

## Nita's Notes

Anita Deming, CCE of Essex County

Hello, I am happy to be writing for the Northern NY Regional Dairy News that Emily Myers has developed. We are excited to have a commercial agricultural newsletter again. Amy Ivy and I are trading one day per week in Clinton and Essex Counties. I will be doing Farm Business Management programs in Clinton County and Amy will be doing Horticultural programs in Essex County.

### *Dairy Farm Business Summaries*

This is your last month to get your own Dairy Farm Business Summary. You can have a one-on-one consultation where we sit at your kitchen table and figure out how to take your cash accounts, changes in inventory and changes in loan accounts to create an accrual profit statement. This allows you to compare your farm's profitability to others in the summary on an apples-to-apples basis. We adjust for increases or decreases in: inventories such as cow numbers, feed in storage, and equipment values; loans and accounts payable; and prepaid expenses. This allows us to use only the assets expended during the fiscal year to determine profitability.

Cash Flow is the best accounting system to use for paying your taxes, but Accrual accounting is the best system to use for comparing your farm from year-to-year and to other

farms around the region. This will give you good numbers to use in making important farm decisions. The Dairy Farm Business summary will also help you identify "opportunity areas" (I used to call these "problems" but now I am more politically correct). These are places where you can improve your bottom line. We do this by comparing to your last year's data and to other farms of similar size and production to see where the "bucket is leaking" or where you might be able to improve efficiency.

The DFBS is sort of an annual report card. I am sure that 2009 was not a year we want to report on to others, but maybe we need to make some important decisions on future plans. The DFBS gives us a good summary from which to start.

This is also an opportunity to have a third party help you put your numbers together for your banker and for any possible loans that you may be considering. Finally, these numbers are used to make State and Federal Dairy policy. It provides detailed information on the health of the industry. We need everyone to participate. This is not only for farms that want to brag about their

profit. It is also farms that are struggling and want others to know that the industry as a whole needs help. Contact Anita Deming to make an appointment: 962-4810 ext 409

### *Insurance*

We have held several classes on the new agricultural insurance programs throughout Clinton and Essex Counties. As you know, you now must have a minimal level of basic insurance in order to participate in any future Federal disaster payment programs. There are several new products that are being offered to make it easier for organic and value added people. These require 5 years of schedule F information and help insure against income losses instead of just yield losses.

Please remember if you will need to file a claim, you must notify the insurance carrier 2 weeks BEFORE you harvest. This is critical. Be sure to get out and look at your fields early and often. Also, if you are denied a claim, you can appeal that decision. A letter from your

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*(Continued from page 1)*

CCE agent, the FSA director, and a neighbor that attest to the local weather issue will usually reverse that decision. Be sure to protect your farm from disaster with insurance and by implementing best management practices.

**Nitrogen**

In most animal agriculture we have plenty of phosphorus and potassium from our manure. These nutrients tend to stay in place on a field and we worry more about build up and possible pollution run-off from them. A simple soil test will let us know much is available for our crop. However, managing nitrogen is another story.

Nitrogen is the most hyperactive nutrient that is needed on a farm. It will go off in the atmosphere as ammonia (NH<sub>3</sub>), nitrous oxide (N<sub>2</sub>O) or nitric oxide (NO) to become molecular nitrogen. It will bind to organic matter usually as a protein. It will wash away in the rain or ground water as ammonium. It will bind onto soil particles and hold on for a

while. Our goal is to get into our plants to grow into a healthy crop using the nitrogen that is available when it is growing. When forms of fertilizer are put on early in the spring, we run a chance of losing it to non-productive states.

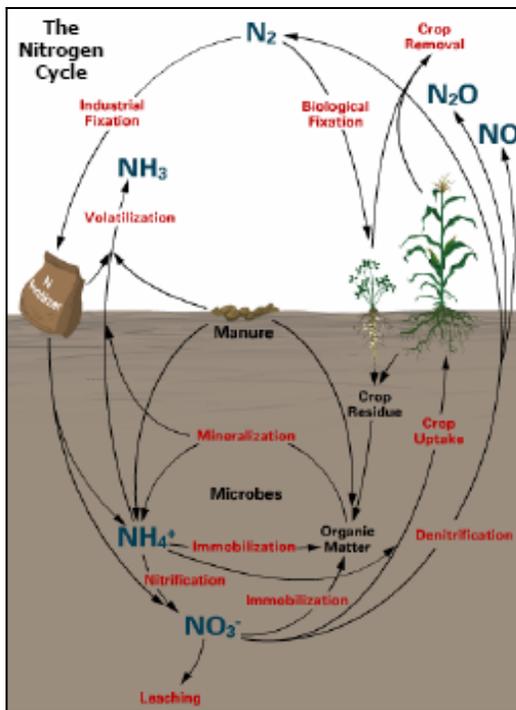
Plants absorb nitrogen as ammonium whether it is applied in organic forms such as manure or in chemical forms such as urea. We need to capture that volatile form as much as possible. Therefore, most farmers are using a side-dress form of nitrogen when the corn is up and the weather is warmer for a maximum crop uptake. Organic

farmers try to bind up as much nitrogen in organic matter as they can so that soil bacteria will release the nitrogen as they decompose it over the summer.

The amount of nitrogen in the soil profile and available to the plant will vary over the summer. Rain and cool temperatures will severely impact

the availability of this nitrogen. Rain will wash away the available nitrogen and cold will prevent the decomposition process to release nitrogen that is stored in the soil. Cornell, the Northeast Regional Climate Center, and the NYS Farm Viability Institute have developed a plan to incorporate weather data into decisions to side dress or not. In the past farmers have taken pre-side dress nitrogen tests and mailed them off for analysis to see if there is nitrogen available for the growing plant. This new process would have an early soil sample that measures the organic matter in the soil and then uses temperature and rainfall to predict how much of that organic might be available to the crop through the summer. Weather models have been substantially improved over the past few years and are used to predict insect and disease outbreaks.

I am coordinating a project to help Harold vanEs and his team to determine if this is a useable process off of research plots and on farms. If you are interested in learning more about this process please contact me at 962-4810 ext 409



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## **Future News/Events**

**Intervet/Shering Plough Animal Health** presents “Real World Review of the Estrous Cycle and the Application of Synchronization Programs to Benefit Your Dairy” at the Hampton Inn in Colchester, from 11-4pm on March 31st. Please pre-register with Rick Jackson (802-309-4226).

**Nitrogen Management for Corn** Wednesday, March 31 Westport CCE building upstairs and Thursday, April 1 at Miner Institute Chazy from 1-3 pm. Learn about the nitrogen cycle, effect of tillage on nitrogen availability and the nitrogen sidedress prediction model. Contact Sharon Garvey for more information or to preregister 962-4810 ext 0

**Beginning Farmer Study Group** Thursday, April 8, from 7 to 9 pm at the CCE Building in Westport The NY Farm Viability Institute, Cornell Small Farms Program, NY FarmNet, Northeast Organic Farming Association, and Heifer International are coming to Westport to solicit farmer input regarding training, service, research, and policy needs to help improve the long term success rate of beginning farms. We want input from producers (especially those with less than 10 years of experience) and from those who serve beginning farmers (lenders, grassroots non-profits, etc). Please let Sharon Garvey know if you can attend 518 - 962-4810 ext 0.

**Considerations When Buying New and Used Farm Equipment & Implements** - Friday April 9th from 6-8 pm at the 911 Services building in Malone, Saturday April 10th from 10-noon at the Cornell Cooperative Extension building on Rt. 22 in Plattsburgh, and Thursday April 15th from 6:30-9 pm at the Extension learning farm in Canton. Registration of \$15/person includes materials and light refreshments. Please register one week prior to the class date. The guest speaker for this program is JJ Schell, an Ag Educator with CCE of Oswego County. JJ has a degree in Ag Engineering as well as a strong practical knowledge of used farm equipment. To register call 483-7403 for Franklin County, 561-7450 for Clinton County or 315-379-9192 for St. Lawrence County.

**Working with the Middleman** Friday, April 16 from 10 am to 3 pm at the American Legion in Chateaugay, NY. \$5 covers lunch and materials. Craig Bilow of Sustain Brand will share his experiences managing wholesale accounts. Bilow recently opened his own chip plant in Malone and buys locally-grown potatoes. Agriculture Marketing Specialist Matt LeRoux with CCE Tompkins County will help local producers evaluate various market channels. Also on the conference agenda, Northern New York regional food distributors will identify the types of products they are looking to buy and at what price, and will discuss the importance of how the food products are grown, prepared and packaged. Pre-registration contact Bernadette Logozar at 518-483-7403 or bel7@cornell.edu .

**It is Farm Business Summary Time** Call Anita Deming for a free confidential consultation on your farm 962-4810 ext 409 or Ald6@cornell.edu. We are doing dairy farms, beef farms and sheep farms in both Clinton and Essex County this year. This program has been ongoing for 40 years. Many farmers find it very useful to have their records organized into a way that they and their banker can easily understand, plus significant benchmarks are provided on a variety of production parameters. Make your appointment before April 30

**\*Please Note** The Regional Dairy Newsletter will not be printed for the month of May due to plowing and planting.

**Contact Information:** Please call if you have questions or comments about upcoming programming.  
Emily Myers, Cell: 518-353-4949

Steven Roy  
Owner/Operator

**REDLINE DRAINAGE**

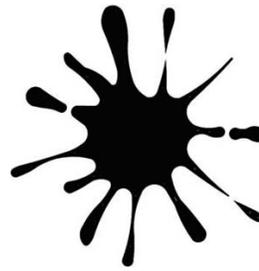
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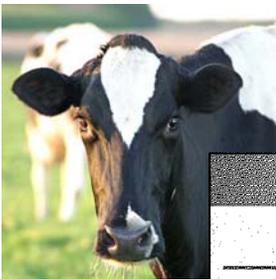
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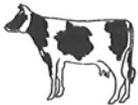


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