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Washington County Ag Report May 31, 2005

Contributors are Sandy Buxton, Aaron Gabriel, and Laura McDermott. Thanks to Connie Havens for compilation and formatting.

Quote

“When men and women agree, it is only in their conclusions; their reasons are always different.” -- George Santayana

Announcements

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

Monday, June 6 @ 1 p.m., at Lochlane Farm (Steve Lane), 12362 Rte 22, Whitehall.

Saturday, June 11 – Cheese Day! A Festival from Grass to Table – numerous speakers, interesting for those getting in to dairy value-added, held at Sprout Creek Farm, 34 Lauer Road, Poughkeepsie. For more information or to register, NYS Cheesemakers Guild at www.nycheese.org or call 518-692-8242.

Weather Data – 2005 and average of 1999 - 2004

	Argyle		Easton		Whitehall		Jackson	
	2005	Average '99 – '04	2005	Average '99 – '04	2005	Average '99 – '04	2005	Average '03 – '04
Rain Past Week	0.23	1.09	0.60	1.43	0.86	1.12	0.37	1.48
So far this month	1.02	4.31	1.70	4.20	2.20	3.70	2.11	4.86
Total since April 1 st	5.50	6.10	5.62	6.43	6.57	6.63	6.33	5.18
GDD Base 41 Growing Degree Days = [hi temp + low temp]/2 – 41								
Past Week	101	131	112	140	125	149	115	138
Since April 1 st	538	658	609	730	809	806	595	729
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	50	76	64	85	65	88	66	81
Since April 1 st	366	441	446	514	491	530	449	519

Soil Temperature – 71°F to 79°F at 4:30 pm, 5/31, in silt loam, air temperature was 75°F.

Midwest Commodity Prices - from the Wall Street Journal

Corn per bushel	\$2.00/bu	Cotton Seed Meal per ton	\$110/ton
Soybean per bushel	6.56/bu	Corn Gluten Feed	54/ton
Hominy Feed per ton	41/ton	Wheat, soft white	3.92/bu
48% Soybean meal per ton	209/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.

TRADING POST

FOR SALE: Antique Produce Wagon, fully functional, beautiful condition. Call 499-2965.

FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: I was talking with someone at the farmers' market on Saturday who has taken some of my material on tracking and use of records and is utilizing it to have a better understanding of the customer. It is paying off as the business looks to expand and add different products, they definitely have learned some interesting facts. Likewise, I was reading the article in the recent Hoard's Dairyman that was analyzing pregnancy and heat detection problems in some cows and one of the issues they were able to trace it back to was semen that had 'gone bad' for want of a better term – straws that were not kept cold appropriately and then became non-fertile. With no records this would have been impossible to pinpoint until far more damage had been done. It also brings up the point that tracking regular maintenance with back-up records is important – checking the liquid nitrogen level weekly or monthly in the tank, getting it refilled.

CROPS

Soil Health: Remember that the first pass over a field with machinery causes most of the compaction. Minimize compaction by having control traffic patterns – as best you can.

Alfalfa: With our recent fairly sunny and mild days, with afternoon showers, it seems that this is the perfect year to be practicing the "wide-swath" technique for harvesting haylage. With some real good planning, the right machinery, and everything going well, I think that you can mow and chop in the same day if showers will hold off until 5p.m. or so. Check out Tom Kilcer's website on wide-swathing at

<http://www.cce.cornell.edu/research/Agriculture/index.htm>.

Today I measured one field of alfalfa at 27 inches in the early bud stage. This should be about 37% neutral detergent fiber. This is the perfect time to begin harvesting pure alfalfa stands. No major bug or disease problems have been seen.

Field Corn: Timing post emergent herbicides for Roundup Ready corn (and post sprays on corn in general) is very critical. Research by Russ Hahn (Cornell) shows that the number of corn kernels per row decreases once glyphosate is applied at the midpost stage (V5 – V6). **So, apply glyphosate to RR corn at early post (V3 - V4 stage of corn) and when weeds are less than 4 inches tall, to get the maximum yields of silage or grain.** The V3 stage is when 3 leaf collars are visible. Today I looked at RR corn in the V2 stage and quackgrass was 6 – 9 inches tall. So, this week would be perfect timing to apply glyphosate.

Grasses: Myself and others have been noticing a disease on grasses in the area. I have seen it on reed canarygrass, timothy, bromegrass, orchardgrass, and quackgrass. These pictures show the symptoms – a dead spot below the leaf tip develops; it looks white, then the leaf tip wilts. I do not think that I have seen this disease before. It looks different than the disease I have talked about before that has affected orchardgrass after first cutting. As we grow more grasses and fertilize them heavily, we will see more diseases on them. Remember that **potassium** is necessary for the proper functioning of disease resistance mechanisms in plants. Often we just put nitrogen on grasses for the yield response. If soils are low in potassium, they should be fertilized adequately (unless you are trying to grow low-potassium hay for dry cows).



VEGETABLES:

Across the county and the state the challenges have been similar – too cold and not enough sun or rain. That seems to have changed this weekend as temperatures moved into the low 70's on two consecutive days!

Chilling injury on tomatoes and peppers in can look remarkably like scorch. On peppers the injury will make lower leaves turn nearly white or may cause leaf puckering and stunting of the entire plant. Chilling can occur at prolonged exposure to temperatures within the range of 32 – 50 degrees F. Tomatoes experience chilling injury in that same temperature range, but often do not show the dramatic symptoms that peppers do. Tomatoes tend to show a darkening of the leaves and stems, interveinal browning and then possibly wilting of the damaged tissue. Chill injured plants are stressed, leaving them more susceptible to diseases. In tomatoes prolonged exposure to chilly temperatures can result in lower fruit set or misshapen fruit as much as five weeks prior to the tomato flower blooming. Most people are just putting their pepper and tomato transplants out this week, so hopefully chill injury has been avoided. If you have plants in a high tunnel, you may be seeing these symptoms.

Identifying **Soybean Rust** on other legume hosts will be a challenge for us this season. If you can access the web, check out this sight. There are some great photos that could help you and I when we see this disease for the first time.

http://www.usda.gov/soybeanrust/downloads/soybean_rust_symptoms.pdf. Remember, this disease

can be a problem for all types of dried beans, green beans and even some ornamental legumes like lupine.

New and Old Strategies for Thrips Management in Cabbage - Onion thrips have become a perennial pest of cabbage grown in New York as well as many other states and countries. For the past 23 years we have evaluated more than 100 cabbage varieties for their inherent susceptibility to thrips injury and dozens of insecticides for their ability to reduce injury. We continue to believe that the foundation of thrips management should be the use of more tolerant varieties of cabbage and we classify many cabbage varieties for their susceptibility or tolerance to thrips (see the Cornell Integrated Crop and Pest Management Guidelines for Commercial Vegetable Production). However, growers may choose less tolerant cabbage varieties because of other considerations and then try to reduce thrips injury by using insecticides. Our research and grower experiences indicate that some insecticides can be helpful in reducing injury, but the results may be variable. This is probably because when thrips move into cabbage heads, they may not come into contact with the insecticide, unless it has good systemic activity.

Over the last several years we have conducted trials on our research farm and commercial fields that indicate insecticides in the neonicotinoid class can provide good control of thrips in cabbage. These insecticides are more systemic within plants than pyrethroids and many other insecticide classes and therefore can control insects that live in sheltered places on plants. They are especially effective on thrips, aphids and whiteflies. Their effectiveness on caterpillars and beetles is variable. Over the last 2 years we have had excellent control of thrips on cabbage when Admire (imidacloprid is the active ingredient) was used soon after transplanting, or when knifed in when the plants are still young. In our trials we have generally seen about a 50% reduction in injury by thrips with a single application of Admire when placed in the soil. We have also conducted tests in which we have used foliar sprays of Assail (acetamiprid is the active ingredient) from cupping to harvest (about 5 sprays) and seen about a 50% reduction in damage at the end of the season. When we have used a single application of Admire soon after transplanting and combined it with foliar sprays of Assail from cupping until harvest, we have seen about 90% reduction in thrips injury at harvest. So, if you are using more susceptible varieties of cabbage and need to control thrips in them, you might consider using Admire and Assail. There is now a NY state label to use both products. Only 5 sprays of Assail can be used during the season. Written by, Tony Shelton, Professor of Entomology, Cornell University.

Greenhouse Tomato Advice- When humidity in the greenhouse gets above 70% it is too humid and the plant transpiration is reduced; if humidity is low and the soil is too dry the plant starts to shut down to protect itself. The plant must transpire in order to make new roots. It must be making new roots now in order to handle the summer heat. About 90% of the water taken in goes to transpiration, so you need to water 1 liter of water per plant per 1000 joules of light. Sunny weather now can be 2000-3000 joules. Remember to take into consideration the drainage of your soil. This water must come when the plant is transpiring. About 70% of the day's light comes between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m., so most of the water must come then and it can not come all at once. More frequency is better for the irrigation.

The below-average light for this time of year will make plants suffer later due to weak blossoms and poor vigor. It is very important to keep plants vigorous (making good vegetative growth)

otherwise when the sun comes out those plants are not going to know what to do. You can promote vegetative growth and hang onto your vigor by keeping the day and night temp close, 4 degrees F apart. If you run low night temperatures you must bring the temperature up early to avoid condensation. Heat the greenhouse, and then vent the humid air. Don't use the sun to raise the temperature in your greenhouse; use some fuel. Watch out for grey mold! Source: Vermont Vegetable and Berry New, June 1, 2005. Translated and condensed by Rebecca Nixon, Old Athens Farm.

Landscape: This has been an unusual year for our office because I have had at least 6 calls from homeowners and professionals concerned about grass forming seedheads. Dr. Frank Rossi at Cornell University has the following to say about the problem. “Dry weather has led to a significant amount of lawn grasses producing seedheads under mowed conditions. These are not just annual bluegrass seedheads as many KBG’s as well as ryegrasses are in seed now in response to the dry weather. Many of the newer varieties that provide dark bluegreen color and require significant irrigation to maintain quality seem to be producing the most seed. This is of minor concern unless we get hot and dry as there will be significant tiller die-back following the seeding. Apply 0.75 to 1.0 lbs. N/1000 sq. ft. with a product that contains 50% or more slow release fertilizer. Slow release N sources include sulfur- or polymer-coated urea, urea formaldehyde, methylenediurea, dimethylenetriurea or natural organic/biosolids. Try to schedule the application prior to a soaking rain or irrigate following application to move the fertilizers off the leaf blade and into the soil where it can be absorbed by the roots. If fertilizer was applied with a preemergence herbicide earlier in the spring, a fertilizer application is likely not needed unless your lawn is off-color/yellow or has low shoot density. If this is the case, 0.5-0.75 lbs N/1000 sq. ft. can be applied.” Source: Cornell’s ShortCUTT, Week 10.

Pests in the Landscape continue to include the **Forest Tent Caterpillar** and **Cankerworms**. Both of these can completely defoliate a tree, so if it is practical spray the tree with Bt or one of many labelled synthetics for these pests. Also, I have had calls regarding stunted and misshapen foliage on everything from Red Oaks to Lilacs. Again, there is a very good chance that these symptoms are due to **frost injury** at a crucial stage of leaf development. If problems persist and the new growth does not seem to grow out of it, then bring us a sample and we would be happy to take a look. **Anthracnose** symptoms look remarkable like frost damage, but because it has been so dry I haven’t seen any anthracnose so far this season.



Kermes scale on Oak was also seen this week. Below is a photo of this pest. To best control it, wait to see some crawlers which should be present in late June. There are several different chemicals that can be used to control this pest. Give the office a call if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Gabriel
Extension Resource Educator
Crops and Soils

Washington County Agricultural Statistics

Farms and Farmland

Number of Farms	887
Farmland Acreage	205,800 acres
Average Acres per Farm	234 acres
Cropland	130,695 acres
Pasture	14,194 acres
Woodland	47,088 acres
Other (1)	14,171 acres

Farms by Size

1-9 acres	70
10-49 acres	145
50-179 acres	321
180-499 acres	228
500-999 acres	99
1,000 acres or more	24



Market Value of Agricultural Products Sold

Livestock	\$ 70.10 million
Crops	\$ 11.86 million
Total	\$ 81.97 million
Average per Farm	\$ 92,413

Farms by Value of Sales

Less than \$2,500	290
\$2,500-\$4,999	74
\$5,000-\$9,999	76
\$10,000-\$24,999	94
\$25,000-\$49,000	90
\$50,000-\$99,999	67
\$100,000-\$249,999	107
\$250,000-\$499,999	62
\$500,000 or more	27

263 farms produce over \$50,000 in sales annually and account for over 70% of the total sales produced in the county.

Value of Sales by Commodity Group

Milk and Other Dairy Products	\$ 61.17 million
Cattle & Calves	\$ 7.82 million
Vegetable, melons, potatoes	\$ 4.01 million
Nursery, Greenhouse, Floriculture, Sod	\$ 1.24 million
Grains	\$ 2.10 million
Other Crops & Hay	\$ 3.47 million
Fruit, Tree Nuts, Berries	\$ 763,000

(1) Land in house lots, ponds, roads, wasteland, etc.
(over)

Value of Sales by Commodity Group Continued

Cut Christmas Trees

& Short Rotation Woody Crops	\$ 260,000
Equine	\$ 168,000
Sheep, Goats	\$ 260,000
Poultry & Eggs	\$ 199,000
Hogs, Pigs	data not disclosed

Estimated Market Value of Land and Buildings

Per Farm	\$ 298,920
Per Acre	\$ 1,356

Estimated Value of All Machinery and Equipment

Average per Farm	\$ 94,903
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Dairy and Equine Facts

180 dairy farms have 23,300 cows producing 368 million pounds of milk with an average of 16,000 pounds of milk per cow.

Farm Income and Expenses

Total Farm Production Expenses	\$ 78.59 million
Average per Farm	\$ 88,313
Net Cash Farm Income	\$ 11.96 million
Average per farm	\$ 13,447

Farm Ownership and Employment

Farms in Washington County are family owned and operated. 547 report farming as their primary occupation, 340 reported other. The average age of the operator is 53.4 years 330 farms report 1,327 employees with a payroll of \$ 12.4 million.

Statistical information is from New York Agricultural Statistics Service 2003 from NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and 2002 Census of Agriculture from USDA



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Cornell Cooperative Extension
of Saratoga and Washington County

