

Cornell Cooperative Extension Delaware County



CIG Project Finishes a Successful First Year!

Written by Paul Cerosaletti, CIG Project Coordinator

The Conservation Innovation Grant (CIG) project has completed a very successful first year of a three-year implementation. The success of this project came as the result of an amazing partnership between the project partners including Delaware County Soil & Water Conservation District, Cornell Cooperative Extension Delaware County, Watershed Agricultural Council, USDA, NRCS, FSA, NYC DEP, Cornell University, Cornell ProDairy, Virginia Tech, Albano's Precision Application, and the participating farms. The year began with the selection of, and contracting with Albano's Precision Application (APA) to be the CIG project contractor, and their assembling an impressive fleet of equipment and dedicated staff to implement the precision manure applications.

The project team, including APA, project staff and farm nutrient management planners, met with 23 farms to develop manure prescriptions on over 400 fields county-wide. APA then began a march back and forth across the county from the beginning of April until nearly the end of November applying both semi-solid and liquid manure on 344 fields on the 23 enrolled farms. As of the end of November, the project injected over 14.8 million gallons of liquid manure on 2,300 acres and applied 7,107 tons of semi-solid manure on 1,047 acres. Across the 23 participating farms in 2025, 15 farm manure storages were emptied, 3 more than once, all before the end of the year. Helping farms get manure storages emptied before the winter was a primary goal of the project, in addition to implementing manure spreading with precision ag technology, variable rate applications and disc coulter manure injection.

The project implemented precision ag technology for the 1st time in Delaware County to fulfill field manure prescriptions and for as-applied manure data recording and mapping (see photo inset of manure rate map). Another 1st for the county was implementation of disc coulter



Manure rate quality map on CIG Project field.

Updates: The Season of Becoming



The Daily Dirt recently featured a piece highlighting the crucial root growth taking place under the quiet blanket of snow we are currently blessed with, and I immediately drew the parallel to our work in extension here at CCE Delaware County. We began the new year with our full team in place, and “root growth” we are experiencing within our team is directly translating into what we are able to deliver to you, our valued agricultural community.

With the collaboration of the group’s talents, the 2026 learning year launched with a successful Catskill Regional Ag Conference, ushering in a winter and spring loaded with fantastic educational programming for area producers to continue to nourish your roots in support of the work you do every day. We are thrilled with the energy the team has and always appreciate hearing what you need from us.

CCE Delaware Agriculture Program Staff

- *Paul Cerosaletti, MS, CCA*
Agricultural Program Team
Leader
- *Desiree Keever, JD Ag Issues*
Leader
- *Lila Shafer, BT Horticulture*
- *Autumn Madugno, Ag in the*
Classroom Educator
- *Jessica Ladd, Ag/HE*
Administrative Assistant

NYC Watershed Agricultural Program Staff:

- *Dale Dewing, MS CCA*
Watershed
Program Leader
- *Meghan Potter, Precision*
Feed Management Team
Leader
- *Rich Toebe, PAS*
Watershed Livestock
Educator
- *April Wright Lucas, PAS CCA*
Precision Feed
Management Specialist
- *James Romack, MS*
Precision Feed
Management Specialist
- *Kim Holden,*
Sr. Administrative
Assistant

CIG Successful Year Cont. From Cover

manure injection, which in addition to dramatically lowering risk of manure nutrient loss to water supplies, allowed farmers to capture the full nitrogen value of applied manure. Across all acres injected in 2025, the project helped farmers conserve 131,043 lbs. of manure nitrogen, valued at \$98,282, which otherwise would have been lost to the air via volatilization. This conserved nitrogen has tremendous potential to increase crop yields, which we already began to see realized in the 2025 growing season.

At the close out of 2025 we are excited to share these successes:

CIG Project 2025 Implementation - By the Numbers:

- 23 participating farms
- 14,902,216 gallons liquid manure applied
- 2,299 acres of liquid manure injected
- 57 lbs. per acre manure ammonia N conserved through injection
- 131,043 lbs. of total manure ammonia nitrogen conserved through injection
- \$98,282 value of manure N conserved through injection
- 7,104 tons of semi-solid manure applied on 1,047 acres
- 15 manure storages emptied, 3 more than once
- 277 attendees at 4 different educational events



We look forward to replicating this success with even greater efficiencies and productivity in 2026!

Upcoming Programs

offered at our Hamden Office: CCE Delaware County
34570 State Hwy 10 Suite #2



Social Media Marketing 201

March 11, 2026 11:30 AM-1:30 PM
March 18, 2026 11:30AM-1:30 PM
March 25, 2026 11:30AM-1:30PM
Registration Fee: \$25.00

This event is a hybrid series focused on giving you the tools to build your toolbox and level up your social media strategies for 2026! Those that complete the series will complete a social media plan for 2026, as well as feel more confident in utilizing different social media and AI tools.



Register: <https://tinyurl.com/SMM201>

Beyond the Cash Box-Deploying a Point of Sale System in your Farm Business

March 26, 2026 6:30 PM-7:30 PM
Registration Fee: NONE!



Participants will learn best practices for entering and organizing products, including how to accurately sell items by the pound or by the piece, create clear categories, and streamline checkout for efficiency and strong recordkeeping. Thoughtful setup not only improves the customer experience but also unlocks powerful sales and inventory insights to support better business decisions.

Join us to get your system set up right—from the moment you open the box to your first successful sale. Also learn about the efforts of the Cornell Farmers' Market Research Project and how this program can benefit your farm business!



Register: <https://tinyurl.com/CCEBTCB2>

Sell More, Stress Less: Optimizing Your Farmers Market Booth

April 15, 2026 6:30PM -8:00 PM
Registration Fee: NONE!



Boost your farmers market sales with smart, simple upgrades! Learn how to create an eye-catching booth, speed up checkout with multiple payment options, tap into nutrition programs, and protect your business—all while serving more customers and growing your market presence.



Register: <https://tinyurl.com/SMSL212>

Ready Set Grow 5-week series for Beginning Gardeners

Registration Fee: \$75.00
Includes seeds & materials



Week 1 March 3, 5:00pm-6:30pm

Starting a Garden

- What to grow, when to start, and how to plan

Week 2 March 10, 5:00pm-6:30pm **Planning a Garden**

- From seed packets to sketching a garden plan

Week 3 March 31, 5:00pm-6:30pm

Seed Starting: Setups and Techniques

- Setting up a successful indoor environment and starting seeds indoor

Week 4 April 14, 5:00pm-6:30pm

Seedling Care & Problem Solving

- Keeping seedlings healthy after germination

Week 5 April 28 5:00pm-6:30pm

Hardening Off & Transitioning to the Garden

- Moving plants outdoors successfully

Free CCE Online Learning

Making Data -Driven Decisions to Increase Farmers Market Success

8 PM Tuesdays
March 3-April 7



The Cornell Agricultural Marketing Research Program and Penn State University are excited to present this 6-week course. This is for farmers with experience selling at farmers markets who wish to increase their earnings through management and marketing practices.

Register: <https://tinyurl.com/CCEBTCB2>



Tick IPM & New Approaches to Fly Thresholds on Cattle

March 5, 2026 10AM-12PM
Presenter: Dr. Cassandra Olds



This webinar will explore two timely livestock IPM topics: managing ticks on cattle and rethinking traditional fly thresholds.

Register: <https://tinyurl.com/IPMTF>

2026 Agritourism Program Work Team Series

This series supports both new & established agritourism operators. Made possible by the USDA NIFA Beginning Farmer and Rancher Program.

March 10th 12pm: Using HipCamp
April 14th 12pm: Farm Safety for Agritourism Operators



Register: <https://tinyurl.com/agtourser>

2026 Ag Program Sponsors

Platinum Sponsor:

- Albano's Precision Application
- Albano's Custom Harvesting

Gold Sponsor:

- Delaware Co. Farmers Bureau
- Lutz Feed Company

Silver Sponsor:

- Robertsons Seed
- Stamford Farmers Cooperative
- Del-Rose Farm
- The Hanselman's

This support of our programming is very much appreciated by us & the farms we serve.

An Extended Thank You to our Ag program supporters and program grant donors

- O'Connor Foundation
- DelCo EcoDev
- NY Beef Industry Council
- Delaware County Rural Healthcare Alliance

Stay Connected:

- ccedelaware.org
- Follow us on Facebook: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County: Agriculture
- Email: delaware@cornell.edu
- Phone 607.865.6531

Upcoming Programs

Sponsored by the Watershed Agricultural Council



Livestock Finishing Series
In Person & Via Zoom

Hamden Town Hall
20 Covert Hollow Road
Hamden, NY
Registration Fee: NONE!



Thursday, March 5, 6:00pm-7:30pm:
Finishing Beef & Sheep with Grain, Dr. Adam Murray, Cornell

Adam will discuss the process of finishing livestock and how genetics, nutrition, and management all contribute to growth of economically relevant issues. Examples of grain finishing diets will be provided along with growth rate goals and visual characteristics of "finished" vs "not finished".

Wednesday, March 11, 6:00pm-7:30pm:
Grass Finishing of Beef & Sheep, Rich Toebe, CCE Delaware and Ken Jaffe, Slope Farms LLC

Finishing cattle and sheep to choice grades with grass only is quite doable. This requires attention to pasture management and forage production for the winter-feeding period. Rich will discuss pasture management and forage production skills. Ken will discuss market expectations, successful finishing strategies, and be available for questions from the perspective of both farmer and marketer of grass finished beef to butcher & restaurants.



Register:

<https://tinyurl.com/CCEDCfinishing>

Watershed Agricultural Council
nycwatershed.org



Spring Cow/Calf Meeting-The Value of Body Condition Scoring

Choose ONE session!

March 9, 2026

5:00PM-7:30PM

Brookside Farm

3352 Hwy 2, Delancy, NY

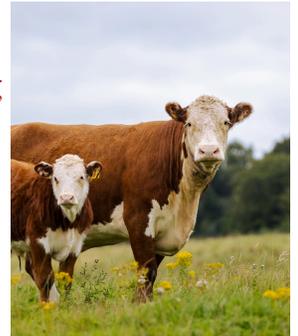
OR

March 17, 2026

1:00PM-3:30 PM

Crystal Springs Farm

36 Martin Road, Stamford, NY



Regular Body Condition Scoring (BCS) of your adult cows is a powerful tool to help you understand the status of your herd. Keeping your animals in the right body condition strongly impacts reproduction success, growth of suckling calves, and maximizing the efficiency of feeding the cows throughout the year.

- Practice Body Condition Scoring on a group of cows, several different scoring aids provided
- Body Condition Score as it relates to reproduction and health
- How to adjust for feeding thin cows, over-conditioned cows, and those in ideal body condition

BQA certified? This event will qualify for 1 of the 3 Continuing Education credits you need to automatically renew your certification.

Register:

<https://tinyurl.com/26cowcalf>



Youth Tractor Safety Course is Back! National Safe Tractor & Machinery Operating Course



Students must attend all sessions & achieve passing scores on the written and operation tests to gain certification!
Sponsored by:

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Delaware County

This National Safe Tractor Training Program enables young workers (ages 14-19) to obtain a US Department of Labor Certificate of Training Certification which is required to operate farm tractors and equipment. The program includes training on farm safety, tractor safety, tractor operation and other related topics.

Classroom Sessions to be held @ CCE Delaware County
34570 State Hwy 10, Suite #2, Hamden

Tractor Operation Sessions to be held @ Eklund Farm Machinery
27696 NY 23, Stamford

Monday, April 27, 5:30 pm-8:30 pm
General Agricultural Safety

Wednesday, April 29, 5:30 pm-8:30 pm
Tractor Operation

Saturday, May 2, 9am
Practice Driving

Monday, May 4, 5:30 pm-8:30 pm
General Agricultural Safety

Wednesday, May 6, 5:30 pm-8:30 pm
Machinery Safety

Saturday, May 9, 9am
Practice Driving

Saturday, May 16, 9am TEST DAY

Registration Fee:

\$45 includes materials

Register:

<https://checkout.square.site/merchant/MLFVW0HFMWEWP/checkout/AS34XHEWZ73K>
AKUVG46NUSL6



PFM Corner



The Precision Feed Management Process

Submitted by Meghan Potter,
MS PFM Team Leader

Precision Feed Management is a continuous flow of monitoring, benchmarking, adjusting, goal setting and informing to achieve documented implementation and management progress. PFM focuses on meeting and not exceeding the nutrient needs of cattle on regional farms. Planner activities which support this process include, but are not limited to:

- Routine dietary monitoring using NYS PFM Dairy benchmarking tool, and beef diet modeling using a commercial platform of the Cornell Net Carbohydrate and Protein System model.
- Communicating results of benchmarking and distinguishing possible adjustments in the diet, feeding practices, and herd management.
- Quality Management Assistance (QMA) which provides planning and technical assistance to farmers and their feed industry advisors through distinct QMA events.
- The creation and maintenance of Feed Management Plans (FMP's) using the NRCS 592 feed management standard.



2026 DEL. CO. CROP SCHOOL
MARCH 24
 10:30 AM – 3:30 PM
 (registration opens at 10:15)
HAMDEN TOWN HALL
 20 COVERT HOLLOW RD, HAMDEN, NY 13782
 Registration \$10.00 – Includes Lunch

TOPICS:

REVIEW OF YIELD AND QUALITY EFFECTS OF MANURE INJECTION ON SOD IN DELAWARE COUNTY: Dale Dewing & Paul Cerosaletti (CCE Delaware) Yield and quality data where liquid manure was injected on sod in 2025.

QUANTIFYING THE VALUE OF MANURE FOR CORN PRODUCTION IN NYS AND DELAWARE COUNTY: Juan Carlos Ramoz Sanchez (Cornell Nutrient Management Spear Program) Results from statewide on-farm research trials, including Delaware County sites, quantifying the effects of manure for corn production beyond just fertilizer replacement value.

PREVALENCE OF SEED PESTS IN NYS AND EFFECT OF SEED TREATMENTS ON CONTROL AND YIELD: Mike Hunter (Cornell IPM) Prevalence of seed pests in NYS, effectiveness of neonic seed treatments, and control options other than neonic seed treatments.

LUNCH – BY THE FARMER’S WIFE

EFFECTS OF LIMING ON SOIL NUTRIENT AVAILABILITY IN DELAWARE COUNTY AND THE NYC WATERSHED: Kari Sheridan (WAC) Analysis of multiple years of liming on plant available nutrient levels in fields in the Watershed Ag Program Cropland Liming Pilot Project.

MYCOTOXIN MANAGEMENT IN FORAGES: John Winchell (Alltech) Management of mold and mycotoxins in forages and in feed rations.

FUNGAL DISEASE PREVALENCE AND CONTROL IN CORN AND SOYBEANS AT-PLANTING AND LATE-SEASON: Dr. Camelo Parada Rojas (Cornell) Common fungal diseases in corn and soybeans in NYS and disease prevention options using systemic at planting or topical late season applied fungicides.

HERBICIDE RESISTANT WEEDS IN NY AND LATE-SEASON ANNUAL GRASS CONTROL IN CORN AND SOYBEANS Mike Hunter (Cornell IPM) Current status of herbicide resistant weeds in NYS and herbicide options to improve late season annual grass control.

Register by March 20 by calling Kim Holden at 607-865-7090 or email kmh19@cornell.edu or scan the QR Code. Pay at the door, \$10/person.



Cornell Cooperative Extension
Delaware County



We welcome farms in Schoharie, Otsego, and Delaware Counties to be part of this regional agritourism tradition. Whether you have participated in the past or are considering joining for the first time, we encourage you to register and share your farm with the community.



Information about eligibility, registration forms, and agritourism resources can be found at: www.cceschoharie-otsego.org/familyfarmdayregistration

For more information or to confirm eligibility:
 Schoharie and Otsego County farms can contact Kelley Doolin at 518.234.4303 (x122), or kmd322@cornell.edu.
 Delaware County farms can contact Desiree Keever at 607.865.6531 (x1013), or dnk2@cornell.edu.

The PFM Process: A Continual Improvement Process



PHOSPHORUS PERSPECTIVES

Over the next several issues we are going to focus on phosphorus and how we are impacting our cows, our bottom lines and the environment. Kicking off the series is this gem out of the Pro-Dairy Vault that is still very relevant today!



Are Your Cows Getting Too Much Phosphorus?

By Larry E. Chase & Charlene M. Ryan

Article published 2004 in Pro-Dairy

Northeast Dairy Business

Environmentally and nutritionally, phosphorus (P) is the mineral of interest today. If dairy cattle consume P in excess of requirements, they excrete the excess in their manure. That raises an important question: If cows aren't using the excess P for production, why spend money to feed extra P just for it to end up in the alleyway?

Traditionally P has been overfed based on the "perception" that it improved reproduction. Research in the last few years doesn't confirm that view. Though the number of cows used in these trials was inadequate for statistical results, the trials showed no apparent differences in reproductive performance between cows fed P to meet requirements and those fed P in excess of requirements. To get statistically sound results, a multi-university field study was initiated to examine the relationship between diet P levels, milk production and reproduction in commercial herds. The University of Pennsylvania is the lead institution in this three-year study. Cornell, Maryland, Delaware, Penn State and Virginia Tech are cooperating universities. About 90 commercial dairy herds are participating.

The study

In 2002, researchers surveyed dairy herds to determine P levels being fed. The results:

- The average diet P level was 0.44% or about 34% above the National Research Council (NRC) requirement for cows producing 62 pounds of milk per day.
- Diet P content ranged from 0.36 to 0.7% of the total diet dry matter.

In November 2003, researchers surveyed feed industry representative. Responses came from 93 people. Specifically:

- 89% of the respondents had lowered diet P target levels in the last three to four years.
- 74% currently formulate dairy cattle diets to contain 0.35 to 0.4% P.
- 19% formulate for diet P levels of 0.4 to 0.45%
- The average diet P level formulated for three to four years ago was 0.44% . This is the same average diet P content found in herds surveyed before the start of the research.
- The average diet P currently being formulated for was 0.376%. This is about a 15% decrease.



- 98% indicated they had observed no changes in milk production as a result of formulating for lower diet P levels.
- 93% indicated they had observed no shift in herd reproductive performance after formulating for lower diet P levels.

How do these changes impact the environment? To answer the question, we used a 100-cow dairy herd averaging 80 pounds of milk per day. Predicted yearly P excretion for the herd was 5,215 pounds when the ration contained 0.44% P. This decreased to 3,860 pounds of P excreted when ration P was lowered to 0.37%. At a manure P application rate of 30 pounds per acre, the number of acres needed for manure spreading declined by 45 acres when ration P was lowered.

Table 1. Ration Phosphorus Guidelines

Annual Group	Ration P, % of DM
Lactating cow	0.32-0.38
Close-up dry cows	0.32-0.38
Far-off dry cows	0.22-0.28
Replacement heifers	0.20-0.28

To determine the target levels of P for rations, use the guidelines in the table.

Since our forages average 0.25 to 0.3% many dry cows and replacement heifers will have P intakes in excess of requirements when fed high forage rations. There appears to be little need for added P in these rations. What's the bottom line for your dairy? Because the feed industry has lowered the target ration P levels used in ration formulations, there is less P excretion to the environment. And the cost of your mineral program should have decreased since P is one of the more expensive minerals.

Dairy Cattle Housing and Bedding Practices Survey

Farmers are invited to respond to a survey about dairy cattle housing and bedding practices on farms in New York and neighboring states.

The survey's goal is to understand the management of dairy cattle bedding materials on farms, how widely the use of manure solids and bedded packs are, what bedding conditioners and additives are used, and the benefits and challenges of these various strategies to keep cows clean, comfortable and productive.

Feel free to share with other farmers in your network!

This survey is being conducted by Cornell CALS PRO-DAIRY and is partially funded by the New York Farm Viability Institute, a farmer-driven small grants program funding agricultural research and education projects that will create and share knowledge to improve the economic viability of New York's farmers.



cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_ekYJWI8beNigRy6



Grant Opportunities

NYS Food and Fiber Processing Grant Program

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets (AGM) and the Farm and Food Growth Fund (FFGF) are administrating the Food and Fiber Processing Grant program, which will provide funding assistance for capital expenses related to food and fiber processing projects, including construction and renovation of buildings and purchasing and installation of equipment. Processed products developed through the grant must contain a minimum of 51% raw agricultural ingredients grown or raised in New York State. Processing facilities must be located in New York State.

The program seeks to expand and renew food and fiber processing to promote long term viability of the agriculture industry and support the scaling of existing and new products produced in New York State. Funds provided by this grant will be used to invest in the cost of construction, renovation, alteration, rehabilitation, improvements, installation, acquisition, repair or replacement of, buildings, equipment, or permanent facilities to support the production, preparation, packaging, and distribution of New York State agricultural products.



For more information visit:
<https://www.ffgrowthfund.org/food-and-fiber>

Applications due by 4/28/2026

NYS Beginning Farmer Competitive Grant Program

Slated to open soon, the NYS Beginning Farmer Competitive Grant Program provides funding to help new and early-stage farmers in New York State.

Administered by NYFVI on behalf of the NYS Ag & Markets, this competitive program is designed to support beginning farmers in building financially sustainable, independent, commercial agricultural enterprises throughout NY.

Beginning farmers play a critical role in the future of NY agriculture. This program supports practical investments that help them establish, grow, and sustain our state's independent farms and farmers.

Who Is Eligible?

Beginning farmers are individuals who:

- Have not operated a farm for more than ten years
- Are actively involved in day-to-day farm management
- Operate a commercial farm in New York State

Applicants must meet all eligibility requirements outlined in the current Request for Proposals.



Sign up to receive notification of when grants become available at:

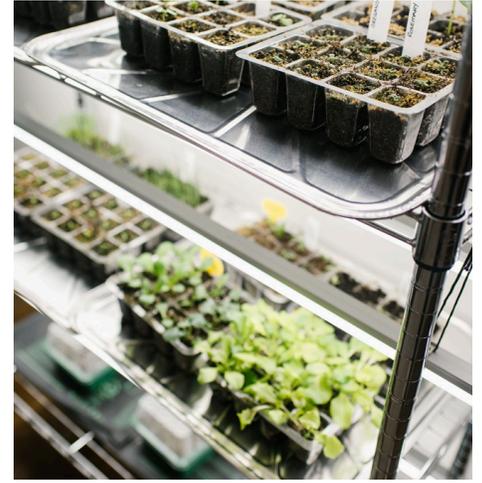
<https://nyfvi.org>

FRUIT & VEG CORNER

Sprout Before You Step Out-A Warm Weather Start On Seed Sprouting

Shared by Lila Shafer. BT Horticulturist

As temperatures rise above freezing in Delaware County and melting snow hints at change, it's tempting to think spring has arrived. While it's still winter in the Catskills, growers can begin the season now by starting seeds indoors, especially crops that need a little extra time to mature.



Longer-season vegetables like onions, kale, tomatoes, and eggplant benefit most from an early start. In our shorter upstate growing season, giving these crops several weeks of protected indoor growth helps ensure strong plants that are ready to thrive once the danger of frost passes, often not until mid to late May depending on elevation.

Success indoors comes down to consistency. Use a sterile seed-starting mix, keep soil lightly moist but never soggy, and maintain steady temperatures around 60–70°F. Bright grow lights positioned just above the seedlings prevent weak, leggy growth, and a small fan can help strengthen stems. Before transplanting outside, gradually harden plants off over 7–10 days to reduce shock.

Even if the landscape still looks like winter, a tray of onions, kale, tomatoes, or eggplant under lights can bring a welcome reminder that the growing season in Delaware County is quietly underway.

Adapted from: *Sprout Before You Step Out: A Warm-Weather Jump on Seed Starting - The Daily Dirt*

Energy Corner One-On-One Consultation



Ag Energy NY, in partnership with CCE county educators from across the state, offers no cost, one-on-one consultations to all agricultural producers across the state to help with access to information, resources and guidance when addressing energy efficiencies or implementation of on farm solar and wind energy systems. "We are excited to partner with Cornell Cooperative Extension county associations across the state to offer this service to agricultural producers," says Gabriel Gurley, Ag Energy NY Program Manager. "Improved energy efficiencies and the use of renewable energy in agricultural production goes beyond helping the environment and reducing the effects of climate change. Adopting energy efficiency practices and renewable energy can have positive benefits to the financial health of the farm as well." No-cost consultation services include assisting with questions regarding on farm energy efficiencies, adopting renewable energy such as solar and wind within agricultural production, providing referrals to specialists and much more. For more information or to request a consultation, visit the Ag Energy NY website at <https://agenergyny.org/>.

PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK

Cows Love Their Cereal Rye (Early Spring Cover Crop) and So Does Fred

Watershed Agricultural Council
nycwatershed.org



by April Wright Lucas, PAS, CCA, Precision Feed Management Specialist, NYC Watershed Agricultural Program

Fred Kuhn was delighted to see his cows grazing a new temporarily fenced corn field of early growth cereal rye cover crop he had planted the prior fall. This was done to reduce soil erosion rates and as part of conservation and soil health practice on a field that was in continuous corn for many years. Fred implemented this practice to increase his stewardship of the land. Dan Flaherty and Brent McKeon, with the Watershed Agricultural Program, encouraged and advised Fred on this practice.

Not only were the cows delighted with early forage to graze, Fred was as well. He saw another six pounds of milk/cow/day showing up in his bulk tank. Obviously, cereal rye is a nutritious feed when grazed early and can help produce more milk efficiently. Cows liked the palatability of this early forage when pastures were not yet growing.

To achieve this, Fred planted three separate fields with about two bushels per acre of cereal rye seed after taking corn silage off 25 total acres. In the spring, grazing was done by using a simple poly wire electric fencing system with push-in posts, set so the cows could be herded to the field for grazing the early lush rye.



What the cows got



Rye forage yield at grazing on April 29th was measured at multiple locations and was calculated to be .8 to 1.5 tons per acre. For Fred's 70 cows that translated to 10.9 pounds dry matter per day of additional nutritious and tasty feed.

According to Fred, "They cleaned it up like a lawn mower!"

Interesting rye growth measurements

Brent McKeon did extensive measurements on these fields each week tracking the growth rate of the rye after the planting date through the fall. He also did two measurements in April when the rye was growing again. The table below shows the average growth rate for all three fields in inches:

KUHN COVER CROP MEASUREMENTS

Date	Average Height(in.) for 3 fields
9/27/15	0
10/8/15	2 1/2
10/16/15	3 1/3
10/22/15	3 3/4
10/29/15	3 3/4
11/6/15	4 1/5
11/13/15	4 2/3
11/20/15	5
11/30/15	5 1/8
4/22/16	9 1/3
4/29/16	13.125 -----height grazed



The benefits of cover crops are:

- Reduce soil erosion from wind and water
- Increase soil organic matter content
- Capture and recycle or redistribute nutrients in the soil profile
- Promote biological nitrogen fixation
- Increase biodiversity
- Suppress Weeds
- Provide supplemental forage to promote a higher forage diet
- Conserve soil moisture
- Reduce particulate emissions into the atmosphere
- Minimize and reduce soil compaction
- And in Fred Kuhn's situation, provided a source of feed in early spring that pleased his cows and gave Fred an increase in milk production.

Tips for using cover crop cereal rye

- Do not graze in the fall. Trampling or chewing of the growing point of the plant will hinder regrowth and tonnage in the spring.
- To prepare for the next crop, make sure you have a proper kill of the cereal rye cover crop.
- If a spring seeding is planned, note that rye contains allelopathic compounds that can inhibit small seeding growth. By experience, this may not be achieved by disking prior to seeding, as the compounds are still present during plant break down. A two-week kill prior to seeding is advised.
- For no-till planting of corn, it is suggested to kill the rye when it is short, around 6 inches. If you have grazed the rye in the spring and are planning to use a glyphosate spray, make sure there is a period of rest to allow the rye to green up for good plant to root transport of the chemical.
- If using a minimal till, zone till, or a plow-down planting method, make sure to use a good residual herbicide.
- Rye has the excellent quality of drying out soil. If you have a wet area, take advantage of rye as a cover crop to help water infiltrate the soil.
- Get it planted early to allow for establishment to provide optimum benefits.
- Plant no later than the first week of October.

This article was originally written in 2016 on data collected from Dan Flaherty, NRCS and Ben Hendee, NYC WAC. The tips supplied are still relevant for cover crop planting and grazing. Don't miss the opportunity!

CORNELL CONNECTIONS



An Effective Farm Leadership Team Enhances Future Farm Success and Employee Success

Written by Bob Milligan

Jim Collins is likely the best researcher studying the reason for corporate business success (Good to Great, Built to Last, Great by Choice). A major finding of his research is that great companies have strong, effective leadership teams. Logic and my experience say that the same is true for farms with multiple owners – partners. We begin by looking at my view of the big advantages of an effective leadership team and then delve a little deeper into the operation of effective leadership teams.

The Two Powerful WHYS

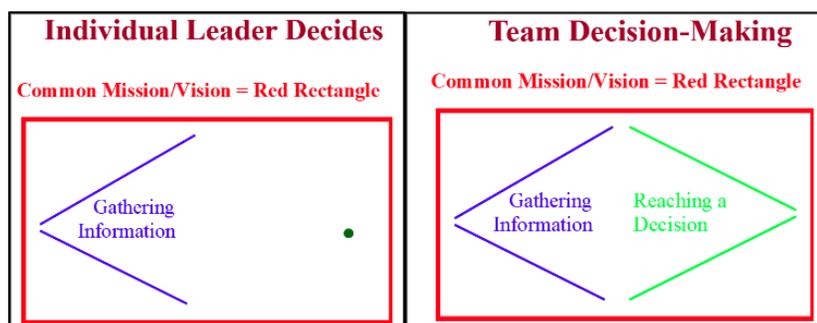
The world today is changing at breakneck speed and responding to those changes to ensure the farm remains successful is crucial and challenging. As discussed in last month’s Learning Edge Monthly newsletter (), continually reviewing and adjusting farm business strategy is best achieved with a structured, collaborative discussion, debate, and decision-making. Without the structure of an effective leadership team, the strategy adjustments necessary for business success can be missed, and decisions lack the collaborative power of discussion and debate.

The second, less frequently recognized, advantage of an effective leadership team is the agreement and clarity of all owners on the mission, vision, values, goals, and plans. This clarity greatly increases employee productivity, motivation, engagement, and retention.

WHY are Effective Leadership Teams Rare

Jim Collins found that even in large corporate businesses effective leadership teams (usually CEO, CFO, and Vice-Presidents) are rare. WHY? The diagrams below help to understand the difficulty.

The left diagram illustrates the decision-making process with one owner or decision-maker. Most farms started this way. In corporate businesses, the CEO often continues to use this process losing the power of the “Reaching a Decision” as illustrated in the diagram on the right. The discussion and collaboration in “Reaching a Decision” leads to superior decisions and provides the explanation for Jim Collin’s finding that companies with effective leadership teams have superior results.



Developing an effective leadership team is especially difficult for farm businesses. Challenges result from two situations. First, the former sole owner, now partner, continues to use the process on the left. In this situation the former sole decision-maker often involves partners in the "Gathering Information" stage but then makes the decision – the first process, thus losing the power of the collaborative discussion and debate in the "Reaching a Decision" stage. A second situation is when the partners divide the leadership responsibilities by enterprise or function (crops/livestock, operations/financial, marketing, etc.). This works well for these responsibilities; however, the more strategic leadership team issues are often ignored losing the power of an effective leadership team and potentially risking the future of the farm.

As outlined in a great book by authors in the Gallop Organization, *The Power of Two*, great partnerships – effective leadership teams – are challenging. They conclude that being a good partner is difficult and requires hard work. The greatest challenge is that the availability of someone else to blame is an ever-present danger. Collaborating requires unusual amounts of accommodation and humility. Each partner must avoid the ease of:

- Straying from the shared vision.
- Overestimating your own contributions.
- Underestimating your partner's contributions.
- Seeing your partner's weaknesses clearer than their strengths.



How is an Effective Leadership Team Constructed

Think about your successful crop and livestock activities. They succeed because you have excellent processes and systems. This same is true, if not more so, for an effective leadership team. It is crucial that leadership team structure and operation are clear and agreed to. Each partner must be held accountable to those expectations. This is a great challenge for most farm partners. They often have never been an employee and being held accountable by someone else, or in this case by the leadership team is foreign.

The involvement of several partners, especially with three or more partners, requires structured meetings to capitalize on the collaborate advantage. I have developed a template – a leadership team charter - (Word file) that you can use to develop the policies and operating rules for your leadership team (email me at rmilligan@trsmith.com or call at 651 343-6065 for a copy) . I also have a suggested structure for the leadership team meeting agendas (email me at rmilligan@trsmith.com or call at 651 343-6065 for a copy). Note that the second agenda column asks for the objective for each agenda item. I have found this to be crucial to clear expectations for effective team meetings.

The following are keys that I have observed for effective farm leadership team success:

- Clarity and agreement on the mission, vision, and values for the farm family business. In my experience failure to articulate and agree on the vision and mission for the farm business is the most common cause of partnership breakups and dysfunctional leadership teams.
- Discussion, dialogue and even debate are encouraged and constructive. This is the real advantage of a partnership. The dialogue, especially in the Reaching a Decision phase, leads to improved decisions based on the strengths, experiences, perspectives, and knowledge of the partners. Synergy ($1 + 1 > 2$) is created by EVERYONE expressing ideas, perspectives, concerns and even hunches.
- All partners believe they have input into key decisions and rally behind the option selected. This is basic to any team and crucial to an effective leadership team. It is also the greatest challenge in moving from a sole proprietorship to a partnership because it requires a major change from the perspective of the former sole proprietor.
- Clearly identifying what decisions should be made by the leadership team and what decisions and responsibilities are delegated to individual partners and key employees is one of the key and continuing issues.



A Final Word

Having an effective leadership team is one of the most important contributors to business success, partner job satisfaction, and workforce engagement. Effective leadership teams, especially with multiple family members including multi-generational, are things of beauty to me. I encourage you to set a goal of improving the functioning of your farm leadership team.

PUTTING KNOWLEDGE TO WORK

Farmstead Pre-Incident Emergency Planning

Adapted from Jay Canzonier's Farmstead Pre-Incident Emergency Planning article in the Ag Workforce Journal

At the 2026 edition of the Labor Roadshow, Cornell Ag Workforce Development's Dr. Kaitlyn Lutz invited a panel of managers who had experienced serious farm emergencies to share their stories. Despite different operations and different crises, several common themes came through loud and clear:

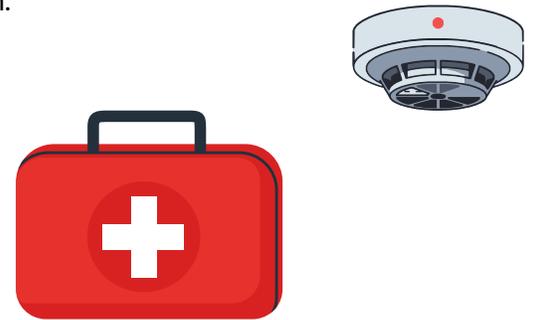
1. Disasters rarely announce themselves before arrival.
2. Emergencies never happen at a convenient time.
3. Preparedness is the only controllable that can impact outcome.

In farming things break, plans fall apart, and unexpected problems crop up at the worst times. Experience teaches us how to respond, and that experience becomes the foundation for better planning.

Farmstead emergency preparedness: The first step

We've talked before about internal emergency preparedness; the fundamentals are simple but critical and can dramatically change the outcome of emergencies on your farm:

- Smoke alarms and Carbon Monoxide detectors
- Fire extinguishers and fire blankets
- First aid kits and AED's
- Basic First Aid training and what to do in an emergency
- 911 address and emergency contacts clearly posted
- Evacuation plans and designated meeting places



State Agriculture Department Announces Overtime Tax Credit Advance Portal Is Now Open for Farmers to Register

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets announced that the State's Farm Employer Overtime Credit advance portal is now open for farmers to register and begin preparing the documents they will need to apply for reimbursement.

Later this year, eligible farm employers may apply to the Department of Agriculture and Markets for a certificate of advance payment of eligible overtime paid to their employees between January 1 and July 31, 2026.

Also new for the 2026 tax year, all eligible farm employers will need to apply for a year-end certificate from the Department in order to claim the credit on their 2026 tax return. The application period to apply for a 2026 year-end certificate will be January 1 through February 1, 2027. Although this is a year away, having the proper documentation in place will be important in order to be able to receive the tax credit!

Additional information and resources, including important dates and a chart where upcoming educational events will be available when scheduled, can be found on the Department of Agriculture and Markets' website at agriculture.ny.gov/farming/farm-employer-overtime-credit-advance and the Department of Taxation and Finance website at tax.ny.gov/pit/credits/farm-employer-overtime-credit.htm. Questions may be directed to farmOTadvance@agriculture.ny.gov or (518) 457-7076.

The Agritourism Brief

Basics of Agritourism & Maple Syrup Operations:

Agritourism Project Work Team

1 Permitting & Compliance

- Consider all relevant food safety standards for both hosting events & creating maple products (20C, FDA, Health Dept. NYS Dept of Ag & Markets). Are you using food grade materials?
- Ensure you are following grading standards.

2 Insurance

Consider obtaining specific agritourism insurance to protect against potential liabilities. Consult with your agent to ensure adequate coverage.

3 Visitor Safety

- Regularly inspect & maintain your facilities and equipment
- Rope off hot surfaces (evaporator)
- Eliminate slip hazards
- Secure off limits areas
- Utilize clear signage

4 Finding You

Sugarhouses are often located in remote areas with no cell service, confusing directions, or limited GPS signals. Consider clear signage and detailed maps.

Consider stone and/or mulch for your parking and walking areas for accessibility by all. This time of year, we have all sorts of weather and mud and ice are situations to address for the safety of all.



5 Marketing/Promotion

Develop a robust marketing strategy to attract visitors. Utilize online platforms, social media, and local partnerships to promote your agritourism offerings.

Don't forget to join the NYS Maple Producers Association. Partner with local AirBnBs to offer maple syrup options.

Consider non traditional opportunities, such as hosting weddings, reunions or other events with an agricultural flair.

6 Consumer Demand

What type of label are you using? What type of bottle are you using? Remember you want to showcase your amazing maple syrup!

- 77% are interested in foods that have a variety of uses, SO showcase the many ways to use maple
 - Maple Cheesecake Dip, Maple Sugar Cookies, Maple Fudge, Maple Popcorn, Maple Sugar...the possibilities are endless!
- Maple isn't just for the Spring! Smaller bottles make great wedding favors or buy seasonal molds to make Halloween or Easter Candy!

7 Legislator Engagement

Maple Weekend is a great way to engage with your local legislators and involve them in activities that showcase the maple industry.

Invite them to "tap a tree" or "plant a tree".

Stay connected and continue learning with the **Agritourism Monthly Webinar Series**



Nutrient Management Internship Opportunity

<https://nycwatershed.org/about-us/career-opportunities/>

The Watershed Agricultural Council is hiring 6 summer Nutrient Management Interns to support the Watershed Agricultural Program. Positions include soil sampling and a technical intern assisting with BMP installation, inspections, and Whole Farm Plan monitoring.

These are 10-week, 40-hour/week positions at \$17.82/hour, with mileage reimbursement. A reliable vehicle, valid NYS driver's license, and insurance are required.

Applications will be reviewed beginning March 11, 2026.





Join us for **FARMERS' NIGHT OUT**
April 25th 6-10 pm
at the Delhi Legion (41 Page Ave)

Let's share an evening of food, fellowship & fun!

- Dinner & drinks provided, courtesy of Delaware County Farm Bureau
 - o Pulled Pork, Lasagna & Salads
 - *Cash bar available*
 - *Corn Hole boards outside if weather permits (inside if not!)*
- Bring your favorite **snack** or **dessert** and a card or board **game** to share

Reservations appreciated but not required.
Call or text Barb at 607-287-1141

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FIRST CLASS MAIL