

PRESS RELEASE

February 28, 2005

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Helping Farms and the Environment: New NNY-Specific Phosphorus Fact Sheets Evaluate Corn Silage and Runoff Research

Researchers working with Northern New York farmers are studying ways to meet farmers' optimum crop yield and quality needs through the environmentally-friendly use of phosphorus, a nutrient that supports the growth of corn, fed as grain and silage to dairy cattle. Two new fact sheets produced by the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program and available through local Cornell Cooperative Extension offices look at the impact of using less phosphorus on corn silage crops and at measuring actual field runoff of phosphorus.

Dr. Quirine Ketterings, the Cornell Crop and Soil Sciences Assistant Professor leading phosphorus research in Northern New York, says depending upon soil tests and the levels of existing phosphorus in fields, starter fertilizer applications of the nutrient can be safely eliminated on some fields and reduced on others without any loss of corn silage yield or quality. The results of research by Ketterings and Senior Extension Associate Karl Cyzmmek are summarized in "The Impact of Starter P on Corn Silage Quality: Fact Sheet #5 in a series on Phosphorus."

In 2005, Ketterings, Cyzmmek and colleagues from Cornell University will continue working to calibrate the P Index – a tool designed to help farmers and conservation planners assess a farm's risk for runoff of excess phosphorus into nearby waters. "Phosphorus Runoff: Calibrating the P Index for NNY" is the latest in a series of six fact sheets looking at phosphorus research across Northern New York's six counties: Essex, Clinton, Franklin, Jefferson, Lewis and St. Lawrence.

Ketterings says, "Improvement of the P Index for Northern New York requires direct field measurements of phosphorus loss. As phosphorus levels increase, farmers will need to adjust their manure and fertilizer application rates to avoid soils becoming saturated, thus increasing the risk of runoff."

The two P fact sheets are found online at www.nnyagdev.org and at Cornell Cooperative Extension offices in Westport, Plattsburgh, Malone, Watertown, Lowville and Canton.

The Northern New York Agricultural Development Program is a farmer-driven research and education program specific to New York state's six northernmost counties. For more information, visit www.nnyagdev.org or contact Board Chairs Joe Giroux, Plattsburgh, 518-563-7523 or Jon Greenwood, Canton, 315-386-3231, or R. David Smith, Cornell University, 607-255-7286, or visit www.nnyagdev.org online. # # #

Note:

Farmers participating in silage studies: Jon Greenwood, John Williams, Gary Tiernan, Ken Pemberton, David Fisher; Paul, Tim and Mark Heiden; Lou Ann King. Farmers with runoff studies: Jon Greenwood, John Williams, Porterdale Farms, Inc.