



NNYADP Project Success Story

Practical Research & Results for
NY Farms, Economy & Communities
*in Clinton, Essex, Franklin,
Jefferson, Lewis & St. Lawrence Counties*

New York Soybean Growth Gets Boost

This February 15, 2012 Cornell Chronicle article also appeared as a February 19 Syracuse Newspapers CNY Farms Blog post; reprinted for educational-use only.

Warmer weather across northern New York could present an opportunity for farmers: soybeans.

The low-input crop is currently commanding a high price, making it increasingly attractive for local growers, according to Cornell crop and soil science professor William Cox.

He has conducted field trials in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station, the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program and three area farms, and he recently released his results to help growers decide which varieties to plant in 2012.

"The climate in northern New York is no longer too cool to produce soybeans, so mid-season (Group I) varieties are adapted to most of northern New York, and early Group II varieties can mature if planted early near [Ontario] Lake," Cox said. "Although the 2011 growing season was challenging, the trials produced very good soybean yields -- 56 bushels per acre average yield for Group I varieties and 53 bushels per acre average yields for Group II.

"If global warming continues over the next several decades, **northern New York may well prove to be the ideal location** rather than a marginal region for soybean production," he added.

Soybean acreage in New York has increased to almost 300,000 acres in 2011 from about 40,000 acres in 1990, with big growth in the Finger Lakes region and western New York, as well as northern New York, where **nearly 9,000 acres are dedicated to the crop.**

Areas even farther north have adapted well to the crop, with 659,000 acres grown in Quebec and more than 100,000 acres of soybeans grown in the province of Ontario in 2010, Cox said.

He added that the high price of soybean meal has more dairy farmers looking to grow their own soybeans and process them in an on-farm or local custom roaster.

"Soybeans are a low-input crop -- you plant, spray once or twice and harvest. This makes soybeans an attractive crop from a labor management perspective, especially on smaller dairy operations," Cox concluded.



Soybean pest scouting workshop at Forrester Farms in Northern NY.

Photo: Kara Lynn Dunn

Learn more about the Northern New York Agricultural Development Program and its' research, outreach and technical assistance projects online at www.nnyagdev.org



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Northern New York has just begun reaping its potential as a major soybean-producing region

Farmers cash in by selling soybeans bound for China

This November 8, 2012 Watertown Daily Times article by Ted Booker is excerpted here for educational-use only.

An increasing number of farmers in Jefferson County are cashing in by selling truckloads of soybeans to China.

The number of 100-ton rail cars loaded with soybeans to be exported at Rudd's Town and Country Store in Watertown is slated to triple compared with last year, store owner Jeffrey M. Rudd said. The operation is managed at a loading dock behind the store at 19748 Route 232, which is linked to the CSX Transportation rail line.

Workers at the store filled five rail cars full of soybeans Tuesday, which were taken to Syracuse during the evening. The beans then go to Newark, where they are shipped overseas to China.

"Last year, we shipped 14 loads, and we're already finishing our 25th load today," Mr. Rudd said.

"We might be up to 45 loads by the end of December."

Mr. Rudd, who launched the operation three years ago, said that about 15 of the county's 30 soybean growers are participating this year, five more than last year.



Photo: Brian P. Whattam

Andrew and Dan Reed check a beautiful crop of soybeans at Reed Haven Farms in Adams Center in NNY.

Northern NY's Potential for Harvesting the Benefits of Soybeans

— Dr. William J. Cox, Cornell University, 2011 NNYADP Soybean Trials Report

The probability of increased soybean acreage in NNY is great for the following reasons:

- First, it is no longer too cool to produce soybeans in NNY because of development of high yielding Group I soybean varieties and the warmer summers. As global warming continues over the next several decades, **NNY may prove to be the ideal** rather than a marginal region for soybean production.
- Second, the high price for soybean meal has more dairy farmers in NY considering either planting the crop themselves while putting in an on-farm soybean roaster or transporting their own soybean crop to a local roaster. Also, **the current high price of the crop makes it an ideal candidate as a cash crop**, if liquidity is an issue for some dairy farmers. Soybean processing or handling facilities are now on the St. Lawrence River so **transportation of the crop to these facilities would be relatively easy**.
- Third, soybeans do not suffer the same yield penalty that corn does with delayed planting. Soybeans can be planted through the first week of June with minimal yield penalty. Many soils in NNY do not dry out until early June and soybeans could be planted at this time with a limited yield penalty. **Soybeans may be better adapted to NNY** than corn as indicated by the vast acreage of soybeans in Canadian Provinces directly north of NNY and the limited yield penalty for planting soybeans in June on slow-draining soils.

Soybean acreage has increased in the Finger Lakes and Western NY regions because growers have substituted soybeans for dry beans, snap beans, oats, and other miscellaneous crops, which has proved to be a major boon to these producers over the last 5 years.

Is it time for NNY farmers to reap the same benefits?