MeatSuite is Expanding!

The meat marketing website, MeatSuite.com, has now expanded to be across New York. MeatSuite.com is a free online directory of regional livestock farms selling meat in bulk quantities. MeatSuite is a project of Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins and Steuben Counties to promote direct, local, meat sales. Efforts are underway right now to recruit farmers to the site. We want to remind you to get your farm listed on this website as it continues to grow.

MeatSuite started in 2012 in 9 counties and is adding 16 more counties. If your county isn’t listed, you can still participate. MeatSuite is designed to increase freezer trade sales of local meat by connecting farms with consumers. Farms can create profiles featuring contact information, prices, photographs, and descriptions of products, practices, and more. Consumers visit the site to search for farms that match their buying preferences.

The directory is FREE for farms and consumers. Creating a profile is an easy way to reach new potential customers and expand your farm’s online presence. MeatSuite offers you an opportunity to explain to consumers why your farm is unique. The directory is open to all meat products raised on your farm. Take some time and look at other profiles; this will give you ideas for developing your profile. There are many terms and claims (breeds, pricing, types of feeds, etc.) to describe your farm and practices. Under the tab, Learn More, there are pages to help you, and also to help consumers. It works best to develop your profile first then enter it into the site.

Each profile will be reviewed prior to posting. Remember, sales are all on a bulk basis, such as quarters or halves. Prices include processing and must be posted. If you use more than one processor, use the higher cost in calculating your price per pound. For rabbit and poultry, list price as $/lb for the whole animal or $/animal. You must list a price for each product! “TBD” or “contact for price” is not acceptable. Products without prices will not be listed on your farm profile. Stay away from false claims; your reputation is at stake.

While we cannot guarantee that MeatSuite will generate sales for you, we encourage you to take a few minutes to join. It’s easy, fast, and free, and the more farms that join, the more consumers will see...
Save the Date:  
2016 NEDPA Conference  
March 8 – 9, 2016  
Holiday Inn, Liverpool, NY

The Northeast Dairy Producers Association (NEDPA) Conference is designed for producers and agriservice professionals to interact and relate to the latest thinking and issues in the dairy industry. The Conference features a progressive agenda and speakers that inspire the Northeast Dairy Industry. Details are posted on the 2016 NEDPA conference website.

Start Untangling the 2016 Economy at the Agricultural & Food Business Outlook Conference

The annual Dyson School Agricultural and Food Business Outlook Conference will be held on Wednesday, January 20th on the Cornell University campus in Ithaca, NY.

Looking ahead to 2016, Professor Steve Kyle will once again offer his insights on what's driving economic growth, fiscal and financial trends, and employment rates. Dr. Kyle’s popular report sets the stage for anticipating consumer purchasing power, rising interest rates, changing exchange rates and other factors that define the backdrop for agricultural and food industries. This year we are adding a new feature where Dr. Jenny Ifft will be sharing her analyses of what's happening in the state and regional agricultural economy and highlight particular trends and issues that are shaping our region.

Every year the Outlook Conference sends participants home with fresh information on prices, production and market trends, and government programs affecting the diverse fruit, vegetable, wine and grape, and dairy sectors that make up so much of New York State agriculture. Highly respected Cornell experts in these fields, including Bradley Rickard and Miguel Gomez will once again take the lead on this year’s sessions on specialty crops. And, Dyson’s Andrew Novakovic will work with University of Wisconsin dairy market analyst Mark Stephenson to see if dairy markets are ready to be revitalized in 2016.

Registration is now open for the Agricultural & Food Business Outlook Conference taking place at Cornell University on January 20, 2016.

Register for the early bird rate prior to January 4!  
Visit http://dyson.cornell.edu/outlook/economic-outlook-conference to register and for more details.

Fall Crop Topics  
By: Mike Stanyard

Soil Sampling

Fall is a great time to get some of your soil sampling done. I know soil sampling can be a daunting task, particularly if you have a large number of acres to cover. Ideally, soil sampling should be done every three years and so it is recommended that you sample one-third of your acres each year. This keeps all your acres
on a three-year cycle and you won’t want to toss your soil probe into the closest pond!

Tips for taking an accurate soil sample:

- Sample to the proper depth depending on tillage. This is usually from 6-8 inches.
- Take 15-20 core subsamples from each sampling area. Take separate samples depending on variation in soil type, topography, and cropping practices.
- Avoid taking samples from areas such as hedgerows, wet or eroded areas and near fences.
- Mix subsamples thoroughly in a clean plastic bucket.
- Dry wet samples at room temperature on cardboard or use a fan for quicker drying. Remove any stones, sticks, and roots from the sample.
- Keep samples separated and labeled with a sample name or number.
- Fill out the sample sheet completely or there will be no recommendations generated. Required information includes soil name, acres, past cropping history and future crops for three seasons, and manure history.
Have Global Milk Prices Turned the Corner?

Andy Novaković
E.V. Baker Professor of Agricultural Economics
Cornell University

The market news hitting my desk this morning is singing “dairy prices have turned the corner”.

This pronouncement is based on double digit percentage increases in dairy commodity prices on the New Zealand based Global Dairy Trade auction platform. What is especially notable are the strong increases in powder prices, which have been the biggest drag on the market for many months. Most likely this is primarily in response to Fonterra’s recent announcement about reduced expectations for production of milk in New Zealand in general and of powder production in particular.

In other words, the price jump is likely motivated more as a response to reduced supply than increased demand. It is premature to confidently conclude that happy days are just around the corner, but I think it is safe to say that the preponderance of market opinion is that the worst is over. Having said that, this is not remotely the same as saying $25 milk is just around that corner we are arguably turning.

If you have checked in on our MPP-Dairy decision tool, you have noticed that the CME-based projections of the MPP margin (ADPM officially), have floated near the $8 mark, dipping below for several weeks but fluttering up and down in conjunction with changes in expectations for the corn and soybean crops more so than milk prices.

The chart based on yesterday’s market is here: This is about the most optimistic that graph has looked in months. The probability distribution around the black line projection still suggests about a 1/3 possibility of margins below $8 in 2016 and a 1/5 probability of margins below $7. Based on these numbers we might say the market outlook is improved but it can qualitatively be thought of as being about average, maybe the high side of average, as opposed to the low side of, or slightly less than average, as we had been seeing earlier.

If you’ve had a chance to check out the new features of the tool, the so-called MPP-Advanced tool, you have discovered the graphic that illustrates our projections of the components of the ADPM. These are displayed below. Keep in mind that this representation only refers to what is the black line in the graph above. It does not contain any information about the probability distribution around each of these numbers.

What this display is suggesting is that when you put it all on a broad scale (0-$25 per cwt of milk), there isn’t that much apparent variation in price expectations over the next year. The actual values in the table are clearly not constant but the range over the marketing year for the feedstuffs is quite tight.

Also keep in mind:
1. All of the feed prices are subject to recalibration as the harvest takes off and eventually concludes.

Comments
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2. The data displayed above do NOT reflect any great "corner turning" in dairy prices just yet. Everyone will be watching to see if the stronger prices on the GDT start to translate into significantly higher price expectations on
the CME and in actual prices reported by AMS over the next couple of months.

Personally, I can’t think of any compelling reasons to expect a great rise in returns to dairy farmers but also no great national disaster either. I suspect the story on returns to dairy will be more personal and regional, hinging quite a bit on the quantity and quality of hay, corn silage, and other feeds harvested around the US.

In other words, if your hay quality was good and your corn silage yields were average or better, you will probably be just fine in 2016. Clearly this is not to say that we are out of the woods just yet as some parts of the country are still very much struggling to figure out what to do with the abundance of milk relative to profitable uses for it. The rise in GDT prices gives hope to getting some help on the demand side of the market.

USDA Issues Safety-Net Payments Corn Producers Have Seen a 30% Drop In Price Below Historic Benchmark

SYRACUSE, N.Y. — USDA New York Farm Service Agency (FSA) Executive Director, James Barber announced that approximately 11,500 New York State farms who enrolled in the new safety-net programs established by the 2014 Farm Bill will soon begin receiving financial assistance for the 2014 crop year. The programs, known as Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC), are designed to protect against unexpected drops in crop prices or revenues due to market downturns.

“These new safety-net programs provide help when price and revenues fall below normal, unlike the previous direct payment program that provided funds even in good years,” said SED Barber.

“For example, 53 counties in New York State harvest corn and producers have experienced
a 30 percent drop in price below the historic benchmark price established by the ARC-County portion of the program. ARC protects against lower revenue from a combination of price and yield. “Payments by county can vary because average county yields will differ,” said SED Barber.

For corn growers who chose the PLC portion of the program, the average price for the marketing year was equal to the statutory reference price established for PLC, so financial assistance did not occur.

Statewide, the majority of farms participated in the ARC-County portion of the ARCPLC program. More details on the price and yield information used to calculate the financing assistance from the safety-net programs is available on the FSA website at www.fsa.usda.gov/arc-plc and http://www.fsa.usda.gov/ny.

Winter Crop Symposium
Steuben County Cooperative Extension

The 2016 Steuben County Crop Symposium will be held Tuesday, February 23 from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at the Civil Defense Center, in Bath. Program Topics include:

10:00 -10:30 a.m. - Registration
10:30-11:00 a.m. – Western Bean Cutworm
11:00 a.m. – NOON – Herbicide Resistance and mode of action
NOON – 12:30 p.m. – Lunch
12:30 -1:30 p.m. – Update on Field Crops
1:30-2:00 p.m. – Soybean seed Treatments

DEC Pesticide Applicator Recertification
Credits for the event include 2 credits pending in Categories 1a, 10, 21, and 23. You must be present at 10:00 a.m. and have your applicator ID with you to receive this credit. Three CCA CCU credits pending. RSVP’s appreciated; contact CCE-Steuben at 607-664-2300 or email ksb29@cornell.edu. $15.00 per person, lunch provided.

Connecting the Dots in Heifer Raising
By: Jerry Bertoldo,
NWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team

There has been significant interest and indeed notable improvement in the area of young calf rearing in the last ten years. Leading this shift has been a wider agreement that intensified feeding, or in reality more natural levels of feeding milk or milk replacer, in this age group is necessary to achieve the animal’s true biological potential. As a result there are many new facilities with feeding systems that help accomplish the delivery of the ideal level of nutrients. Unfortunately, in too many instances this paradigm change and necessary investment to calve in an outstanding heifer with super production and few transition issues does not pan out. The farms that do get significant increases in first lactation performance compared to their past all have ratcheted up the total management of replacements all the way through to the calving pen. This goes beyond balancing diets to include ventilation, heat abatement, minimizing social interactions, tightening up on reproduction, keeping body condition in line, addressing comfort and engaging good people in the process. Here are two examples of common stumbling blocks found on dairies. It is not hard to find newly designed calf and heifer transition barns that are plagued with respiratory problems. In our climate, an ideal ventilation system in the winter can be a disaster in the warmer months. Just fans, or positive pressure tubes or natural ventilation alone may not do the trick depending on calf density, barn dimensions, barn location to other structures and the topography of where it is built. Corn silage may fit well in heifer diets prior to breeding age, but with metabolic changes that occur with the onset of estrus a haylage/hay based diet (and forage not too high in relative feed value) may be essential to avoid over conditioning. Some pointed questions asked by advisors of the farm can unearth some of the missing link opportunities. Do calf/heifer care employees receive any training? How adept are they at disease assessment and treatment decision making?
What kind of record keeping goes on including recording heights, weights, treatments, feed changes and dramatic weather events? Are there goals set for growth, disease incidence, breeding performance and culling? Are the costs known for each stage of growth? Are heifers treated for respiratory problems noted, assessed and subject to removal from the herd? Where are breeding age heifers located? If distant from the main farm do they get the heat detection and breeding intensity they should? How do springing heifers join older herd mates as prefresh animals? These are all bits of information that are known and addressed by the top heifer raisers. The journey a newborn heifer takes on her way to the milking string is long, filled with disease potential, includes several distinct timeframes of nutrient needs and can be booby trapped with stressful events presented by pen mates, people or the environment. This year’s Calf & Heifer Congress will shed light on this comprehensive approach to raising the next generation of milk producers on the dairy. Hope to see you there!

Five Reasons Why Soil is Key to the Planet’s Sustainable Future

It may not be as visually striking as a green forest or appear as vital as fresh water, but plain-looking soil is a natural resource just as essential to sustaining life on Earth.

Soil provides nutrients, water and minerals to plants and trees, stores carbon and is home to billions of insects, small animals, bacteria and many other micro-organisms.

Yet the amount of fertile soil on the planet has been diminishing at an alarming rate, compromising the ability of farmers to grow food to feed a global population that is projected to top nine billion by 2050.

One of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)’s 14 themes of focus in sustainable development, soil has been among priority areas discussed at UN headquarters in New York where intergovernmental negotiations for a post-2015 development agenda are currently taking place.

Underscoring its importance, 2015, the year in which the world community will agree a new global development framework to succeed the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), has been declared the International Year of Soils by the United Nations. Here are five reasons to treasure our often overlooked natural resource.

1. Healthy soil feeds the world

Soil is where food begins. Composed of minerals, water, air and organic matter, soil provides primary nutrient cycling for plant and animal life and acts as a basis for feed, fuel, fibre and medical products as well as for many critical ecosystem services.

“The quality of our food very much depends on the quality of our soil,” says Ronald Vargas, Soils and Land Management Officer at FAO. “Soil degradation is a silent process but with huge consequences for humanity. Studies show that about a third of the planet’s soils are facing moderate to severe degradation. Along with the international year of soils, 2015 happens to be a particularly important year for the planet’s sustainable future with new global goals set to be announced. A focus and commitment to healthy living soils will be a crucial ally in ensuring food security and nutrition for all.”

2. Soil, like oil or natural gas, is a finite resource

Soil is non-renewable – its loss is not recoverable within a human lifespan. It can take hundreds to thousands of years to form one centimetre of soil from parent rock, but that centimetre of soil can be lost in a single year through erosion.

Poor farming practices - extensive tilling, removal of organic matter, excessive irrigation using poor quality water and overuse of fertilizers, herbicides, and pesticides - deplete soil nutrients faster than they are able to form, leading to loss of soil fertility and degrading soils. Some experts say the number of years of
top soil left on the planet is comparable to estimates for reserves of oil and natural gas. At least 16% of African land has been affected by soil degradation. And globally, 50,000 square kilometres of soil, an area the size of Costa Rica, is lost each year, according to the *Global Soil Partnership.*

3. Soil can mitigate climate change
Soil makes up the greatest pool of terrestrial organic carbon, more than double the amount stored in vegetation. As well as helping to supply clean water, prevent desertification and provide resilience to flood and drought, soil mitigates climate change through carbon sequestration and reduction of greenhouse gas emissions.

“Soils of the world must be part of any agenda to address climate change, as well as food and water security,” says Rattan Lal, Director of Ohio State University’s Carbon Management and Sequestration Center. “I think there is now a general awareness of soil carbon, an awareness that soil isn’t just a medium for plant growth.”

4. Soil is alive, teeming with life
A quarter of the planet’s biological diversity exists in soil. There are literally billions of microorganisms such as bacteria, fungi, and protozoans in the soil, as well as thousands of insects, mites and worms. More organisms are contained in one tablespoon of healthy soil than there are people on the planet. “It’s only been recently that we’ve begun thinking about soil biodiversity as a resource we need to know something about,” says Diana Wall, Scientific Chair of the Global Soil Biodiversity Initiative. “Without soil and their biodiversity, there is no human life.”

5. Investing in sustainable soil management makes economic and environmental sense
Managing soil sustainably is cheaper than rehabilitating or restoring soil functions. In the Lempira Sur region of Honduras, a FAO project developed the Quesungual slash and mulch agroforestry system to replace the age-old slash-and-burn method of farming, which had led to declining moisture and fertility. It resulted in increased productivity and income for the region’s farmers. A very different FAO-led project focusing on land, water and biological resources to reverse the process of land degradation in the Kagera river basin between Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda and Tanzania has improved the livelihoods and food security of farmers around Lake Victoria.

“Across the globe, human pressure on soils is reaching critical limits,” adds Vargas. “As per the principles outlined in the World Soil Charter and supported by FAO, good soil governance requires actions at all levels, from governments to individuals in promoting sustainable soil management.

“A focus on soils in the post-2015 development agenda would bear rich rewards.”

*Committed to sustainable soil management, FAO members have established the Global Soil Partnership.*

Content in this article are paid for and provided by FAO sponsor of the Guardian Global Development Professional Network.
Syracuse and graduated from the University of New Hampshire. She has since worked for both grazing and robotic dairies before accepting the position at Alfred State which involves managing both a conventional and an organic herd in a tie stall/parlor and robotic freestall respectively.

Stephen Gould farms with his parents John and Susan Gould at HarGo Farm near Pavilion. Stephen returned to the family farm after studying at both Alfred State College and Cornell University. Mutual respect between parents and adult children in family dairy farming is both challenging and rewarding.

The Goulds work hard to develop mutually acceptable goals and work toward them together.

Peter Martens, son of Mary Howell and Klaus Martens of Penn Yan started branching out to develop his independent farming operations during high school. Renting cropland and hiring his father’s equipment to plant and harvest crops is how Peter got his start. He too has enjoyed the opportunity advanced education affords. Today he works to grow and expand his farming operations by gradually taking on more land and acquiring equipment.

As the discussion progressed some common themes emerged among the young panelists. Each had been involved in a youth agriculture program like 4-H. This foundation helped to build their passion for agriculture. They took that passion and applied it to further their education and their daily life in farming today. All achieved a Bachelor of Science in their chosen agricultural specialty.

Compensation was another topic of discussion. Adequate compensation to be able to raise a family and gain equity was important. These folks were willing to work hard and are dedicated to farming as a career and a way of life but feel that time away to reflect, grow and spend time with family is also important to getting started in organic farming. They described how organic farming has helped to afford them opportunities. This was particularly true for the individuals not farming in conjunction with family.

Investing in ongoing professional growth opportunities and continued learning is important to these farmers. They are excited about technology and how it will change farming practices going forward. They talked about how reinvestment in the businesses they are affiliated with is critical to long term success.

Lastly, each emphasized the importance of communication among the parties involved in the farming operation. Effective communication is critical to identifying and achieving common goals. They talked about how shared goals are necessary for multiple parties to successfully operate a farm business together.

It was indeed an honor to facilitate this panel of bright, young Western New York organic farmers. As I work with farms across the region to develop and implement succession plans, the ideas introduced to the discussion by Eric, Virginia, Stephen and Peter frequently emerge.

In 2016, the NWNY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team will offer the “Managing for Today and Tomorrow” Workshop Series to help farms owners and managers think through and develop succession plans for their farm businesses. To learn more about this course reach out to Joan Sinclair Petzen, jsp10@cornell.edu or 585-786-2251, Ext. 122.
Cheese: Cheese production is active throughout the country. Last minute holiday orders have pressed supplies, at least for the short term. Larger manufacturers anticipate running full schedules over the weekend as surplus holiday milk increases. Foreign type cheese demand is seasonally active. NASS reports total natural cheese stocks in refrigerated warehouses on October 31, 2015 totaled 1.149 billion pounds, 15% more than a year ago. The holiday shortened week saw mixed daily cheese prices at the CME group. The gyrating price spread is concerning for some manufacturers.

Butter: Cream supplies for butter manufacturing are increasing in all regions. At this point, butter production is improving and is mostly focused on orders for year-end holidays. In the Northeast, the market undertone is unsettled. However, interest for butter from food service is active.

Flavor Milk: The general trend of seasonally steady to higher farm-level milk production continues for most of the country, with reports of lower output in some areas of the Pacific Northwest. Fluid milk production volumes were high to begin the week as bottlers added to orders and satisfied last minute holiday retail needs. With the country-wide closing of schools for Thanksgiving, fluid milk sales volumes trended lower by mid-week. Cream markets are weaker with lower multiples. Cream availability is up, as Class II cream sales slowed. Interest is building for eggnog as the year-end holiday approach.

Dry Products: Nonfat dry milk market prices are lower, with little activity occurring for the holiday shortened week. The market undertone is weak. Production is likely to surge as bottling declines support higher NDM drying rates. Dry buttermilk prices are steady throughout the regions. Stocks are mixed. Manufacturers expect to add to inventories this week. Prices for dry whey are unchanged across the U.S.

Production: According to NASS, milk production in the 23 major states during October 2015 totaled 16.0 billion pounds, up 0.1% from one year ago. Milk cows in the 23 selected states totaled 8.632 million head in October, 38,000 head more than a year ago.
Global Dairy Trade prices are low, resulting in decreased export opportunities, due to China and Russia’s decreased purchasing, global unrest in Africa and the Middle East, and increased worldwide milk production. But, with New Zealand’s continued decrease in production and the return of the El Nino weather pattern on the horizon, things could start to look up for U.S. export opportunities. Production has increased compared to a year ago for butter, cheese, and nonfat dry milk, but fluid milk sales have declined by 1.5% compared to a year ago. Domestic Stocks of dairy products are also higher than they were a year ago, 23% for butter, 13% for cheese, and 25% for nonfat dry milk. (Cropp, Bob. Memo to Dairy-L. November 19, 2015).

Low Global Dairy Trade prices continue to hinder exports, with cheese exports 20% lower than a year ago, butter 83% lower, and dry 32% lower. September imports of cheese were 18% higher than a year ago, and butter was a staggering 90% higher. World dairy stocks look bleak due to higher overall world dairy production, and loss of demand from Russia and China, as well as the Africa and Middle East Region, typically stable importers of U.S. Product. U.S. exports will likely continue to decline until at least the second half of 2016. Depressed milk prices and production in the EU and New Zealand, the two largest dairy exporters, may help to slow the import market and strengthen world dairy prices in 2016. U.S. Milk production is growing at a slower than projected rate, with less than 1% increases in September (0.5%) and October (0.1%). Cow numbers are also growing slowly with just a 0.3% increase from September to October. Milk per Cow has also been below trend, just 0.3% higher than a year ago. (Cropp, Bob. Memo to Dairy-L. November 19, 2015).

Although many prices continued to hold for October and into early November, it looks like prices will be heading lower into the end of 2015 and the beginning of 2016. Butter and cheese prices will decline early in December, and there is nothing apparent on the horizon to help rally these prices. The Class III prices will likely be $15 or below for December, and the low $14’s by the beginning of 2016. Class IV prices will likely be in the low $13’s for 2016, and may rally to the $16’s by the end of 2016. Class III and Class IV dairy futures have similarly declined. (Cropp, Bob. Memo to Dairy-L. November 19, 2015).
COMING EVENTS:

December 15-16, 2015-Calf & Heifer Congress Conference
Doubletree Inn, East Syracuse, NY located off Exit 35 of the New York State Thruway.
The fifth in a series of dairy replacement conferences presented by Cornell University Extension and
the Cornell PRO-DAIRY Program. The conference topics will cover the entire heifer growing period.
This year the event will begin with an afternoon of speakers and panelists addressing facilities,
environment and health. Following that will be an evening reception and a buffet dinner program
dedicated to antibiotic stewardship, changing regulations and public concerns. The second full day of
presentations and discussions will feature health, growth and economics.

Registration deadline is on or before November 23, 2015. After that date a $50 late fee will be added.
Register on-line go to: http://www.cvent.com/d/jrq4k0

January-March 2015-Tractor & Machinery Operation Certification Program Offered
Youth who will be 14 and over by March 1, 2016 are eligible to take the course. Please go to the
following website for more information http://putknowledgeatwork.org/4-h-youth/club-programs/tractor-machinery
or contact Kim Randall at 607-583-3185, or e-mail, ksb3@cornell.edu

February 23, 2016-Winter Crop Symposium
Civil Defense Center, Bath, NY 10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m. DEC Pesticide Recertification Credits available.
Cost is $15.00/person with lunch provided. See page 6 for more details

TRADING POST:

For Sale: 4 x 4 round bales of mixed hay and wheat straw bound with twine. Hay has been tested.
Large quantities available. Please call: 607-535-4903