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## Washington County Ag Report June 14, 2005

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

### Quote

**“The most important part of communication is to hear what is not being said.”**  
-- Peter F. Drucker

### Announcements

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

*Monday 6/20 at 1:00 at Goose Island Farm (Chris McKernon), Goose Island Road, Argyle*

**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., Hoophouses: 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 hoophouses 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 hoophouses. Directions will be forthcoming, but please give us a call if you plan on attending – 746-2560.

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

### 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
<b>Rain</b> Past Week	<b>1.70</b>	0.65	<b>0.40</b>	0.33	<b>1.50</b>	1.35	<b>0.69</b>	0.52
So far this month	<b>2.58</b>	1.69	<b>0.85</b>	2.12	<b>1.50</b>	2.25	<b>1.49</b>	1.00
Total since April 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>8.08</b>	7.96	<b>6.47</b>	8.70	<b>8.13</b>	8.88	<b>7.82</b>	6.18
<b>GDD Base 41</b> Growing Degree Days = [hi temp + low temp]/2 – 41								
Past Week	<b>257</b>	177	<b>256</b>	171	<b>268</b>	187	<b>277</b>	172
Since April 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>993</b>	971	<b>1055</b>	1052	<b>1295</b>	1155	<b>1079</b>	1030
<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>183</b>	110	<b>177</b>	113	<b>193</b>	126	<b>192</b>	117
Since April 1 <sup>st</sup>	<b>683</b>	643	<b>749</b>	727	<b>836</b>	762	<b>783</b>	720

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

Corn per bushel	\$1.94/bu	Cotton Seed Meal per ton	\$125/ton
Soybean per bushel	6.71/bu	Corn Gluten Feed	52/ton
Hominy Feed per ton	43/ton	Wheat, soft white	/bu
48% Soybean meal per ton	217/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

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.

**Wanted:** Milking equipment and milkhouse equipment for goats. Argyle – 638-5403.

**Wanted:** Buyer looking for working or potentially working dairy farm in Kingsbury, Hartford, Argyle, Ft. Ann, Ft. Edward, Greenwich, Salem, Whitehall area. Please call 745-5065 ext. 115.

**Position Announcement:**

**NY Maple Promotions Coordinator**, New York State Maple Producers Association. A NY Maple Promotions Coordinator is sought to manage activities of the New York State Maple Producers Association. The mission of the Association and this position is to increase the profitability of the New York maple syrup producer through promotion and education of both the

producer and consumer. Major responsibilities of the position will include **coordination** of activities to benefit NY Maple Producers (Maple Weekend, Fall Campaign, NY Tourism, media interactions, and other promotional activities); **liaison** with Cornell, state and federal agencies, and legislators; **manage association activities** (newsletter, membership records, dues); **grant writing** to support these activities.

The incumbent should have strong leadership, organizational, and communication skills. Ability to raise funds is required. The position will work with maple producers as volunteers and should be comfortable networking among people with diverse backgrounds, interests and capabilities.

The New York Maple Promotions Coordinator will have a contractual relationship with NYSMPA. Pay commensurate with experience. Separate arrangements for travel and other expenses will be negotiated with the contract. Flexible work schedule. Position is contingent upon future grant funding. Letter of application and resume deadline is **June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2005 to:** Dwayne Hill, President of NYSMPA, 387 Shaver Road, Harpersfield, NY 13786 (607) 652-7827 or Harry Komrowski, Vice President of NYSMPA, 7584 Tater Road, Memphis, NY 13112 (315) 635-9365.

**DAIRY:** Developing a plan can help with early recognition and allow for timely intervention with fresh cows and their problems. This is the process of “transition cow management”. There are a variety of assessments, exams and tests that make all of this work. By checking several physical conditions of the cow provides an excellent snapshot of her health at that moment. The tests include measuring rectal temps, checking vaginal odor and discharge, checking urine and/or breath for ketones, evaluating rumen fill and rate of contractions, examine udder and do a California Mastitis Test (CMT), evaluate appetite and attitude and finally examine manure. This should really be done on ALL COWS up to 10 days in milk. It allows them to be seen just one more time and can prevent problems from being found much later in the lactation. All of this is focused on managing for increased profitability.

**Source:** Guard, Chuck “Fresh Cow Progress” Cornell University, 2001

**FARM BUSINESS MANAGEMENT:** A couple of things have come across my desk that you might find interesting. Steve Taylor, New Hampshire Commissioner of AG, says that Stoneyfield Farm’s Organic Yogurt business (and plant) is moving through a 5-year expansion project. They are going to need more access to organic milk from New England and New York. Farms examining options should keep that in mind.

The Cornell Dairy Executive Program is looking for the next round of students. It is an intensive 3-part experience that is helping business owners develop the next level of skills. If you would like to check out the information, go to [www.ansci.cornell.edu/prodairy/dairyexec/](http://www.ansci.cornell.edu/prodairy/dairyexec/)

**LIVESTOCK PEST MANAGEMENT:** We have had a bunch of hot weather and July is still two weeks away. If hot weather continues, conditions could be just right for lots of annoying and costly flies – disease carrying and blood sucking parasites. Practice sanitation, use fly traps, and other pest control measures to prevent a fly population explosion. When you spread manure, spread it thin enough so that it will dry out in a day or two – this will stop fly development of the maggots already in the manure. AG

## **CROPS**

**Soil Health:** The decomposition of soil organic matter (SOM) is good because it releases nutrients and feeds microbes with improve soil tilth. It is bad because it is then lost along with its water and nutrient holding capacity. So, we always need to replace SOM and increase it if possible. SOM decomposition is very rapid when there is plenty of moisture and warm temperatures. Tillage in hot weather speeds up the break down of soil organic matter very quickly. Carefully think about tillage operations in the summer to minimize SOM decomposition. It is a balancing act. AG

**Alfalfa:** “*They are back!!!*” Potato leafhopper (PLH) have returned from the south to spend their summer up here in the north. If you see PLH injury on plants (a V-shaped reddish/yellowing starting at the leaflet tips) it is too late prevent any yield loss. **You need to sample alfalfa fields and treat them if necessary to prevent a loss.** Hopefully, most folks are planting PLH resistant varieties of alfalfa. They yield as well or better than the regular top alfalfa varieties. Here are the action thresholds for PLH when using a sweep net:

<b><u>Average Stem Length</u></b>	<b><u>Leafhopper per 10 sweeps</u></b>
<3 in.	2
3 to 7 in.	5
8 to 10 in.	10
11 to 14 in.	20
> 15 in.	If PLH exceed 20 per 10 sweeps, and if regrowth is within 1 week of harvest, no action is needed. Otherwise, use a short residual insecticide.

Alfalfa weevil larvae are mostly large and should stop eating in a week to begin pupating to become adults. So, unless > 50% of the alfalfa tips have feeding damage, and the larvae are still medium size (3/16") or smaller, no action needs to be taken.

**Field Corn:** Over all corn is looking good. With our dryness (except those spots that got heavy thundershowers) it is a good time to look for water stressed plants and see if compaction is the cause. Tillage is one way to combat compactions. No corn borer damage has been seen, but it should start soon. Now is a good time to estimate corn population by counting plants in 17' 5" of row, then multiplying by 1,000. Consistently, I find that corn populations are less than the farmers expected. Fireflies have been out this week, which indicates that corn rootworms are hatching. More mature corn with large root masses will be more likely to have CRW feeding. AG

**Grasses:** We cut grasses about every 30 days, and should apply 50 lbs. of N before 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> cuttings to make them grow. If you topdress with manure to get that 50 lbs. of N, how much manure do you need? The average 1,000 gallons of liquid dairy manure with 10% solids has 26 lbs. of N. Half is from urine (and volatilizes into the air at the rate of 15% each day that it is not incorporated). The other half of the N is in the organic matter and which must decompose to be released (35% of the N is available the first *year*, 12% the second, and 5% the third year). If you apply manure and the N from the urine is "incorporated" into the soil by rain within 1 day, then

you need 5,000 gallons of manure. If rain does not incorporate any of the urine N, and you rely only on the organic N, then you need 31,000 gallons of manure. I am taking into account that only a portion of the organic N is available each month of June, July, August, and September. Even 5,000 gallons of manure is a heavy top dressing. Bottom line, is that you should also apply fertilizer N along with manure. Let's assume you capture 1/3 of the urine N (a good rain within 4 days), and you topdress with 3,000 gallons of manure, **you still need 33 lbs. of N (75 lbs. of urea) per acre to meet the grass needs.**

### **For Your Information:**

- The online version of the 2005 Integrated Crop and Pest Management Guidelines for Vegetables is now available at <http://www.nysaes.cornell.edu/recommends/>.
- For a short article on how to grow asparagus “out-of season”, check out our website at <http://www.cce.cornell.edu/washington/washington.html>.

**VEGETABLES:** Plenty of **flea beetles** on crucifers. You should do your best to control these pests whether it's with a synthetic pesticide or using early row covers (too late for that now) and perhaps plant trap crops. I didn't see too many **mites or aphids** on transplants or new seedlings, but high tunnel crops or anything that has been under row cover and is slightly larger may have these pests on them. Both of these pests love our current hot and dry weather pattern and multiply rapidly. Look under the leaves – you may notice some bronzing, but the plants could just look slightly chlorotic. Make sure that you get control before the canopy gets lush. There are some good guidelines for scouting for these pests on certain vegetable crops. Give me a call if you are interested in trying to fine-tune your spray program by using economic thresholds as your decision making tool. Potato Beetle adults are out and laying eggs. John Mishenac, the Regional IPM Specialist for Vegetables, has this to say about CPB: **Colorado Potato Beetle** (CPB) egg masses are being found in fields but I have not found hatched larvae. Scout your fields and flag 10 CPB egg masses that you find. Watch these eggs for hatch. If you are using M-trak, Raven, Novodo or any of the other Bacillus Thuringiensis products, you will want to apply your product when you see the first larvae hatch. This is because those products only work on the small larvae. If you are using a hard product like Provado or Asana, than you can wait till those first larvae are about the size as the hard shell parents.”

The early adults are not heavy feeders. As the larvae hatch and get bigger, more damage will occur in the field. Because the ground is warming up slowly, adult CPB's are emerging from their over-winter slumber slowly. This will cause an overlap of generations in the field and can be difficult to control without multiple applications of insecticide. This is all the more reason to wait and time the first application for when it will do the most good.

It's a good idea to check your potato cull piles. Cull piles can be a good source of late blight. It can be carried over from the previous year or unsprayed potato plants will be more susceptible. Bury the pile with at least 2 feet of soil or cover with a black plastic tarp.

If you think you find **late blight** in your field, contact your local Cooperative Extension office *and have someone come out to positively ID the disease or call me at 518-434-0016.* (For those of you that may be new to the vegetable scene, the Regional Vegetable IPM program puts out a very comprehensive electronic newsletter during the season that focuses exclusively on vegetable pests. If you are interested in receiving that, email him at [jjm27@cornell.edu](mailto:jjm27@cornell.edu).)

**Be On The Look-Out For Alternaria Leaf Spot In Cruciferous Crops:** This disease affects all cruciferous crops. Symptoms begin to develop on older leaves as yellow spots that enlarge, turn dark brown, and often develop target-like rings. Dark elliptical spots develop on stems of bok choy. Severely affected leaves often drop. The pathogen can survive in seed, cruciferous weeds, and crop debris. Make sure seed has been tested for this pathogen, use a 4-yr rotation, control cruciferous weeds, clean equipment between fields, and apply fungicides. Bravo and Manex are labeled for this use on the main cruciferous crops plus some Chinese types. There is a supplemental label for using the new fungicide Endura on leafy brassica greens, including bok choy, as well as the head and stem brassicas. Only 2 applications are allowed per crop for resistance management. PHI is 0 day for head and stem crops and 14 days for leafy greens. Amistar is labeled for use on leafy brassica greens. (*From Long Island Fruit and Vegetable Update, June 10*).

Lots of challenges in the field with **uneven growth** and **anemic looking plants**. These complaints seem to be echoed statewide, and from all reports, despite dry conditions that are of concern, we still are making out better than the western part of the state. Keep reading for some straightforward approaches to evaluating soil moisture and then how to prioritize your irrigation efforts.

**Evaluating Soil Moisture** – You can directly monitor soil moisture for determining when to irrigate. Check the soil at the depth where the bulk of the roots are, which will change as the crop grows. A hand-held soil probe or auger is one of the cheapest and most useful irrigation scheduling tools you can invest in. A trowel works well early in the season. Soils vary in water holding capacity depending on their texture (the amount of sand, silt and clay), their structure (the amount of small and medium pore space) and their organic matter content. Compaction may also limit the soil's ability to supply water by limiting the depth of rooting. As a rough guide, sandy loams can hold about 1 ¼" of available water per foot of soil depth, gravelly loams about 1 ½", silt loams about 2" and muck from 2 – 4". Irrigation should begin when no more than half this available water has been depleted to avoid yield and/or quality loss. You can still form a good soil ball on a sandy loam or silt loam at this point. In the summer of 2002 the water loss due to evapo-transpiration reached 0.3" per day on bright days when the wind was blowing. Insufficient irrigation in bare ground plantings and in plastic mulched trickle-irrigated systems occurred due to the unprecedented conditions and in some cases due to the lack of water. Keep tillage to a minimum to limit loss of soil water for later plantings. (*Information from Dave Wolfe, Horticulture Dept., Cornell*).

**Irrigation Priorities** - Although it's still early, the season seems to be turning dry. Unfortunately, at this time of the year, many growers may not be set up for irrigation. The good news is that dry springs actually help drought proof plants for later in the season. Roots are forced deeper to search for water and will be less likely affected by temporary dry conditions during the summer. There are, however, some crops that will benefit from early irrigation and growers need to prioritize these.

Direct seeded crops, which develop a deeper root system, are much more tolerant of dry soils than transplanted crops. At this stage, about the only direct seeded crop that will benefit

from irrigation are peas that are at or near the flowering stage. Irrigation of other direct seeded crops will only encourage shallow rooting, making them more drought susceptible later in the season. Exceptions to this include leafy greens (lettuce, spinach, endive), onions, and radishes, which have the shallowest root systems and will benefit from even a light irrigation.

At this time of the year, concentrate on irrigation of transplants. Their limited root systems are not capable of pushing deeply into the soil to find water, especially in the 2-3 weeks after planting. Some crops, like cabbage, are capable of withstanding dry conditions early, but the price you will pay is increased transplant shock and a greater number of days to harvest. Bare root transplants are even more vulnerable to drought than plug plants.

As to how much water to apply, at this point, plants probably need only about 0.5 inches of irrigation per week. This will increase to 1 to 1.5 inches as the plants develop and the days grow hotter. (*written by Steve Reiners, Cornell University*).

**Small Plants? No Need For Concern Yet** - Growers are becoming concerned that crops are still relatively small and may be thinking about sidedressing with a nitrogen fertilizer to help push the crops. Our advice – don't do it. There are two reasons why crops may be smaller than what is expected at this time of year. First is the cool weather. Up until one week ago, temperatures were running much cooler than normal, slowing growth. Once the temperature warmed, soils remained dry, also checking growth. Sidedressing with fertilizer will do nothing to alleviate these problems. If you applied fertilizer, either broadcast prior to planting or in a band at planting, those nutrients are still there. We have not experienced heavy enough rain this spring that would cause leaching of nitrogen. In addition, if ammonium fertilizers (or manure or legume cover crops plowed down) were used preplant, dry soils will also slow the conversion to nitrate. Nitrate is the preferred N source for plants (though plants can also use ammonium) but it is also the form most easily leached.

The good news is that even though plants may appear small, cell division is occurring within the plants. Dry conditions limit the expansion of the cells, thus keeping plants smaller. All it takes is a little soil moisture for these cells to elongate rapidly, resulting in a rapid increase in size, seemingly overnight.

What is needed is a little water, through rain or irrigation, that will make these fertilizer nutrients available. Save your sidedressing for later in the season when it will do much more good. (*written by Steve Reiners, Cornell University*).

**Landscape:** I hate to sound like a broken record, but the volume of calls and the obvious damage done in central Washington County lends real credence to the fact **that Forest Tent Caterpillar** is The pest of the season for our rural landscape. Most of the hardwoods on ridges between Granville and Hartford and down into the Argyle area are completely defoliated. Many landscape trees and shrubs have had their canopy reduced by at least 50%. It is important for homeowners and professionals to treat defoliated trees with care. Water religiously, making sure that 1" of water per week gets to the root system. **Do not fertilize**, unless you are using a very low nitrogen product, and don't treat lawns surrounding these stressed trees with fertilizer or a weed and feed product. Keep your eye out for other pests of the tree that might crop up while

the trees natural defenses are compromised. Check out our website for a fact sheet on Homeowner Tips to Caring for damaged trees. Also, if you would like to get a fact sheet on this pest, you can call our office or go to the following website:

<http://www.na.fs.fed.us/spfo/pubs/fidls/ftc/tentcat.htm>.

Sincerely,

Aaron D. Gabriel  
Extension Resource Educator  
Crops and Soils