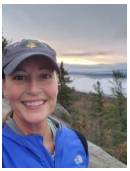
Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County

Farm Flash

August 2025

The Ag Team



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Did You Know?

CCE Oneida County offers recordings of previous agriculture related meetings on our YouTube page. Use this link https://tinyurl.com/446dknaz **OR** scan the QR Code.

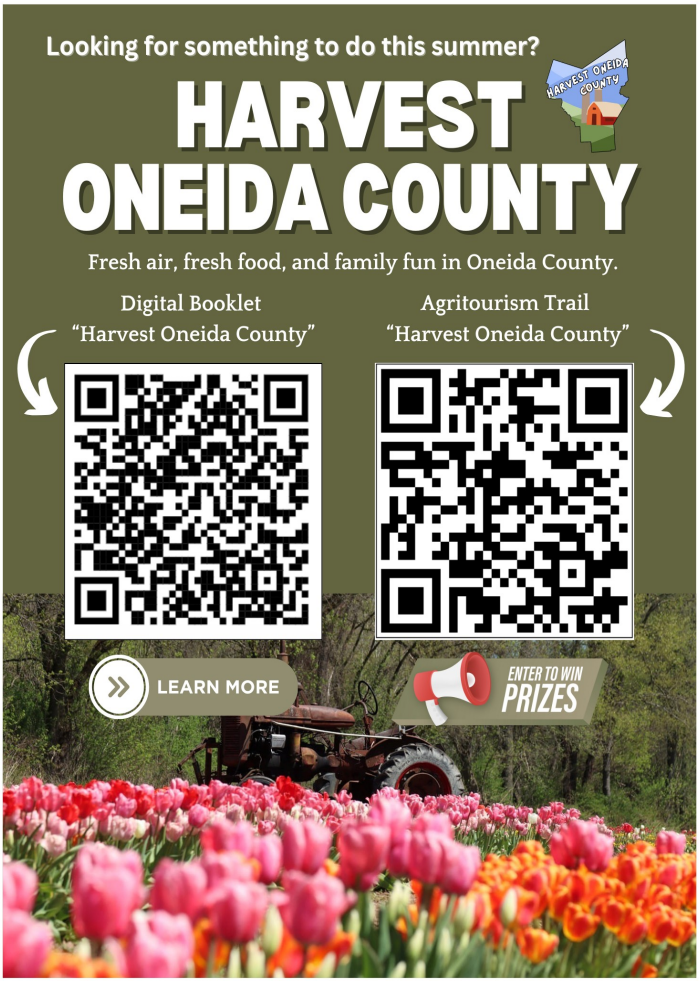
Upcoming Events

Twilight Tour

Thursday, August 21
6:30 pm - 8:00 pm

Leon Atwell's Farm
9628 Prospect Rd Remsen

RSVP to Marylynn at mrm7@cornell.edu OR
via text at (315)368-8603



Seeking Dairy Farm Team Member - Family Run 80-Cow Free Stall Dairy - Rome, NY

We are seeking an experienced, motivated individual to join our **family-run 80-cow free stall dairy farm** in Rome, NY.

You'll work closely with the farmer and family to support daily operations and contribute to the long-term success of the farm. We value hard work, dependability, and a positive attitude - and we take pride in running a farm where team members are treated with respect.

Responsibilities Include:

- Milking Cows
- Assisting with field work (equipment operation, crop planting/ harvest, and maintenance)
- Supporting herd management tasks (feeding, care, basic health checks)
- (Preferred) Performing artificial insemination

Qualifications

- Prior experience in dairy farm operations required - at least 2 years of hands-on experience or relevant agricultural coursework
- Knowledge of dairy herd management, production , and AI preferred
- Strong work ethic, reliability, and ability to work as part of a team

Compensation

- Starting salary: $700/week
- Average of 45 hours per week (hours vary seasonally - flexibility required)

To apply:

Please submit your resume to sandeferfarm@gmail.com OR call (315) 337-0534

I wanted to take a moment to introduce myself to the Oneida County community. My name is Jennifer Reynolds, and I have been a life-long resident of Oneida County. Currently, I live in Remsen, but I grew up in Floyd, NY, and graduated from Holland Patent High School. Ag was always a big part of my community growing up. I had been teaching science locally at the high school level for many years wanted to transition into something more community-facing. CCE brought many of my interests, skills, and background together in one exciting role – Ag Team Lead!

I earned my undergraduate degree in Geoscience from Hamilton College in Clinton, and my thesis focused on an after-school enrichment program for 4th-grade students, specifically on fossils and minerals of New York State. I earned my Master's in Secondary Science Education from Syracuse University.
When I am not at work I am usually outdoors—Kayaking, fishing, hiking, etc. Summer is a fabulous time in Central NY. I attend music and art festivals, but my favorites are the ones that focus on FOOD. I enjoy cooking, gardening, and food preserving. ! I LOVE animals. I currently have five dogs, all of which are rescues.

I am a strong supporter of CCE's mission to educate through Cornells's evidence-based research. The programs we provide like Farm to School, Ag in the Classroom and upcoming regional grant initiatives are making real impacts right here in our community. I am eager to continue to support my team as they grow these programs and implement new projects helping sustainable agriculture in CNY thrive. I am thrilled to be a member of CCE Oneida and all the amazing work that is being done here!

Staying Seasonal
Audra Benincasa

In Central NY we are entering peak harvest season at our farm stands, stores, and markets. Our early summer crops like strawberries are finishing up, while tomatoes, blueberries, and summer squash are making their way to the dinner table. We've grown accustomed to having every type of fresh produce at our reach, given the expansive network of transportation and the commercialization of agriculture. While there is nothing inherently wrong about that, I encourage all to shop locally and shop seasonally. Consider creating meals and dishes focused on produce that comes from your garden or local farm. In Oneida County, we have 11 farmers markets, one nearly every day of the week. Each market has a selection of local producers ranging from organic produce, value-added goods crafted from their own bounty, and local meats like chicken, pork, and beef. So, when planning your weekday meals and weekend parties, consider looking at what's in season!

Check out CCE Oneida's list of local farmers markets at www.cceoneida.com/agriculture/buy-local/farmers-markets

Boonville: June 12 -Oct 2
- Upper Erwin Park - Rt 12
- Thursdays 12PM-5PM

Boonville
- DPNH Community & Art Center
- **Postponed for the Season**

***Camden: May 9 - Oct 24**
- Camden Life Center
- Fridays 2PM-6:30PM

***Clinton: June 5-Oct**
- Clinton Village Green
- Thursdays 10AM-4PM

New Hartford: June 11-Aug 27
- Village Green, Oxford Rd
- Wednesdays 2:30PM-6:30PM

Oriskany: June 19 - Sept 25
- Trinkaus Park, 420 Utica St
- Thursdays 2PM-7PM

Rome: May 28-Oct 1
- 502 W Chestnut St
- Wednesdays 2PM-6PM

***Utica: June 28-Oct 25**
- Chancellor Park
- Wednesdays 9AM-5PM

Vernon Center: June 3-Aug 26
- Vernon Center Park
- Tuesdays 3PM-7PM

***Vienna: May 8-Oct 23**
- North Bay Fired Department
- Thursdays 2PM-6:30PM

Whitesboro: June-Sept
- Village Green, Corner of Main & Clinton
- Mondays 2PM-7PM

***Oneida County Public Market, Utica: Year Round**
- Union Station, 321 Main St
- Saturdays 9AM-1PM

***Indicates Market Accepts SNAP**

Dairy Growth in New York: Biosecurity Considerations
Rob Lynch, DVM, Pro-Dairy Herd Health and Management Specialist

With the recent investments in dairy processing capacity in New York, demand for milk will increase. This may prompt dairy owners to consider herd growth, and advanced planning is critical for this to be successful. Expanding the herd through internal growth is the safest option, but takes a long time, and farms might miss out on economic opportunity in the meantime.

Management strategies that lead to extra home-raised heifers include:

- Breeding policies that shift more breeding to sexed heifer semen and fewer breeding's with beef sires.
- Optimized reproductive efficiency for both the milking and the replacement herds.
- Replacement herd management that results in minimal calf health issues, optimal ADG, and a heifer breeding program that makes it a priority to inseminate as soon as sexual maturity is reached.

Dairies that are looking to increase herd size more rapidly by purchasing animals should use strategies to reduce the risk of bringing in health issues with them. Include biosecurity practices in the herd growth plans to help protect the existing herd and newly acquired cattle.

Sourcing New Cattle

Many contagious diseases can have significant negative health effects on the herd: BVDV, *Mycobacterium paratuberculosis*, *Mycoplasma bovis* and *Staph aureus* mastitis, H5N1 (HPAI), *Salmonella dublin*, digital dermatitis, and Bovine Respiratory Disease Complex to name a few.

Source animals privately from as few farms as possible. If available, evaluate somatic cell history and milk culture results from the animals being considered for purchase. Review recent bulk tank SCC reports and culture results for contagious mastitis pathogens, including Mycoplasma. Bulk tank milk can also be tested for the presence of BVDV and *Salmonella dublin* in the herd. Any purchased non-lactating animal should have all four quarters cultured when they calve in and be kept separate from the existing milking herd until their results are known. If any purchased animals were pregnant on arrival, test their calves for BVDV when born.

The dairy industry is still dealing with HPAI. Farms purchasing animals from out of state will need to follow interstate transport requirements to help keep H5N1 out of N.Y.

Consider diagnostic testing even if not required by federal and state animal health officials. Source animals from dairies that participate in the HPAI Dairy Herd Status Program and have achieved Monitored Unaffected status. Another option is to have a negative influenza A milk (for lactating cows) or nasal swab (non-lactating animals) test for each animal no more than seven days prior to leaving the farm of origin.

Protect the Existing Herd

Review the vaccination protocol to make sure it provides sufficient protection against diseases that could enter when new animals arrive. Vaccines are included in a herd protocol based on risk. Adding new animals to the herd is considered high risk from a health perspective and may change which vaccines the farm's veterinarian recommends. Also, make sure farm employees are following the written vaccine protocol as this is a common area for procedural drift.

Operate an effective 30-day quarantine for new animals upon arrival. A separate barn is preferred as it helps prevent aerosol transmission of pathogens. If this is not possible, a dedicated pen in the barn with sufficient separation from the other pens to prevent nose-to-nose contact can limit the spread of disease. If purchased cows cannot be milked in a separate facility, these cows should go to the parlor at the end of each milking with a full system wash to follow. Practice heightened biosecurity protocols when managing this group of animals. Assume new animals have all the contagious diseases until their diagnostic test results are known and they have completed the full 30-day quarantine.

Set New Animals Up for Success

New facilities will likely be needed to house the expanded herd. Pen counts that lead to insufficient cow resting time, limited access to the feed bunk, and excessive standing in the holding area while waiting to be milked will negate some or all of the additional milk resulting from more milking cows. An agricultural engineer, or another advisor with animal housing experience, can help farms site and design new facilities with all the latest features that promote good health and optimum performance.

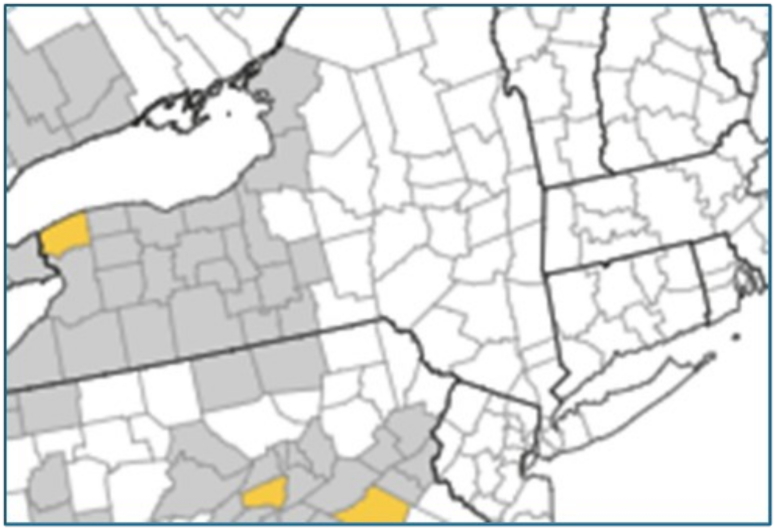
It is important to help newly purchased animals transition to the new facility successfully. This begins with pre-conditioning if possible. Vaccinations given at least three weeks prior to shipment can help prevent illnesses, like respiratory disease. Make sure the trailer is cleaned prior to loading. New animals are especially at risk of illness due to the immune suppression associated with transport stress.

Monitor new animals for health problems for the first few weeks as this is when they are most likely to break with disease. Finally, to bring the new cattle up to speed with the rest of the herd, the farm's veterinarian can recommend an "onboarding" vaccine program.

Conclusion

This is an exciting time for the New York dairy industry. Farms with growth in their short-term plan should consider strategies that minimize health risks to increase their odds of success. The farm's veterinarian is a valuable resource to reduce herd health risks associated with herd expansion.

An Overview of Tar Spot



Grey shaded areas represent where tar spot was present in previous years. The black arrow points to Oneida County. Given our wet spring and continued humid conditions, growers are encouraged to monitor for tar spot in their fields.

Information and maps courtesy of Crop Protection Network: A Product of Land Grant Universities. Current maps available by visiting: https://cropprotectionnetwork.org/maps/tar-spot-of-corn

Tar spot is a foliar disease of corn that commonly occurs throughout the Caribbean, Central America, Mexico, and South America. Tar spot was identified in the United States for the first time in 2015, in northern Illinois and Indiana. As of 2019, tar spot has also been confirmed in Florida, Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Ohio, and Wisconsin (Figure 1).

During the 2018 and 2019 growing seasons, the distribution, prevalence, and severity of tar spot increased dramatically, and in some areas caused substantial yield losses. This publication discusses our knowledge of tar spot, describes diseases commonly confused with tar spot, and offers basic management guidelines.

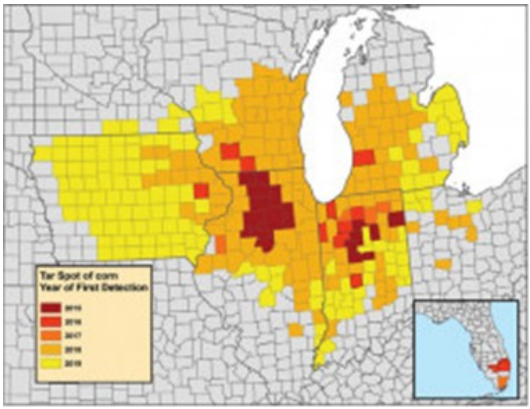


Figure 1. Areas where tar spot has been confirmed in the United States since 2015.

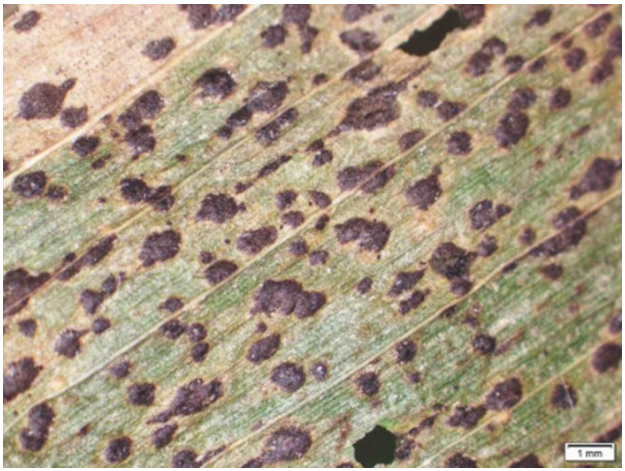


Figure 2. *Phyllachora maydis*, the fungus that causes tar spot, produces stromata that can be slightly raised, black, and often observed on leaves of affected corn plants.

Symptoms and Signs

In the United States, tar spot of corn is caused by the fungus *Phyllachora maydis*. The fungus produces small (1/16-3/4 inch), round to irregular diamond-shaped, raised black structures called stromata. These structures form on both the upper and lower surfaces of corn leaves (Figure 2). In severe cases, stromata may also be observed on leaf sheaths, husks, and tassels.

Tar spot severity on ear leaves at growth stage R5 (dent stage) can exceed 50 percent in susceptible hybrids when conditions are favorable for the disease development. Leaves of infected plants prematurely die when severity is approximately 30 percent or more.

Occasionally, tan to brown lesions with dark borders can develop around the stromata (Figure 3). The lesions are referred to as fisheye lesions because of their appearance. Fisheye lesions are frequently observed in areas of Mexico and Central America. When fisheye lesions occur in these areas, the disease is called tar spot complex, because a second fungus (*Monographella maydis*) is thought to be associated with these lesions.

Although fisheye lesions have been observed in the United States, *M. maydis* has not been detected. Fisheye lesions could potentially be related to hybrid genetics, the genetics of the tar spot fungus, the environment, a different microbe forming a complex with *P. maydis*, or some unknown factor. In any case, the cause of fisheye lesions observed in United States tar spot outbreaks is currently unknown.

Figure 3. Tar spot stromata surrounded by brown, necrotic tissue producing a fisheye appearance.

Disease Cycle

The tar spot fungus (*P. maydis)* is an obligate pathogen, which means that it requires a living host to grow and reproduce. Although there are many species of *Phyllachora* that infect various grass species, *P. maydis* is only known to infect corn. *Phyllachora maydis* can overwinter in Midwestern states where the disease has been confirmed. Spring ascospore viability can range from as low as 2.5 percent to as high as 25 percent on corn leaves that overwinter in Midwest U.S. fields. Rain and high humidity cause the stromata to release spores (ascospores and conidia; Figure 4) that are dispersed by rain splash or wind. Spores can be dispersed in-field and locally.

According to data from Central America, ascospores are released as single spores or in bunches. After infection, new stromata form within infected tissue in 12-15 days. The stromata can produce spores soon thereafter. When conditions are favorable, multiple spore release events and infection cycles can occur during the growing season. Corn is susceptible to infection at any developmental stage.

Yield Losses and Impact

Yield losses due to tar spot can be variable, depending on the time of disease onset, weather conditions, and hybrid susceptibility. Losses can be minimal to none, and in severe cases, losses of 50 bushels per acre or more have been observed. Yield losses are a function of reduced ear weight, poor kernel fill, and vivipary (a condition in which the seed germinates while still on the cob). Stalk rot and lodging may increase when tar spot severity is high. Severe tar spot also reduces silage corn feed quality by reducing moisture, decreasing digestible components and reducing energy. No associated mycotoxins have been reported for this disease.

Diagnosis

You can diagnose corn tar spot in the field by examining corn leaves for the presence of circular to diamond-shaped, black, tar-like spots, which may have a slightly raised appearance and feel bumpy to the touch. Tar spot stromata cannot be wiped off the leaf. Tar spot has been observed most often in the United States during or after silking through to late grain fill (growth stages R1-R6), but may appear earlier. Initial stromata can form on lower or upper leaves depending on the onset of disease development, and have been observed on green and senesced tissues. Occasionally, necrotic brown tissue may surround the black stromata, which produces a fisheye appearance. If you suspect tar spot, send a sample to your state diagnostic lab or contact your extension state specialist to confirm the diagnosis.

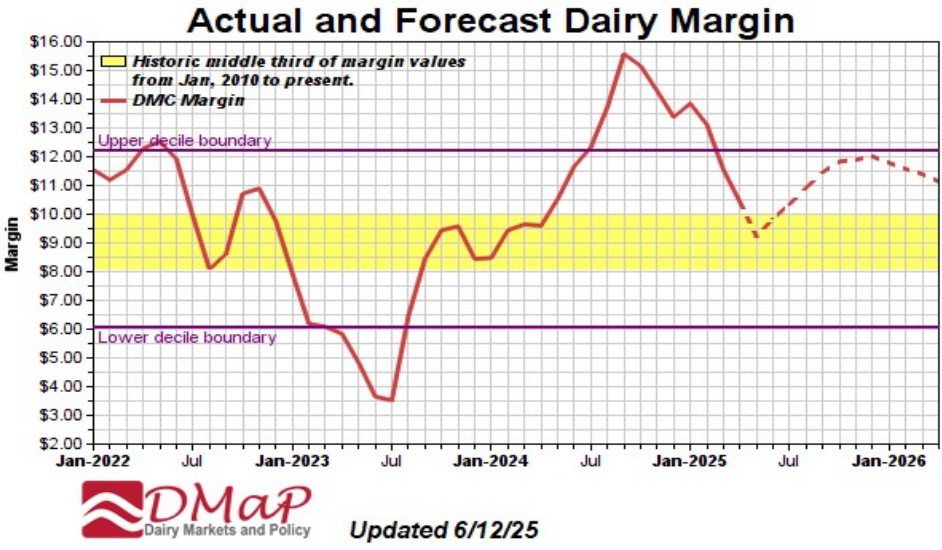
Join our Ag Team

Ag Educator

The Agriculture (Ag) Educator is primarily responsible for delivering established educational programming in assigned subject matter areas of general agriculture, pest management, soil and plant sciences, emerging technology in agriculture, or other appropriate fields of study in agriculture. The educator also provides planning input for a variety of subjects, such as animal & plant sciences, food systems, and agricultural technology programs. The Ag Educator serves as a team member and will assist the supervisor in activities to organize, deliver and evaluate agricultural programs within the community.

- This is a full-time (37.5 hrs./week), benefits eligible, non-exempt position.
- Compensation is $23.00/hr.
- **Required:** Bachelor's Degree in agriculture, environmental science or related discipline or Associate degree and two years of transferable program/ functional experience.
- Experience relevant to the role of the position.
- Paid time off includes 12 Vacation days, 15 Sick days, 4 Personal days, 12 Holidays, and 2 Floating Holidays annually.

Scan the QR Code to view qualifications and



Pricing Corn Silage - Preliminary Fall 2025 Estimates

John Hanchar

Summary

- Analysis suggests corn silage price depends upon corn silage quantities, alfalfa hay price, the price received by farmers for milk, and corn grain price.

- Analysis for NY suggests corn silage price estimates are most sensitive to changes in alfalfa hay price, and corn grain price.

- Price estimates, combined with understanding of relevant supply, and demand factors from an individual farm business owner's perspective can aid decision making regarding corn silage price, while also aiding in the pricing of other forages. Given recently available alfalfa hay, and corn grain prices (USDA/NASS, and Western NY Energy, respectively, 2025-06-24 access date), initial fall 2025 price analysis for NY suggests an estimated corn silage price of about $63 per ton. The fall 2024 estimate was about $53 per ton.

Determining Corn Silage Price

Some readers may be checking their calendars wondering why results from the team's annual pricing corn silage work are being published early this year when compared to the usual September, October reporting in Ag Focus. This year, weather conditions present challenges to farm business owners working to implement cropping programs as planned. Depending upon adjustments being considered, farm business owners seek price information for relevant crop alternatives. For example, dairy farmers and cash grain farmers, when faced with a need to consider changes to cropping programs due to weather and, or markets, seek corn silage price information when deciding selling, buying agreements.

The farm business owner can examine how much corn silage the owner would be willing to supply to a market at a given price. Analysis of the farm business' cost structure for corn silage production combined with consideration of other factors help define the supply relationship. The seller can develop a target based upon the above, but actual market conditions provide no guarantee that a buyer will purchase quantities desired at prices that achieve the producers' target.

Some farm business owners might approach the task of determining corn silage price from a value in production, or input demand perspective. Amounts of corn grain and corn stover in a ton of corn silage, relevant output and input prices, and corn silage's place in the milk production process relative to other inputs are key factors. The buyer can develop a price target based upon the above, but actual market conditions provide no guarantee that a producer will sell the quantity desired at a price that matches the buyer's willingness to pay target.

Although factors in price determination, the two approaches described above, in isolation, don't completely determine price, and quantity. Supply and demand relationships work simultaneously in markets to determine price, and quantity. Empirical price analysis brings supply, and demand relationships together to determine price.

Corn Silage Price Analysis

Empirical price analysis suggests that corn silage price is a function of corn silage quantities, alfalfa hay price, the price received by farmers for milk sold, and corn grain price. An ordinary least squares regression model expresses corn silage price as a linear function of the above variables. The statistical analysis used here is fairly basic. However, readers of the original work, and annual update articles note that the analysis, and estimates help farm business owners price corn silage.

Corn Silage Price Estimates - Preliminary Fall 2025

The ordinary least squares regression model originally reported in August 2012, updated annually to reflect additional data available, and changes in other underlying factors, produced corn silage price estimates for NY. Estimated corn silage price is a function of alfalfa hay price, and corn grain price with other factors (corn silage production, and milk price) fixed at expected levels. Expected corn silage quantity is set at 8,430 units (one unit = 1,000 tons), the approximate state average for the period 2007 through 2024, subject to change.

Suppose

- NY alfalfa hay price is $240 per ton, the most recent value reported, (USDA/NASS. Agricultural Prices. Washington, DC: National Agricultural Statistics Service.
- QuickStats website. 2025-06-24 access date.), and corn grain price is $4.33 per bushel, an approximate value based upon reported bids for fall 2025 (Western NY Energy. "Corn Bids." Website. 2025-06-24 access date)

Using the estimating equation, and the above prices for alfalfa hay, and corn grain as expected prices, estimated corn silage price is about $60 per ton. The estimate represents the expected value of corn silage post harvest, in the bunk, wet, for the fall months of September, October, November, 2025. Compare this to last fall's estimate of about $53 per ton. Late planting dates, and other agronomic factors, may combine for lower production when compared with the average. Using an expected corn silage quantity of 7,938 units (1 unit = 1,000 tons), about one standard deviation less than the initial value, yields a corn silage price estimate of about $63 per ton. Buyers, and sellers use an estimate as a base, typically adjusting for quality and, or harvest, hauling and storage costs based upon the situation, for example, when pricing standing corn for silage. Corn silage price estimates combine with understanding of important supply, and demand factors from the individual farm business owner's perspective, including local conditions, to aid decision making regarding corn silage price.

Beware of AI Pest Management Recommendations

Natika Walters

Anyone who has heard me speak knows that I see great promise in the integration of artificial intelligence (AI) with advanced weed control technologies like laser weeding and vision-guided spraying. These tools offer the precision needed to reduce herbicide use while maintaining effective weed suppression. AI-driven platforms can distinguish between crops and weeds in real time, enabling site-specific management that minimizes crop injury potential and environmental impact. I'm particularly excited about using these technologies to address herbicide-resistant weeds and other difficult-to-control species through novel means.

But AI has its drawbacks. The information it provides is not always accurate. For example, my initial experiences with the Carbon Robotics Laser Weeder and the Verdant Robotics Sharp Shooter in New York were marked by poor control of common ragweed, a species not commonly found in the western United States and therefore not represented in the machines' training algorithms.

In another instance, I asked ChatGPT to generate a description of Palmer amaranth, and the output incorrectly stated that the species has wind-dispersed seed. Palmer amaranth seed lacks a pappus, the umbrella- or parachute-like structure found on dandelions that enable long-distance transport on wind currents. This highlights the importance of reviewing AI-generated content for accuracy.

A recent article by Dr. Eric Prostko (University of Georgia) in Farm Progress highlights the risks of relying on AI recommendations for pest management, using real-world examples where such advice could have caused problems for the producers. https://www.farmprogress.com/crop-protection/extension-specialist-beware-of-ai-herbicide-recommendations Specifically, AI tools suggested the use of herbicides that are not legally registered for use on the target crops, leading to regulatory violations as well as the potential for severe crop injury (for example, an atrazine recommendation in peanuts).

While AI tools may seem convenient, they lack the local agronomic knowledge and judgment that trained professionals bring to pest management decisions. Cornell Cooperative Extension has an extensive network of specialists deployed across the state to assist growers with their weed control needs. They are here to help you, so please take advantage of their experience when it comes to developing pest management plans. And, as always, CONSULT THE LABEL before making any pesticide applications. The label provides critical information for safe and effective use. Applying a pesticide in a manner inconsistent with its labeling can result in crop injury, environmental harm, and potential health risks to applicators or bystanders.

Making Your Marketing Plan

Natika Walters

Not many people go into farming to become a business mogul, but business is an important part of running a successful farm. You can produce the best agricultural products, but if nothing is selling, it isn't a viable farm. Creating a business plan is a direct way to map out where you want your business to go and to check in on your goals. Beyond that, a marketing plan is an important tool for planning how to sell your products. It can help you determine how much to produce and how much effort will go into selling. According to the nonprofit SCORE, a group that mentors the business aspects of small businesses, 50% of small businesses do not have a documented business plan. Not having a business plan doesn't seem so bad—until you stop to think about how much time and effort you waste by throwing ideas at a wall to see what sticks. A marketing plan outlines how your products will be promoted.

It consists of a strategic overview, target audience, marketing channels, content strategy, budget, timeline, measurement, and analysis. It helps ensure your time and effort aren't wasted. These plans can be created for your business overall or for a specific product.

Strategic Overview

Strategic overview encompasses everything to follow: what are our goals, how will we get there and if it aligns all with the business objectives from your business plan.

Target audience

"Everyone has to eat" is a famous saying and it is very true, strawberries taste just as good to a 24-year-old bachelor as it does to a grandmother of 10. However, how you market to these people varies wildly. Identifying your target audience is important because when you know who you are marketing to, you know how you should be marketing. Imagine your consumer and put a face to them, how often do they shop, what do they prioritize (quality, price, convenience, etc..), are they adventurous with trying new foods, do they want to make their famous pasta salad with peas or are they looking for a cool new recipe to try. By doing this your marketing will become more focused to the customer, which is best for your farmstand and it will also make your farm content and branding consistent which can help build loyal following online.

Marketing Channels

In today's world we could go on for ages about how many marketing channels there are. From online channels and buying ads, to social media, online newsletters, to the radio. There are many options to choose from but don't let that make you think you need to do it all.

Content Strategy

When you do this marketing, what is it going to look like? Thinking about the style of marketing and how to make everything look cohesive and targeted before you start helps avoid the "throw it at a wall and see what sticks" strategy. How often are you going to post and where? With what message? With what content form? Are we trying to make people laugh, give them a call to action, make them hungry? Creating a content strategy and sticking with it- consistency is key.

Budget and Timeline

Knowing your budget ahead of time and where it is getting delegated to makes sure you can analysis if the money spent is worth it, with a certain effort or overall. There is a lot of marketing that can even be done with no budget in today's online world. On this same note growth can only be measured it there is a time frame that it is measured within. Make sure with your plan and strategy you look at the timeline that you are aiming to work within. In farming it is super easy to create a timeline because often it is seasonal!

Measurement and Analysis

"You can't manage what you don't measure" is a well-known quote by Peter Drucker a famous business management expert. Measuring the success of the business can be done primarily through recordkeeping and can help you see if your time and effort spent on marketing were efficient. From this analysis of the timeframe, you can continue to adjust your goals, marketing plans and business plans. A key to remember is to make S.M.A.R.T. goals; specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time bound.

Farmers First: Small Family Farms Policy Agenda, National Farm Security Action Plan, and Other Recent Policy Affecting Agriculture

Natika Walters

On July 7, 2025, the White House released a National Farm Security Action Plan as part of the USDA's *Make Agriculture Great Again Initiative* otherwise known as "Farmers First: Small Family Farms Policy Agenda" that was launched May 19, 2025. The Farmers first agenda states that 86% of farms in America are small farms, quantifying small farms have been labeled at $350k to $1,000. The key points from this plan are as follows as taken from USDA.gov/farmers-first-small-family-farms-policy-agenda.

- **Streamlining and Digitizing USDA Application Process** - Trying to make the process less complex and time consuming for small family farmers.
- **Generating Reliable Access to Credit** - Goals to streamline delivery of existing programs.
- **Providing Greater Access to Farmland: Land Acquisition and Permitting** - Streamlining the delivery of FSA and RD programs withing the USDA so small farmers have better access to credit and farmland. This also includes plans to disincentivize solar and reduce competition for farmland by solar companies.

- **Transitioning Farms to the Next Generation** - Restoring 100% expensing and minimize or eliminate death tax penalties.
- **Providing Small Family Farms with Greater Access to Markets and Infrastructure -** Expand access to processing capacity and emphasize USDA programs that push local foods.
- **Providing All Family Farms, Including Small, with Affordable and Reliable Labor** - Working with federal agencies to address the issue of farm labor
- **Enhancing Risk Management and Business Planning Tools** - Making sure small farms are aware of the resources that the FSA and RMA have for them
- **Ensuring the Definition of Small Farm Adequately Captures U.S. Agriculture Today -** Reviewing the definitions of small farms to ensure accuracy
- **Hosting Small Farmer Webinar and Educational Series** - Changing the energy sectors to put America first focusing on U.S. row crops for biofuels
- **Other Small Farmer Resources** - Make sure farmers know about farmers.gov.

The National Farm Security Action Plan is a pillar of the Farmers First plan and was released on July 8, 2025. The broad goals of this plan are promoting agricultural and economic prosperity, defending the foundation of agriculture and food, and strengthening domestic agricultural productivity. The key points in this plan are as follows, as taken from USDA.gov/farm-security-nat-sec.

- **Secure and Protect American Farmland** - Review agricultural land owned by foreign nationals from countries of concern
- **Enhance Agricultural Supply Chain Resilience** - Assess the critical agricultural inputs that come from other countries (fertilizers, chemicals, minerals, etc.) to ensure there are no vulnerabilities.
- **U.S. Nutrition Safety Net Must be Protected from Fraud, Abuse, and Foreign Adversaries** - A look into funds within the USDA's 16 nutrition programs.
- **Defend the Foundations of Agriculture and Food** - Making sure USDA funding is going toward innovation to help put American farmers and ranchers first.

- **Evaluate USDA Programs to Ensure America First Policies -** USDA programs and grants will be put under review to ensure they are following America first policy.

- **Safeguard Plant and Animal Health** - USDA will work with partners to strengthen our ability to respond to agricultural biosecurity threats and prioritize programs essential to safeguarding American agriculture from agricultural biosecurity threats.

- **Protect Critical Infrastructure -** Making sure there are resources to precent cybersecurity and ransomware attacks

On July 4,2025 the H.R.1 One Big Beautiful Bill Act was signed into law. Within this bill there were farm bill provisions, found in Title 1 Subtitle B- Investment in Rural America. Some of the provisions include the following. Safety net programs included the extension of key commodity support programs and raise reference prices for major commodities 11-21% with a price escalator starting in 2031. The bill also enhances the DMC program by increasing Tier I coverage eligibility. Farms can also use the highest production year from 2021 to 2023 as a new enrollment baseline. Those who commit to multiyear DMC coverage receive a 25% discount on premiums, encouraging long-term participation. The crop insurance program got increased premium support for beginning farmers, with the definition of beginning farmers changed from within the first 5 years to within the first 10. The bill continued funding for major conservation programs but did rescind $450 million in funds that had been budgeted to forestry grants.

A new Agricultural Trade Promotion and Facilitation Program was created and funded with similar purposes and functions as Market Access Program (MAP), Foreign Market Development (FMD). Those programs were not placed or defunded, so the new program essentially doubles what they are doing. Funding for USDA research agencies and land-grant universities (like Cornell) were maintained with targeted funding for certain agricultural research programs. There was support given to the Specialty crops as well as the organic crops sector within the continuing funding of Specialty Crop Block Grant Program and organic market data tracking. There were also programs to focus on livestock biosecurity as well as direction for the USDA to conduct mandated biennial cost surveys for dairy producers. Outside of the farm bill provisions there were also tax provisions that benefit farmers including raising business depreciation as well as estate relief for farm families.

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