

Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County

FARM FLASH



SEPTEMBER 2024
Livestock Issue

The Ag Team



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For Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County Federal Reporting please consider taking this anonymous survey please consider taking this anonymous survey via the link or by scanning the QR Code.

https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_40ffQgIRwkkRXZc



Upcoming Events

October is Beef Month!

We have a variety of events planned for Beef Month: Zoom presentations, BQA training, farm tours, beef marketing discussions and more. Mark your calendars, tell a friend and make your reservations today. Making reservations for programming allows us to contact you in the event of changes or cancellations.

Thursday October 3, 7:00pm

Beef Health and Nutrition Discussion with Tara Felix, Penn. State Beef Specialist. Zoom presentation. Contact Marylynn at mrm7@cornell.edu to receive Zoom link registration.

For Zoom link register here: <https://tinyurl.com/ydbeyacw>.

Saturday October 5, 10:00am

Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Training/Recertification. Join us at Bardwell Farms 10273 Black Hollow Rd. Remsen for a hands-on training in best management practices for beef producers. REGISTRATION REQUIRED. Please email Marylynn at mrm7@cornell.edu by Friday October 4, 2024

Wednesday, October 16 and Thursday, October 17, 6:00-9:00 PM via Zoom

Farm Disaster Preparation Online Certificate Training. You must attend both sessions to receive the certificate. Space is limited, and pre-registration is requested by October 11. There is a \$35 fee per farm for this program. For more information about the training contact Maryellen Baldwin at 315.736.3394 ext. 117 or email mfw73@cornell.edu. To pre-register: https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/FarmDisPrepCertTrn2024_202

Friday October 18, 7:00pm

Prepping for Winter Hay Feeding and Storage, guest speaker Rich Taber, CCE Chenango County and fellow beef producer. REGISTRATION REQUIRED; email Marylynn at

mrm7@cornell.edu

Saturday October 19, 12:00-3:00pm

Planning for Facility Changes and/or Remodeling Discussion and Tour

All in Good Time Farm (Marylynn's continued work in progress cow/calf, finishing gig) located at 9660 Loughlin Rd. RSVP to Marylynn at mrm7@cornell.edu. Thinking of adding on or improving your beef facilities? Plan to attend to gain insight into the various options of designing feed areas, handling equipment, and housing options.

Monday October 21, 6:30pm

Meat Processing and Marketing Workshop with Matt LeRoux, Extension Associate at Cornell's Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management

The workshops will address a variety of topics, including:

- Evaluating Livestock for Ideal Harvest Timing
- Livestock Handling & Delivery for Meat Quality
- How to Work with your Processor & Navigate Difficult Situations
- Carcass Math Break-Down & Pricing
- How Much Value does Value-added Add?
- Creating Consumer and Processor-friendly Bulk Meat Sales
- An introduction to MeatSuite.com, the Cornell Meat Price Calculator, and the forthcoming Meat Processor Directory.

Cost to attend is \$10 and will include a meal. Details provided at time of registration. To register please email Marylynn at mrm7@cornell.edu

Record silking/tasseling dates for corn fields
Joe Lawrence

Tracking Growing Degree Days (GDD's) is an effective way to monitor the progress of a corn crop and in recent years a number of online tools to track GDD's were developed. For the Northeast, the [Climate Smart Farming GDD tool](#) from Cornell is a great option. Dr. Kitty O'Neil, Regional Field Crops and Soils Specialist, prepared an [instructional video](#) to use the tool. While this tool was designed to estimate GDD accumulation from planting, you can simply enter in silking/tasseling date in the planting date box to track accumulation from that date.

One approach to predict corn maturity with GDD's is to monitor GDD's from planting to harvest, some seed brands provide estimates of GDD's needed for different hybrids. For corn, the 86/50 method is used to calculate GDD's. This references a base temperature of 50°F and a maximum of 86°F.

A few considerations to keep in mind:

- The numbers provided for a hybrid are often from planting to physiological maturity (black layer) which is past the silage stage. A rough rule of thumb is to subtract 150 GDD's from this number to estimate the number needed for silage harvest.
- Studies have shown a fair amount of variation in the GDD's required from planting to silking, which could be exacerbated by the variable weather conditions experienced so far in 2022.

Research in NY by Dr. Bill Cox assessed the number of GDD's required from silking to silage harvest timing in a [multi-year study](#). While there is still some variability in GDD requirements from silking to silage harvest timing, this method offers better results than using full season numbers as it takes out the early season variability of GDD's needed from planting to silking. The average GDD's reported in the study are shown in Table 1.

| Hybrid Relative Maturity | GDD's (86/50) |
|--------------------------|---|
| 101-110 | 800 |
| 96-100 | 750 |
| <96 | 750 or slight less <i>(extrapolated)</i> |

TABLE 1: Approximate Growing Degree Days needed from silking to silage harvest

This study used 32 percent whole plant dry matter (DM) as the target for silage harvest; however, a better target is 35 percent whole plant DM. Therefore, the GDD targets reported in the study offers a sort of early warning for harvest. Once corn begins the dry down process an average rate of dry down is 0.5 percent per day (with a range of zero to one percent per day) indicating that the crop may reach 35 percent DM approximately six days after reaching these GDD targets for 32 percent DM.

When a field reaches these GDD targets, it is a good time sample fields and dry down samples for whole plant DM to further refine harvest timing.

Clarifications Related to FARM Program Daily Exercise Standards
BY ML Collins

Over the course of recent months I have fielded various questions from producers that focused on perceived changes to the FARM Program, pertaining to certain animal care standards. The specific question was whether or not dairy calves could remain tethered in the facility they are housed in. Another question was do I have to provide daily outside exercise for my lactating animals? I wanted to confirm with the National FARM program to better understand if these changes are now incorporated into version 5.0 so I emailed Executive Director, Emily Yeiser Stepp, for guidance. Below is her response. Please note, it is possible that in addition to the FARM Program standards in place, certain dairy processors, co-ops or dairy customers may be implementing or requiring additional standards to be met.

Within the FARM Program Version 5 standards, the specifications around the daily exercise standard that would apply to these questions are below: (Question posed to Emily: Can calves be tethered?, and Do I need to provide outside exercise area for lactating herd?)

- For pre-weaned calves, exercise includes the ability to easily turn around, which means they can physically turn around (360 degree turn in both directions) without touching the sides of their enclosure.
- Exercise, or the ability for all other age classes of animals to freely locomote, must be offered daily in order for this standard to be met.
- If the facility utilizes an outdoor area, weather conditions may impact daily access to exercise. This is acceptable, so long as daily opportunity for movement is offered except for when weather conditions are poor.
- Facilities that only allow animals to have exercise for certain months of the year do not meet this standard (i.e., not offered daily).
- If animals are not provided with exercise at certain times or days, the answer is still No.

Therefore, you are correct--FARM would still permit calves to be tethered so long as they can turn around 360 degrees without touching the sides of their enclosure and we do not require that daily exercise has to be outside re: your question about lactating animals.

Livestock Resource Website from CCE

If you are looking for resources for producing and marketing livestock, visit the Cornell Cooperative Extension's Livestock Program Work Team website <https://www.ccelivestock.com>

Preserving the Harvest: Safety Reminders for Food Preservation

With peak harvest season upon us for many fruits and veggies, many growers and local produce buyers are beginning to think about (if you haven't already started!) preserving the delicious delicacies of summertime for use over the looming winter months. Whether you pickle, can, ferment, freeze-dry, dehydrate, or stock up the freezer, food safety should take center stage as you preserve the harvest. Here's a few considerations to make sure you, your family, and friends you grace with jars, jerky, and jams stay healthy and safe from food borne illnesses:

Maintain cleanliness and hygiene

Make sure your workspace and utensils (including your hands) are thoroughly clean. As you process foods, take time to sanitize and clean your area often, especially if you are preserving a variety of foods at the same time.

Use high-quality ingredients

Select fresh, high-quality ingredients. If any of the fruits, vegetables, or meats you are using show signs of spoilage – don't use these ingredients. Now, when I start to notice blueberries on their last leg of life in my refrigerator, I'm of course going to make a quick jam or sauce to use immediately. But if you are preserving for longer term, try to use the best ingredients for optimal taste, nutrition, and storage.

Follow tested recipes

Use tested recipes from reliable sources, such as the National Center for Home Food Preservation (NCHFP) <https://nchfp.uga.edu/>, Ball Blue Book (can be found at Ace or True Value), or other reputable sources.

Use safe methods

High-acid foods (mostly fruits) can be canned in boiling water, low-acid foods (typically veggies & meats) need to be pressure canned. If you're freezing, make sure you use appropriate storage methods like freezer-safe bags or rigid plastic containers that won't crack or break in the freezer.

Thawing

Thaw in the refrigerator, cold water, or even (after carefully reading manufacturer's instructions) the microwave. Use immediately.

Consider your acidity and pH levels when Canning

Familiarize yourself with food acidity, there are some great charts and resources from the NCHFP. You can also purchase a pH meter for enhanced accuracy. Remember, you can acidify foods with the addition of citric acid (including lemon juice) or vinegar.

Safe storage and labeling & spoiled foods

Preserved foods should be stored in a cool, dark, dry place to maintain quality and avoid spoilage. Always check preserved foods prior to consumption for signs of spoilage like bulging lids, odd odors, seepage, weird colors, mold, or unusual textures. Label with the date so you can keep track of preserved items.

And most importantly, enjoy!

STOCKMANSHIP STEWARDSHIP

2024

October 25 - 26th
Hamburg, NY

Join us for an outstanding two day event sponsored by Neogen!

- Hear from world renowned stockmanship clinicians and other industry experts.
- Session highlights include chute-side trainings, herd health planning, cattle handling, and a chance to get BQA certified!
- Full registration includes all events and meals, student pricing and one-day registration options available!

- FRIDAY, OCTOBER 25TH**
- Breakout sessions covering biosecurity, nutrition, and industry hot topics, including an update from Certified Angus Beef
 - Live cattle handling demonstrations

- SATURDAY, OCTOBER 26TH**
- BQA Certification and industry updates
 - Classroom demonstrations

REGISTER TODAY!



stockmanshipandstewardship.org



Event Recap: Key Insights on Manure Management and Gas Safety
Maryellen Baldwin

We recently hosted an on-farm manure management and gas safety seminar for our local agricultural community and first responders, highlighting our commitment to providing farm safety education. New York Center of Agriculture Medicine and Health (NYCAMH) educators Jim Carrabba and Erik Merrell provided critical insights into the dangers of manure gas, confined spaces, and essential safety protocols, offering invaluable knowledge for both agricultural professionals and first responders.

Guest presenter Zach Newton from Newton Ag Services shared his expertise on manure transport risks and demonstrated effective techniques for unplugging a manure tank using basic tools—such as a hammer and a garden hoe—in under five minutes. Newton further emphasized the importance of using a gas meter to detect dangerous gases, which enhances safety during manure management and transport. With corn silage harvest on the horizon, he stressed the critical role of equipment maintenance and the use of safety equipment, such as a body lock, when working on dump boxes. Newton’s advice underscored the importance of proactive maintenance and proper safety measures to prevent accidents and protect those involved in the harvest process.

In conclusion, the seminar successfully deepened our understanding of manure management and gas safety through the valuable contributions of NYCAMH educators and Newton. Their insights and practical demonstrations have enriched our knowledge base. We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who made this event successful: NYCAMH for their expert speakers, Zach Newton for his lifesaving measures in manure transport, Crop Growers, Daniele Harris for providing lunch, and the Collins Family—John, Sam, and the boys—for generously hosting us.

We look forward to future FarmSafe Training and continued progress in building connections between our local agriculture community and area first responders.



Farm Disaster Preparation Online Certificate Training

Contact: Lynn Bliven

The Farm Disaster Preparation program will help farm owners plan for and manage possible disasters. This program focuses on practical pre-disaster education and preparedness regarding farm equipment safety on the road, fire or structure collapse, storm and wind damage, criminal activity, farm chemical risks, and biosecurity. Farms that complete the training will receive a certificate to provide to their insurer and may be eligible for a credit or discount toward the farm's annual insurance premium. The value of the credit or discount will vary according to individual policies and policyholder circumstances but can be up to a 10 percent discount.

The Farm Disaster Preparation Certificate is directed to all sizes of farms and all types of products. Dairy and livestock farms are especially encouraged to participate in the program due to their additional concerns regarding animal agriculture. The person representing a farm should be the insurance policyholder; other key farm personnel are welcome.

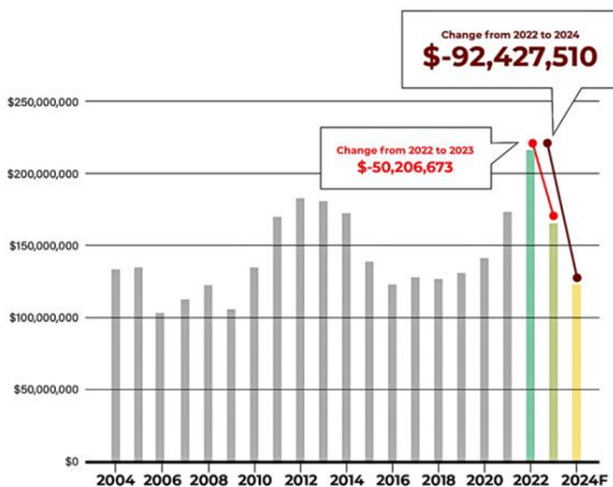
The certificate program will be held on Wednesday, October 16, and Thursday, October 17, 2024, from 6:00-9:00 PM via Zoom. You must attend both sessions to receive the certificate. Space is limited, and pre-registration is requested by October 11. There is a \$35 fee per farm for this program. For more information about the training contact Lynn Bliven at 585-268-7644 ext. 18 or email lao3@cornell.edu. To pre-register: https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/FarmDisPrepCertTrn2024_202.

Course Instruction Team: Lynn Bliven, Ag & Natural Resources Issue Leader CCE Allegany County; Stephen Hadcock, Ag. Entrepreneurship and Market Development Team Leader, CCE Capital Area Agriculture and Horticulture Program; Maryellen Baldwin, Farm Business Manager, CCE Oneida County; and Jim Carrabba, Agricultural Safety Specialist New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH).

The Farm Disaster Preparation Certificate Training is one of many programs offered by Cornell Cooperative Extension. The association is part of the national cooperative extension system, an educational partnership between County, State, and Federal governments. As New York's land grant university, Cornell administers the system in this state. For more information, call 525-268-7644 or visit our website at www.cce.cornell.edu/allegany. Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans and Individuals with Disabilities, and provides equal program and employment opportunities.

Please contact the Cornell Cooperative Extension Allegany County office for special needs. If you have a disability and are having trouble accessing information or need materials in an alternate format, call 585-268-7644 for assistance.

Net Cash Farm Income (Real 2024 Dollars)



| Year | Net Cash Farm Income |
|-------|----------------------|
| 2024F | \$121,702,149 |
| 2023F | \$163,922,986 |
| 2022 | \$214,129,659 |
| 2021 | \$171,393,167 |
| 2020 | \$139,747,114 |
| 2019 | \$129,540,920 |
| 2018 | \$125,556,120 |
| 2017 | \$126,503,234 |
| 2016 | \$121,557,383 |
| 2015 | \$137,121,366 |
| 2014 | \$170,078,239 |
| 2013 | \$179,343,817 |
| 2012 | \$181,295,791 |
| 2011 | \$168,210,929 |
| 2010 | \$134,221,129 |
| 2009 | \$104,892,589 |
| 2008 | \$120,469,873 |
| 2007 | \$111,947,452 |
| 2006 | \$101,687,475 |
| 2005 | \$132,750,555 |
| 2004 | \$132,178,016 |

(Real 2024 Dollars)

As the agricultural sector faces unprecedented challenges in 2023 and 2024, farmers across the United States are bracing for what could potentially be the toughest financial years in recent memory. According to the latest forecasts from the USDA, net farm income is expected to plummet by 25.1% from 2023, following a significant 16% decline the previous year. If these projections hold, it will mark the largest two-year decline in net farm income recorded.

Understanding the Challenges

The downturn in net farm income is primarily attributed to a combination of factors. Constantly low commodity prices, coupled with rising input costs, have severely squeezed profit margins for farmers nationwide. Many farmers find themselves in a precarious position, holding onto their crops in storage in hopes of better market conditions, further exacerbating their financial stress.

Strategies for Farm Resilience

Amid these challenging times, there are proactive steps that farmers can take to mitigate financial risks and enhance their resilience:

1. Optimize Operational Efficiency: Review and streamline operational practices to reduce costs without compromising productivity. This could include optimizing irrigation practices, adopting precision agriculture technologies, and evaluating crop rotation strategies to maximize yield potential.

2. Diversify Income Sources: Explore diversifying income streams beyond traditional crop production. This could involve integrating livestock farming, agritourism, or value-added products that cater to niche markets. Diversification can help stabilize income during periods of market volatility.

3. Risk Management: Implement robust risk management strategies, including crop insurance, futures contracts, and forward pricing agreements. These tools can provide a buffer against market fluctuations and protect against downside risks in commodity prices.

4. Financial Planning and Budgeting: Develop detailed financial plans and budgets to closely monitor cash flow and expenses. Seek opportunities to reduce unnecessary expenditures while maintaining essential investments in farm infrastructure and technology.

5. Market Intelligence and Timing: Stay informed about market trends and pricing forecasts. Utilize market intelligence tools and consult with agricultural economists to make informed decisions on when to sell crops and lock in prices.

6. Adaptability and Innovation: Embrace innovation and adapt to evolving market conditions. Explore new technologies, sustainable practices, and efficiency improvements that can enhance productivity and profitability over the long term.

Looking Ahead

While the outlook for the remainder of 2024 and 2025 poses significant challenges for farmers, there are opportunities for resilience and growth by adopting proactive strategies and leveraging available resources. By prioritizing operational efficiency, diversifying income streams, implementing robust risk management practices, and staying informed about market dynamics, farmers can navigate through these turbulent times and position themselves for long-term success in the agricultural industry.

Lastly, while the current economic climate presents challenges, it also underscores the resilience and adaptability of the agricultural community. By taking proactive measures and leveraging available resources, farmers can mitigate risks, optimize profitability, and build a sustainable future for their operations.

SAVE THE DATE

Oneida County Crop Congress will be Tuesday January 7, 2024, at White's Farm Supply in Waterville. Registration and event details will be provided in future issues of farm flash & the bi-monthly Ag team email updates.

To get on the email list, email Michaela at

mlk258@cornell.edu

Dealing with Lice on our Ruminant Species

By Amy Barkley, Livestock & Beginning Farm Specialist, Cornell Cooperative Extension

There are a few parasites that producers will interact with over the course of keeping stock. One of those is the humble louse. Lice are small, about the size of a pinhead, and can be hard to spot unless either a.) you're looking for them or b.) they're in such large numbers that they are causing discomfort to the animal. There are two types of lice: those which consume dead skin (chewing lice) and those which consume blood (sucking lice) Animals with heavy infestations may not gain well, lose weight, drop in milk production, present with anemia, and/or have areas of hair rubbed off where they are trying to scratch the always present itch. Of course, chewing lice don't cause anemia because they don't suck blood, but they do result in discomfort. The economic threshold for treatment is achieved once 10 lice or more per square inch are counted on any one animal in the herd or flock.

Once an infestation is identified, the first bit of good news is that it's relatively easy to treat, but takes dedication on behalf of the stockowner. The second bit of good news is that lice are obligate parasites. This means that they can't live without their hosts. If your favorite cow leaves some lice when she scratches against a pen support, those lice will die in the environment unless they find another cow to call home.

While producers get the relief of not needing to treat the barn, they do need to aggressively treat all the animals of the affected species on the farm. This is because lice easily transfer from animal to animal, so if one animal is infested, consider that they all have lice to varying degrees.

When treating, we need to think of the louse's biology. These critters take about 1-2 weeks to hatch from eggs. That means that one treatment of insecticide, depending on the label's treatment timelines, may not be enough if that insecticide is only active for a week. For this reason, it's important to treat multiple times, in strict accordance with the label's scheme for lice. Remember that chewing and sucking lice may need different treatment strategies; chewing lice are not susceptible to systemic insecticides because they don't consume treated blood!

Once the lice are controlled, you'll need to check 10-30 individuals in the herd for signs of nits (eggs attached to the hair) and/or adult lice every 2-4 weeks. If either of these are seen at a rate of 10 nits or lice per inch, you'll need to repeat the whole herd treatment.

There is a chance they'll come back once eradicated, but vigilance and repeated treatments will keep them controlled. It's also a good idea to isolate and treat any cattle you buy in (if you do) for that 4-6 week period before introducing them to the herd as a precaution.

Looking for more information? Here are some resources used to help put this article together:

Cattle Lice - Cornell Cooperative Extension: <http://ccetompkins.org/resources/cattle-lice>

Eradication of Lice in Cattle: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2202344/>

Managing the Impact of Cattle Lice During the Winter Months - Kansas State Extension: <https://enewsletters.k-state.edu/beeftips/2018/01/01/managing-the-impact-of-cattle-lice-during-the-winter-months/>

Lice on Beef and Dairy Cattle - University of Kentucky: <https://entomology.ca.uky.edu/ef512>

Additional Comments on Lice Control Approaches:
BY ML COLLINS

Always be sure to consult with your herd veterinarian when choosing lice control products. It is helpful to know what type of louse you are dealing with, sucking or chewing. Products come in various forms: Non-systemic that work by contact (pour on or rubs) OR systemic products that work to reduce lice numbers by being absorbed internally by the animal thru the skin (pour on) or systemic injectable products. Systemic endectocides are noted for killing both chewing and biting lice, making it an easy choice. However, read all product labels carefully. Some products are rain safe, others are not. Some products will have meat and milk withholds, others will not. Timing of lice control is important as well. Lice are more prevalent in colder temperatures. We tend to have warmer falls. While treating the herd at weaning will reduce the number of lice present, it's likely that you will need to keep observing your animals once the cold weather comes to stay. Depending on the product you chose, a second application might be warranted. Always read the product labels completely and understand the application method.

Contact Information for Local Agencies that support Agriculture

NYS DEC 315-793-2554,
Oneida Co Soil & Water 315-736-3334
USDA Farm Services 315-736-3316
Oneida County Farm Bureau
1-800-342-4143
Farm Net 1-800-547-3276

Which Hay Is The Right Choice For My Horse?

Lynn Bliven, CCE Allegany County Ag & Natural Resources Issue Leader

It's that time of year when livestock owners are planning to transition from pasture to stored feeds for the winter. I often receive questions about which is the right grain supplement for horses or ponies, but rarely asked about what the correct forage choice is. To address the question of supplementation we should begin with understanding what is available in the hay we plan to feed as that will make up the majority if not meeting the total nutritional needs of our equine companions.

If you are producing your own hay you may be faced with forage that is not optimal, as making hay is both an art and a science; and we can't control the weather. If purchasing hay, you want to get the best value for your dollar; buying solely based on price per bale is not necessarily the cheapest route economically or for the health of your horse. In either case, a forage analysis will allow you to match the nutrients available to the needs of your horses.

Not all animals will need top quality forage as long as it is free of dust and mold. A hay analysis is the place to start when balancing the ration as it helps you know the specific amount of various nutrients that are found in the hay you are feeding. This is particularly important if your horse has a nutrition-based digestive problem but also can be more cost effective.

If you're new to understanding how to sample your forage or read the report, please check out our past webinars on the topic: [Hay Analysis for Horses with Karen Jonhson, Senior Field Representative, Cargill](#) discusses taking samples, reading reports, and matching your horse's needs. [Hold Your Horses: Forage Analysis with Sara Fessenden, Dairy One and Lynn Bliven, CCE Allegany County](#) explains the [Equi-Analytical](#) testing process and covers factors that impact evaluation of hay quality.

For assistance with sampling or access to sampling equipment, please contact your local [Cornell Cooperative Extension](#) office or [Regional Team](#).

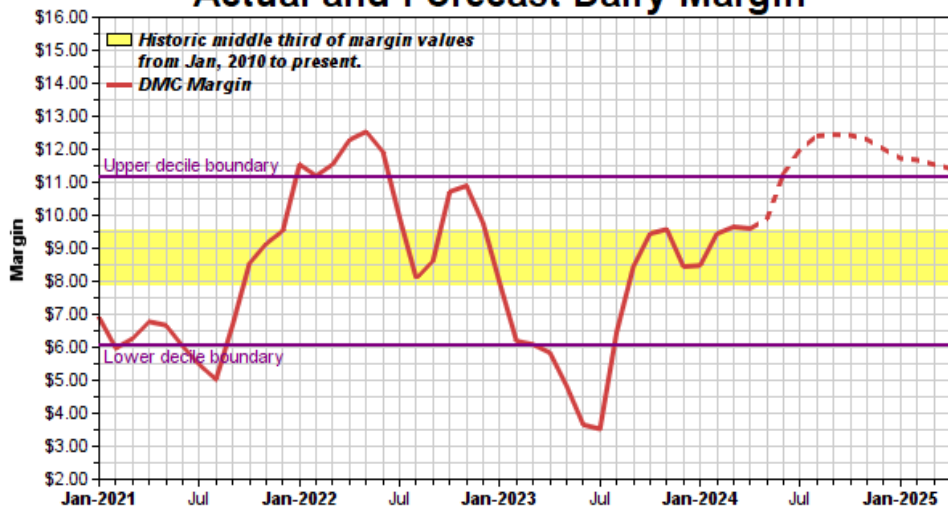
Oneida County horse owners are welcome to contact Dairy/Livestock Educator Marylynn Collins at 315.736.3394 ext. 132

Bi-Weekly Ag Email

Sometimes information about upcoming events come in too late to make it into Farm Flash. In order to counteract missing out on information we created a bi-weekly Ag Email for updates exclusively on upcoming events, important deadlines and useful resources!

Contact Audra Benincasa at (315) 736-3394 ext. 266 or ajb489@cornell.edu to be added to the Email Update List.

Actual and Forecast Dairy Margin



Updated 6/14/24

Dairy Farm Business Summary (DFBS)

A free tool that provides producers with the opportunity to analyze their financial situation, set goals for the future, and make sound financial decisions when it comes to their dairy farm business. In addition to taking advantage of benchmarking your business against other dairy operations and prioritizing areas for improvement.

Program Objectives are to:

1. Assist producers in developing and maintaining more complete and accurate farm business data
2. Assist producers in improving their managerial skills through the appropriate use of farm business data and the application of modern analysis and decision making techniques
3. Identify the current costs, returns, and changes occurring on dairy farms
4. Improve the interaction between dairy farmers, agribusiness, and education professionals in addressing current issues and problems facing dairy farms

Interested in utilizing DFBS? Contact Maryellen Baldwin at mfw73@cornell.edu or (315) 736-3394 ext. 177

Mastering the Art of Beef (or Product) Marketing: Strategies for Producers

Maryellen Baldwin

In a competitive market, standing out as a producer (beef, animal protein, value-added, etc.) requires more than just quality products. Effective marketing plays a crucial role in reaching customers, building brand loyalty, and ultimately driving sales. Whether you're producing on a small scale or are considered a larger producer, implementing savvy marketing strategies can significantly impact your bottom line. This is geared towards beef producers, however, here are some actionable ways to market your product/business effectively.

- 1. Know Your Audience:** Gone are the days of one-size-fits-all marketing. Understanding the diverse needs, preferences, and lifestyles of your target customers is essential for tailoring your marketing efforts. Dive deep into consumer insights to uncover trends, behaviors, and pain points that can inform your marketing strategy. Whether you're targeting health-conscious millennials, busy parents, or gourmet food enthusiasts, align your messaging and product offerings to resonate with their unique needs and desires.
- 2. Highlight Quality and Transparency:** Consumers are increasingly concerned about the quality and origin of their food. Use your marketing efforts to showcase the superior quality of your beef and emphasize transparency in your production practices. Share stories about your farming methods, animal welfare standards, and sustainable farming practices. Consider obtaining certifications such as New York Grown & Certified or BQA, which can enhance the perceived value of your beef products.
- 3. Leverage Digital Marketing:** In today's digital age, an online presence is non-negotiable for any business. Invest in a professional website that showcases your beef products, farming practices, and brand story. Utilize social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to engage with your audience, share enticing visuals of your beef products, and promote special offers or events. Consider partnering with food bloggers, influencers, or local chefs to amplify your reach and credibility. In addition, e-commerce platforms such as Barn2Door, or local options like Local Foods MV or Oneida County Public Market.
- 4. Offer Value-Added Products:** Diversifying your product offerings can attract a broader range of customers and increase revenue streams. Consider developing value-added beef products such as pre-marinated steaks, gourmet burgers, or ready-to-cook meal kits. Highlight the convenience, flavor, and versatility of these products in your marketing materials to appeal to busy consumers seeking convenient meal solutions.
- 5. Participate in Farmers' Markets and Events:** Farmers' markets, food festivals, and community events are excellent opportunities to connect with local consumers and showcase your beef products. Set up a booth or food truck at these events to offer samples, engage with potential customers, and distribute promotional materials. Consider hosting cooking demonstrations or educational sessions to highlight the versatility of beef and provide cooking tips to attendees.
- 6. Establish Partnerships:** Collaborating with local restaurants, grocery stores, or meal delivery services can expand your distribution channels and increase brand visibility. Partner with establishments that align with your brand values and target market. Offer exclusive deals or promotions to customers who purchase your beef products through these partnerships to incentivize sales.
- 7. Prioritize Customer Service:** Exceptional customer service can set you apart from competitors and foster customer loyalty.

Respond promptly to inquiries, address customer concerns or feedback, and strive to exceed expectations in every interaction. Consider implementing a loyalty program or offering discounts to repeat customers to incentivize repeat business and word-of-mouth referrals.

8. Embrace Your Unique Narrative: Every beef producer has a story waiting to be told. Whether it's a multigenerational family farm rooted in tradition or a modern ranch pioneering sustainable practices, embrace the unique aspects of your journey and heritage. Share anecdotes, experiences, and values that set your brand apart and resonate with your target audience. Your story is your most potent marketing asset—use it to captivate and inspire consumers.

Marketing beef effectively requires a strategic approach that resonates with your target audience, highlights the quality and value of your products, and leverages digital and offline channels to reach consumers. By implementing these strategies, beef producers can enhance their brand visibility, attract new customers, and build lasting relationships that drive business growth.

New Opportunities for Farmers and Ranchers Through USDA’s Farm Loan Programs

We are happy to announce the most significant changes to USDA’s farm loan programs since 2007. These updates from the Farm Service Agency (FSA) are set to enhance financial opportunities for farmers and ranchers, ensuring their long-term viability.

As part of a comprehensive modernization initiative, the [Enhancing Program Access and Delivery for Farm Loans rule](#) aims to revitalize our farm loan programs. These programs are vital in helping agricultural producers start, expand, and sustain their operations through various challenges.

The Enhancing Program Access and Delivery for Farm Loans rule introduces several critical changes:

1. **Low-Interest Installment Set-Aside Program:** This new program assists financially distressed borrowers by allowing them to set aside low-interest installments.
2. **Flexible Repayment Terms:** These terms offer equitable access to repayment options, increasing farmer profitability and enabling the building of working capital reserves and savings.

Reduced Loan Security Requirements: By lowering loan security requirements, borrowers can leverage their financial equity more effectively.

These changes provide borrowers with the financial freedom and flexibility needed to improve profitability and resilience. They create opportunities for saving towards long-term needs and making strategic investments.

Since 2022, the FSA team has been dedicated to streamlining business processes for both customers and employees. By automating operations, they have improved the overall customer experience, making farm loan programs more accessible, equitable, and user-friendly.

This modernization effort includes replacing outdated, paper-based processes with efficient, automated systems. They are phasing out over 20 obsolete IT systems that support Farm Loans delivery, integrating new end-to-end functions to enhance the online customer experience. This shift promises more efficient and effective loan origination and servicing.

We are excited about these changes and confident that they will create a stronger agricultural community. Stay tuned for more updates and information on how these changes can benefit you.

The Economic Benefits of Farmers Markets to Farmers

Myron Thurston

Farmers markets have long been a staple of local economies, providing a direct link between farmers and consumers. These markets are more than just a venue for selling produce; they represent a significant economic engine for farmers, fostering sustainable agricultural practices, supporting local economies, and creating a ripple effect that benefits communities at large. As the demand for locally sourced, fresh, and organic produce continues to grow, farmers markets have become increasingly important for small and mid-sized farmers looking to expand their reach, enhance profitability, and contribute to the economic vitality of rural and urban areas alike.

Direct Sales and Increased Profit Margins

One of the most immediate economic benefits that farmers markets offer to farmers is the opportunity to engage in direct sales to consumers. By eliminating intermediaries, such as wholesalers or distributors, farmers can capture a larger share of the consumer dollar. Traditional retail channels often involve a complex supply chain where multiple middlemen take a cut, reducing the profit margins for farmers. At farmers markets, however, farmers sell directly to consumers, allowing them to set their own prices and retain a greater portion of the revenue.

The ability to sell directly also provides farmers with the flexibility to adjust prices based on market conditions and consumer demand. For example, if a particular crop is in high demand, farmers can increase their prices accordingly without the need to negotiate with third parties. This flexibility can lead to higher profit margins, particularly for specialty crops or organic produce, which tend to command premium prices in farmers markets.

Moreover, the direct interaction with consumers at farmers markets allows farmers to receive immediate feedback on their products. This feedback can be invaluable in making decisions about what to plant, how to market products, and how to improve the quality of their offerings. By responding to consumer preferences, farmers can increase customer satisfaction and build a loyal customer base, further enhancing their economic stability.

Diversification of Income Streams

Farmers markets provide a platform for farmers to diversify their income streams by offering a variety of products directly to consumers. Many farmers use these markets to sell not only fresh produce but also value-added products such as jams, baked goods, pickles, and artisanal cheeses. These value-added products often have higher profit margins than raw agricultural goods because they cater to consumers seeking unique, locally-produced items that they cannot find in traditional grocery stores.

In addition to diversifying product offerings, farmers markets allow farmers to tap into niche markets, such as organic, heirloom, or sustainably grown products. These niche markets often attract consumers who are willing to pay a premium for products that align with their values, whether it be environmental sustainability, support for local economies, or the preservation of heritage varieties of fruits and vegetables.

Furthermore, farmers markets can help farmers hedge against the risks associated with fluctuations in crop yields or prices. By participating in multiple farmers markets or expanding into different geographic areas, farmers can spread their risk and reduce their dependence on a single market or product. This diversification can lead to greater financial stability and resilience in the face of economic uncertainties or adverse weather conditions.

Building Brand Identity and Customer Loyalty

Farmers markets offer a unique opportunity for farmers to build their brand identity and establish a direct relationship with their customers. In contrast to the anonymity of selling through large retailers or distributors, farmers markets provide a personal touch, where farmers can share their story, farming practices, and the origin of their products. This personal connection is crucial in building customer loyalty, as consumers increasingly value knowing where their food comes from and who is producing it.

A strong brand identity can differentiate a farmer's products from those of competitors, both within the market and in other retail channels. For example, a farmer known for high-quality, sustainably grown produce can develop a reputation that attracts repeat customers, not only at the farmers market but also in other sales avenues, such as community-supported agriculture (CSA) programs or online sales. The trust and loyalty built through farmers markets can translate into a steady stream of income and a more predictable cash flow, which is particularly important for small and mid-sized farms that may not have the financial cushion to weather market downturns.

Additionally, farmers markets often serve as a testing ground for new products. Farmers can introduce new varieties of fruits, vegetables, or value-added products and receive immediate feedback from consumers. This direct interaction allows farmers to gauge market demand and refine their offerings before scaling up production or entering new markets. The ability to test and adapt quickly can be a significant economic advantage in a competitive and ever-changing market landscape.

Strengthening Local Economies

The economic benefits of farmers markets extend beyond individual farmers to the broader local economy. Farmers markets are a key component of the local food system, keeping more money circulating within the community. When consumers purchase directly from farmers at these markets, they are supporting local businesses and contributing to the economic vitality of the region. This localized spending helps create jobs, both on the farm and in related sectors such as transportation, marketing, and food processing.

Moreover, farmers markets often act as an anchor for other local businesses. Markets attract foot traffic, which can boost sales for nearby restaurants, cafes, and retail shops. In many cases, farmers markets are held in town centers or other community spaces, revitalizing these areas and making them more attractive for other forms of economic activity. The presence of a vibrant farmers market can increase property values, encourage tourism, and foster a sense of community pride, all of which contribute to the overall economic health of the area.

Farmers markets also provide opportunities for new and beginning farmers to enter the market. The lower barriers to entry, compared to selling through traditional retail channels, make farmers markets an accessible platform for small-scale producers to start their businesses. These new farmers bring fresh ideas, diversify the local agricultural economy, and contribute to the resilience of the farming community. As they grow their businesses, they may expand into other markets, hire additional workers, and invest in their farms, further stimulating the local economy.

Supporting Sustainable Agricultural Practices

Farmers markets play a crucial role in promoting sustainable agricultural practices, which can have long-term economic benefits for farmers. By providing a market for locally grown, organic, and sustainably produced food, farmers markets encourage practices that are environmentally friendly and economically viable over the long term. Consumers at farmers markets often seek out products that are grown without synthetic pesticides, herbicides, or fertilizers, creating a market incentive for farmers to adopt sustainable practices.

Sustainable farming practices, such as crop rotation, reduced tillage, and the use of cover crops, can improve soil health, increase biodiversity, and reduce the need for costly inputs. These practices can lead to higher yields and lower production costs over time, enhancing the economic viability of the farm. Additionally, farms that adopt sustainable practices are often eligible for various certifications or participate in programs that offer financial incentives, such as organic certification or participation in conservation programs.

Furthermore, the focus on local and sustainable food systems at farmers markets can help farmers mitigate the risks associated with climate change. By building a resilient local food system, farmers can reduce their dependence on long supply chains that are vulnerable to disruptions from extreme weather events or global market fluctuations. A strong local food system also provides a more stable and predictable market for farmers, reducing the uncertainty and volatility that can come with selling to distant or international markets.

Access to Resources and Networking Opportunities

Farmers markets serve as a hub for resources and networking opportunities that can further enhance the economic prospects of farmers. Many markets are supported by organizations that provide technical assistance, marketing support, and access to grants or low-interest loans. A good example of this is Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County's management of the Oneida County Public Market. These resources can help farmers improve their production practices, invest in new equipment, or expand their operations.

Additionally, farmers markets often facilitate connections between farmers and other stakeholders in the food system, such as chefs, retailers, and food processors. These connections can lead to new business opportunities, such as wholesale contracts, collaboration on value-added products, or participation in farm-to-table initiatives. The relationships built at farmers markets can open doors to new markets and revenue streams, further boosting the economic benefits for farmers.

Moreover, farmers markets provide an opportunity for farmers to learn from each other. The exchange of knowledge and best practices among farmers can lead to innovations in farming techniques, marketing strategies, and product development. This collaborative environment fosters a sense of community among farmers and contributes to the overall resilience and sustainability of the local agricultural economy.

Conclusion

Farmers markets offer a multitude of economic benefits to farmers, from increased profit margins and diversified income streams to the strengthening of local economies and the promotion of sustainable agricultural practices. By providing a direct connection between farmers and consumers, these markets enable farmers to capture more value from their products, build strong brand identities, and create loyal customer bases. Furthermore, farmers markets play a critical role in supporting the economic vitality of rural and urban communities, creating jobs, fostering local businesses, and encouraging sustainable farming practices.

Reminder: Maybe Time to Transition Online or Seek an Alternative

QuickBooks announced that after May 31, 2024, support for its desktop versions will end according to its Service Discontinuation Policy. Found here: https://quickbooks.intuit.com/learn-support/en-us/help-article/feature-preferences/quickbooks-desktop-service-discontinuation-policy/L17cXxlie_US_en_US

1. Discontinuation Policy:

- QuickBooks Desktop products will no longer receive updates or support after the specified end-of-life dates.
- This means no more security patches, feature updates, or technical assistance from Intuit.

2. Transition to QuickBooks Online:

- Users are encouraged to move to QuickBooks Online, which offers cloud access, regular updates, and ongoing support.
- QuickBooks Online provides a range of plans to suit various business needs.

3. Data Migration:

- Data from QuickBooks Desktop can be migrated to QuickBooks Online. Intuit provides tools and guidance for this process.
- Ensure you back up your data before beginning migration to prevent any data loss.

4. Next Steps:

- Evaluate QuickBooks Online or other alternatives based on your business needs.
- Plan your transition, including data migration and available training on the new system.

Please reach out if you have any questions or are looking for additional accounting operations for your business. Making the transition to an Online software maybe daunting, and I am here to help.

-Maryellen



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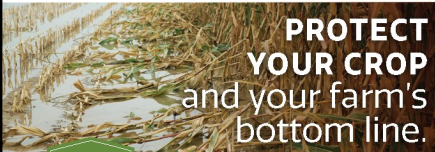
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