

# Cornell University Cooperative Extension

## *Capital Area Agricultural & Horticulture Program Staff*

vacant

*Farm Business Management*

Aaron Gabriel

*Crops and Soils*

Rachel Moody

*Livestock Production &  
Marketing*

Steve Hadcock

*New Farmer /  
Market Development*

Jingjing Yin

*Commercial Ornamental  
Horticulture*

*The Ag Report is produced  
by Aaron Gabriel*

***In this issue:***

***Cornell Guide***

***Test Spray Water***

***Tile Drain***

***Alfalfa Winter Survival***

***Alfalfa Insects***

***Chickweed***

## Capital Area Ag Report

### April 25, 2023

#### Calendar

**Tuesday, May 9, 6:00 pm, 2023 Spring Turn-Out - A Tour of Grazin' Acres Farm**, 288 Gilchrist Rd, Argyle, NY 12809. Come see the grazing operation, learn how they raise beef, lamb and poultry on pasture and market their products at local farm markets. Bring your pasture and livestock management questions for Aaron and Rachel. **Free Event but please register by 5:00 pm, May 5, 2023 at: <https://caahp.ccext.net/civicrm/event/info?reset=1&id=175>**. If you need assistance with registration, please call (518) 765-3518 or email [cce-caahp@cornell.edu](mailto:cce-caahp@cornell.edu).

For program questions or special accommodations, contact: Rachel Moody, [ram72@cornell.edu](mailto:ram72@cornell.edu).

**Wednesday, July 19, 2023—Soil Health Farm Tour & BBQ.**  
Save the date. More details to follow.

#### FYI

The Cornell Guide to Integrated Field Crop Management can be purchased at the [Cornell Store](#). Get updated information on soil management, pesticides, fertilizers, and forage variety trials.

**Call me (Aaron, 518-380-1496) to get pH and water hardness test strips** to test the water you use for spraying pesticides. Improve the effectiveness of your pesticides with properly conditioned water.

**Innovations in Organic Agriculture Series from Iowa State University!! Organic Weed Management** webinar recording, watch, [here](#). [Here](#) is a book chapter on mechanical weed management and the podcast series is found [here](#).

**Northern Grain Growers Association, [April newsletter](#).**

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The [Small Grain Herbicide Summary Table](#) (updates 2020) provides information on timing of the common herbicides for small grains.

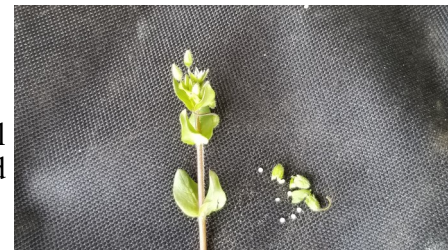
## Agronomy Notes—Aaron Gabriel

Spring was off to a fast start and now temperatures have cooled a bit, and may stay cool for a little while. Hopefully you were able to plant small grains and hay seedings during the last stretch of dry weather and topdress nitrogen fertilizers onto to grasses and small grains before the latest rain—I received 1.25 inches at my house. **Should you apply urea fertilizer after a soaking rain? - NO.** If you apply urea to moist soil, even with a urease inhibitor, it will sit on top of the soil and lose nitrogen as ammonia. **Wait until a 1/2 inch rain is forecast and apply it BEFORE the rain.** The fertilizer needs to be dissolved by the rain and washed into the soil to capture the ammonia given off in the first step of converting urea to plant available ammonium and nitrate.

After a good rain, check your [tile drains](#). Is the water coming out clear or cloudy. It should be clear. Check for plugged outlets, tree roots, eroded banks, etc. This picture shows cloudy water, an indication that soil is being lost, which will eventually create a sink hole in the field.



[Chickweed](#) has already set seed. This weed develops so early in the spring, that I think the key to its management is to control it in the fall—tillage, herbicides, and cover crops to smother it. I put some of these seeds on a moist paper towel to germinate, and in three days they turned brown (completed maturity). I will see if they will germinate or need some other environmental cue before growing. (picture taken 4/21)



Many [alfalfa](#) fields came through the winter with no or very little heaving or mortality. This field has some ladino clover in it, which I think is a good thing. Bare spots will inevitably occur, and the clover spreads out to fill the empty spaces rather than chickweed or other weeds.

If you find large bare spaces and thin stands, consider interseeding grasses and legumes as soon as you can in the spring. Italian ryegrass has a vigorous seedling and will not head out until year two. About 5 lbs/ac of Italian ryegrass if seeded with red clover and 10 lbs/ac if seeded alone. Do not seed alfalfa into alfalfa to avoid “autotoxicity”. Mature alfalfa plants release chemicals that kill new alfalfa seedlings. Interseed red clover at 5 to 8 lbs/acre.



**This alfalfa root heaved out of the ground just an inch. It may not survive after first cutting. Heaving is most prevalent in wet spots.**

**While sweeping alfalfa** I found just a couple [alfalfa weevil](#) (AW) adults and other insects. The AW adults and larvae feed on the foliage. Usually natural enemies (parasitic wasps) keep the AW under control, but spring temperatures influence the speed of development of the AW and its enemies. In a good year, the natural enemies can develop fast enough and are active enough to keep it under control. The [clover root curculio](#) larvae feed on clover and alfalfa roots, which leads to root diseases. This is one reason why alfalfa and clover survive for just a few years. It takes a lot of [aphids](#) in alfalfa to be of concern. Typically you find an occasional cutworm. There are various species, usually of no concern in alfalfa and grasses. Rarely, late season infestation of cutworms in grass and alfalfa can be a problem.



**Characteristic head markings**

**[ID of common cutworms](#)**

