As we head into the fall harvest season, please keep safety in mind. Now might be a good time to review standard operating procedures and safety considerations for all workers especially those who were recently hired and may be young and/or inexperienced. We need to remember that agriculture continues to be one of the most hazardous occupations and family members are often part of the work crew. According to the Center for Disease Control’s (CDC) website in 2012 there were an estimated 955,000 youth under the age of 20 who reside on farms with about half performing farm work. In addition, there was an estimated 259,000 youth hired to work on farms. Please take the necessary steps to prevent an injury or, even worse, a fatality on your farm. Page 8 has a few safety tips from Michigan State University Extension for you to consider.

- With the uncertainty of silage quantity and quality as a result of the drought we are all still experiencing; Page 2 has a link to a website for Cornell’s Dept. of Animal Science for Feed Fact Sheets and Worksheets. Keep in mind that the drought has the potential to create Nitrate Toxicity in corn. Caution should be used when harvesting and possible accumulation in upright silos. Page 3 has some good information regarding bunk silo density based on research that shows you cannot over pack a bunk.

- If you have participated in or considered participating in Recycling Ag Plastics please refer to Page 3 for an update on the program.

- Are you in compliance with federal and state regulations applicable to trucking? According to DTN Farm Business Advisor Lori Culler, “too often farm businesses make wrong assumptions.” Page 4 gives an overview and describes driver qualifications files and drug testing.

- What might cause an OSHA Inspector to stop at your farm? Bunker silo filling and packing seems to be a key point. Now is a good time to review bunker silo safety considerations and protocols in case you still need to complete this. Page 5 has some key bullet points to review! Remember to document the training and who attended.

- According to Andy Novakovic at Cornell University, “the milk price cycle suggests that prices should improve through 2017” learn more on what 2017 holds on Page 6, as well as a deadline extension for the Market Protection Program for dairy.

- Do you have Johnsongrass on your farm or know where a population might be? Cornell Professor DiTommaso is seeking your help to locate populations in New York so he may collect seeds. More details about this nationwide study can be found on Page 7.

Dairy Acceleration Program Funding Available

There is still some funding available for eligible projects under the Dairy Acceleration Program (DAP). To date four farms in Cayuga County have taken advantage of this funding to improve current operations or develop plans for future expansions. Funding for projects may be used for organization of financial records and benchmarking, creation of strategic business plans, design of new or remodeled production facilities, development or updates of Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plans (CNMPs) and design of Best Management Practices (BMPs) identified in the farm CNMP.

The Dairy Acceleration Program is an initiative of Governor Cuomo in partnership with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation designed to enhance profitability of New York dairy farms while maintaining a commitment to environmentally responsible dairy farming. For more information go to: http://prodairy.cals.cornell.edu/dairy-acceleration.
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Below is a list of upcoming events that we thought might be important to you! If you have further questions or need to clarify any information, you can always check out our website [http://blogs.cornell.edu/ceecayuga](http://blogs.cornell.edu/ceecayuga), go to the Agriculture tab on top. We try our best to keep information as up-to-date as possible so that you have a quick, easy reference available 24/7. Of course, you can always call our office with any questions or concerns you might have at 315-255-1183, Judy Wright (ext. 234) or Keith Severson (ext. 225)—be sure and leave a message with your phone number.

October 5...... Worker Protection Standard Mock Inspection  Held October 5th at Dickman Farms, 13 Archie Street, Auburn. More information is below.

November 17. Cornell Cooperative Extension Cayuga County Annual Meeting: Begins at 6 p.m. at The Sunset Restaurant, Auburn, NY. Stay tuned for more details.

CAYUGA COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT ANNOUNCES FALL FISH STOCKING SALE

The Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District will be holding a Fish Stocking Sale this fall. A variety of fish for ponds will be available for sale, including rainbow trout, largemouth bass, yellow perch, bluegill, black crappie, channel catfish and minnows. Grass carp will also be available, but landowners must have a NYS DEC permit in order to purchase them. The Conservation District is currently taking orders for these species. Orders will be taken through Tuesday, September 13, 2016.

To get an order form, go to their website at: [www.cayugaswcd.org](http://www.cayugaswcd.org), call (315)252-4171, ext. 3, or stop by their office located on County House Road in Sennett Monday - Friday from 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM.

OF NOTE

- The August Hops Newsletter from Steve Miller, Senior Resource Educator from Cornell Cooperative Extension Madison County, is now available at: [http://www.northeasthopalliance.org](http://www.northeasthopalliance.org).
- Cornell’s Department of Animal Science has Feed Fact Sheets and Worksheets available online for those concerned about stretching feed through the winter. For a complete listing go to: [http://ansci.cals.cornell.edu/extension-outreach/adult-extension/dairy-management/feed-fact-sheets-and-worksheets](http://ansci.cals.cornell.edu/extension-outreach/adult-extension/dairy-management/feed-fact-sheets-and-worksheets) or call our office at 315-255-1183 and speak with Keith (ext. 225) or Judy (ext. 234) to obtain copies.
- A new fact sheet has been made available by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority titled “Landowner Considerations for Solar Land Leases”. A copy has been made available on our website: [http://blogs.cornell.edu/ceecayuga](http://blogs.cornell.edu/ceecayuga) or call the office at 315-255-1183 to obtain a copy.

WORKER PROTECTION STANDARD MOCK INSPECTION BEING HELD

Wednesday, October 5th

Held at Dickman Farms, 13 Archie Street, Auburn, NY

“A number of significant changes to the federal Worker Protection Standard for Agricultural Pesticides (WPS) will go into effect on January 2, 2017. These changes will affect farms, greenhouses, nurseries, forests, and other establishments (including organic establishments) on which pesticides are used in the production of agricultural crops.

If you use, supervise the use, or are responsible for the use of pesticides on such establishments, the Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) invites you to attend a WPS Mock Inspection on the morning of October 5th at Dickman Farms, 13 Archie Street, Auburn, NY. NYSDEC staff will be on hand to explain the rule changes and how to comply with them.

Check-in is from 9:30 to 10:00, with training to follow from 10:00 to noon. Attendees who are certified to apply pesticides in Categories 1A, 1D, 10, 21, 22, 23, 24, or 25 will earn 2 recertification credits. (Remember to bring your NYS pesticide certification photo ID card.)

To register, please send an e-mail to Pesticidecompliance@dec.ny.gov. If currently certified in New York as a pesticide applicator or commercial technician, include your Certification ID Number.

You can find additional information about changes to the WPS on EPA's website at: [https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/revisions-worker-protection-standard](https://www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/revisions-worker-protection-standard)"
As harvest season approaches it is a good time to make sure everything is in order to make the season as successful as possible. There are lots of rules and sayings regarding quantity; “too much of a good thing”, point of diminishing return, optimum range and the list goes on. Often times in crop production we pay close attention to these rules. We have very good data to show the point of diminishing return on fertilizer applications, seeding rates, forage quality versus yield, etc.

In other cases there are guidelines that offer a minimum value or goal to shot for but there has yet to be proven that there is a point of diminishing return and sometimes these minimum guidelines give us a false sense of accomplishment. There are a few examples of this relative to forage harvest.

Here we will address bunk silo density, while this is not new information it remains an opportunity for many. Based on research conducted by Curt Ruppel at Cornell in the mid 1990’s the benchmark was set that the minimum density for silage should be 14 lbs dry matter (DM)/ cubic foot. At some point in time the word minimum seemed to be lost from this and many began to think about 14 lbs. as their goal not just the minimum. As a guideline for achieving this density the rule of thumb of 800 lbs. of packing weight per ton of forage per hour was developed, again as a minimum.

In reality we have yet to see a bunk packed too much or any negative outcomes from extra resources committed to packing during silo fill. Silo filling is a very dynamic process and parameters can change from hour to hour. If you set your goal for the minimum of 14 and your assumptions for filling are not accurate the risk of ending up with a density lower than 14 becomes high.

Investing in “packing power” to get the highest density possible assures that even when things are not going exactly as planned you have a better chance of keeping the density at 14 lbs or above. A higher density will improve forage quality, reduce dry matter losses and increase the efficiency of your storage footprint.

The calculations can be done for various storage strategies; bunks with wall, drive over piles, etc. A simple example would be a modest size bunk that is 40’wide by 100’ long with 10’ sidewalls. This provides 40,000 cubic feet. With a density of 14 lbs DM per cubic foot that would result in a storage capacity of 280 tons of DM and expected DM losses (shrink) of approximately 16.8% (Ruppel, 1992).

Now let’s take that same storage space and increase the density by 4 lbs DM to 18 lbs DM per cubic foot. This increases the capacity of your bunk to 360 tons DM, an increase of 80 tons DM or approximately 36%. Additionally, DM losses would be expected to drop by 3.4% to approximately 13.4% (Ruppel, 1992).

Increasing the capacity of your current storage by this amount could eliminate the need for investing capital into more storage space and also reduce the necessity to pile forage above the walls in the case of bunk silos. Staying within the walls alone can drastically cut down on spoilage and improve safety around the feed storage.

**When More is Better**

Written by: Joe Lawrence, Cornell University PRO-DAIRY & Ron Kuck, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County

The Recycling Ag Plastics Program (RAPP) that has been available in Cayuga County for the past few years. Unfortunately, the financial support for this important program on the state level has slowed resulting in a reduction in local support for RAPP. The past support available to participating farms to bale collected ag plastics and then locate a market for removal is no longer available at this time.

CCE Cayuga County was pleased to be able participate these past few years to implement best handling practices to produce a quality product for recycling. CCE Cayuga has been informed that all baled plastic has been removed from participating farms. **Should this not be the case;** please call either Keith Severson (ext. 225) or Judy Wright (ext. 234). **At this time we are not certain that the project will continue as it has in the past.**

We are continuing to explore alternative processes for recycling ag plastics. However, they are few, limited and often experimental. We are well aware that current disposal methods are expensive and want to remind you that it is against the law to burn plastic waste in open fires anywhere in New York State including on farms. The following link will take you to DEC’s website for more information on open burning in New York State: [http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/58519.html](http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/58519.html). As we become aware of other alternative disposal methods we will keep you informed.
**ARE YOUR TRUCK DRIVERS IN COMPLIANCE?**

Written by: Lori Culler, DTN Farm Business Advisor

With farms sharing equipment, expanding their reach and offering services to other farms, it's critical to know the federal and state regulations applicable to trucking. The Federal Motor Carrier Safety regulations (FMCSR) provide exemptions from some compliance for farm vehicle drivers. However, too often farm businesses make wrong assumptions about their exemption from the rules.

Let's explore some of the basic rules on farmer exemptions. This is not a full list of FMCSR requirements and we recommend reading through your state commercial motor vehicle compliance laws.

**Required for All**

FMCSR requires all farmers to comply with Parts 392 (Driving of Motor Vehicles), 393 (Parts and Accessories), and 396 (Inspection, Repair, and Maintenance). A few key requirements to note:

- No cellphone use while driving unless hands-free. CB radios allowed to be used.
- Annual vehicle inspections for each truck. Sticker on truck or inspection sheet must be with the vehicle.
- Post-trip inspection written report is required at the completion of the each day a vehicle is operated.
- Pre-trip inspections must be completed. Any repairs noted on the prior driver’s post-trip must be signed-off that it has been repaired prior to operating.
- Accident records must be kept three years.
- Identification and marking of USDOT on vehicles.

**Exemptions for Farm Vehicle Drivers**

In order for a person who operates a commercial motor vehicle to be exempt from some of the FMCSR under the Farm Vehicle Driver exemptions, all of the following must be met:

The vehicle is controlled and operated by a farmer, their employee or family member;

1. It is being used to transport agricultural products, farm supplies, or farm machinery to or from a farm;
2. It is not being used in a for-hire operation;
3. It is not carrying hazardous materials in an amount that requires placarding; AND
4. It is being used within 150 air miles (173 statute miles) of the farm.

Farm vehicle drivers are exempted from several FMCSR compliances including, but not limited to, drug testing requirements, obtaining copies of medical cards and driver qualification files. Even if your employee meets the farm vehicle driver criteria above, they still have to log their hours if they drive over 100 air miles across another state.

If a driver does not meet the above criteria for a farm vehicle driver, the farm must adhere to the FMCSR including, but not limited to, maintaining driver qualification files, adhering to drug testing policies and more. Let's explore these driver files and drug testing in more detail.

**Driver Qualification Files**

- Driver application for employment (pre-hire)
- Inquiries into past employment the last three years (pre-hire)
- Motor vehicle records
- Copy of current medical card
- Road test
- Annual violation certificate and review of driving record (must be completed each year)

**Drug Testing**

- Pre-employment drug testing required
- Post-accident potentially required depending on accident
- Random drug testing required
- Reasonable suspicion

If you are required to place your drivers into a random drug testing pool, I have found it relatively inexpensive to join a consortium pool and have an outside company track, administer and ensure your drug testing. If you search online for consortium drug testing or occupational drug testing, you should be able to find a company that provides that service in your area. They would also be able to assist with pre-employment testing as well.

My recommendation is to analyze how and where you utilize your farm drivers. Ask yourself: Are you 100% sure you are in compliance with your federal and state regulations? If not, seek out expert help. Then, review compliance annually to ensure you stay on top of changes. It may save you both headaches and fines down the road.
As preparations begin for another fall harvest, it is important to review safety protocols with your farm team before harvest begins.

Last spring, PRO-DAIRY and the OSHA Work Group sent an alert highlighting the importance of adequate sleep during these high paced operations. Unfortunately, low milk prices are pressing many farms to cut costs where they can. The harvest crew should be properly sized to do a good job safely. It may be tempting to work a smaller crew for longer hours, but this is not a good money saver if it increases the risk of accident or injury. Please be safe and make sure all members of the farm crew are well trained AND that everyone gets enough rest. An incident or injury can cost much more than any savings realized by cutting corners in this area.

A sample list of items to review for harvest preparation and in safety meetings includes:

- Farm specific safety concerns and other issues, including narrow roads, soft shoulders, main highways, traffic, spilling silage or tracking mud on roads, etc.
- Rules of the road, including safe speed, specified routes and alternatives to reduce neighbor irritation. Beware of complacency. The 22th time at the same stop sign can get boring, but the stop sign must still be observed!
- Get a good night’s sleep. Tired operators are more likely to make mistakes. According to research, almost everyone is hard wired to need 8 to 9 hours of sleep per night. Any less sleep than this, especially night after night, will result in impaired function and significantly reduced reaction time.
- Carry water and snacks/stay hydrated. Take breaks periodically.
- Stay in communication. Let others know of hazards when they are observed.
- Stay in trucks or equipment when waiting. If personnel must exit, radio other operators.
- If personnel are on the ground, they should never walk out in front of or behind any machine or truck without first making eye contact with the operator.
- No extra riders unless in training.
- Make sure lighting is adequate for all work performed after sunset.
- Use an escort vehicle to reduce risk when moving poorly marked or lighted equipment at dusk. This time is especially dangerous.
- Make sure all tractors and machinery that travel less than 25 mph on public roads have a properly mounted SMV (Slow Moving Vehicle) emblem. SMV emblems need to be clean and not faded, must be mounted in the center or the rear of the machine (or as close to the center as possible), and be 2’ to 6’ above the road surface.
- Completely shut down machinery when clearing debris!!! It is not enough to disengage the power supply!!!
- Make sure that staff use the proper personal protective equipment, such as hearing protection in noisy areas.

Pre harvest:

- Check over trucks and equipment. Ensure that tires are at proper inflation and change excessively worn tires. Check that lights all function and recheck each day before work starts. Trucks need to be equipped with fire extinguishers and safety triangles or flares.
- Provide fire extinguishers on larger tractors and self-propelled harvesters.
- Make sure road safety features meet the legal minimum.
- Check field entry routes for wash outs and culvert problems.
- Mark driveways with flags so that drivers do not have to guess where the edge is.
- Check common routes for road crew activity or other new issues.
- Consider providing hi-visibility clothing or vests to staff to help prevent run over incidents.
- Each day remind drivers, packers and chopper operators to be safe, use safety belts and take no unnecessary risks.

Filling:

- If new silage is being added to old silage, mark where the two materials are joined. The joint areas can be very unstable during silage removal and can collapse without warning because the silage will not be interlocked at this point. Extra caution is warranted with any activity in these areas.
- Avoid putting new silage over the top of existing piles covered with plastic. Major slippage of the top pile can occur during silage removal.
- Pile height should not exceed the reach of the unloading equipment. Filling staff should be told the target pile height.

Continued on Page 6 . . .
Dr. Andrew Novakovic, Professor Dyson School at Cornell University, recommends that dairy farmers should not ignore or take lightly the extension of the Margin Protection Program for Dairy from September 30 to December 16, 2016. According to Dr. Novakovic while “producers have soured on the MPP-Dairy Program” this extension gives the “USDA just enough time to process enrollments before the date on which coverage starts while at the same time giving dairy farmers about the maximum opportunity to assess what 2017 is likely to have in store for them in terms of prices and margins.”

In addition, by mid-December harvest will be complete and we will have a good idea of what prices for major feeds are looking like at least through July or August. Farmers who grow their own feeds will know what they have in storage and what they will need to buy. Similarly, the CME will have Class III and IV future prices that historically have been pretty accurate for the first 3 months and reasonable accurate for the next 4-6 months. This means that the price environment through the summer of 2017 will be fairly predictable. Obviously there are never any guarantees short of actually hedging a price, but the delay to mid-December gives farmers their greatest advantage they could hope to have in making an educated choice on MPP-Dairy coverage selection for 2017.

Dr. Novakovic also states that “the milk price cycle suggests that prices should improve through 2017. Let’s certainly hope that pattern holds true. Of course the more important question is how much. Farmers may conclude that the margin expectation for 2017 is reasonably favorable and they don’t need help from MPP-Dairy. Whether they do or not, short of being able to enroll after the fact, they couldn’t have a more favorable condition for enrollment in 2017.”

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**Bunker Silo Safety Reminder Continued . . .**

- Packing tractor(s) should be ROPS equipped and operators should be belted in.
- Rollover hazard is obvious. Side slope steepness is an important safety concern. There are many factors that influence safe operating gradient. Minimize exterior side slopes as much as practical. Beware of soft spots. Safest packing is achieved when driving up and down the pile. Some references suggest no more than a 3:1 slope for this type of operation. As your farm changes, please consider how to size and organize bunker silos so that pile height and slope allow packing equipment to drive safely over all sections of the pile.
- Only the most experienced equipment operators should pack. Provide new packing operators with proper training.
- When using hydraulic dump bodies, do not back up onto the pile to dump due to tip-over hazard.
- Inform all staff that only authorized personnel should be in the silo filling area. Extra people should be kept out. Make sure appropriate signage such as “No Unauthorized Personnel” and “Danger” is posted visibly.
- **Covering crew:**
  - Conduct safety meeting before going up onto the piles. Designate those that will work near the edge. All others stay away!

Make sure workers are not wearing slick surface shoes. Remind workers to watch out for each other and no horseplay on top.
Help Needed to Locate Johnsongrass Populations

Cornell Professor Toni DiTommaso is working on a nation-wide research project assessing the distribution and genetic diversity of the invasive perennial weed commonly known as Johnsongrass. NY State is currently the geographic northern most limit of this species but it is expected to increase in abundance across the state in the future.

Dr. DiTommaso is seeking help in locating populations of Johnsongrass in New York so he may collect seeds from these plants starting the end of August into early fall. These collected seeds will be grown in central NY and other areas of the country to learn how well adapted different populations are growing and how difficult they are to manage.

If you have Johnsongrass populations that have not yet been killed by herbicides or mowed please contact Toni directly by email at ad97@cornell.edu with the location of the population (GPS coordinates or road intersections, etc.), the type of habitat it is found in (corn field, back of barn or roadside) and the approximate size (ex. 10 foot by 15 foot). If you can send pictures that would also be helpful so he can confirm they are Johnsongrass.

If you have questions and need help confirming that you have Johnsongrass, please contact Keith Severson at kvs5@cornell.edu or 315-255-1183 ext 225. He can also help you with pictures and other information if Johnsongrass is confirmed.

Brief Description: Johnsongrass is a tall, coarse, grass with stout rhizomes. It grows in dense clumps or nearly solid stands and can reach 8 feet (2.4 meters) in height. Leaves are smooth, 6-20 inches (15.2-50.8 cm) long, and have a white midvein. Stems are pink to rusty red near the base. Panicles are large, loosely branched, purplish, and hairy. Spikelets occur in pairs or threes and each has a conspicuous awn. Seeds are reddish-brown and nearly 1/8 inch (0.3 cm) long.

Above: Mature Johnsongrass plants in flower

Below: Seed heads

Above: The ligules on Johnsongrass leaves (A) are membranous, while the ligules on Fall Panicum leaves (B) are a fringe of hairs. Barnyardgrass (C) lacks ligules.

Note the prominent, white, midvein on a mature Johnsongrass leaf (far left) and root system with rhizomes (left)
Cayuga County has been declared a disaster due to the current 2016 drought. Farmers may be eligible for assistance if they have suffered grazing losses or are in need of water. As a result of this declaration there is also emergency loan money available.

For more information, please contact the Cayuga County Farm Service Agency at (315) 253-8471 extension 2 or by email at krista.tyrrell@ny.usda.gov.

SAFETY TIPS FROM MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

- Read operators manual(s).
- Install Slow-Moving Vehicle (SMV) signs.
- Wear seat belts.
- Put equipment in neutral or park, engage parking brake, and turn off engine before dismounting. Wait until all mechanisms have stopped moving before attempting to service or unclog a machine.
- Locking hydraulic cylinders or supporting the head prior to working under it is always recommended.
- Limit riders on equipment! Instructional seats are designed for training or diagnosing machine problems.
- Keep all guards in place.
- Take breaks. Get enough sleep.
- Train all operators to safely operate the equipment.
- Fatigue, stress, medication, alcohol and drugs cause you to not focus on tasks.
- Have all safety equipment in proper condition and ready to use such as safety glasses, hearing protection and respiratory masks.
- Have ROPS (rollover protective structures) fitted on tractors.

The information given herein is supplied with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement is implied by Cornell Cooperative Extension. Where trade names are used, no discrimination is intended and no endorsement is implied. Every effort has been made to provide correct, complete and up-to-date pesticide recommendations. Nevertheless, changes in pesticide regulations occur constantly and human errors are possible. Any recommendations herein are not a substitute for pesticide labeling. Please read the label before applying.