Pasture Walk to Focus on Soil Health
Saturday, May 12, 2018
11:30 am to 2:30 pm (Lunch included with $5 Pre-registration)
Spas Farm, Paul & Connie Spas, 3781 Morley Road, Ashville, NY

Soil Health is being identified as the limiting factor to productivity on many farms nationwide. Seed companies and agronomists have done an excellent job of improving seed selection and the nutrient or chemical composition of crop growing soils, but now realize we also need to focus on the physical structure and biological life in the soil to make the most of seeds and nutrients.

This Pasture Walk will include interactive activities using the “Soil Health” trailer equipped to measure and demonstrate the three vital components of soil health – Physical, Chemical, and Biological. This trailer is part of a 5-state Conservation Innovation Grant funded by the NRCS. We will also walk the pastures and discuss the management of the Spas’ beef herd, and how they market their beef.

Fay Benson, Extension Educator with Cornell University SCNY Regional Team, will compare some soil management plots under a rainfall simulator to measure aggregate stability. Participants will use penetrometers to measure soil compaction, and a demonstration of the Active Carbon test to measure how much food the soil contains for the biology living there. We will also discuss the Pasture, Rangeland, Forage (PRF) Insurance program available to help land owners manage risks growing forage and pasture.

All are welcome to attend at $5 per person payable at the Pasture Walk, to help cover the cost of lunch. Pre-registration is requested by May 10th by contacting Lisa Kempisty at CCE of Chautauqua County at 716-664-9502 Ext 203 or ljk4@cornell.edu.

The Spas Farm is a third-generation family-run farm owned and operated by Paul and Connie Spas on Morley Road, overlooking Chautauqua Lake. Their registered Red Devon Cattle herd of 30 cow-calf pairs, are rotationally grazed, with a focus on producing high quality beef using regenerative farming practices to build and sustain soil health. They market naturally raised grass-fed beef from their on-farm store.

This Pasture Walk is being co-sponsored by New York’s Grazinglands Coalition, Seneca Trail RC&D, the Spas Farm, and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Chautauqua County, with support from the Northeast Extension Risk Management Education Program.

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