Cornell Cooperative Extension Oneida County

Farm Flash

January 2026

The Ag Team

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****Attention Landowners****

Did you purchase any new property this year? Is it part of your farm? Are you performing any agricultural business activity on it?

If so, January 1st through January 31st is Oneida County's Open Enrollment Period for NYS Agricultural Districts. Being part of a NYS Agricultural District affords you *additional protections* for your farming activities that you would otherwise not be eligible for outside an agricultural district. This is a voluntary program, and you must be the property owner to apply. Applications can be found at https://tinyurl.com/38xsv9bu

Upcoming Events

Crop Congress - Save the Date!
Co-Hosted by Clinton Tractor

January 15 from 9:30 am - 3:00 pm at the Clinton VFW

Producers seeking certification or recertification will have the opportunity to earn DEC pesticide credits, including:

- 0.75 Core Credits
- 2.25 Field & Forage Credits
- 2.25 Vegetable Credits

Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) credits will also be available:

- 0.5 Soil & Water
- 1.0 Integrated Pest Management

Register with Danielle at Clinton Tractor by calling (315) 853-6151 or (315) 404-8423 or email Danielle@clintontractor.net

Winter Shop Meeting

Tuesday, January 20 from 12:00 pm - 2:00 pm at Brabant Farm on Happy Valley Road in Verona

Take a break farm your farm work as the Van Lieshout Family will open up their farm for networking, a free lunch and a demonstration (weather permitting) of drone use for monitoring bunk inventories. Field Agronomist with Pioneer, Tyler Stevenson, will be on hand to discuss and share the use of drones for pest management and inventory management.

Please RSVP to Marylynn by email: mrm7@cornell.edu or by phone to 315.368.8603 by Monday January 19, 2026

Farm Family Safety: Common Farm Chemicals and Exploring Zoonotic Diseases

February 19th from 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm on Zoom

Reviewing safety, security and standard operating procedures to keep everyone safe at home and on farm with chemicals and zoonotic diseases.

Register online at: https://tinyurl.com/4khsvpt3

Apple Grafting Workshop - March 13 - $75
Fruit Seminar - March 28 - $30
More Details to Come

Season's greetings from your Agriculture and Agricultural Economic Development teams at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County!

I am **Jennifer Reynolds**, the **Agriculture Team Leader and Farm Business Manager here at extension**. I'm excited to be in this role at such a meaningful time of year. Our agriculture team is here to support farmers and producers across Oneida County with data driven education and outreach. I'm proud to work alongside **Holly Wise**, Consumer Horticulture and Master Gardener Volunteer Program Coordinator; **Marylynn Collins**, Dairy and Livestock Educator; **Natika Walters**, Soil and Crop Educator; and **Amanda Vinci**, Ag Operations Coordinator.

Carol Watkins is the new **Agricultural Economic Development (AED) Team Leader**. She is also eager to connect with you in the coming year by learning about your farms, ideas, and the economic needs that matter most to you. Our AED team includes Ag Special Projects Educator **Madi Engel**, Upstate Downstate Food System Specialist **Carl Mierek**, and the Oneida County Public Market team, **Beth Irons** and **Audra Benincasa**. In the year ahead, we'll be updating producer guides and service listings for the Mohawk Valley, building a "knowledge hub" to support small food manufacturers, and promoting local producers and products to bring **Mohawk Valley Grown** goods to consumers across New York State.

Together, we're committed to helping you strengthen your businesses and grow the next generation of agriculture in our county.

From our team to you and yours, we wish you a festive, safe, and joyful holiday season. Thank you for all you do to feed our communities. We look forward to working with you in the year ahead!

Jennifer Reynolds and Carol Watkins

Agriculture Team Leader & Farm Business Manager &

Agricultural Economic Development (AED) Team Leader

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oneida County

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 Alex Harrington at (315) 736-3394 ext. 255 or ash273@cornell.edu to be added to the Email Update List.

Ten Key Management Opportunities on Dairy Farms During Low Margin Times

Tom Overton, Jason Karszes, Robert Lynch, Julio Giordano, and Mike Van Amburgh Department of Animal Science and PRO-DAIRY Cornell University

****Choosing to share this article as we enter into a New Year*** While the original was updated back in 2020, the following herd management focal points still resonate today, particularly with lower milk prices and volatility remaining as we embark on 2026. What area (s) are you considering revisiting and making improvements to on your operation? - Marylynn Collins*

Maximize milk component production - Top-tier herds in the monthly Dairy Profit Monitor benchmarking program dairyprofit.cornell.edu are producing a combined total of 6.5 lbs/day per cow or more of fat and true protein, with a solid goal across herds of greater than 6.0 lbs/day per cow. Although the major driver of fat and protein yield is overall milk yield, component percentages are also important. In general, herd-level milk fat percentage below 3.7% and true protein percentage under 3.1% in Holstein herds suggest opportunities for improvement. Motivation to seek this improvement needs to be based on the current value of milk fat and protein – the value of milk fat has been and likely will continue to be an important driver of the milk check. Low milk fat suggests passage from the rumen of unique unsaturated fatty acids that directly inhibit milk fat synthesis and that there is opportunity either in ration formulation (unsaturated fats, carbohydrate balance, forage quality issues) or in ration implementation (dry matters, amounts fed, sorting, etc.). In the case of milk protein, levels below 3.0% suggest that rumen fermentation and microbial protein synthesis are not being maximized, or there are opportunities to improve amino acid balance by use of blended proteins or protected amino acids. The general timeline for the impact of ration changes on milk components is 10 to 14 days after implementation of the change.

Relentlessly seek marginal milk opportunities - Generally, the highest profit margin production is that from marginal (incremental) increases in milk production.

This can be accomplished by herd-level management strategies such as changing milking frequency (e.g., 2X to 3X or 4X/2X milking), shortening dry period length on higher producing cows down to 40 days dry, capturing feed efficiency through use of compounds such as Rumensin, or improving cow comfort. Several years ago, we completed a field study to evaluate production responses to 4X milking during the first three to four weeks postcalving followed by 2X milking thereafter.

Although responses varied among farms and by lactation group within farm, all farms had positive production responses for cows milked 4X/2X and the average response was approximately 3.5 lbs of component-corrected milk yield across the first 7 monthly test days – responses likely will be better in herds that maintain fresh groups at less than 100% of headlocks and can milk the fresh cows with time away from pen no more than 30 to 40 minutes per milking. The overall increase in labor/milking capacity for a 2X herd to actualize 4X/2X is only about 7% compared to 30% for whole-herd 3X. With any of these changes, it is important to look at not only the expected increases in production, but also the changes in input costs to determine what the actual profit may be.

Don't lose fresh cows - The best dairies that we encounter maintain fresh cow loss in the first 60 days in milk at or below 5% of all parturitions, without keeping low producing fresh cows simply to keep this number lower. In a recent dataset of 72 herds in New York and Vermont, about 25% of the herds had 9 to 13% of fresh cows leaving in the first 60 DIM. Furthermore, within first calf heifers this rate averaged about 6%; alarmingly, the highest 25% of herds had between 7 and 11% of first calf heifers leaving in the first 60 DIM. This represents a large economic loss to these dairies. Frequently, contributors to these losses are overcrowding both before or after calving, frequent group changes before or after calving, or competition issues between springing heifers and older cows. In another recent dataset from our group, cows in herds with less than 28 inches of bunk space prefresh had 40% greater risk of leaving the herd in the first 30 DIM. Ration formulation issues are relatively rare, but ration implementation issues (long chop length of dry forages in dry/prefresh TMR leading to sorting, inaccurate weighing of ingredients, not accounting for dry matter changes) are common. Farms with high quality forages typically will need to obtain low energy forages for far-off dry cow rations because high-energy intake far-off can lead to more fresh cow health disorders and increased fresh cow loss. If overall management practices and grouping are in line, there is little added value from routine drenching/pumping practices.

Identify and potentially cull low value and low profit cows - Identify the low producing cows who are not generating enough revenue to cover variable feed and labor expenses and use routines such as COWVAL in DairyComp 305 (either on-farm or can be run by DairyOne technician at monthly herd visit) to identify those lower value cows in the herd for either removal, dry off or replacement. In overstocked pens, removal of low profit cows may result in little to no change in overall milk yield because of better overall performance of the remaining cows. If barns are understocked, how can culling be controlled or heifer rearing be improved to ensure that facilities are being used at optimal capacity? It is important to analyze each individual herd situation, perhaps in conjunction with your agri-service professionals (consultants, extension, veterinarian, nutritionist) because the opportunity can vary widely from herd to herd.

Ensure that all management protocols are still appropriate, are working and still being followed - Protocol drift in many areas of dairy herd management (an incomplete list includes milking routines, calving and colostrum management, reproductive program implementation, and feeding management) is more common then desired. This can easily lead to drag in milk yield, higher SCC, poorer conception rate, increased morbidity and mortality in calves, lower feed efficiency and poorer rumen health among other issues. Are you losing out on milk quality premiums because of milking routine/ facility issues or a few high SCC cows that are elevating the entire tank? Spending time and money on protocols that are no longer appropriate or needed on the farm adds unnecessary expenses to the farm. Take the opportunity to review protocols with employees and provide feedback to ensure that these protocols are getting the response and return that you expect. Also take time to review protocols with key agri-service personnel and farm employees to determine if they are still needed and providing positive returns, or if there are changes that can made.

Don't incur excess heifer rearing costs: raising animals longer than necessary or raising to many - Despite years of research and herd experience that suggests that herds can grow heifers well and calve them at 21 to 22 months of age, many herds still average 24 to 26 months age or higher at first calving. This can incur substantial additional cost both in terms of feed requirements and facility/labor to support additional heifer inventory. Preliminary results indicate that the economic costs to raise a heifer on dairy farms in NY is over $2,300.

If raising more heifers than necessary, what is the ability for the farm to recoup the investment in the animal? An Excel spreadsheet calculator for evaluation of the heifer enterprise is available at the PRO-DAIRY website located at prodairy.cals.cornell.edu/business-management/resources

Of course, quality of heifers also counts. In our recent study, lactational milk yield of first lactation animals averaged between 75 and 80% of mature cows in 25% of the herds studied, however, we have observed individual herd where first lactation 305d milk yield is as low as 68% of mature cows. The goal is 80% of mature cow 305d milk yield and anything less than that is simply unrealized milk. Among several herd studied, 72 to 74% of mature milk is equal to approximately 10 lb milk per day that is unrealized, which is a significant loss of revenue. To overcome this, the goal is be 82 to 85% of the body weight post-calving of the mature cows or to be approximately 94% of the mature size precalving. Furthermore, cull and death rates of first lactation animals varied widely. Herds averaged about 19% cull and death rate in first lactation animals – the highest 25% of herds ranged from 25 to 37% and the lowest 25% of herds ranged from 5 to 15%. If poor heifer quality is driving high turnover of first lactation animals, this can be a large economic loss that can go unrealized on many farms.

Get the most out of your reproduction program - Many dairies are consistently achieving pregnancy rates of 26% or higher. Comparing this to what used to be considered a good goal of 20% a few years ago, there is significant revenue to be gained. Even at current milk prices, a 500 cow dairy stands to gain $42,000/yr if they can improve from 20% to 26%. Of course, any additional expenses needed to make improvements in the breeding program must be deducted from this dollar figure. Evaluate all aspects of your reproduction program and take advantage of the advancements our industry has made in this area to improve.

Optimize neonatal management - Opportunities exist on many dairies to decrease stillborn (DOA) rates and decrease morbidity and mortality in calves through the milk-fed phase and weaning. Our best dairies consistently maintain dead-on-arrival (DOA) rates in female calves at around 4 to 5% of all calvings; however, a number of dairies have DOA rates of 8 to 10% or more, especially in first calf heifers. Intensively managing the calving process for a "just-in-time" move from a close-up group to a calving area usually decreases DOA rates (and also decreases overall fresh cow problems). More calves born alive provides more calves that either eventually enter the herd or can be sold to improve cash flow. Once born alive, studies suggest that calf mortality rates average 8% and morbidity averages about 30%. In our recent study, the best 25% of dairies averaged less than 2% death and cull rate in the first 3 months of life.

Excellent colostrum management [4 quarts of quality colostrum (> 45 to 50 mg/ml of IgG; < 100,000 CFU/ml of bacteria) within 4 hours of birth for Holsteins] is critical to ensure that calves have sufficient passive transfer of immunity and nutrition immediately after birth. Calves should be fed to double their birth weight by 56 days of life, which is higher than traditional feeding recommendations – this level of nutrient intake enhances the efficiency of lean gain and provides nutrients to allow the immune system to function, thereby decreasing veterinary and medicine costs for the calf program. Daily diet costs increase, but return on investment (gain:feed) decreases accordingly.

Strategically identify ration opportunities - Opportunities exist both in terms of using accurate forage analyses to enable tighter ration formulation and more sophisticated forage analyses (e.g., fiber digestibilities) integrated with nutritional models to optimize use of homegrown forage within dairy rations. If forage is of high quality and inventory is adequate, is it being utilized to its potential? Likewise, if high quality forage is not available, are there other ration adjustments that can be made to optimize milk yield? Recent work has suggested that there are opportunities to strategically decrease protein feeding levels and maintain high milk and milk component yield. This strategy has focused primarily on decreasing rumen degradable protein supply to about 8 to 9% of diet dry matter and using high quality undegradable protein sources and amino acids to ensure adequate metabolizable protein supply. Economics likely will make this approach more attractive in high corn silage based diets when haylage inventory is limited. Research consistently indicates that there is no productive or reproductive reason to exceed approximately 0.40% phosphorus for fresh cows, and 0.35% phosphorus for cows at other stages of lactation. Formulated diet levels of 0.35% phosphorus are typically achieved using only basal feed ingredients, and no added phosphorus from mineral sources. Although it is tempting to remove nutrients or feed additives from the ration to lower cost, be careful that you are not hurting subsequent returns by doing so. It is reasonable to carefully review with your nutritionist what is going into diets and ensure that you are making solid decisions. When making changes to the overall nutrition program, it is important to measure and track net milk income over feed costs to ensure that the changes you are making are providing the results that you are looking for. More information on this topic can be found in the companion paper "Feeding strategies during challenging times" authored by Tom Overton and Larry Chase and found at prodairy.cals.cornell.edu.

Maximize your feeding management program - The feeding management program can result in hidden losses in feeding programs. Opportunities range from decreasing shrink at the silo by better face management in bunks and bags to accurate and frequent (at least weekly) assessment of silage dry matters to ensure more consistent delivery of diets to cows to decreasing shrink of purchased ingredients during storage and feeding. This is another area in which protocol drift both within a feeder and across multiple feeders has occurred. This can change particle size and consistency of diets, which contributes to inconsistent intakes and lower efficiency of use of diets. This protocol drift may also impact other costs on the farm, such as labor, fuel, maintenance, and repairs.

Summary of the New York and Vermont Corn Silage Hybrid Evaluation Program Field Crop Performance Network Findings of 2025

Natika Walters

Full report available at cals.cornell.edu/pro-dairy/

Hybrid evaluation of multiple environments helps in decision making and expands the reach of this type of data to more farmers. Cornell, UVM, and seed companies collaborate to provide this evaluation. Field locations spanned from Erie County in western NY to Essex County in northeastern NY and Grand Isle County in northwestern Vermont. Planting occurred on June 4th in Aurora and May 13th in Alburgh. The early-mid hybrids were harvested on September 9th, and the mid-late hybrids were harvested on September 17th in Alburgh.

Harvest did not occur at the Aurora location due to extreme weather patterns resulting in failure and substantial variability between plots. Based on RM there is a range in tasseling dates From planting to harvest, the early-mid hybrids accumulated 1,977 GDD with the mid-late hybrids accumulated 2,072 in Alburgh (86- 50°F system). While the general trend was above average precipitation early in the growing season followed by dry to drought conditions later in the season, the total amounts and timing of precipitation played a significant role in overall crop performance (yield and nutritional value). The trends, and in some cases lack of trends, highlight the interactions of weather patterns, soil characteristics and cropping system/rotation with crop performance.

There are tables available in the full report. Due to space constraints in Farm Flash we are unable to print the summary with the tables. If you would like to view them contact Alex at ash273@cornell.edu

Lewis County, NY

This location reported the highest crop yield across the network despite having below average precipitation. Soil health characteristics providing adequate drainage and good water holding capacity along with the timing of precipitation events likely factored into the overall performance.

Madison County, NY

Across most locations, Hybrid A and B showed similar performance; however, this location was the exception. Observations at harvest showed stunted ears on hybrid A which shows up as larger differences in crop yield and starch content between hybrids A and B. Reviewing field data, this variation between hybrid A and B may be associated in field topography and changes in soil type. Lower average whole plant DM aligns with low GDD accumulation due to harvest schedule restrictions. Within field variability and slightly lower emerged populations in hybrid B are noted variables in reported yields, which were likely factors in the recorded differences.

It may not always be desirable to select a hybrid that falls into the second quadrant (above average in crop yield and PMY). Instead, selecting a range of hybrids may be beneficial to accommodate feeding a range of cow groups. As an example, with respect to other forages available for the diet, it is often not favorable to feed a highly digestible corn silage to heifers or dry cows as this may cause over conditioning due to increased DMI and excessive energy consumption. However, the difference in PMY results in different growing environments demonstrates the importance of growing digestible forages as an approach to reduce non-forage feed costs and non-forage feed inclusion rates. Environmental conditions strongly influence the forage quality; however, selecting hybrids that have performed well under varying conditions may improve your chances of having a more digestible forage compared to other hybrids grown under the same conditions.

Women in Agriculture Programming Efforts are in the works! Please consider participating in a brief poll to
1. Indicate what programs are a need or an interest
2. Share your preferred meeting time and frequency

Scan the QR Code to take the poll!

Ag Value Exemption: Potential for Tax Savings
Jessica Pyrda - Oneida County Soil and Water Conservation District

January is usually down time. You may be thinking about getting your taxes done. If you are a farmer or rent land to one, you may be eligible for an assessment based on the lands value for its use in agricultural production and potential tax savings.

To qualify for this assessment your agricultural business must average $10,000 or more in gross sales and use a minimum of 7 acres of land. Eligible agricultural land includes cropland, pasture, orchards, sugarbush, ag support land, Christmas trees and horse boarding (not for racing purposes).

Christmas trees and horse boarding operations have more requirements than the 7 acres. Please contact your assessor for more information on them. Rented agricultural land also qualifies if the parcel is at least 7 acres and under lease to a farm.

Assessment values are based on soil types established by NYS.

To see if you qualify for an assessment you will need to contact your Assessor and then Soil & Water Conservation District (315-736-3334 x 3 - Jessica Pyrda).

*Annual renewal is required. If you fail to renew your parcel you will be required to submit the RP-305 Agricultural Assessment Application again.

** A new application must be completed for any land that has been split or newly acquired for farm production.

Please scan QR code for a link to Agricultural Assessment Application or contact Alex at ash273@cornell.edu for a paper version.

Agriculture Non-Point Source Pollution (Ag-Nonpoint/ AGNPS)

Jeff Miller - Oneida County Soil and Water Conservation District

We all can picture some manure, fertilizer or herbicide finding its way into some surface water course near our farm. The objective of this annual funding is to prioritize areas where soil sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, manure and /or pesticides are entering surface or ground water and reduce their quantity and impact.

Several types of projects have been funded in the past with this goal in mind:

- Manure storage construction
- Covered barnyards
- Silage leachate collection and treatment
- Milkhouse wastewater treatment
- Cover crops
- Controlling runoff near farmsteads
- Controlling runoff in crop fields

Below is a graph of annual funding for this program across NYS.

AGNPS ROUND PROGRAM UPDATE

Round	Total	Completed	Cancelled	Active	Pending	Under Review	Funding Amount
24	55	44	8	3	0	0	$16,800,000.00
25	47	39	2	6	0	0	$16,300,000.00
26	46	22	5	19	0	0	$14,900,000.00
27	44	8	5	30	0	1	$14,000,000.00
28	36	5	0	31	0	0	$13,100,000.00
29	33	2	1	28	0	0	$13,800,000.00
30	50	0	0	0	50	0	$24,800,000.00
Total	311	120	21	117	50	1	$113,700,000.00

Personally when I see funds in the millions of dollars I think "that's a lot of money" but am grounded very quickly when I see the cost of building a single manure storage at $400,000+ with cost share up to 75%. So these funds are prioritized and getting them is competitive. To find out more about this program contact the Oneida County SWCD at: (315) 736-3334

Other services that the District provides to farmers:

Nutrient Management Plans: developing a plan for the farm that looks at the timing and rates of application of manure and/or fertilizer to meet crop needs but reduces the likelihood of manure/ nutrients entering surface or groundwater

Ag Value Assessments: the District assists landowners with the Soil Group worksheets that are needed as part of the RP-305 application

Technical assistance: soils maps, evaluating farmsteads, cropland erosion concerns, stream bank erosion/stabilization and crossings

Soil Sampling for Accurate Nutrient Recommendations
Hayleigh Gates and Jeff Miller - Oneida County Soil and Water Conservation District

When to take a soil sample:

For crop/forage fields:

- Spring: before crops are seeded and before manure or fertilizers are applied
- Fall: after crops are harvested but before any fall manure is applied

For garden/lawns/small areas:

- Not time-dependent but avoid saturated, fertilized, or other obscured conditions to prevent inaccurate samples

Although not required, it is recommended that ongoing sampling occurs at consistent timing, such as a field that is sampled every year, is sampled every spring

Obtaining a precise and accurate sample:

- Remember that when taking a sample, you are trying to represent the average fertility of a given area
- Take a minimum of 8 samples from small areas like a garden, or 3 subsamples per acre for all crop/forage fields
- Avoid sampling from unusual areas (old hedge rows, field edges, concentrated flows, where manure/fertilizer have been recently applied, etc.)

- Take an equal volume for each subsample, and sample to the same depth (6-8 inches)
- Zigzag across the area when obtaining subsamples
- Once the area has been covered, break apart any large clumps, mix together the subsample thoroughly and remove any rocks or excess organic matter
- Obtain 1 pint, or a lunch bag, worth of the representative sample to submit to the lab
- Allow soil to dry before submitting to the lab

Filling out a submission form for your sample:

Filling out your soil sample submission form is an important part of submitting the sample(s) to receive accurate recommendations for where, and what you're trying to grow.

Depending on the form you choose to submit, you may need to provide the following:

- Sample ID
- Sample date
- Soil name
- Crop code/species/prior crops/future crops
- Tillage depth
- Artificial drainage
- % legume last year
- Year established
- Maintenance
- Soil drainage
- Soil texture

Crop history provides information to calculate nutrients that may come from crop residues.

Crop plans for future years provide the needed information to produce nutrient recommendations for the upcoming crop.

Choosing and submitting your soil sample submission form:

Cornell has performed continuous field studies in New York and throughout the Northeast to correlate their fertilizer recommendations using a Morgan analysis with soil analysis results. Two labs currently can use a Morgan analysis on soils samples (Dairyone and University of Maine).

Dairyone offers soil sample analyses (Morgan extractant) from $16-$22/sample + $2 bag fee. This provides you with soil test values and fertilizer recommendations based on Cornell field research. Dairyone has a series of soil sample submission forms for the services they provide, and supplemental services are offered at an additional expense per form. You can find these forms at dairyone.com under the Resources tab > Forms and Documents > Soil Submission Forms.

Submission Form A (Commercial Field Crops): $22 per sample – to test pH, buffer pH (lime requirement), organic matter, Morgan phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, aluminum, iron, zinc, and manganese

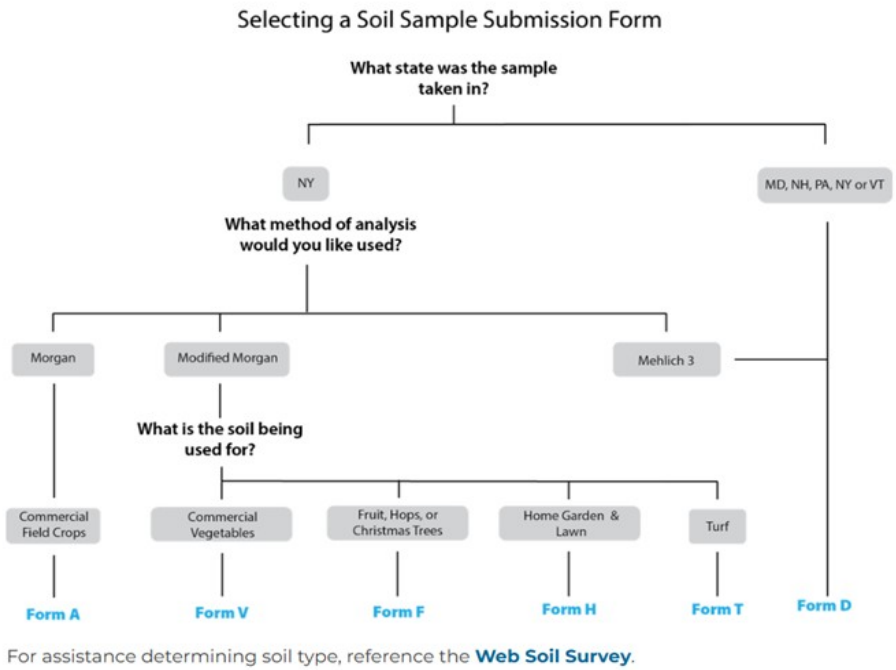
Submission Form V (Commercial Vegetable Crops): $16 per sample – to test pH, buffer pH (lime requirement), organic matter, Modified Morgan phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, aluminum, iron, zinc, and manganese

Submission Form F (Commercial Fruit): $16 per sample – to test pH, buffer pH (lime requirement), organic matter, Modified Morgan phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, aluminum, iron, zinc, and manganese

Submission Form H (Home & Garden): $16 per sample – to test pH, buffer pH (lime requirement), organic matter, Modified Morgan phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, aluminum, iron, zinc, and manganese

Submission Form T (Turf): $16 per sample – to test pH, buffer pH (lime requirement), organic matter, Modified Morgan phosphorus, potassium, calcium, magnesium, aluminum, iron, zinc, and manganese

Dairyone has drop off sites around the state where you can place your samples at no charge (Sangerfield Bldg by FS Growmark or Oneida Madison Coop). You will typically receive your results within one to three weeks via email, or mail.



The University of Maine will perform the same Morgan extractant analysis for $15/sample. Maine requires soil samples to be 1.5 cups in a plastic Ziplock bag, and the cheapest way we found to transport soil samples to Maine was via USPS in a 12" x 12" x3" box, at a flat cost of $31.40. You can fit approximately 12 samples into this sized box. The University of Maine provides soil test results in an excel spreadsheet format, and this information can then be downloaded into a software called CropwarePlus.Net, to generate the Cornell research-based nutrient recommendations. This is the program utilized by Oneida County Soil and Water Conservation District to help landowners record and plan nutrient applications.

Updates on some projects conducted by SWCD staff on local farms

Tim Wimmer, Jeremy Langner, Don Lynch and Hayliegh Gates

One project completed this year with the guidance of Oneida County SWCD staff was a covered solid manure storage, consisting of a concrete pad and buck wall from the barn to the storage, a ramping pit belowground, and a roof overhead to divert clean water.

A second project was a covered feed area to contain runoff nutrients from manure and feed, while keeping clean water clean.

Oneida County Soil and Water Conservation District
121 Second Street Oriskany, NY 13424
315-736-3394

Pause in 2026 Cornell Guidelines Production

Cornell IPM has been working with Illume Projects, a project management consultant, on how to reimagine the Cornell Crop and Pest Management Guidelines. Through interviews, surveys, and data analysis, Illume Projects has evaluated the Guidelines' production system, their value, and ways we can improve the Guidelines for a long-term future.

After careful consideration based on Illume's findings and their recommendations, we have decided to pause Guideline production for 2026. We feel this is the best way for us to put our energy into restructuring and rejuvenating the Guidelines. Producing revised editions for 2026 while restructuring the whole Guidelines system is not possible without sacrificing quality and the long-term future of the Guidelines.

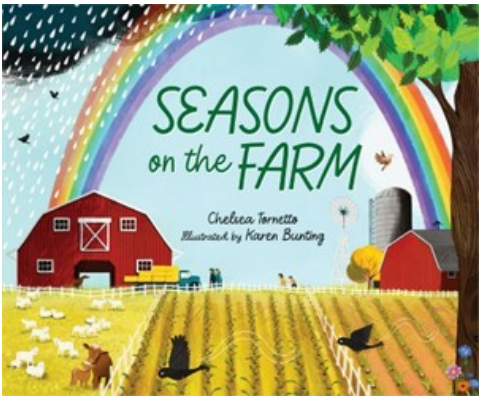
While we have paused Guidelines production for 2026, we will still offer the 2025 versions of the Guidelines through the Cornell Store. Print versions for each title will be available as long as their supply lasts. Online versions will be available for purchase until the next editions are released in 2027.

The 2026-2027 New York/New England Greenhouse/Herbaceous Ornamentals Guidelines that was announced yesterday was an exception to the pause. We had a commitment to our New England partners for the work, which was finished prior to our decision.

We realize the pause is a bold move, but it's the best way for us to have the space to modernize the Guidelines. We appreciate your support as we move towards a stronger and more sustainable future for the Guidelines. We will keep you updated on our progress and any opportunities for input.

-From Cornell IPM

Help Grow the Next Generation:
Support Children's Appreciation of Agriculture!



Will you volunteer an hour of your time to promote agriculture in schools? Agricultural Literacy Week is an annual event held every March coordinated by New York Agriculture in the Classroom and implemented by Oneida County 4-H to support children's appreciation of agriculture.

Each March, volunteer readers go into local elementary classrooms to read the featured book and do a related activity. We usually do two weeks due to the number of registered classrooms. The book for 2026 is ***Seasons on the Farm;*** Written by Chelsea Tornetto, Illustrated by Karen Bunting.

Register using the QR Code or link: https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5jsN2vQkiZuYOEK

Want the link emailed to you? Contact:
Celeste Oppito, 4-H Educator
cmo95@cornell.edu

Farmer's Tax Guide

Getting ready for tax season? The CCE Oneida Ag Team has plenty of copies of the 2025 Farmer's Tax Guide at our office located at 121 Second St, Oriskany. Stop by to get one or contact Alex Harrington at ash273@cornell.edu to have one sent to you.

A Year of Farm-to-School in Oneida County

Madelyn Engel

Farm-fresh, local foods in school cafeterias—that's what Farm-to-School is all about. Under the 30% NYS Initiative, schools are incentivized to source at least 30% of their cafeteria food from NY producers. But beyond the reimbursement benefits, it's not a difficult mission to support. Farm-to-School efforts support NY agriculture, the local economy, and student nutrition—a win for everyone. While many Oneida County school districts have met or are actively working toward the 30% threshold, educators are also working to get students on board. As an Ag Educator at CCE Oneida, I have the privilege of visiting classrooms and helping students make those farm connections. As we begin a new year, here's a look back at some of the Farm-to-School programs we brought into schools in 2025.

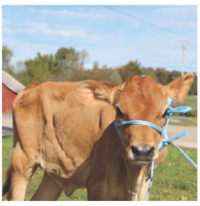
One of our most popular programs this year was the Taste-Testing Series, in which students learned about a hyper-local food item before playing "food critic" and tasting it themselves. This year's tastings included unique apple varieties from local orchards, cheeses from local cheesemakers, and raw local honey from different floral sources. Students not only discover how much work goes into producing these products—they also learn how to describe tastes and textures, explore their own preferences, and share opinions with classmates. Reviews are consistently positive, with many students leaving with a new favorite variety or trying something they'd never considered before. The best part? When those foods appear in the cafeteria later, students are already eager to try them and understand the importance of choosing local.

Another highlight this year was launching the Oneida County Adopt-a-Calf program. In partnership with four local dairy farms, we introduced eight calves for classrooms to "adopt" for the school year. More than 60 classrooms signed up for 2025–2026. Each month, students receive a calf update with a photo, a mini dairy-focused lesson, and additional learning resources. Students and teachers alike are excited to follow their calf's progress. Milk is required to be offered in all school cafeterias, and yet many students don't understand the process of getting it there. Through the Adopt-a-Calf program, we hope to bridge some of those knowledge-gaps and have students connecting with dairy.

We are excited to continue programs like these into the new year, and we are grateful for the farmers who make Farm-to-School possible here in Oneida County. Together, we're spreading the good word about local food!

2025-2026 ADOPT-A-CALF

“ Bambi ”
from Finndale Farms
in Holland Patent



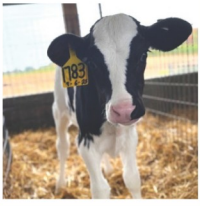
“ Penny ”
from Finndale Farms
in Holland Patent

“ Rosie ”
from Collins Knoll Farm
in Chadwicks

“ Poppy ”
from Collins Knoll Farm
in Chadwicks

“ Stella ”
from Bridgewater Farms
in Cassville

“ Annabelle ”
from Bridgewater Farms
in Cassville



“ Winnie ”
from DiNitto Farms
in Marcy

“ Sandie ”
from DiNitto Farms
in Marcy

A special thank you to Brandon Crandall for taking time to volunteer at CCE Oneida to spread mulch on our Nature Trail!

Looking for a new way to advertise your business? Think about sponsoring Farm Flash for 2026. If you're interested contact Alex Harrington at ash273@cornell.edu or call (315) 736-3394 x 255.

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