Announcements

Wednesday, October 28th 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM - Cover Crop Plot Walk Through—Fox Creek Park, Rte 30, Schoharie. 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

October 15 2015, Deadline to Apply for The Academy For Dairy Executives
Calling all Eastern NY Young Dairy Managers: APPLY FOR THE ACADEMY FOR DAIRY EXECUTIVES NOW! For more information and to apply online visit http://prodairy.cals.cornell.edu/conferences/academy

Thursday, Nov. 19th, 10 am—3 pm—Money on the Table: How do the Pieces of the Puzzle Fit for 2016? - sponsored by CCE. Speakers Jason Karzes, Dave Balbian, Sandy Buxton, Kevin Ganoe, Kirk Shoen. $30 registration through CCE Saratoga. RSVP to Ellie, 518-885-8995, eah29@cornell.edu. See flyer at the end of this newsletter.

Three Cover Crop Field Days put on by Univ of Vermont. For details go to http://campaign.r20.constantcontact.com/render?ca=e458a1dd-d848-4dd6-ad2f-ee8798d5a31e&c=19ff2800-5d86-11e3-
I will be going to the October 27th field day in Alburgh, VT. Call me (Aaron) if you want a ride, 518-380-1496.

FYI
Your input on the effectiveness of the NYS Weekly Field Crops Pest Report is important to us. By providing your perspective you can help us design the report to better fit your extension needs in the future. Please take a minute to complete the following survey questionnaire at the link below. Thanks for your help! - Ken Wise, NYS Field Crop IPM Specialist. Please Click the link below to take the survey.
2015 NYS IPM Weekly Field Crops Pest Report Survey

NY Bee Wellness, (http://nybeewellness.org/) is your source for maintaining healthy honey bee colonies. It is an educational nonprofit program to teach beekeepers honey bee disease recognition & to promote honey bee health.

Grain Bin Safety -The National Corn Growers Association reminds farmers of the importance of proper grain bin safety procedures this harvest. With farmers across the country busy in their fields, NCGA is again offering a video highlighting the importance of proper safety procedures and reviewing helpful guidelines. To view the video, click here. http://www.ncga.com/news-and-resources/news-stories/article/2015/10/grain-bin-safety-important-to-farmers

The Biopesticide Website of the EPA has been updated. Go to: www2.epa.gov/pesticides/biostates

The October Penn State Dairy Outlook is available at http://www.personal.psu.edu/faculty/j/w/jwd6/DairyOutlook%20oct%2015.pdf (Jim Dunn, PSU).

EPA is proposing changes to pesticide regulations. The comment period is open until November 23, 2015.

Tips for sending comments on regulation changes to EPA
Link to full Federal Register text of the proposed rule by the EPA
Detailed comparison of proposed federal certification and training
regulation changes to current situation in New York State.
List of changes for New York State applicators and pesticide businesses if proposed federal certification and training rule adopted.

Please tell us how our CCE programs have impacted you by taking our CAAHP Web Survey!
We need to show that we are impacting the agricultural community and farm businesses. Please take a minute to connect to the survey and give us a little feedback… I know you are all feedbacked out… But it really is important for just a quick blurb. Here is the link to the survey website: https://cornell.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_eXOHmhhQwiQPlvF
We appreciate your time and effort and will continue to provide valuable info, education and programming.
A Checklist For Managing Crops in Tough Times

Aaron Gabriel
Capital Area Agriculture and Horticulture Program

I wrote this list a couple of years ago—during the last economic slump. Now that milk prices are in the gutter, it is time to print it again. I will emphasize one thing—I see farmers paying for traits in corn seed that they do not need, such as traits to control corn rootworm in first year corn. Corn rootworm (CRW) will not infest first year corn. Do not pay for genetically modified corn to control CRW in first year corn.

With the recent tumbling of crop prices we get the notion that we have to manage crops differently to stay profitable. Really, we should always manage crops as if the prices were heading down. In years of high prices, you cannot squander income, since it will be needed when times get tough. So, I actually have two lists. One is a foundation for profitable crop production. The other is a list of management decisions necessary to be profitable. The non-agronomic management decisions are key to profitability (landowner relations, communication), as many know by experience.

The Foundation of Profitable Crop Production

- Build soil health – nutritional, physical, and biological aspects of soil health.
- Manage Meticulously – pay attention to all the details of crop production, so that every dollar & hour spent will provide a short or long-term return.
- Know your strengths and get help or hire out for your weaknesses.
- Keep records to make future decisions. “A short pencil is better than a long memory.”
- Do on-farm trials to tailor practices to you and your farm.

Managing Crops Profitably (not in any order of importance, except maybe soil health)

- Build soil health - It’s your best insurance for extreme environmental conditions and to stabilize crop yields. FEED ORGANIC MATTER TO YOUR SOIL with manure, crop residues, cover crops, etc.
- Develop an annual crop plan by late-winter/early spring.
- Soil test every 3 years. Sample in the fall. Use the info to maintain reasonable soil nutrient levels, not very high levels. Fertilize to feed the plant what it needs to give good yields. Feed the soil with organic matter to build a foundation of soil fertility.
- Soil test and keep track of minor nutrients (boron, zinc, sulfur).
- Maintain soil pH within 0.5 points of what is needed for the most sensitive crop. Then it will take only a little lime before planting the most sensitive crop in the rotation.
- Use manure wisely. Do a cost analysis to determine how far it can be transported to distant fields.
- Make wise purchases and take advantages of discounts.
- Invest in lime before investing in fertilizer.
- Be patient and wait for the soil to dry out properly for tillage, planting, and harvest.
- Use seed technology wisely - Do not pay for traits that are unnecessary (ie. corn rootworm resistance in corn seed for first year corn).
- Pay custom operators promptly so they are glad to provide you timely service.
- Tune up machinery and replace parts as needed. Break-downs and poor performance are very costly.
- Evaluate each field and set reasonable yield goals. Prioritize which fields will use inputs the most efficiently and profitably. Do not plant fields that will not yield, until you can improve them so that they are profitable.
- Rotate crops. ROTATE, ROTATE, ROTATE!!! It is a time proven principle and it is profitable.
- Manage pesticides and genetic seed traits wisely so that you do not get pest resistance.
- Do not skimp on critical management points: use inoculant when necessary; do not skimp on baleage wrap; etc
- Do a thorough job to reduce the cost of poor performance. With good seedbed preparation and a good planter, you only need 12 – 15 lbs/ac of alfalfa seed.
- Evaluate the potential return on each input and decide if it is reasonable. Record results for future decisions.
- Scrutinize crop varieties. Ask questions and get data from your seed rep.
- Know which diseases are prevalent on your farm and pick resistant varieties.
- Know which fields are prone to particular insect pests (leafhopper, armyworm) and then choose appropriate varieties and scout fields.
- Map weeds in each field to manage with appropriate rotations, tillage, planting dates, and herbicide selection.
- Scout your fields so that you do not get surprises and to make better decisions next year. You cannot always blame missing corn plants on rocks.
- Keep a record or fuel usage and become more efficient.
- Do not manage more acres than you are able. Farm intensively rather than extensively.
- Develop good landlord relations: communicate; use written contracts; respect their wishes; explain your operations; make necessary notifications.
- Communicate well with others working with you on crops to avoid mistakes.
- Stop the machinery and check its performance – is the corn planted at the correct depth (was the planter properly switched from conventional to no-till mode?)
- For custom work, have a plan B in place in case things go wrong for whatever reason.
- Repair and prepare crop storage structures and then store crops properly so that you do not waste the harvest.

**Spreadsheets for Field Crop Records and Farm Forage Balancing**

Posted on our blog under the “Field Crops” category you will find three spreadsheets to help you manage crops and forage needs. (Go to: http://blogs.cornell.edu/capitalareagandhortprogram/category/field-crops/). They are simple without “bells and whistles”. A little computer experience will be helpful to use them. I see them as a first step to keeping farm records on the computer.

- “Field Record Sheet” - for this you input crop inputs, machinery operations, expenses and
other data to calculate crop production costs per acre and crop value per acre.

- “Dairy Forage & Crop Balance Spreadsheet” - This may possibly be used for other livestock as well, if you know their forage needs. This spreadsheet calculates how much forage your livestock will consume; how much you can produce; and how much you can store. This is critical information to properly manage a crop & livestock operation.

- “Crop Rotation Planner” - (scroll down to find this one) this spreadsheet simply helps you record and plan crop rotations from year to year. It calculates the acres of each crop. And it will hopefully help you keep track of winter forages and cover crops.

Please give me your feedback so I can improve these spreadsheets; or let me know if they are useful as is. Find them at [http://blogs.cornell.edu/capitalareaagandhortprogram/category/field-crops/](http://blogs.cornell.edu/capitalareaagandhortprogram/category/field-crops/)

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**Tile Drainage Field Day VIDEO**

Thanks to Sarah McFadden (CCE Rensselaer Co), we have video of the Soil Max tile plow in action during our September 1st “Tile Drainage Field Day”. Go to: [http://blogs.cornell.edu/capitalareaagandhortprogram/category/tile-drainage-resources/](http://blogs.cornell.edu/capitalareaagandhortprogram/category/tile-drainage-resources/) and click on the YouTube link.

You can also find a list of publications to help you plan or maintain your tile drainage system. Find them at: [http://blogs.cornell.edu/capitalareaagandhortprogram/category/tile-drainage-resources/](http://blogs.cornell.edu/capitalareaagandhortprogram/category/tile-drainage-resources/)

What should you do if you are interested in installing tile drainage? Take these steps:

1. Read the “Drainage Guide for New York State” found on our blog. Go to the link above. It will take a couple hours and give you a good basic start. Read other material on our blog as well.

2. Go to your Natural Resource Conservation Service office (6 months to 1 year before breaking soil). Tell them your plans and fill out form AD-1026.

3. Plan out your system with a knowledgeable person well in advance of breaking ground. Use a transit or laser to map out all the high and low spots in your field. Pick out the most logical outlet locations. Determine where the drainage pipe will go. Etc.

4. Once you have studied and know how all of this works, proceed with installing the system.

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**Forage Analyses—Filling Out the Form**

I recently read a very good article in “Progressive Forage Grower” that made an excellent point. How you fill out the form when you send in forage for an analysis can greatly affect the analysis. Is the sample all grass? Mostly grass? Mostly legume? Etc. The lab calibrates the NIR machine to different types of forage. When it analyzes your forage, it compares your results to a “standard”. If your all grass sample is compared to a “mostly grass” standard, you will get inaccurate results. The lab will only do what you tell them to do. **So, fill out the sample submission form properly.**
MONEY ON THE TABLE

“How Do the Pieces of the Puzzle Fit for 2016”

NOVEMBER 19, 2015
10 AM - 3 PM
50 West High Street, Ballston Spa

With the instability in the dairy industry, having all of the pieces of the puzzle is critical. Cornell Cooperative Extension’s “Money on the Table” meeting will provide some insight into areas that may be financial pit-falls.

- Insights from the NYS Dairy Farm Summary - Jason Karszes
- Managing Your Herd for Profit - Dave Balbian
- Successful Crop Strategies - Kevin Ganoe
- Planning for Risk as a Management Tool - Sandy Buxton
- A Mindset to Succeed - Kirk Shoehn

Cost: $30 / per person
RSVP by Nov 17th with Ellie, EAH29@cornell.edu OR call 518-885-8995.
Please make checks out to: CCE Saratoga
Mail to: CCE Saratoga, 50 West High Street, Ballston Spa, NY 12020