



**Western
New York**

CROP MANAGEMENT



Main Office: 5242 Curtis Road, Warsaw NY 14569

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July 10, 2012

25 Years- Look How We've Grown

July 21st marks the 25th anniversary of our incorporation as a cooperative. Although a few members have been involved for that entire time span, the majority have joined the association subsequently and may not be familiar with the roots of the organization. As we celebrate this milestone, we thought it would be a good opportunity to look back and see how our cooperative has grown.

The Crop Management Association was birthed out of Cooperative Extension pilot programs in Cattaraugus and Chautauqua counties. Between 1983 and 1985, growers in those educational programs were combining the use of computerized crop information management with the initiation of integrated pest management (IPM) scouting in field crops. The first year of the program had 12 growers on 1,000 acres. At the same time, similar IPM programs were being piloted in Erie and Wyoming counties. All of these initial programs were partially funded by the Integrated Pest Management Grants Program, coordinated by Cornell University. The remaining portion of funding came from the growers enrolled, and the local Cooperative Extension Associations. These efforts were the first such programs in New York State.

As the benefits of regular field monitoring for insects, diseases and weeds became more apparent, the grower-leadership met with the State Coordinator of Crop Management Associations in Pennsylvania and decided to take steps toward starting their own such Cooperative. Pennsylvania CMA's, first started in 1981, and had grown to encompass 14 counties in that state.

In 1986, the Southwest New York Crop Management Association was formed, remaining in the administrative structure of Cooperative Extension, and operating in Cattaraugus, Chautauqua and Allegany Counties. Twenty-six growers on 6,500 acres were enrolled that year. During 1987, the Association was approached by grower-leaders in the Erie and Wyoming County regional IPM program, requesting inclusion in the cooperative. On July 21, the cooperative was incorporated with the State of New York as a service at cost general cooperative corporation, namely the Western New York Crop Management Association. By the end of 1987, there were 52 growers enrolled on 16,000 acres of cropland.

Under the direction of a seven-member board of directors and management of John Deibel, the cooperative continued to grow. In 1989, the directors, upon request from the growers in Niagara and Genesee Counties, expanded operations to include those areas as well. Presently, our cooperative membership includes approximately 400 farms in twenty-six counties, encompassing over 285,000 acres of cropland, and providing a full range of services across several commodity areas.

When David DeGolyer assumed managerial responsibilities of the company in 1995, the staff consisted of five employees working out of home offices. By October 1998, the main office staff had outgrown that space and occupied two different storefronts in Perry before purchasing the building in Warsaw that it now calls home. The Southern Tier office saw similar growth, utilizing offices in an Extension building, Dan Steward's home, a storefront in Kennedy, and finally the current location in Randolph. The staff currently numbers 30 year-round employees with an additional 9 scouts hired this summer.

But growth has not been confined to the size and geographic location of the membership and staff. As the cooperative became aware of member needs that correlated with its mission, it branched out to address these concerns. When New York State initiated Confined Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO) regulations, the association stepped up to become certified to write the required plans. In 2000, David DeGolyer became the first recognized planner in the state. Currently we have seven staff members focused on updating member plans, keeping up with ever-changing regulations and assisting 125 growers with implementing and maintaining their CAFO plans.

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The cooperative is much more than a regulation-driven organization. It strives to be in the forefront of practices that push productivity and profitability limits in farming. We have been working with members using zone-till systems for almost twenty years and have assisted many growers in adopting this challenging but beneficial system. Through advice on proper management of field crops, we have enabled many of our growers to increase the percentage of forage in dairy cow diets, some reaching a level as high as 65%. This creates a large reduction in feed costs. And, by adopting intensive wheat management strategies we have seen a great increase in wheat production.

Through all the changes, the cooperative approach remains intact. The direction of the company is under control of the membership through the board of directors, deciding on services offered and prices charged, among other things. This approach also sets up a valuable information exchange. A large network is created, allowing the successes and pitfalls of methodologies employed by one grower to be communicated to others. Through this interchange, farmers can build off the experience of others without having to start from scratch individually. This can be accomplished through advice based on the consultants' experiences or more formally through trial plots and field meetings.

Although these mark only a small portion of the activities of the cooperative, they are good representations of the impact it is making on farms across New York State and Northwestern Pennsylvania. Our goal as we head into the next twenty-five years is to maintain a high level of service to our membership, bringing them the best in technological and cultural practice advances while exhibiting responsible stewardship of the environment.

Happy Anniversary!

25th

BOARD MEMBERS

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Medium CAFO's Need To Be Fully Implemented By March 31, 2013

Most medium CAFO's that we work with are covered under the New York State ECL Permit. Many of these facilities did not fully implement their Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) by the March 31, 2012 deadline. There was an opportunity last year to apply for an extension to complete remaining Best Management Practices (BMP's). The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) granted all Medium CAFO's requesting more time an extension to March 31, 2013. While it is possible that DEC may grant another one-year extension if progress in implementing remaining BMP's can be demonstrated, this is by no means certain. In any case, the ECL permit expires June 30, 2014.

With this in mind, if you received an extension until March 31, 2013, you should be working with your planner to see how you can meet this deadline. You should also by now be working with your engineer on a design and have lined up a contractor if needed to complete the remaining projects. If you have any questions, contact your farmstead planner at Western New York Crop Management Association.

CAFO Inspections Are Underway

Now that summer is here, inspectors from the various DEC Regions are busy conducting inspections of CAFO facilities. In addition, the Environmental Protection Agency is inspecting a few farms, mostly in the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The Chesapeake Bay Watershed covers most of Steuben County and Southern Tier counties to the east. All CAFO farms in the Chesapeake will probably be inspected every year, by either DEC or the EPA. Farms in other watersheds can expect an inspection periodically.

To help you get through an inspection, there are a number of things you should be doing. Most importantly, you should be up to date on your required record keeping. These include farmstead records such as rainfall, storage levels and animal mortalities, as well as manure spreading records. A large part of an inspection will consist of going over your records. You need to have records for the last five years available. If you have any questions, you should review your Farmstead Record Book with your farmstead planner and your spreading records with your crop consultant. It is also important that you are performing required operation and maintenance on BMP's already installed. Refer to your Operation and Maintenance Schedule in your Farmstead Record Book. There are also practice-specific operation and maintenance requirements in most engineering designs. There is a calendar included with your Farmstead Record Book that can be used to record when you perform required maintenance, such as mowing manure storage dikes and vegetated treatment areas. If you have a BMP that is not properly functioning, your CAFO permit requires that an engineer evaluate it and needed recommendations be implemented. Your farmstead planner will be making farmstead visits in the coming months, and this is a good time for you to take a few minutes to review your CNMP. Your planner will complete a farmstead walk-through and bring to your attention any areas of concern.

Please feel free to contact your WNYCMA Planner with any questions. If you do not have the cell phone number, call our office at 585-786-5831 (Warsaw) or 716-358-3020 (Randolph).

FARMSTEAD STAFF

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The Rise and Fall of the Armyworm

By: Chad Stoeckl

What a great winter! What a nice early spring! Where, what, why, and how did these "Armyworm" get into my fields and cause so much damage? Why didn't anyone know they were here? Will there be a second generation? So many questions have been raised from this spring's pandemic.

True Armyworm is a warm weather species that migrates into New York in early May or with a mild winter they sometimes overwinter here. (Do not confuse this species with *Fall Armyworm* which is a different species that is essentially a southern insect with moths moving northward in late summer and fall.) There are armyworms around every year in different pressure levels or locations. This year, the mild winter and early spring made for ideal environmental conditions for the insects' arrival and survival in the northeast.

The lifecycle of the armyworm is actually very short. An armyworm moth carried in on the spring winds lays its eggs where its offspring, the larval or worm stage, will have the best chance for success. Thus, eggs are laid primarily in wheat fields, grass fields, and grassy or cover cropped cornfields. One female can lay up to 2,000 eggs during a two week period! The eggs hatch out in 7 to 12 days.

Newly hatched larvae are less than 1/16", but begin feeding on grass immediately. Small larvae feed on plants near the ground or in protected areas at nighttime as they are nocturnal. They usually go unnoticed until they reach roughly an inch, when they start to move up the stems on the grass or wheat plants. When they are small, they eat relatively small amounts; when they are large, they eat a lot. It is estimated that 80% of what an armyworm eats is in its last days as a larva.

The whole larval period lasts approximately three weeks, at which point the mature larvae burrow into the soil to pupate. This pupal stage lasts nearly 12-14 days, after which a second generation of moths emerge to repeat the process. Why did it seem to take so long for the armyworm to pupate out? Simply put, we had three to four flights of moths coming in to lay eggs leading to a staggered hatching of the eggs.

Our first reports started coming in late May from scouting wheat fields in Niagara County. Soon after, they were found at threshold levels in minimum-tilled sod cornfields. As we began to realize the extent of the armyworm, we immediately started scouting grass fields, something most of us have never done before. Threshold levels for wheat and grass are four or more per square foot, and for field corn 25% of plants damaged. Many fields with economic levels of injury were found and spraying to control the armyworm quickly commenced. Unfortunately, for many farms, the damage had already been done. To complicate matters, a shortage of pyrethroid insecticides developed, leaving growers and custom operators waiting for supply.

Once the new moths begin to lay eggs, and the larvae begin to emerge, will the second generation be a problem? When asked this question, Elson Shields (Cornell Field Crops Extension Entomologist) responded that there is no useful reason to monitor or worry about the second generation of armyworm!! According to Dr. Shields: *the same behavior which makes this insect a long-distance migrant (the need to fly long distance before settling down to lay eggs) is in force in all generations. In addition, the dilution in the vast habitat in NY reduces any potential to a non-problem. The reason we had a spring problem was that millions of moths were concentrated into a small zone due to weather issues and dumped on us in a wide swath from Michigan across Ontario to NY.* Another advantage we have over the first generation is the arrival of the armyworms' natural enemies which consist of a parasitic fly and a certain strain of virus.

All things considered, our growers have a lot of concerns about a second generation, and rightly so, since many of them have already lost a lot of valuable hay to frost, dry weather, and armyworm. With it being dry, third cutting grass doesn't have a lot of potential. Those of us working with dairy farmers can't afford the luxury of not worrying. There is still the possibility of additional flights from the southwest. Scouting will be intensified again in mid-July by CMA scouts and all eyes should be kept open for any potential problems. Any questions should be forwarded to your consultant.

CROP TECHS

Mike Youngers	Andy Marusarz
Ben Welch	Jason Post
Josh Harvey	Bob Scott
Dave Wiggers	Don Mitzel
Julia Knight	

CROP CONSULTANTS

David DeGolyer, CCA, CCP	Dan Steward, CCA, CCP
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