

**Washington County Ag Report  
June 7, 2005**

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

**“Inside yourself or outside, you never have to change what you see, only the way you see it.  
-- Thaddeus Golas**

*We are not able to provide weather and commodity information this week.*

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

*Monday, 6/13, 1pm at Ideal Dairy (John Dickinson) 239 Vaughn Rd., Hudson Falls.*

**Tuesday, June 21** - Cornell Turf and Landscape Management Field Day, Ithaca, NY. Includes information for all types of ornamental issues incl., Golf Courses, Lawn and Landscapes, Sports Turf, Ornamentals Research, Plantations Tour and Campus Tour. Contact: Joann Gruttadaurio, [jg17@cornell.edu](mailto:jg17@cornell.edu) or 607-255-1792

**Friday, June 24-25** - Landscape Architects and Landscape Professionals Short Course

Focus on: Plant Selection, Establishment and Design for Complex Landscapes. Featured

Speaker: Michael Van Valkenburg. Also featured: Zucker Shrub Selection at the Plantations. Dinner and tour of the Bassuk/Trowbridge Gardens Cornell Campus, Ithaca, NY Contact: Joann Gruttadaurio [jg17@cornell.edu](mailto:jg17@cornell.edu) or 607-255-1792.

**Sun - Weds., June 26-29**, Seeley Conference, 20th Anniversary Conference theme: "Stayin' Alive: Can We Captivate the Elusive Consumer?" Cornell Campus, Ithaca, NY. For more information check <http://www.hort.cornell.edu/seeleyconference/>.

**Tuesday, June 28<sup>th</sup>** - IPM Walk; Diagnosing Problems of Landscape Plants and Turfgrass. 6:30- 8:00 p.m. Contact Chuck Schmidt 518-765-3500 or email [cgs34@cornell.edu](mailto:cds34@cornell.edu) for the location in the Capital District.

**Tuesday, July 5 - 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. - High Tunnels: What do they offer the Fresh Market Farmer?** This meeting will be held at Ted and Jan Blomgren's Wind Flower Farm, 585 Meeting House Road, Valley Falls. The Blomgren's have several different styles of hoopouses and experience growing a wide variety of crops in them. They will also be reporting on results of a SARE grant on cut flower quality in hoopouses. If you would like to join a local farmer to farmer group for a pot luck, arrive with a dish to share at 5:30 pm. For directions and to let us know that you are coming, please contact our office at 746-2560.

**Wed. & Thurs., July 6 & 7, 2005 Tractor Safety Certification** course in Greenwich, Pre-registration is required. Call John Bow for more info, at 1-800-548-0881.

**Wednesday, July 6 - Cornell Potato Field Day**, Thompson Vegetable Crops Research Farm, Freeville, NY. Observe yield trials, an insecticide-free plot and seed multiplication blocks. Project goals, in addition to finding high yielding varieties adapted for NYS, are developing lines resistant to the golden nematode, scab, late blight, insect and virus problems. See a demonstration on tissue culture for seed propagation. Empire State Potato Growers, Inc. is sponsoring this field day. **This meeting and lunch is FREE**, we just ask that you RSVP to Don Halseth at 607-255-5460 or e-mail [deh3@cornell.edu](mailto:deh3@cornell.edu) for help in estimating bus and meal needs.

**Saturday, August 13, 2005 - Symposium on Chronic Wasting Disease** - will be held at the Wyndham Hotel in Syracuse, hosted by CCE and the American Wildlife Conservation Foundation. Additional information will be available in the coming weeks. AG

**September 11-19, 2005 - Professional Study Tour Planned to Holland** - features the bi-annual AGF TOTAAL Fruit and Vegetable Trade Fair in Rotterdam, and meetings and discussions with U.S. and Dutch Agricultural Officials. Agricultural inspections throughout the itinerary include a large variety of agricultural commodities: dairy, nursery, strawberries, tomatoes, mushrooms, aquaculture, pork and eggs, to name a few. A selection of Holland's Value-Added Agriculture and Agri-businesses are also on the schedule plus a visit to the world famous Aalsmeer Flower Auction. Organizers are Mark P. Linder & Associates 916 799-8345 and Harvest Travel International 800 227-0464. Call Aaron or Laura for a flyer.

**Chronic Wasting Disease Seminar Available Online** Please go to the CCE CWD web site at this URL: <http://wildlifecontrol.info/CWD/default.htm>. This very large file (350 MB) takes about six minutes to download at a high-speed connection. It will only run with Quicktime software (may be downloaded for free). The audio quality is good, but your volume needs to be turned up high. Image quality is a bit fuzzy, but readable, as the presentation was filmed from the back of the seminar hall. Paul Curtis would appreciate your feedback if you find this presentation and format to be useful. Contact Paul at [PDC1@cornell.edu](mailto:PDC1@cornell.edu).

**Northeast Organic Farming Association announces ten new handbooks** of the NOFA Organic Principles and Practices Handbook Series that cover many aspects of ag production and marketing. Retail price is \$7.95. To order, contact Elaine Peterson [info@nofamass.org](mailto:info@nofamass.org) or 978 355-2853 or go to [www.nofa.org](http://www.nofa.org)

**The Spring 2005 issue of the Northeast Buckwheat Growers Newsletter** is now available online at: <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/hort/faculty/bjorkman/buck/NL/605.html>

### **IMPORTANT NEW FROM NEW YORK FARM BUREAU:**

The State Department of Labor, Division of Labor Standards, has announced their farm compliance program for the year will be targeted towards the vegetable industry. This program will be similar to the one conducted last year, targeted towards the dairy industry. Inspectors will be focusing on compliance with the Minimum Wage Order (remember it is now \$6.00 an hour and must be posted as such), Workers' Compensation coverage, and the Farm Work Agreement. State inspectors may, or may not, be accompanied by a federal Department of Labor regional inspector as well. As a general reminder, federal inspectors tend to check for compliance with the Migrant and Seasonal Protection Act and the OSHA housing standards.

**Please know that the state and federal Departments of Labor are directing their efforts towards compliance education, but can and will avail themselves of the ability to issue fines should a grower have a serious violation. The dairy inspections went quite well last year, with the majority of problems arising over farm work agreements, or lack thereof, and a lack of understanding that farm workers are considered manual workers and must be paid on a weekly, and not bi-weekly, basis.**

If you are a dairy farmer and received a visit last year and had a compliance issue, you can and should expect that you will see a recheck of your farm operation to ensure that you are now in full compliance. If you are not in full compliance yet, you can expect to see penalties assessed.

Please feel free to distribute this New York Farm Bureau alert widely to your farmer neighbors, regardless of their commodity. It's vitally important that you take the time to understand and be in full compliance with all state and federal labor laws. Nobody should read this message and think that they cannot, at any time, be subjected to a labor inspection simply because they are an apple grower and not a vegetable grower! **Please note that there is additional information posted on our website that has much of the information you will need to double check your farm operation. You may access it at [www.nyfb.org](http://www.nyfb.org).**

**WOOD CHIPS:** With our first summer storm, municipalities and tree services will be making lots of wood chips. Often disposal of these wood chips is a hassle. **Wood chips have lots of uses on the farm.** You may want to talk to the folks making all these wood chips and see if you can help them by letting them dump them at your farm. For you, they can be used for composting manure, mulching high-value crops, used for composting mortalities, or bedding for bed packs.

**DAIRY:** Diseases affect cow productivity in 3 ways: 1. By reducing reproductive efficiency, 2. By shortening the animal's expected productive life, and 3. By lowering milk yield. The nine most common are: dystocia, milkfever, retained placenta, metritis, mastitis, ketosis, displaced abomasum, lameness and cystic ovarian disease. Some of these factors are independent and others are very related. Working on systems or procedures that can track, manage and reduce their incidence will result in improved profitability. According to a study reported in 2001 (Grohn), milk loss begins 2-4 weeks before diagnosis and may continue for 2-4 weeks afterwards, having a dramatic economic impact. Source: Grohn, Yrjo, "Incidence and Production Losses of Early Post-Partum Diseases" Cornell University, 2001

**FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT:** Just so that everyone hears, NY Farm Bureau is communicating with its members that this season's hot commodity for NYS Dept. of Labor is vegetables. Like last year, it is important that vegetable producers have their records and postings up to date (minimum wage poster, I-9's, W-4's, and work agreements on file). However, if your business uses chemicals it is also important to have all of that material in proper condition too! Keep in mind that dairy farmers who were flagged last year for having compliance problems, may receive a visit this summer. If you need any help, please give the office a call.

**Interesting:** Food system energy breakdown: Agricultural production accounts for 21 percent of all food system energy use; 16 percent goes to processing; transport uses another 14 percent; packaging takes seven percent, as do restaurants and caterers; food retailing consumes four

percent; and 32 percent is needed for home refrigeration and preparation. Source: *CFNP Report May 19, 2005*.

## **CROPS**

**Soil Health:** (from the US Compost Council) The Rodale Institute Experimental Farm received NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant to build and distribute 10 organic no-till assemblies tailored to regional production needs. "In many ways, organic no-till represents the best possible farming strategy for temperate systems," says Jeff Moyer, Rodale Institute farm manager and project director for the grant. "It brings together the environmental benefits of organic production—eliminating chemical pesticides and fertilizers and improving soil quality through composts and cover crops with the conservation benefits of reduced or zero-tillage." Dubbed "No-till Plus," the three-year project is centered on The Rodale Institute's development of an innovative crimper-roller implement that converts a standing cover crop into a weed-suppressing, soil-building mulch. Because the roller is designed to mount on the front of a tractor, it can be paired with a no-till planter assembly to knock down cover crops and plant a primary crop in a single pass. See the following web sites for more information. [http://www.newfarm.org/depts/RI\\_ops/0904/grant.shtml](http://www.newfarm.org/depts/RI_ops/0904/grant.shtml)

[http://www.newfarm.org/depts/NFfield\\_trials/1103/notillroller.shtml](http://www.newfarm.org/depts/NFfield_trials/1103/notillroller.shtml)

**Beneficial Insects:** It seems to me that we may have a lots of insects around this year if the dry weather continues. Dry conditions accelerate the population growth of some insects (mostly sap feeders but also leaf feeders) because the water stressed plants are a more concentrated diet. Add heat to the conditions, and insect populations can really explode because high heat will shorten the generation time. So watch carefully for pests this year, and also any natural enemies that are associated with them. Sometimes natural enemies can keep populations under control all on their own. So far this year, I have noticed reed canarygrass with an unusual amount of aphids – dozens to hundreds on a leaf. My willow tree at home seems to have more than the usual number of willow leaf beetle larvae. AG

**Cover Crops:** When you till under cover crops, they need moisture to decompose rapidly so that the next crop is not inhibited. Irrigate if necessary to stimulate the decomposition of cover crops, which are tilled into the soil.

**Alfalfa:** Alfalfa weevil developed slowly this year, so first cutting has been fine. However, AW larvae are still small and they now have the regrowing alfalfa for food. They can still cause damage. Check alfalfa regrowth within two weeks of cutting to be sure that second cutting is not getting devoured. If you find > 50% of stem tips with feeding damage and the larvae are medium size or smaller, then an insecticide treatment may be needed to save second cutting. If you topdress alfalfa with fertilizer, do it within two days of harvest to avoid damaging the regrowth.

In a couple of fields around the county, I have noticed herbicide damage to alfalfa. First, it is best to lime fields regularly with a ton or two of lime, rather than in heavy doses. Atrazine becomes more active as the pH rises, so acid fields that are limed heavily before planting alfalfa can be at risk for herbicide injury if atrazine has been used in the past. Eptam is a common herbicide for alfalfa seedings, but should not be used if atrazine has been applied in the last 12

months. The dry conditions we had this spring also caused some Eptam injury to alfalfa seedings.

**Field Corn:** Now is a good time to scout weeds in corn to be sure that pre-emergent herbicides are working and to spot any problem weeds like bindweed, cucumber, or other late germinating weeds. You can then select the proper post-emergent herbicide to use.

White speckling on corn leaves is probably due to thrips (a very small insect) that feed on corn leaves. Rain and plant growth will solve take care of this pest.

**Grasses:** Should you topdress grass with urea or ammonium sulfate (50# N/acre)? Compare the cost using the formula below. Ammonium sulfate (21% N) has very little nitrogen volatilization, while urea (46% N) can lose up to 40% of its N.

$$\$/\text{ton of fertilizer} \div (2000 \times \%N \text{ of the fertilizer} \times \% \text{ not voltalized}) = \$/\text{lb N}$$

**Landscape: Forest Tent Caterpillars** remain the largest insect problem in the area. They appear to be feeding on plants other than the preferred hosts such as maple and ash. I have seen them on oak, honeysuckle, cottonwood, birch, viburnum and monarda. There has been a lot of concern re: the defoliation of sugar bushes, which continues to progress. There is some discussion about the legality of certain insecticides for control of forest tents in the forest. *Bacillus thuriengensis var. kurstaki* is the chemical of choice for forest situations, but the concern is that the product may not work as well on these late instars because the caterpillars are over an inch long. Still, it was reported that Vermont made some aerial applications of Bt on Memorial Day weekend with excellent results. Dan Gilrein, Cornell University entomologist, suggest that Bt shouldn't be more than a year old for best efficacy so make sure to check the batch date. Foray 48B is a Btk that has been used for forestry applications. He mentioned also that for gypsy moth control, low-volume applications tended to be more effective than hydraulic applications because more active ingredient was available for the insect to ingest.

Prior to the heavy thunderstorm on June 6th, area lawns were beginning to show **drought stress** and fortunately along with the heavy winds and hail, we did get some precipitation with the storm. Unfortunately we received this in a very short time which brings me to the topic of **RUNOFF**. Turf managers and homeowners should be aware of local weather predictions prior to application of any lawn treatments. Fertilizers pest control products have serious implications for storm sewers, neighboring streams etc., so just be aware that these weather conditions can appear anytime that we have high heat with unsettled air approaching. This week I did see several samples of **Pink Snow Mold** which had been growing all spring. This turf fungus is a problem when the weather is cool and we have consistent wetness (both samples were from irrigated lawns). Cultural control is usually effective – turn off the sprinkler and hope that the weather will get warmer, but maintaining a moderate N level and a low soil pH will also help.

**Vegetables:** As soon as the weather warmed the **striped cucumber beetles** were out in force, feeding on vine crops. This beetle can kill young seedlings and cause enough damage that yields will be drastically reduced. They also vector bacterial wilt, which is a recurrent threat to local growers. Control of these insects is important if you depend on your vine crops. For a comprehensive discussion of organic control measures, take a look at the fact sheet from

ATTRA: <http://www.attra.org/attra-pub/cucumberbeetle.html>. If you are uncertain of the appropriate insecticide choices, give me a call at 1-800-548-0881.

**Plectosporium Blight: A New Disease of Cucurbit Crops** - Plectosporium blight (previously named Microdochium blight) is a new, potentially devastating disease. Pumpkin, squash (especially zucchini) and gourd are susceptible. Symptoms of Plectosporium blight were confirmed on pumpkin and zucchini squash plants in eastern NY in Aug 2004 and in Oct 2004 on pumpkin fruit brought on to Long Island. In 2000, the first year Plectosporium blight was observed in IL, symptoms were found in all pumpkin fields examined and yield loss was as much as 50%. Severe losses occurred in 2003 in CT and MA, where the disease was confirmed on 7 farms and in several home gardens, probably because rainy weather provided favorable conditions. Two of these farmers reported total loss of their squash (yellow and zucchini) and pumpkin crops. Once observed in a state, Plectosporium blight usually has reappeared in following years, unless weather is unfavorable for disease development. It now occurs routinely throughout TN and VA. Plectosporium blight can disappear after conditions become dry because the pathogen is highly dependent on rainfall. Spores of this pathogen are dispersed by wind and rain.

This pathogen is thought to not be the same as the one occurring in Europe, but rather to be a mutant of this fungus (*Plectosporium tabacinum*) which is a common saprophyte often found on decaying vegetable debris.

**Symptoms** occur on leaf veins, stems, and fruit. Lesions are white and have a very distinctive diamond to spindle shape that is characteristic for this disease. They are small initially (<1/4 inch), but can expand and coalesce, causing the entire surface of stems, leaf veins or fruit handles to turn white. Leaf tissue between veins is not affected, thus early symptoms are not as apparent as with other foliar diseases. Leaves eventually die and collapse, often in a 10- to 25-ft diameter circle around the site of initial infection. Dead vines can be so brittle they shatter when stepped on. Spots are more circular on fruit, and they remain small and don't coalesce.

**Management** begins with rotation because the pathogen can survive in soil. The minimum effective rotational period has not been determined; at least three years is recommended. The pathogen is not thought to be seed-borne.

Genetic resistance has not been detected, but differences in susceptibility have been documented among pumpkin varieties. An experiment conducted in TN in 2003 revealed that Sorcerer had fewer unmarketable fruit (50%) while Gold Strike had the most (85%). Since disease development requires leaf wetness, irrigate with drip. If that is not feasible, time overhead irrigation to minimize leaf wetness. Scout fields after rainy weather.

Carefully inspect any pumpkin fruit brought onto your farm to re-stock pick-your-own fields. Affected fruit typically do not breakdown and the spots could be mistaken to be oedema or another non-pathological blemish.

Bravo and Dithane are the primary fungicides recommended for Plectosporium blight. These were as effective as the QoI (aka strobilurin) fungicides Cabrio, Flint and Quadris. Plectosporium blight is specified on the Dithane and Cabrio labels. Unfortunately Dithane is not labeled for use on pumpkin, which is one of the more susceptible crops. NYS Department of Environmental Conservation granted FIFRA 2(ee) requests to add Plectosporium blight to the labels for Bravo, Amistar, and Flint in 2004. Applicators need a copy of the FIFRA 2(ee) Recommendation in their possession when Bravo (EPA Reg. No. 50534-201-100), Amistar

(EPA Reg. No. 100-1164), or Flint (EPA Reg. No. 264-777) are used for Plectosporium blight. A copy (tif file) can be obtained on the web at <http://pmep.cce.cornell.edu/pims/current/>.

A 7-day fungicide application interval is recommended during rainy weather. Plectosporium blight was significantly more severe in pumpkins sprayed every 14 days than those sprayed weekly when conditions were favorable in an experiment conducted in MD. Development of Plectosporium blight is highly dependent on rainfall. Thus the interval can be extended during dry weather. This disease has been observed to disappear under dry conditions.

In a rotated field, begin applying fungicides for Plectosporium blight when powdery mildew starts to develop. This timing has worked well in fungicide efficacy experiments conducted in MD. Start at flowering or fruit set where scouting is not done. Start applications shortly after crop emergence when planting into a non-rotated field that had Plectosporium blight the previous year as recommended in TN. A weekly spray program has been used in most fungicide efficacy experiments.

**Suggested Fungicide Program for Powdery mildew, Plectosporium blight, Black Rot and Other Pumpkin Diseases 2005.** The fungicide program listed below includes a product each week that is effective for powdery mildew, Plectosporium blight and black rot. Begin when powdery mildew is detected at the action threshold of 1 leaf with symptoms out of 50 older leaves examined. If only powdery mildew is a concern, consider in place of Bravo either sulfur for all cucurbits except melon or mineral oil. Microthiol Disperss and JMS Stylet-oil were the most effective contacts tested in experiments conducted on LI. Note that Nova is also only effective for powdery mildew. Add copper if bacterial diseases are a concern.

Week 1 Pristine + Bravo or another chlorothalonil product.

Week 2 Nova + Bravo.

Week 3 Pristine + Bravo.

Week 4 Bravo. Add Nova if little powdery mildew on leaf underside and couple more weeks of powdery mildew control desired.

Bravo could be used alone if additional sprays are needed.

NOTE: additional information and photographs of symptoms can be found in news articles under Cucurbits at: <http://vegetablemdonline.ppath.cornell.edu>.  
written by Margaret T. McGrath, Cornell University



Plectosporium lesion on stem end of pumpkin.



Plectosporium lesions on mid-rib vein