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Washington County Ag Report
September 13, 2005

Contributors are Sandy Buxton, Sandy Ferry, Aaron Gabriel, and Laura McDermott. Thanks to Connie Havens for compilation and formatting. **Special thanks to our dedicated weather watchers: Will Randles (Argyle), Don Skellie (Jackson), and Mike Radcliff (Lock 12, Whitehall).**

"I know only that what is moral is what you feel good after and what is immoral is what you feel bad after." -- Ernest Hemingway

Announcements

The next and last issue of the "Ag Report" will be September 27.

Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 17 & 18, 2005 Small Farm Expo in PA – a conference on topics related to beginning, part time and small farmers. For more info check out www.smallfarmexpo.org

Wednesday, Sept. 21, 12:30 – 3 p.m. – Grazier Meeting: Alternative Watering Systems for Livestock – at Salu Farm, Keith & Lisa Saunders, 72 McCormick Rd., Greenwich. Robert DeClue, Chenango Co. SWCD, will be our guest speaker. He will show and discuss solar, ram pump, nose pump, and other watering systems.

Saturday, September 24 at 10:00 am – **Small Vineyard Field Day Event**, Rob McDowell's Vineyard, Beekmantown, NY (near Plattsburgh). To register call Kevin Iungerman at 885-8995.

September 26-30 - ASCFG Cut Flower Conference, Lancaster, PA. *Topics include:* variety selection, starting a business, marketing and pricing, irrigation, crate growing, expansion, high tunnel crops, controlling pests, and equipment and suppliers. Tours of three local flower operations included. For information contact ASCFG at (440) 774-2887 or ascfg@oberlin.net.

October 6, 2005 at 7 p.m., CCE Albany County, Voorheesville - **Ancient Forests in Modern Times.** Join Fred Breglia from Landis Arboretum and David Yarrow from Champion Trees to learn about the elder arbors that live in our area. Fred and David will share fascinating facts about the "old timers" including where they are and why they have been so successful at surviving. Please call Billie-Jo at 765-3512 by October 4th to register. Cost is $10.

October 8 - NYS Nursery/Landscape Association Region 3 - Used Equipment Auction, held at HURB Landscaping, 4278 Albany St., Albany, NY 12205. An opportunity for members to buy and sell used equipment. Preview at 7:00 a.m., Auction starts at 8:00am. Sellers must register and get info on bringing items to sell. For more info contact: Jerry Parmenter 765-5002, or Brian Fleury at (518) 438-9823

October 20 - Raspberry High Tunnel Open House, 1 to 4 PM at Cornell University. For more information contact Cathy Heidenreich, mcm4@cornell.edu or call 315-787-2367

October 22 – Washington County Barn Tour, sponsored by Cornell Cooperative Extension. This event showcases several unique Washington County barns throughout the eastern side of the county. Please join us for this special day. Tickets are $10/person.

November 15-17 - Empire State Green Industries Show (formerly the Turf and Grounds Expo) Programs will be offered from the NYS Turfgrass Association, NYS Nursery/Landscape Association, NYS Arborist-ISA Chapter, Inc. and the NYS Flower Industries. Credits will be offered for courses; 41.25 DEC Category specific credits; 3.75 CORE credits; 2.05 GCSAA education points and 22.5 ISA continuing education units. Riverside Convention Center, Rochester, NY Contact: NYSTA (800) 873-TURF, www.nysta.org/greenshow/home/html.

Will you disturb more than one acre of land for a construction project? If so, then you may need a SPDES permit from NYS DEC. There are several agricultural exemptions, but you need to follow the law to avoid fines. Joe Driscoll and Bob Kalbfliesh at Washington County SWCD have information on the regulations. Call them, 692-9940, ext. 3. AG

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	**0.00**	0.45	**0.00**	0.46	**0.00**	0.40	**0.00**	0.70
So far this month	**0.00**	0.78	**0.25**	0.94	**2.07**	1.07	**0.00**	1.55
Total since April 1st	**22.38**	21.32	**18.77**	20.08	**20.41**	22.03	**20.92**	14.15
GDD Base 41 Growing Degree Days = [hi temp + low temp]/2 – 41								
Past Week	**177**	169	**160**	178	**193**	185	**169**	155
Since April 1st	**3869**	3597	**3860**	3709	**4414**	3935	**3902**	3630
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	**121**	120	**110**	124	**129**	127	**116**	103
Since April 1st	**2666**	2455	**2696**	2552	**3060**	2705	**2728**	2496

Midwest Commodity Prices - from the Wall Street Journal

Corn per bushel	$1.77/bu	Cotton Seed Meal per ton	$140/ton
Soybean per bushel	5.56/bu	Corn Gluten Feed	48/ton
Hominy Feed per ton	41/ton	Wheat, soft white	3.42/bu
48% Soybean meal per ton	180/ton	Tallow per pound	.20/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.

Advertising accepted in accordance with rules of Cornell Cooperative Extension and subject to final determination of acceptability by the Executive Director. Advertising space is limited to subscribers only.

Trading Post

For Sale: New hydraulic hoses 3/8" with JIC ends 4' to 9' long, $1/ ft.
JIC to 1/2" pipe fittings $1 each. 495-0531

For Sale: Gathering chains for John Deere 1 and 2-row corn heads, used but good shape $25 each. 495-0531

For Sale: Dion Forage Wagon with gear 16 ft. (2 beaters) $3250.00, Kinzee 4-row corn planter w/monitor, insecticide boxes, no-till capability. $3000.00. (802) 325-3478.

DAIRY NOTES: Now that fall is upon us it is time to start looking at your winter housing for your heifers and your heifer inventory. The demand for dairy replacements is still very high. According to the USDA's tracking data the demand has increased 2.0% over the same time a year ago. If you do not have the room for all your animals' maybe you should think of cashing in on your cash crop.

FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT: Since it is now after September 1, 2005, consumers in New York are now eligible to receive a FREE, ANNUAL credit report from each of the three reporting companies. These reports were mandated by legislation passed by Congress that is now coming into effect. The goal of the new opportunity is to allow consumers to have a better picture and understanding of their credit histories. On-line consumers can visit www.annualcreditreport.com to get a free report. Other consumers may order their free report by calling toll-free 1-877-322-8228.

CROPS

Soil Health: At the Soil Health Workshop last month we also discussed manure spreading and its relation to soil health. George Abawi (Cornell plant pathologist) has found that if a soil is *already* disease prone, then applying manure right before planting increases the incidence of disease. So, for unhealthy soils, spread manure 6 months or so before planting.

Cover Crops: Cover crops, like oatmeal, are "the right thing" to do. Soil erosion reduces the productivity of soil. The best part of the soil is washed away. Cover crops also improve soil tilth, and keep live roots in the soil from fall through spring. This is important for the biological activity of the soil. If winter rye scares you as a cover crop, try winter wheat. If you get a very tender annual ryegrass, you can plant that now and it will winterkill. Even if it does not winterkill, you just need to plow it before early May to prevent it from making seed.

Alfalfa: A recent article in "Hay & Forage Grower" discusses how the proper amounts of both phosphorus (P) and potassium (K) are necessary to keep alfalfa stands productive over several years. Purdue U. research showed that unfertilized plots had greater plant persistence than the

plots that received either just P or just K. Another comment is that annual grasses should not be appearing in alfalfa fields. If they do, then the cutting schedule is probably too short. It should be from 28 to 35 days, to give the alfalfa time to develop a dense canopy and out compete annual grasses.

As you evaluate the fertility for your alfalfa, remember that both P and K can be excessive. Excessive P will cause iron and zinc deficiencies in plants. Excessive K will cause plant deficiencies of magnesium and calcium. A part of good fertility is a balance among the nutrients, not just lots of them.

Field Corn: Corn silage harvest is proceeding rapidly. Let's do our best to store this crop well. You need 800 lbs. of packing tractor for every ton/hr of silage being packed.

PACKING TRACTOR WT (LBS) = TONS / HR X 800 LBS

U. of Wisconsin research shows that the factors most strongly correlated with good packing are: spreading the silage 6 inches or less before packing; average packing tractor weight; average wheel load; dry matter content; bald tires (improved packing); and packing time. In *this* study, longer particle length was correlated with more dense packing.

Grasses: Grasses are growing well and there is a nice cutting in the field. Putting nitrogen (manure) on grass late in the fall can make it less winter hardy. So, be moderate when spreading manure on grasses this late in the year.

Pasture: At first, I thought I was the only one that made this mistake, but as I look at more fences, I see that it is more common. Before setting wood posts, take off the bark. The bark is high in nutrients and makes the post rot faster.

VEGETABLES –

Cucurbits: I've seen **black rot** on butternut squash at several farms. This disease is caused by the same fungus (*Didymella bryoniae)* that causes the stem blight called **gummy stem**. Black rot is the primary storage disease of squash, pumpkin, and gourds. Affected fruit may show black rot lesions in the field before harvest, collapse soon after harvest, or exhibit lesions some time later in storage.

Symptoms vary depending on the cucurbit infected. On butternut the lesions appear as superficial, bronzed, irregular patches and may show raised corklike areas. Another appearance is a reddish-brown ring-spot pattern that becomes bleached white and looks petrified. These field symptoms occur on the side of the fruit touching the ground because high moisture favors infection by the gummy stem blight fungus. Large Halloween pumpkins are more susceptible to black rot than smaller pie types.

Because infection originates in the field, control practices include the use of disease-free seed, a minimum 2-year rotation out of all cucurbits, and fungicide sprays as required. When powdery-mildew-resistant (PMR) cucurbits are released, the losses from black rot may be reduced. To reduce the effects of this disease once harvested, fruit should be shipped while refrigerated. It also helps to cure the rind properly before shipping.

Curing Onions for Maximum Quality: Quick curing can be done with outside air, which is heated to approximately 77ºF. Higher temperatures, up to 90ºF can be used if onions are of high quality with several layers of good skins. Higher temperatures are favorable for development of bacterial diseases. Black mold is more likely to develop when temperatures exceed 82ºF. A lower temperature, down to 68ºF should be used if onions are poorly skinned or if they have been touched by frost. Best skin color develops at 75-90ºF. *Relative humidity* - should not fall below 65% or exceed 80%. RH going into the boxes should ideally be 50%.

Airflow should be no less than 3 cubic feet per minute per cubic foot of product. Be aware that when bulb size is down, air circulation through the boxes is reduced (onions pack tighter with smaller air spaces in between). An empty bushel crate can be placed into the onion boxes while filling to increase air circulation. The wetter/greener the onions going into a dryer, the fewer should be put into it. Stack no more than 3 boxes away from the plenum. The RH and temperature of the air going into and out of the boxes should be monitored and adjustments made accordingly. Check airflow. Air will take the path of least resistance. Use a smoke test to show you where and how the air is moving.

Late Season Weed Management – written by *L. Huffman, Weed Specialist, Ontario, Canada. Source: September 7th Pestminder*
Growers are often frustrated with weeds by this time of year. Take solace that there are some benefits to weeds now. Weeds can: tie up excess fertility; provide shelter for beneficial insects and mites; prevent soil erosion from bare soil; contribute to organic matte in the soil. Late summer weeds cause less yield loss than spring weeds. So what is the best place to spend weed management dollars in late summer? Mow down weeds around the edge of fields. Weeds growing on field edges produce much more seed than weeds that grow in crops. Get rid of infield weeds that will shed seed. Spot spray perennials that re-grow after mowing. **Quackgrass** control with glyphosate can be better in the fall than spring, but remember that plants need to be actively growing with 4-6 new leaves. Treat **thistles** with glyphosate that reach early bud after mowing. Post-harvest treatments with 2,4-D for broadleaf weeds including **dandelions, seedling Canada thistle and sow thistle** can be very effective. Fields can be treated after harvest, right up to late October. Plant cover crops immediately after harvest to smother weeds. Watch for an opportunity to use selective herbicides to eliminate/reduce problem weeds in next year's crop.

One of the most difficult weeds to control is **Wild Morning Glory or Hedge Bindweed**. The best time to control morning glory is with the use of between-crop application of herbicides when the plants are actively growing and at or beyond the full bloom stage. A combination of 1-quart 2,4-D plus 1 quart Banvel per acre or 2 quarts/acre of 2,4-D will provide good control. There are no materials for control of this weed in potatoes at this time of the year. (Bindweed info from Dale Moyer at the Long Island Exp. Station).

TURF: Establishing/Renovating Turf: Cool evening temps and moderate day temps allows soils to cool and with adequate moisture creating an ideal time for reseeding damaged areas. Keep in mind broadleaf weed control will delay reseeding for at least 2 weeks (depending on active ingredient). If most of the lawn has been invaded with crabgrass, use a Post-emergent non-selective material to reduce the competition. You then can seed into the area within a few

days. In all these cases adequate moisture is essential for the weeds to be actively growing and absorb the herbicide and of course for seed germination.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Gabriel
Extension Resource Educator
Crops and Soils