Capital Area
Agricultural & Horticulture Program Staff

Sandra A. Buxton
Farm Business Management

Aaron Gabriel
Crops and Soils

Steve Hadcock
New Farmer / Market Development

The Ag Report is produced by
Aaron Gabriel

The NYS IPM
Weekly field Crops Pest Report is at

http://blogs.cornell.edu/ipmwpr/

Cornell University Cooperative Extension

Capital Area Ag Report
September 17, 2015

“The real things haven’t changed. It is still best to be honest and truthful; to make the most of what we have; to be happy with simple pleasures; and have courage when things go wrong.” - Laura Ingalls Wilder

Announcements

Wednesday, October 28, 2015, 1 pm- 3pm – Cover Crop Plot Walk Through – at Fox Creek Park on Rte 30, Schoharie, 0.5 mi. south of Schoharie Valley Farm. Take a look at 42 cover crop plots after several weeks of growth, before winter sets in. Extension Educators will be there to answer questions. No set program - just “show and tell”. Questions to Aaron Gabriel, 518-380-1496, adg12@cornell.edu.

FYI

The Ag Exchange—http://agexchange.cce.cornell.edu
Use the Ag Exchange to connect with other farmers to manage your feed supplies. Do you have silage to sell or need feed to build inventory? The Ag Exchange is free and easy to use.

Cornell Climate Change website, http://climatechange.cornell.edu/, is a good source of information to learn about climate change and how it will affect agriculture.

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities
Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities
Cover Crops: Corn is coming off early. This is a good year to plant cover crops after corn harvest. Being dry, it is very important to plant the seed at the proper depth and get good seed/soil contact. Broadcasting alone will “not do” when it is dry, even with rye—our most forgiving and easy cover crop to grow. Drill; disc & roll; cover with manure - get the seed covered.

Rye is a good simple cover crop to plant. Annual ryegrass is another option if you plant during September. I have planted annual ryegrass into October, and it has still squeaked through. However, my experience is that it should be planted by the end of September. Plant 1/4 to 1/2 inch deep (dry soil). Getting the plant crown below the surface is important for winter survival. In the spring you can harvest a modest yield of very high-quality forage. Glyphosate does not kill it well. If you kill it with glyphosate, spray on a hot day to get any herbicide past the waxy leaf surface. The roots will loosen up the surface soil and help build soil structure.

I have also planted mammoth red clover into October with limited success. If conditions are there for fast germination (moisture, warmth) then you can also plant mammoth red clover until the end of September and get enough growth to over winter.

If extreme winter conditions occur (very cold and dry), mammoth red and annual ryegrass may not make it.

Here are some great resources for cover crops that you can find on the web:
Soil Health & Cover Crop Resources on the Internet


“Cover Crops for Vegetables” website: http://covercrops.cals.cornell.edu/. Developed by Dr. Thomas Bjorkman, it has a Cover Crop Decision Tool, summary of several cover crops and more.

“Cornell Soil Health” website: http://soilhealth.cals.cornell.edu/. Information on soil health, soil health testing, resources, videos, etc.

“Mid-west Cover Crops Council” website: http://www.mccc.msu.edu/selectorINTRO.html. An educational website with a cover crop selection tool for field crops as well as vegetable crops.

“Managing Cover Crops Profitably”, download PDF document or purchase as a book (244 pages): http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center/Books/Managing-Cover-Crops-Profitably-3rd-Edition


Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education website: http://www.sare.org/Learning-Center. At the “Learning Center” webpage, do a search for cover crops and find books, fact-sheets, and webinars about how to select cover crops, estimating nitrogen release from cover crops and much more.

“...You may be right 🎶♩♩♩ I may be crazy!...”

But then look at this ➡️

This is a two year old burdock plant with its root (>24”) going right through the dense subsoil of a Hudson silt loam (clay). When it dies this fall, it will leave a large channel into the subsoil.

I have been planting burdock to learn more about it and see if we can use it as a cover crop and livestock feed. YES, livestock eat burdock. Of course, I have planted it three times in one plot, and it has barely come up.

As I think about this, I think a mix of Italian ryegrass plus burdock could make an awesome cover crop mix to drill holes in dense soil, help granulate the surface soil, and feed livestock as well.

Stayed Tuned....
**Selling Cover Crop Seed**

I think it is good for farmers to sell things directly to each other without a middleman. Many farmers will sell rye or wheat out of the bin as cover crop seed. Remember, that to sell any seed for the purpose of planting, *it must be tested and labeled*. I asked the people “in the know”, and all seed must be tested and labelled: bagged, bulk, anything that will be planted. You are only looking at about $50 to $75 to do this. It is good for you as a seller and for the buyer. We all like quality, and to know exactly what we are selling and buying.

**Selling Agricultural Seed in New York: The State Seed Law**

Alan Westra, New York Seed Improvement Project, Cornell University

Seed sales in New York are regulated by Article 9 of the New York Agriculture and Markets Law, Chapter 631 “Inspection and Sales of Seeds.” This statute, and the regulations promulgated under it, applies to all seed “sold, offered or exposed, or transported into this state for planting purposes.” Article 9 AML provides the legal authority for the regulation of seed by the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Division of Plant Industry. Article 9 AML can be described as a “truth in labeling” law, as a significant portion of the statute deals with the requirements for the labeling of seed. However, the law also contains a number of important prohibitions, sets minimum quality standards for seed being offered for sale, and lists those weeds considered to be “noxious” in New York. The seed law also provides for official seed certification in New York. This article is intended to provide a brief summary of Article 9 AML as it relates to agricultural seeds.

Agricultural seed (crop seed) is defined in Article 9 AML as “seeds of grass, forage, cereal, field beans, and fiber crops or any other kinds of seeds commonly recognized within this state as agricultural seeds, lawn seeds, and mixtures of such seeds.” In order to be sold in New York, agricultural seed must be properly labeled and must be fit for sale. The dissemination of “false or misleading advertising concerning seed in any manner or by any means” is prohibited by the statute.

In order to be fit for sale, agricultural seed must meet minimum germination and purity standards. Agricultural seed cannot be sold in New York if the seed “so weak or low in germination as to be unfit for seeding purposes” or if it is “so unclean as to be unfit for planting.” The specific minimum standards for agricultural seed are:

Germination. Two-thirds of the minimum germination specified for certified seed of the kind in question by the International Crop Improvement Association (now AOSCA).

Purity. Agricultural Seed must be subjected to “…usual commercial cleaning process…” to remove weed seeds. Weed seed content cannot exceed 1% by weight. Noxious weeds content is limited based on the size of the agriculture seed: wheat, oats, rye, barley, and seeds of similar or larger size may not contain 10 or more noxious weeds seeds per pound; grass, legume, and other seeds smaller than wheat may not contain 100 or more noxious weeds seeds per pound.

Seed labeling is the responsibility of the “immediate vendor.” The label must be conspicu-
ous, legible, and written in the English language. With respect to germination and purity, the labeling must accurately represent, within tolerance, the seed lot. Specific labeling requirements vary according to type of seed and, in some cases, package size. For agricultural seed, the following labeling is required:

1. Name and address of the labeler or vendor of the seed.
2. Commonly accepted or trade name of seed treatment (if used) and a warning statement.
3. Name of kind and variety.
4. Lot number or other lot identification
5. Percentage (by weight) of all weed seeds
6. Percentage (by weight) of inert matter
7. Percentage (by weight) of other crop seeds
8. Percentage Germination and date of test.
9. Name and number per pound of all noxious weeds

For wheat oats and barley, the name and number per pound of rye and hairy vetch seeds.

There are some special labeling considerations:

Germination tests must be current, i.e., the test date must be within the calendar year of offer of sale, but not more than nine months old.

The percentage germination listed must be exclusive of the hard seed, if present. The label must also list the percentage of hard seed.

Certain cool season lawn and turf grasses and their mixtures are labeled with “sell by” dates.

Agricultural seeds that contain individual components in excess of five percent of the whole by weight are considered to be mixtures and must be labeled as such.

Specific labeling requirements for mixtures are dependent upon the makeup of the mixture and include the kind and variety, the percentage by weight, and the germination and test date of each component of the mixture.

Coated seeds have special labeling requirements.

Regulation of Seed Sales. Article 9 AML gives authority to the NYS Department of Agriculture to test seed offered for sale in New York. Seed sampled by inspectors from the Division of Plant Industry is tested by the New York State Seed Testing Laboratory in Geneva. Seed that is found to be not in compliance with Article 9 AML is subject to regulatory action, including stop sales and other penalties.

Article 9 AML is available from the NYS Department of Agriculture website [http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/PI/commodities/ARTICLE9.pdf](http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/PI/commodities/ARTICLE9.pdf). Specific inquiries regarding the laws governing seed sales in New York should be directed to NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, Division of Plant Industry, 10B Airline Drive, Albany, NY 12235.

**Storing Baleage Bales**

Be sure to store wrapped bales where there will be the least variation in temperature and sun. Bales exposed to sun will heat up on one side, then cool down at night causing moisture migration. That side that gets hot then cold will draw in moisture a little at a time until you get wet slop.
Store bales on the north side of a building, on north-facing slope, in the shade of a tree line, etc. 

**Sorghum Harvest:** Look at the two sorghum seed heads at the right. The seed head on the left is dark (reddish) and still in the milk stage. The seed head on the right is whitish and in the dough stage, almost no milk left. *Harvest sorghum during the soft dough stage.* If the seeds get hard, they will be indigestible.

**Corn:** On Sept. 23rd (after 2” of rain this past weekend), I cut a chunk of the lower stalk out of the corn in this picture above. I was able to squeeze water from the pith of the stalk. Plants with any life will take up water after a dry spell.

**Cornell Bull Test is Seeking Consignors**

Planning is underway for the fourth year of the Cornell All Forage Fed Bull Test. Gain on last year’s 140-day test was a success with an average gain of 2.1 lb on a diet of ensiled forages and mineral. Monthly updates were provided to consignors and other producers with the information posted to: [http://beefcattle.anr.cornell.edu/](http://beefcattle.anr.cornell.edu/). The 25 bulls were body conditioned scored and weighed every 28 days. Hip heights were measured to determine frame scores. Breeding soundness and carcass ultrasound exams were performed at the conclusion of the test.

New York is well positioned to take advantage of the growing demand for pasture-finished beef due to its rich grazing resources and proximity to large urban markets. One of the keys to profitable production is the use of genetics that will result in a quality product within a feasible timeframe. Raising animals through a second winter presents challenges both from an economical and production standpoint. The forage based test is a cost-effective option to help breeders and buyers assess and compare bull cohorts raised under commercial conditions.

Comments from one of last year’s consignors Roy Brubaker, Blue Rooster Farm in East Waterford, PA, says, “For not a whole lot more than what it would cost me to feed our young bulls, the test provided a full range of data from ADG to ultrasound and breeding soundness; all within the context of an all-forage diet which is how we raise our cattle. But the value of having good data at an affordable price is only the tip of the iceberg. What matters even more to us is
the collective learning opportunity the test provides for those interested in providing both objective information and real genetic value within the grass-finishing segment of the beef industry.”

The upcoming year’s test will be 112 days. Discussion is underway to add an optional 84-day grazing component. Delivery dates are January 8 and 9 with the test beginning January 15. Nomination form with a non-refundable $50 deposit is due by October 15. If you are interested in consigning or want additional information, contact Nancy Glazier at (585) 315-7746, nig3@cornell.edu or Mike Baker at (607) 255-5923, mjb228@cornell.edu. Test rules and forms can be found at http://beefcattle.ansci.cornell.edu/eventsprogram.