtails	Up to 1,000	10 years

VEGETABLES

Cole crops: A second peak in **flea beetle** populations is expected at the end of July and into early August, as a new generation of adult beetles emerges. Damage to brassicas (especially leafy varieties) in August 2002 and 2003 was high in many areas, and we expect to see the same trend this year. Lightweight, non-heating rowcover can be used to protect brassicas from flea beetles and other pests. To be effective, row cover should be applied before seedlings emerge from the soil, and the edges should be tightly sealed. (Umass Veg Update)

SOME THOUGHTS ON CROP INJURY : Over the past couple of weeks I have dealt with crop injury observations or phone calls and wanted to make a few comments. The crop injury I have dealt with is primarily contact in nature, causing leaf burning, and happening easily within 24 hours of applications. There are 3 main factors influencing this injury: tank mixing, surfactants, and temperature/humidity. Tank mixing is often allowed on pesticide labels. Some times there are precautions listed. For example, labels preclude mixing some materials such as Sandea or Quadris with emulsifiable concentrates, organophosphate insecticides, or certain surfactants. The reason for this is that one chemical may affect the penetration of another into the leaf causing injury. Another example is with the insecticide Sevin. There have been cases where both the dry and liquid formulations have caused leaf burn. I have seen it when Sevin was mixed with a surfactant and also when it was mixed with a herbicide (Sanda in the most recent case). High temperature and humidity also enhance this potential injury. If a label does not list a certain tank mix that you want to use AND, at the same time, does not preclude it, you may make the tank mix. Remember, however, that you should try it on a small scale first to make sure that there will be no problems. Surfactants can increase the potential for crop injury by enhancing penetration of pesticides into the foliage or by just causing some burning on their own. Non-ionic surfactants are usually best for improving mixing of pesticides, for enhancing coverage of leaf surfaces, and to improve retention of the pesticide on the crop or weed. It is best to stay away from silicone-based surfactants, ionic surfactants, or others that you are not familiar with unless you have a specific purpose for using them. One that has often caused crop injury is LI 700. This product, although a non-ionic surfactant, was designed to use with glyphosate (Roundup) to increase penetration into weeds and to reduce the pH of the spray mix. When used as a general surfactant and under the right conditions (warm to hot, humid, very sunny), it can cause leaf burn. **Higher temperatures and humidity** also increase the potential for crop injury. A good rule of thumb is to avoid spraying in the mornings or middle of days where you can add the temperature and humidity together and get 150 or more. We have seen injury with Poast and Fusilade plus their recommended surfactants or crop oils under these conditions. One interesting

point is that, you can still get leaf burning with lower temperatures and humidity, just by increasing the rate of the surfactant. The take home message is to avoid hot and humid weather, follow label directions, use surfactants only when the label calls for them, use the right surfactant, follow tank mixing directions, test new tank mixes first, and cross your fingers.

-Rich Bonanno, UMass Extension Weed Management Specialist

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Gabriel
Extension Resource Educator
Crops and Soils