“PARA-VETERINARIANS”

By Mick Bessire, Greene County

Nope, this article isn’t about two vets working together, like “Los Dos Hermanos” (two brothers) Vet Clinic in central New Mexico. Instead, it’s about the mind and skill-set that livestock producers should probably have in their “repertoire” and at their command to be in the business. Some have said, “necessity is a mother,” and it seems to be more so all the time – with the ever-increasing shortfall of well-trained livestock (or food supply) veterinarians, able and willing to make visits to the smaller farms. The issue is similar to the livestock processing facilities shortfall, in that it’s another instance of the agricultural industry’s supportive infrastructure shrinking, even in the light of increased livestock production on small-scale operations in the region.

We’ve always stressed that livestock producers should have an overall herd/flock health program in effect for their operations. Ideally, this program is set up with a cooperating veterinarian of choice, convenience, and/or proximity. The program would include feed and nutrition directives, breeding and reproduction agendas, housing requirements, vaccination and worming schedules, foot and teeth care – and general “prophylactic” efforts to keep all kinds of maladies “headed off at the pass.” On the therapeutic side, mitigation for disease, poisoning, “pestilence” problems, and emergency contingency plans should also be a part of the overall health program. Or what to do, in what order, until the vet arrives – or doesn’t...

There seems to be (most often) fairly adequate veterinary representation for the larger dairies and equine enterprises. But, when it comes to small scale beef cattle, sheep, goats, swine, ungulates, raites, and yes, even some “chicken outfits” – vets that cater to these folks nowadays are scarce as, well, “hen’s teeth.” It’s equally important (or possibly even more so) that these smaller-scale producers have access to veterinary advocacy in day to day issues and emergencies, as well as assistance in setting up an over-all health program for their operations.

It seems like there are a number of reasons for the “missing in action” vet problem. Included in the list are logistics issues, time constraints, equipment deficiencies, size/scope of operations, and the cost-effectiveness of treatment to relatively small numbers. Not to mention the risk of injuries, (to the vet) and even the wage returns to college debt ratios. So the primary question becomes, what can be done, in this environment of not enough vets to “go around?” “Vet Deserts.”

We get lots of calls each year at the CCE, asking “vet questions.” I really enjoy the opportunity to put my 50 years of livestock experience to work in these cases, and sometimes I can even help, and I’m glad to do it. The main problem with this arrangement lies in making an attempt at accurate diagnosis and proper treatment without the “laying on of hands” (or eyes) upon the critters. I always preclude any advice I give with the recommendation to get a veterinarian to “see” the animal. But then, we often get back to the main problem, of finding a vet “handy.”

There are veterinary “hot-lines” at several of the land-grant colleges, including our own Cornell Veterinary College at (607) 253-3100. Many of the folks answering the hot-lines are veterinary students, and even they too, will sometimes struggle with accurate diagnosis, prognosis, and treatment advice. So at best, phone advice might be considered “somewhat effective,” in certain instances, anyway.

“On-line guidance” in certain veterinary situations is another possibility, and many of the land-grant colleges of...
Changes to Animal Health Requirements For New York State and County Fairs

We recently received from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets updated animal health requirements for the New York State and county fairs. Important changes noted for 2013 are:

- All cattle and swine must be identified by USDA approved official ear tag.
- Rabies vaccination lower age limit is 4 months.
- Category 2 veterinary accreditation is now required.
- GoPass is now available for horse movements.

Regarding tags that will satisfy the “USDA approved official ear tag” requirement for cattle and swine, the APHIS/USDA website has 12 pages detailing the criteria and options for official tags. We won’t try to summarize all that in this column. Your herd or flock veterinarian should be able to determine this for you. It is also possible to contact the state veterinarian if a determination is needed on an existing tag or tags.

Regarding rabies vaccination, in previous years the lower age limit was 105 days. Also the previous requirement was to have the shot done at least 14 days prior to arrival at the fair. The new language simply says that the vaccine must have been administered within the past 12 months. (The exception is Imrab LA vaccine used in sheep which protects for 3 years after the second annual vaccination. Consult your veterinarian for more information on this). Essentially this means that the vaccine could be administered up to the day of arrival at the fair. Remember, veterinarians are busy people and may not be available for an “11th hour” visit. Timely scheduling of the veterinarian’s farm visit is always a good idea especially if they have to issue a Certificate of Veterinary Inspection for your animals.

Category 2 veterinarians are those who are accredited to work on food and fiber animal species, equines, all bird species and poultry, farm-raised aquatic animal species, exotic livestock species, and zoo animals that can transmit exotic animal diseases to livestock. (Category 1 veterinarians are not accredited to work on these species).

GoPass is an electronic six-month equine passport health certificate that may be a substitute for the existing paper-based, 30 day Certificate of Veterinary Inspection health certificate for the state of New York. Veterinarians in New York are approved to issue GoPass certificates for horses travelling to 14 other states plus within New York. A GoPass can be used as an entry document for New York fairs. You are not required to get a GoPass; if you live in New York and keep your horses here and are only travelling to fairs or shows in New York you still just need a valid negative EIA test record and a valid rabies vaccination certificate.
Ag and Markets requires rabies vaccination for all species for which there is a USDA licensed vaccine available (cattle, horse, sheep, dog, cat, and ferret). Individual fairs can require that animals for which there is no approved rabies vaccine be immunized. As I am employed in this county I will mention that this applies to the Saratoga County Fair. Thus goats, swine, and camelids must also be vaccinated. The New York State Fair requires rabies vaccination for all livestock species entering the grounds.

Unless noted, most of the animal health requirements are the same as in prior years. Your local CCE office should have a copy of the complete 2013 document and as usual the requirements will appear in open class and 4-H exhibitor’s handbooks for the various fairs.

**Is Overtime Pay Looming on Horizon Again?**

Ag employers need to continue watching the horizon as well as talking to their legislators about regulations. There will be changes possibly coming from both the federal direction (minimum wage increase, an expanded guest worker program) as well as possible changes from the state level.

A push for overtime pay and a mandatory day of rest are two regulations that have the potential to seriously influence the financial picture on a farm even if it only impacts some of the key crunch times of harvest. The economic impact is something all farms should think about since it may require more investigation to truly grasp the areas that could be at issue.

For farms that have employees regularly working a few long days per week or many days in a row, this could add up to a 10-25% increase in labor expenses. Each farm needs to think about what could happen because it may be critical to the decision making process that is ever on-going for most farms.

Adding a high value but labor intensive crop could look completely different in a partial budget when seasonal overtime must be considered. Or a mandatory rest day is a challenge for many farm businesses with livestock requiring care 7 days/week. Pay attention and get thinking about your situation. Then talk with others about theirs.

**Are You Sure That It Worked?**

Are you sure that worked when you applied that fertilizer; or changed the closing wheels on your planter; or whatever else you changed or tried new? A small effect multiplied
Are You Sure......... Continued from page 3 by many acres can add up to something significant (good or bad). How do you know for sure what you did made a difference? With a little effort, you can do an experiment, and measure the difference. This spring plan your field work just a little and test your new product or practice.

Rule one is to keep it simple. Compare only two things: with or without a product; little or a lot; implement one vs. implement two. These are your “treatments”. Think through each step to apply your treatments. For example, let’s say I want to compare an area with manure and one without manure. When I spread the manure to one area, I am also compacting the soil with the machinery. So, I need to run my machinery through the second area to do the same amount of compaction (without apply manure). Now the ONLY difference is the manure.

Rule two is to replicate. Compare the two treatments more than once. Use as uniform an area as you can. If one strip of hybrid one out yields one strip of hybrid two, are you going to plant your whole farm to hybrid one next year? There are lots of things that affect yield, to be sure that the difference is really the hybrid, you have to compare the two several times. Some compare your two treatments side by side in three or more locations either in one field, or in various fields. Do not be convinced too easily.

The next step is to measure any differences that occur. This can be the tricky part depending on what you are comparing. A yield monitor can make some comparisons very easy. I will be glad to help, so give me a call (other than hand harvesting and weighing an entire field).

Once you have some measurements, you analyze the numbers. Are the measurements from one treatment consistently greater than the other treatment? Are the numbers convincing you of any real differences that may have occurred? Statistics can help to analyze the numbers. Again, give me a call. Everyone knows that each crop year is different. It is good to repeat experiments. If you have some concrete evidence, then you have information to make future decisions.

There are several resources to help you do on-farm research. The first is Cornell Cooperative Extension; so give me a call to help you set up and carry out your on-farm research project. You will also find information at the NY On-Farm Research Partnership [http://nmsp.cals.cornell.edu/NYOnFarmResearchpartnerships/index.html], a factsheet about on-farm research, [http://nmsp.cals.cornell.edu/publications/factsheets/factsheet68.pdf]; and online statistical analysis [http://www.iharf.ca/resources/research-guide.pdf]. There are also several farmer groups that put their on-farm research results on the web. Do a Google search for: Practical Farmers of Iowa; Michigan Soybean Promotion Committee; Iowa Soybean Association; Farmer’s Independent Research of Seed Technology.
On The Lighter Side

A Humorous Look at Everyday Farm Life

Farmers Are Magicians

The definition of magician is one who is skilled at producing baffling effects or illusions by sleight of hand or concealed apparatus. That sound just like a farmer to me. Only a farmer can make food out of dirt and water.

Only a farmer could leave the barn at 7pm and think he could be cleaned up and in his seat by 7:30, to watch his child star in the school play. Only a farmer could chop one more load of silage, even though the chopper fuel gauge has been riding on E for the last two loads. Only a farmer could cajole a loose heifer back into the barn after she has tasted the joy of being unconfined for the first time.

Most farmers are full of magic tricks, like felling a three foot in diameter tree, with an 18 inch chain saw or changing two tires at once with one jack. A farmer can magically, right before your eyes, turn a front end loader into a scaffold, forklift or even a rock picker. It’s magical how a farmer can remember where he used a tool last, how much to tighten a bolt without twisting it off and how to disappear when a salesman pulls into the yard.

What gives a farmer these seemingly magical powers? Some of it comes from a boundless sense of optimism needed to solve the numerous problems that must be dealt with every day. Some of it comes from a willingness to dive in to a problem in the hope it isn’t as bad as it looks at first glance. Or is it the smug feeling they will have if they can solve the problem without breaking the bank.

Magic is the only way to explain what a farmer is able to do. How else could a farmer know how hard to push a machine without breaking it, how to make one milk check last until the next one comes, how to fix almost anything with duct tape, baler twine and super glue; and how to turn an unruly teenager into a responsible adult.

There are many ways that farmers perform magic tricks. In a matter of minutes, they can produce a live, hungry calf from a concerned mother cow. In a matter of hours they can convert a machine that harvests hay crops into one that will harvest field corn.

In a matter of days they can convert an empty trench silo into one so full of silage; it won’t hold one more kernel. In a matter of years they can convert a poorly drained pasture into productive environmentally friendly cropland.

And in a life time they can turn a marginal farm into a successful one. I would call that pure magic.

Joe Peck, a Saratoga County dairy farmer, storyteller and humorous speaker, is author of “A Tractor in the House & Other Smashing Farm Stories” and “A Cow in the Pool & Udder Humorous Farm Stories” which you may order at www.joepeckonline.com or call (518) 584-4129.

Old Crop, New Opportunity

By Doug LaGrange, Albany County

On Saturday, February 16th, the Guggenheim Pavilion at the Carey Center for Global Good was filled to capacity with, primarily, farmers and brewers from Albany County and beyond. The event? A Farmer/Brewer workshop on barley which covered many topics ranging from seed to bottle. The workshop was co-sponsored by Albany County Cornell Cooperative Extension, the USDA Farm Service Agency and the Carey Center in Rensselaerville. Funding for the event was provided through a grant from the Hudson River Valley Greenway.

This event was inspired by the N.Y.S. legislation signed into law last summer by Governor Cuomo which, among other things, expands opportunities for farm breweries. The specific part of the law, that is prompting everyone’s interest, is the requirement for locally grown products to be used in order to be “New York State” labeled beer. These stipulations include that a minimum 20% of all hops and 20% of all other ingredients (malted barley in this case) must be locally grown and used in the brewing process from now through December 31, 2018. The next step will be 60% of each until December 31, 2023 and then, a minimum of 90% will be required.

This will create a strong demand from brewers in NYS Continued on page 7
“PARA-VETS” Continued from page 1  

fer information to the public. A couple of good websites to connect with are:  [http://vet.cornell.edu/library/vetaccess. tm](http://vet.cornell.edu/library/vetaccess.tm)  [http://vet.cornell.edu/consultant](http://vet.cornell.edu/consultant)  or  [http://www.palmervet.com](http://www.palmervet.com)  In addition to sometimes having to pay a fee for the service, there may also be potential problems using website instruction in “real life” situations. I envision a scenario where the producer being “coached” on the internet is trying to hold the laptop still, while on a “fishing expedition” for the two front feet. Or, the laptop freezes up. Caution should be exercised when using U-tube renditions and offerings of livestock interventions. Although they are sometimes helpful, in some cases they can confound and confuse the viewer, and sometimes the “credentials” of the “coach” can be questionable.

The best circumstance, by far, is a visit by the vet, to assess the situation first-hand, and then present a diagnosis, remedy, and/or a prognosis regimen. The next best thing is for the producer to be experientially trained by the veterinarian, going through the protocol for handling a wide range of maladies, issues, and treatments. This is one facet of the overall health program that can prove to be invaluable to the producer.

Reading a good livestock production/veterinary hand-book about “when, how, and why” may be a very effective precursory or supplemental education to the “hands-on” training. Attending livestock production and veterinary practices schools, workshops, and classes when they’re offered can also be very helpful. Another reasonably good learning method employs a mentor farmer/rancher that is well experienced in vet practices, and preferably, has served under the tutelage of a vet, directly. This neighbor/mentor could also be a valuable part of an emergency contingency plan, in the case there is no vet visit possible, or probable.

What can be done, in addition to our producers arming themselves with para-veterinary skills from multiple resources to counteract the lack of accessible veterinary services in the region? Another “angle” to take, but could hardly be considered an “immediate” remedy, is to support, promote, and promulgate programs in locales to help fledgling veterinarians with their college expenses, in exchange for them serving for a time in “underserved” areas. The Veterinary Medicine Loan Repayment Program (VMLRP) will pay up to $25,000 each year toward educational loans of veterinarians who agree to serve in a NIFA designated “veterinarian shortage locality” for a period of three years.

Information about this program may be found at  [http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/animals/in_focus/an_health_if_vmlrp.html](http://www.nifa.usda.gov/nea/animals/in_focus/an_health_if_vmlrp.html)

In order to have an area designated a “veterinarian shortage situation,” an “Emergency in Service” application has to be approved by NIFA and administered through the NYS Ag & Markets’ Division of Animal Industry, and David C. Smith, DVM, Director.  [david.smith@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:david.smith@agriculture.ny.gov)  or (518) 457-3502

The only challenge is to get an area designated as an “underserved area,” when often times, there are small animal and “pet vets” in abundance in certain areas where livestock-oriented vets are just not to be found.

Other programs that can assist with the potential massive college debt currently associated with veterinary education, concern payback options and are the Pay As You Earn program (PAYE) and a new Income-Based Repayment Program, but these programs are not necessarily geared toward getting livestock veterinary expertise into underserved areas, but merely to trying to help the new vet live a halfway normal financial life while paying the huge loans off.

Then as always, you can call the livestock person at the local CCE, and they will probably tell you that you should call your vet. In the case that one is not available, or if a nearby mentor is not available either, he or she will probably gladly offer up their “two cents worth.” In these cases anyway, we sure hope you get more than your money’s worth. In the counties affiliated with the Capital Area Agriculture and Horticulture Program, (CAAHP) you can contact directly, (or we can refer you to) the Livestock Specialist, Mr. Tom Gallagher at (518) 577-0958 or  [tig3@cornell.edu](mailto:tig3@cornell.edu)  and he can apply his “world-class livestock expertise” to the problem at hand.

Until next time, you all take real good care…
New York's Forests – An Endangered Species?

Recent studies by Cornell University and The Nature Conservancy concluded that up to seventy percent of our state’s forestland is not regenerating. Since our current second-growth forests are entering the last quarter of their life cycle, this is a problem that should concern every New Yorker.

Our forests provide critical services to the ecosystem, including the purification and holding of water and the prevention of soil erosion. A single mature tree can sequester 48 pounds of carbon dioxide per year and produce enough oxygen to meet the needs of two people. Forests provide habitat for countless species of wildlife, and recreational opportunities and aesthetic values that contribute to our quality of life. Forests also provide important economic benefits to the state. The forest products industry employs more than 60,000 people and contributes almost nine billion dollars per year to the state’s gross annual product. Forests cover 65% of our state, and their loss would be tragic.

Most of our current forests developed when farmland was abandoned starting in the late 1800’s. During the last half of the 20th century, in the absence of natural predators, deer populations exploded to levels far exceeding the carrying capacity of the forest. In many woodlands the deer consumed the entire understory of the forest, including seedlings of desirable tree species. In some cases, the natural understory has been replaced by undesirable vegetation not eaten by deer, and this vegetation is so well established that it prevents the germination of tree seeds.

Aggressive management action will be required to address this problem before the seed trees are gone. Deer populations will have to be significantly reduced in some areas, or the deer will have to be fenced out of woodlands where forest regeneration is being attempted - an expensive alternative.

Broad use of EPA-approved forest herbicides will be necessary to control interfering vegetation. Heavy thinning of the existing forest may be required to admit sufficient sunlight to establish the future forest. Eighty percent of New York’s forestland is privately owned, and forest owners will need the public’s understanding of the measures necessary to establish the next forest. They will also need cost-share assistance from established state and federal programs in order to succeed.

The New York Forest Owners Association (NYFOA) is a non-profit organization of private woodland owners whose mission is to promote sustainable forestry practices in NY

Continued on page 10
New York All Forage Fed Bull Test - On Test Report

Nancy Glazier, NWNY Livestock/Small Farms Specialist

The NY All Forage Fed Bull Test kicked off with the arrival of 14 bulls from 6 farms on December 14, 2012; the test officially beginning December 21. Data collected that day were weight, body condition score and hip height.

The purpose of the test is to develop and evaluate the performance and quality of young bulls on a typical commercial forage diet. As the predominant feedstuff used in a cow/calf operation is forage, the data collected will assist producers in selecting bulls raised in conditions similar to the environment under which they will be expected to perform.

The diet is high quality 2nd cut grass mix hay and mineral. The test is being conducted at the Cornell University Teaching and Research Unit in Dryden, NY, and officially began December 13, 2012.

The test will run for 112 days with the end date April 12.

Next data collection is January 18.

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1Body Condition Score; 2Hip height; 3Frame score

Carcass ultrasound data was collected on December 21, 2012. This data will also be collected at the conclusion of the test. Owners will use the ultrasound data to evaluate the carcass quality of these potential herd sires.

For more information, contact Nancy Glazier, NWNY Livestock Specialist, (315) 536-5123, nig3@cornell.edu or Mike Baker, Beef Extension Specialist, 607-255-5923, mjb28@cornell.edu.

NEW YORK ALL FORAGE FED BULL TEST – 28 DAY REPORT

The second data collection was taken January 18. Bull weights were measured and Average Daily Gain calculated.

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1Average Daily Gain; 2Body Condition Score.
The adjustment period for some of the bulls was challenging. Nine of the bulls needed treatment for fever on 12/28/12; one bull needed additional treatment 1/2/13.

Dry Matter Intake (DMI) was calculated for the 35-day period. As Fed Intake (AFI) averaged 15.3 lb/hd/day bulls, DMI average per bull was 13.9 lb/day. With the average weight of 681 lb, DMI was 2% of body weight; 2.2% on AFI basis.

For more information, contact Nancy Glazier, NWNY Small Farms/Livestock Specialist, (585) 315-7746, nig3@cornell.edu or Mike Baker, Beef Extension Specialist, 607-255-5923, mjb28@cornell.edu.

The Full Pink Moon: April's Moon Guide

Here are highlights of the April 2013 Moon! The Almanac’s monthly Moon guide keeps you informed about full Moon names, Moon phase dates, and Best Days by the Moon.

April’s Full Moon, Full Pink Moon, heralds the appearance of the moss pink, or wild ground phlox—one of the first spring flowers. It is also known as the Sprouting Grass Moon, the Egg Moon, and the Fish Moon. A full Moon in April brings frost. If the full Moon rises pale, expect rain.

Best Days in April

Below are the Best Days for activities, based on the Moon’s sign and phase in April.

For Planting:
Aboveground crops: 13, 14, 23, 24  Belowground crops: 4, 5, 31

For Setting Eggs:  2, 3, 19–21, 29, 30

For Fishing:  9–25

Source: http://www.almanac.com/content/full-pink-moon-aprils-moon-guide

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BEEF PRODUCERS FIELD DAY WORKSHOP

Saturday, May 18, 2013
10:00 am - 2:30 pm

Westendlock Farm
515 West End Road
Craryville, NY

The farm is 3 miles off Route 20 at 515 West End Road, Craryville (Route 20 runs between Claverack and Hillsdale in Columbia County)

- Beef Quality Assurance Certification
- Body Condition Scoring of Cattle
- How to Choose the Right Bull
- Cattle Health

Pre-registration is required for this meeting to help plan for lunch and to make sure we have enough copies of the BQA manuals on hand. To register please fill out the form below.

Name __________________________________________________________
Farm Name ________________________________________________________________________________
Mailing Address ______________________________________________________________________________
Phone _________________________________    Email __________________________________________________________
Number of people attending ______ x $15 ______ Number of manuals needed ______ x $10 ______ (Only one manual per farm is needed.)
Total Enclosed $ ____________

Please make check out to CCE Albany County

Send registration and payment to:
CCE Albany County
Attn: Gale Kohler
24 Martin Road, Voorheesville, NY 12186

For more information on this meeting, contact Tom Gallagher at 518-765-3500 or tjg3@cornell.edu.

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How Food Marketers Can Make “Win-Win” Adjustments to their Strategies to Help Consumers Eat Better While Staying Profitable


Food marketers are masters at getting people to crave and consume the foods that they promote. Often their marketing tools are used in response to consumers’ desires for tastier, more convenient and less expensive foods. Unfortunately, much of the food that is advertised may be high in fat and sugar. With the obesity epidemic at an all-time high, we need to look for marketing solutions that can have positive outcomes for both businesses and consumers.

The following is from an academic article that describes how food marketing may be influencing consumption and over consumption. It then provides food marketers with some promising ideas on how they might meet their business objectives of profitable sales and at the same time make adjustments to help consumers eat better.

The authors are Pierre Chandon and Brian Wansink, and the full article can be found at: http://foodpsychology.cornell.edu/pdf/market_fat.pdf. (Chandon is with INSEAD Business School, Fontainebleau, France. E-mail: pierre.chandon@insead.edu; Wansink is with the Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.)

Summary

It is important to understand that marketers and the executives who guide them are torn between satisfying the desires of various consumers, the demands of their shareholders, and the concerns of public health organizations that largely perceive the food industry as the new tobacco industry. Looking for solutions that would work in today’s fast-pace culture, we scoured a host of marketing studies and examined current marketing trends. We then identified changes that food companies can implement to continue to grow their profits without growing their customer’s body mass index (BMI). In our exploration we chose to focus on key marketing tools, all of which have powerful effects.
Pricing is one of the strongest marketing factors that predicts energy intake and obesity and explains why obesity mainly plagues lower-income consumers. Econometric studies suggest that lower food prices have led to increased energy intake. Within the last thirty years the price of food has drastically declined which in turn may have caused people to eat more. In addition, one study suggests that if fast food prices were increased by a mere 10%, the obesity rate would decrease by 0.7%. People accelerate the consumption of products they believe were purchased at a lower price. We suggest applying this principle to healthier foods by offering quantity discounts or bonus packs. This can induce consumers to increase their purchases of fruits and vegetables, for example. Other win-win considerations include:

Reduce retail price of healthy food through more efficient production and distribution, e.g., lower spoilage with better packaging;

• Give coupons or discounts on fruit and vegetables, such as $1 off salads, buy-one, get-one-free;
• Use social media to promote healthy food choices.

Marketing promotion, or communication, enhances consumers’ expectations of taste, quality, and social value. Today, 72% of television advertising for food promotes candy, cereal, and fast food. A study in Montreal proved that banning television advertising in children’s programming reduced consumption of sugared cereal and trips to fast food restaurants. Promoting healthy foods in and of itself to consumers may not be effective though because of the stigma that they will taste worse. We propose re-branding healthy foods on non-health related positive benefits. Some win-win considerations include:

• Increase the use of social media and adver-gaming for healthy products;
• Increase healthy eating in the media; in movies and TV shows, portray characters eating healthily, especially in media geared towards kids.

The tastiness and package size of a food product can have an effect on satiety and how much a person ultimately consumes. Increasing the flavor complexity and number of components in a food improves its overall tastiness rating. Offering healthy foods that have more complexity, such as a fruit salad instead of a whole fruit, can increase consumption because of both variety and convenience. Larger package sizes can lead people to eat more. Reducing package sizes of less healthy foods by elongating the packages makes the size reduction less visible, which in turn can make choosing a smaller size more likely. Furthermore, restaurants can add a smaller size on the menu. Even if nobody chooses it, it will make other sizes look bigger and will lead people to choosing smaller sizes.

Eating is often more than just food intake; it is a social activity, a cultural act, and a form of entertainment. The eating environment, or placement, can promote mindless behavior that causes people to eat more food than they realize. For example, studies have suggested that the increased availability of fast food (but not full-service restaurants) is a strong predictor of local obesity. Salience, or visibility,
How Food .............. Continued from page 11

matters. When jars of 30 chocolate candies were placed on the desks of secretaries, those in clear jars were consumed 46% more quickly than those in opaque jars. The more visible and accessible a food is the more of it will be consumed. Displaying healthy foods in highly visible areas will increase consumption. For example, fast food restaurants could more prominently display an attractive picture of a salad, and grocery stores might replace candy with fruit and healthy snacks at the register. This and previous research shows that small changes in the eating environment can cause a significant difference in the width of our waistlines. Other win-win considerations include:

On dining tables at home or in restaurants, replace foods that are easy to eat, such as chips or bread, with food that is more time-consuming to eat, like peanuts;

• Instead of asking consumers if they want the supersize, ask if they want to add a salad or another healthy item that brings in more money;

• Serve the same size portions on smaller plates to reduce consumption and maintain satisfaction.

Food companies are already trying some solutions to mitigate the effect of overconsumption. Some of initiatives include:

• Chili’s $20 dinner for two – each person gets an entrée but they split an appetizer.

• A Bunch of Carrot Farmers has fun, innovative advertising for produce, “Eat ’em like junk food” campaign for baby carrots on YouTube.

• Food companies have reduced the amount of fat, sugar, and salt in many of their products without compromising the product’s taste

• Positioning chocolate milk in the school lunchrooms so it is less convenient to take

Food marketers can use these and other suggestions located in the complete article as a winning formula to make money while promoting healthier foods!

(“Smart Marketing” is a marketing newsletter for extension publication in local newsletters and for placement in local media. It reviews elements critical to successful marketing in the food and agricultural industry. Please cite or acknowledge when using this material. Past articles are available at http://marketingpwt.aem.cornell.edu/publications.html.)

State Dairy Princess Crowned

Written by Times Union. Submitted by Ashley Pierce, Rensselaer

Courtney Luskin of Hoosick Valley High School was crowned the 2013-2014 New York State Dairy Princess on Tuesday at the Holiday Inn in Liverpool. Luskin, who has been Rensselaer County Dairy Princess since spring 2012, will devote another year to promoting milk and dairy products with the American Dairy Association and the Dairy Council.

“It was really tough,” Luskin said Wednesday about the competition. “All the girls were really good.”

As the state princess, she will receive a $1,200 scholarship and will represent the organization at the county dairy princess pageants, farm meetings, and special events. She will help train new county promoters at seminars and workshops, according to the association. Meghan Rohe of Onondaga County was named first alternate state princess, and Claudia Hauslauer of Livingston County was chosen as a second alternate.

Nineteen county dairy princesses competed at the state pageant, which included a personal interview, an impromptu and prepared speech, a product knowledge test, a writing skills test, and informal interaction with others. Judges evaluated contestants on their communication skills, knowledge of the dairy industry, poise, and personality.

Summer Checklist for Cattle

By: Jerry Bertoldo, NWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team, Cornell Cooperative Extension

The breeds of cattle common to the Northeast are not well suited for extremes of heat and humidity. Any temperature in excess of 70°F (even with low humidity) requires the adult cow to rid itself of excess metabolic heat. This is particularly the case for dairy animals housed together in confinement. Fans are a start at cooling. Unfortunately, cows do not sweat very much and have a large body mass, so moving air past them does not result in effective cooling as it warms into the 80’s. Natural evaporative cooling resulting from sweat evaporation works great for us humans, but has to be artificially applied to cows with sprinkler systems.
Thermal stress affects cow comfort, nutrition, reproduction and immunity. Increased standing time leads to lameness problems while flies, inability to eat when desired or drink fresh, clean water can add another page to the stress playbook. There are many management considerations that have amplified impact at this time. The carryover of the negative impacts on productivity, conception rate, pregnancy retention and hoof health makes this more of a 5 month ordeal rather than a couple of months of bother during the peak of summer.

Here are some things to think about that are real deal breakers during summer heat stress:

- **Does the feed stay relatively cool throughout the time it is available?** Feed heats with yeast and mold activity. More frequent feeding rates or addition of feed stabilizers can help. Better forage harvest and storage techniques are even better.
- **Do you check weigh backs, cud chewing rates, individual fat tests and stall utilization?** Heat alters behavior patterns. This includes reduced cud chewing, increased slug feeding, more on feet time and in the extreme bicarb losing drooling – all leading to poor rumen performance and compromised performance.
- **Are cows able to drink soon after milking?** Cows will seek water and then feed after being milked. A second try later may not result in equivalent intakes.
- **Are calves given free choice water from the start?** Calves lose water during warm weather through increased respiration rates. Calves experiencing some degree of scours tend to dehydrate as well. Pre-weaned calves are capable of consuming 1-3 gallons per day!
- **Do you keep waste feed, manure piles, liquid organic effluence and standing water to a minimum?** Flies reproduce in various organic matter environments. Think about areas that accumulate such materials that should be addressed. Flies aggravate cattle of all ages reducing growth rates as well as being a vector for pink eye disease.
- **Do you refrain from vaccinating when the temperature could reach 85 degrees?** Increased core body temperatures result in poor response to immunization. Early morning is an ideal time to vaccinate cattle on a day that will be hot.
- **Do you restrict the lock up time for cows for breeding, examination or treatment on hot days?** Cows away from feed and water get anxious and compound the stress associated with high temperatures. Lock up areas should have high priority for cooling fans.
- **Do you keep foot bath management to a high standard?** Infectious hoof diseases thrive with moist conditions prevalent during the summer in confined housing. The softening of the hoof contributes to claw wear and potential problems as well.
- **Do you make sure stall grooming and raking is up to snuff?** No matter if you bed with manure solids, shavings or sand, more humid weather and higher temperatures will promote faster growth of mastitis organisms when the moisture content increases in the bedding. Even fresh sand becomes contaminated with manure and urine at the back of a stall with normal traffic within a few days.
Ag. Engineering
Farm-Based Anaerobic Digestion

By Ashley Pierce, Rensselaer County

Farm based anaerobic digesters can provide many benefits to the dairy farmer in New York State, including reducing odor, creating a renewable energy source, and reducing greenhouse gasses. Interest first arose during and after the energy crisis caused by the 1973 oil embargo. During this time some anaerobic digester systems were built to try to produce energy. As of August 2011, there were 20 New York dairy farms (totally 22,175 cows) using digesters producing enough energy to power 3,550 average sized U.S. homes for one year.

The benefits to implementing a digester include the reduction of manure odor, improved crop utilization and conservation of manure nutrients, improvement of water quality, generation of renewable energy, revenue potential, and pathogen reduction. For every two cows having their manure digested, it equals one car being removed from the road.

As stated in the Cornell publication *Introduction to Farm-based Anaerobic Digestion*, “Dairy manure in its original state is an ideal medium for an aerobic digester (AD). Raw dairy manure is a complex organic material comprised of carbohydrates, proteins, lipids, and cellulose. Several types of bacteria degrade the manure until the methane-forming bacteria take over and produce biogas.” The first step to using manure to produce this gas is the collection and agitation of the organic matter which is done in a pit located next to the vessel. This pit can vary in size depending on the amount and type of waste that is being processed. The manure (and possibly additional waste) is agitated to prevent freezing in cold weather, prevent settling/floating of solids, and to homogenize materials if several are present.

The vessel itself if oxygen-free, has a consistent temperature (100 or 135 degrees Fahrenheit depending on type or reaction desired), and has sufficient hydraulic retention time (HRT). HRT is the length of time in days that organic matter remains in the digester. The two types of digesters that are used in New York are “plug-flow” and “mixed systems.” Plug-flow digesters are low in equipment and operating costs (not always overall costs though). These work by the contents flowing as a “plug” from the inlet to the outlet, which usually takes 21 days. These work best when the solids are 10-15% of the mixture and have the advantage of not containing the complex mechanical systems like the mixed digesters.

Mixed digesters either periodically or continually mix dairy manure (and potentially other wastes) mechanically to produce a homogenous product. These systems can handle higher water content and food wastes in addition to manure. The disadvantage to a “mixed system” is that they are more complex and have higher operating costs. By being able to accept food wastes as well as manure, farms can generate income from tipping fees (charged to those dumping their waste), and increased production of the biogas that can be used on the farm.
With all the benefits realized from using an on-farm anaerobic digester, what are the potential drawbacks? One of the major problems encountered by the average dairy farmer is the cost of the building and implementation of the system. The current capital cost averages from $1,000 to $1,400 per cow, in addition to the engine-generator set component which costs roughly $1,000 per kW of capacity. Financing can be difficult in these situations. Funding opportunities do exist however, which include NYSERDA, USDA’s Rural Development program, and potentially USDA’s Natural Resources Conservation Service.

Farm-based anaerobic digestion has many benefits that are being realized by New York State dairies. Providing a way to control odor, generate energy on farm, and limiting environmental impacts are all very positive, but do have to be balanced with the capital investment needed to install one of these systems. If Ashley can answer any of your questions, she can be contacted at arp253@cornell.edu or (518) 272-4210.

Source: Introduction to Farm-Based Anaerobic Digestion by Jennifer Pronto and Curt Gooch, P.E.

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**Dairy Princess**

**Spring Forward With Dairy**

By Beth Chittenden, bbchittenden@yahoo.com

As spring arrives we suddenly become aware of the dreaded holiday weight. Only a few months to get in shape for summer’s warm weather and bathing suits. To prep for the next season don’t forget your three servings of dairy everyday. Not only does it help with bones, teeth and muscles, but also milk assists with weight loss. The dairy case has low-fat and fat-free along with lactose-free products to choose from as well. If you aren’t someone who wants a glass of milk, yogurt or cheese, get creative! Smoothies are delicious, keep you full and is also packed with nutrition. Even for a quick breakfast or even a snack on the go smoothies are great. Also, the different combinations with fruit never ends that means a new flavor everyday! Spring forward with dairy and get your nutrition on with three servings of dairy products everyday!

This article was brought to you by New York dairy farmers and ADADC through checkoff dollars.
Take Home Points from “On-Farm Silage Management” Talk

Dr. Jerry Bertoldo, DVM of CCE’s NWNY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team and Pro-Dairy did a whiz bang talk at the 2013 Winter Dairy Management event. And he stressed some take home points that bear repeating.

- Harvest @ correct moisture & maturity
- Fill FAST!!!

A Bright Idea: Manipulating Photoperiod to Improve Milk Production

by: Jackson Wright

In many domestic species photoperiod manipulation is used to enhance growth and increase production. In poultry exposure to extended periods of light (long day photoperiod; LDPP) is commonly implemented to increase egg production, while in horses LDPP is used to manipulate reproduction. A dairy cow’s exposure to LDPP has been shown to increase milk production an average of 5.1 lbs./day, which is of great interest to some dairy producers. The response to LDPP also appears to be fixed across various production levels and can be combined with other management strategies that improve milk production, such as bST or frequent milking. As a result manipulating photoperiod in dairy cows is a useful tool to improve milk production efficiency.

Manipulating photoperiod has not been widely adopted in the dairy industry, most likely because the increase in milk production is hard to quantify on commercial dairy farms. Others have suggested that the increase in milk production associated with LDPP is limited to increasing dry matter intake. However, the increase in dry matter intake lags behind the milk yield response to LDPP. Indicating that the demand for energy to support the added milk production stimulates dry matter intake. Moreover, one of the most consistent responses to LDPP has been an increase in circulating concentrations of prolactin and insulin-like growth factor I, both of which are associated with improved mammary growth and function.

More recent research has shown that exposing cows to short day photoperiod (SDPP) during the dry period increases milk yield during the subsequent lactation. Dry cows exposed to SDPP express higher levels of prolactin-receptor mRNA, suggesting that exposing cows to LDPP during lactation and SDPP during the dry period would increase levels of prolactin and its corresponding receptor. This provides additional evidence that prolactin is responsive to photoperiod manipulation; stimulating mammary growth and immune function, both of which likely contribute to increasing milk yield.

To produce the response, lights should be strategically placed to provide all areas of the barn with a minimum light intensity of 150 to 200 lux, not just the feed bunk. Lactating cows exposed to LDPP require 16 to 18 hours of light, followed by a continuous 6 to 8 hour period of darkness. In lactating cows, continuous light exposure should be avoided to maximize the milk production response. Conversely, dry
cows should be limited to 8 hours/day of light exposure. For the remaining 16 hours/day dry cows should be kept in darkness to maximize the milk yield response. This can be maintained using enclosed, well-ventilated barns. In addition, during periods of darkness low intensity red lighting from 7 to 15-W incandescent bulbs can be used for observing both lactating and dry cows, as this range of the light spectrum is not perceived as light by cows.

Now may be an opportune time to implement photoperiod manipulation in the dairy industry as advances in lighting technology, such as the LED light bulb, are capable of providing effective and reliable lighting while reducing energy consumption. Similarly, the life expectancy of LED lighting is superior to other forms of lighting, providing a long-term return on investment. Ultimately, updating facilities to manipulate photoperiod can increase milk production while reducing energy costs and after installation requires minimal effort to maintain.

The Forest’s Future Is Our Legacy
By Jerry Michael

Over one year ago, I offered a $50 bill to the first member of my hunting club who could find five maple, cherry or oak seedlings or saplings anywhere on the 1600 forested acres we hunt. Unfortunately, the $50 is still in my pocket. How could such an unnatural and foreboding circumstance occur, and how unique is the situation among New York’s forests?

My hunting club’s property was clear-cut 90 years ago, along with most of the Catskills, for saw logs, charcoal, and by-products for the wood chemical industry. By the beginning of the twentieth century, New York’s forest cover had been reduced to about 15% of the land area as a result of agriculture, logging, industrial development and human habitation. When the founders of my club began purchasing contiguous parcels in 1939, the land was a very early successional forest on which they hunted rabbits. They went to the Adirondacks every fall to hunt deer as there were none to speak of in the Southern Tier of New York or the state of Pennsylvania. With all the browse available from regrowing forests, and with no natural predators, the deer population exploded in the 1950’s and 1960’s. In many areas, densities exceeded 50 deer per square mile, while the normal carrying capacity of forested land is around 10 to 20 per square mile. The ecological impact on the forest and the deer themselves was not understood at the time, and the New York Conservation Department, a forerunner to the DEC, catered to hunters who were happy to see a lot of deer in the woods. My club routinely harvested an average of twenty bucks a year from our land in the 1970’s and shooting a doe, even if you could get a permit, was considered “counterproductive” if you wanted to have lots of bucks to hunt. We did wonder why antler size was

Continued on page 18
The Forest

shrinking, and why the average body weight had dropped by about a third. What we didn’t focus on at the time was that the deer had consumed the entire understory of the forest and, by the 1990’s, the understory had been replaced with shade-tolerant species unpalatable to the deer — mainly hay scented fern, striped maple and beech

brush. This “interfering vegetation,” as it is now called, has been so well-established for so many years that it now prevents almost all germination of seeds from desirable hardwood species. Any seedlings that do sprout soon die under the dense shade from interfering vegetation, or are heavily browsed by deer. And unfortunately, the total absence of hardwood regeneration is not unique to my hunting club’s forest. A study conducted by Cornell University obtained survey responses from nearly 200 practicing foresters in 2009. Their responses indicated that desirable tree regeneration was occurring on an average of only 30% of the stands where foresters expected regeneration to take place. The Nature Conservancy also published an alarming study in 2010, based on 1,647 USDA forest inventory data plots in the state. It concluded that regeneration was adequate on only 43% of the data plots measured. The worst areas included almost all of the Catskills, the lower Hudson valley, and the southern half of the Adirondacks. Furthermore, where there was regeneration, the predominant species was American Beech, at 23%. Nor is the regeneration problem unique to NY State. Pennsylvania and the rest of the northeastern hardwood forests are in the same boat. Dr. Gary Alt, retired Game Commissioner for Pennsylvania has been quoted: “Attempting to raise more deer than the land can support has been the greatest mistake in the history of wildlife management in the state of Pennsylvania” (Forest Stewardship Bulletin #15, Penn State University, 2009). So what does this situation portend for our forests, already threatened by a multitude of invasive and native insects, climate change and, in some cases, the effects of past high-grade logging practices? Most of our secondgrowth forests range in age from 75 to 125 years. If we consider the average life span of a native canopy tree species to be about 150 – 200 years (less in the shallow, rocky Catskill soils), what will our forests look like in another half century when most of the current trees are gone? While leading a chapter woods walk at Cuyler Hill State Forest (Cortland County) in 2010, Dr. Ralph Nyland, Professor Emeritus from SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry (ESF) in Syracuse, described his “worst nightmare” as a forest landscape dominated by diseased beech, beech brush, hay-scented fern and invasive vegetation, populated by woodpeckers and not much else. Are we prepared to accept the economic and environmental impact of such a disaster? Will our successors be able to pay taxes on the land without income from forest products other than firewood? Will tourists still drive up the Thruway or Route 17 in September and October to look at the forests if the reds, oranges and yellows have been replaced by brown? Will we be willing to pay $100 plus per gallon for maple syrup imported from Canada? Are we ready to accept the impact on wildlife and recreation? The good, or at least hopeful, news is that researchers at the US Forest Service, Penn State, Cornell, SUNY ESF and other universities have been aware of, studying, and developing solutions for the regeneration problem for almost thirty years (see table on page 11). Guidance on dealing with the problem has been refined and is now available from Webinars on Cornell’s Forest-Connect and Penn State University’s websites. Since the regeneration issue was not on the front burner when many practicing foresters went to college, they are being trained on new methods and technologies through the auspices of The Society of American Foresters. Restoring our forests to a sustainable condition will require combinations of deer management, specialized silvicultural treatments and the judicious use of herbicides. The sequence and timing of these treatments is critical for success and to minimize the cost over a stand’s growth cycle. Forest owners wishing to undertake the restoration of their woodlots can get started by familiarizing themselves with the material available online. When ready to retain a consulting forester, make sure they are “up to speed” on the development of stand-specific prescriptions for promoting regeneration. As discussed in Jim Minor’s “President’s Column,” the NYFOA Board of Directors is implementing several long-term initiatives to address the restoration of New York’s forests and the subject will be featured regularly in future issues of The New York Forest Owner. Stay tuned.

Jerry Michael is a Master Forest Owner Volunteer and a former NYFOA Board member.

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NYFOA Board of Directors is implementing several long-term initiatives to address the restoration of New York’s forests and the subject will be featured regularly in future issues of The New York Forest Owner. Stay tuned.
## APRIL 2013

### AGRICULTURAL NEWS

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**FEBRUARY 2013**

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**Washington County Agricultural Advisory Committee**

**Washington County Agricultural Advisory Committee** is a county farm organization. We are a local company farm organization based in Washington County, Washington. Sanger and Rentschera, counties. After insuring farms and rural properties for over 150 years, we attribute our success and longevity to:

- **A QUALITY** Claims Settlements
- **PERSONAL** Service
- **KNOWLEDGE** Corporate Rates

**Washington County Agricultural Advisory Committee**

33-35 St. Green St., Greenbrier, NY 12834

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Hay For Sale - 3x3x8 bales large, square 1000 lb bales. Good quality, stored in barn at harvest. Priced by cutting, delivery available by charge, based in Washington County. Call 518-796-3988.

Hay For Sale - 4x4 Round bales $35.00. Second cut square bales. $4.00. Call 812-6814