Western New York CROP MANAGEMENT

WNYCMA NEWS

May 5, 2017

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Wet Weather? Time to Change Your Plans?

By: Dan Steward

Most of the time, it is appropriate to make a plan and then work that plan. Sometimes you just have to change your plan based on new information. Here is some new information: it is wet. How wet depends on where you are. Most farms planned on having all of their seedings in and manure spread by now. Unless you are on all gravel ground, this is likely not the case. Now is the time to look at a change in plans. Here are some things to consider:

Consider delaying seeding fields until the summer or next year. With few seedings on heavy ground planted so far this year, this is a very viable option to consider. If you have not already fall-killed or rutted up the hay fields you planned on putting to corn, you may want to leave them in hay and not seed any fields. The other option is to summer seed fields. Fall-killed wet, heavy ground is also a candidate for summer seeding instead of corn. The advantage to taking this strategy is that you just decreased your spring fieldwork by a significant amount of time and probably kept the same hay yield potential on your farm, for this year at least. The disadvantage? It sets your rotations back another year.

Too late for nitrogen on grass stands? Most farms were able to get nitrogen out on their grass fields at some point in April. Some were not. Unfortunately, the maturity of hay crops seems to be ahead of schedule this year. There is already a lot of growth on orchardgrass and fescue fields, whether they were fertilized or not. For those farmers who are looking to make dairy quality feed, it is likely they will be mowing these fields within a week to 10 days if the weather allows. (See Table 1 for harvest guidelines for mixed alfalfa and grass stands.) If you are still planning on mowing these fields early, you may as well skip the nitrogen this time around

Max. alfalfa height, in.	% Grass in the stand (dry matter basis)								
	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90
14	23.5	26.7	29.9	33.1	36.3	39.5	42.7	45.9	49.1
15	24.3	27.5	30.7	33.9	37.1	40.3	43.5	46.7	49.9
16	25.1	28.3	31.5	34.7	37.9	41.1	44.3	47.5	50.7
17	25.9	29.1	32.3	35.5	38.7	41.9	45.1	48.3	51.5
18	26.8	30.0	33.2	36.4	39.6	42.8	46.0	49.2	52.4
19	27.6	30.8	34.0	37.2	40.4	43.6	46.8	50.0	53.2
20	28.4	31.6	34.8	38.0	41.2	44.4	47.6	50.8	54.0
21	29.2	32.4	35.6	38.8	42.0	45.2	48.4	51.6	54.8
22	30.1	33.3	36.5	39.7	42.9	46.1	49.3	52.5	55.7
23	30.9	34.1	37.3	40.5	43.7	46.9	50.1	53.3	56.5
24	31.7	34.9	38.1	41.3	44.5	47.7	50.9	54.1	57.3
25	32.5	35.7	38.9	42.1	45.3	48.5	51.7	54.9	58.1
26	33.4	36.6	39.8	43.0	46.2	49.4	52.6	55.8	59.0
27	34.2	37.4	40.6	43.8	47.0	50.2	53.4	56.6	59.8
28	35.0	38.2	41.4	44.6	47.8	51.0	54.2	57.4	60.6
29	35.8	39.0	42.2	45.4	48.6	51.8	55.0	58.2	61.4
30	36.7	39.9	43.1	46.3	49.5	52.7	55.9	59.1	62.3
31	37.5	40.7	43.9	47.1	50.3	53.5	56.7	59.9	63.1
32	38.3	41.5	44.7	47.9	51.1	54.3	57.5	60.7	63.9
33	39.1	42.3	45.5	48.7	51.9	55.1	58.3	61.5	64.7
34	40.0	43.2	46.4	49.6	52.8	56.0	59.2	62.4	65.6
35	40.8	44.0	47.2	50.4	53.6	56.8	60.0	63.2	66.4

Table 1. Estimated stand NDF of a mixed alfalfa-grass stand based on alfalfa height and the percent grass in the stand. Target NDF for each mixture is highlighted.

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and make sure you hit the grass with plenty of N, P & K after first cutting. Timothy or other fields that won't be harvested until they are more mature are another story. Assuming it gets dry enough to get across the fields in the next week, it will still pay to apply nitrogen. Although it is likely that some yield has already been lost due to the nitrogen not being out there, grass puts on the majority of its growth in the last 10 days and will still respond to N. If the nitrogen is not taken up on this cutting, it will be available for the second cutting.

Don't put in your haylage too wet. A friend of mine recently reminded me of a year back in the mid -90's similar to this one. The grass grew like you would expect in a wet year, but when it came time to harvest, it was still wet and overcast. Because of the soil moisture and overcast weather that year, the cut hay just didn't dry. It seemed dry, but the koster tester didn't lie; it was still wet. Those who ignored the koster tester put up a lot of wet, butyric haylage that year. Coupled with the low sugars due to lack of sunshine, and the high lignin due to the cold, wet weather, not much milk was made on that haylage. You are better off having high NDF forage that cows will eat than a bunk of unpalatable slop.

Don't mud in your corn. The harm caused by plow layer and sidewall compaction is irreparable. You are better off putting in corn 10 days late, than mudding it in. If you do work your soils when they are a little marginal, the less tillage the better. Check the moisture at the depth of your tillage implement. If the soil is wet there, and you can make a ribbon with your thumb and index finger, you will compact the soil. Unless you compacted your soils while spreading manure or harvesting the previous year, consider shallow tillage instead of deep tillage. Consider no-tilling fall or spring-killed sods as well as double crop fields.

Try to trade in your long season corn for shorter season corn. When you take into account how little fieldwork has been done, it is already late. This is especially true if you are planning on dry shell corn. The following is an excerpt from an article by Bill Cox of Cornell summarizing a corn planting date study: "there is very limited yield loss, if any, for corn planted from 15-20 May compared with corn planted from 20-25 April. Grain moisture will be 2 percentage units higher at harvest, however, so planting earlier hybrids is a consideration if planting drags on until late May or early June." (See the article on page 3.)

Don't miss this great opportunity to get your equipment ready. In other words, try to find something positive out of this frustrating spring.

Late Corn Planting Guidelines

Since 'mudding in' corn can result in a yield loss of up to 30%, it definitely pays to be patient. As the date gets later, it may also pay to trade in some longer-season varieties for shorter-season hybrids. Below are some suggestions based on date and location.

Region A: Full Season heat units, ex. Livingston County flats, Ontario County, Eden flats
Region B: Mid Season heat units, ex. Niagara County, Perry, Randolph, Clymer
Region C: Short Season heat units, ex. Arcade, high elevation heavy ground

Silage or High Moisture Corn			
Dates	**Region A**	**Region B**	**Region C**
May 23-29	100 -105 day	95-102 day	90 -97 day
May 30- June 7	95-100 day	90-95 day	85-90 day
June 8-15	90-95 day	85-90 day	80-85 day

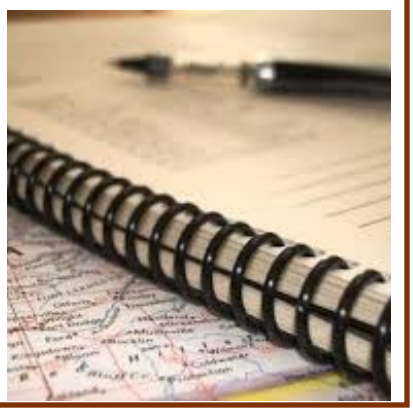
Grain Corn			
Dates	**Region A**	**Region B**	**Region C**
May 23-29	95-100 day	90-95 day	85-90 day
May 30- June 7	90-95 day	85-90 day	80-85 day
June 8-15	85 day or soybeans	soybeans	soybeans

Hopefully the weather and field conditions will turn around soon and a great deal of corn will be planted in the next few weeks. An alternative to keep in mind is sorghum or sorghum-sudangrass. It has done very well for forage production planted from mid-June to early July.

Lessons Learned from 2011

by Dan Steward

I had a farm comment that this has been the worst spring for him ever. He told me it was the first time he had not planted anything by May 1st in his 50+ years of farming *and* he still had a lot of liquid manure to spread. I asked him about 2011, as I recalled that it had also been a very wet spring. This farmer, who keeps meticulous records, called me the next day. He had consulted those records for 2011. He told me he had received almost 8" of rain in both April and May of that year, and did not plant his first seeding until May 10th, and his first corn until May 18th! The majority of his corn was planted between June 2nd and June 20th. When he was done planting in June, he went back and replanted the corn that he had planted in May that had been mudded in and didn't come up. As it turned out, we received a lot of heat that summer and June planted corn was by far the best yielding. If there is a lesson to be learned, be patient. It could be worse.



Is a Manure Storage in Your Future?

by Jared Norton

With the release of the new CAFO permits came new spreading guidelines. The new New York State Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) GP-0-16-001 permit, Section III.A.8.a)(1)(a) prohibits spreading in saturated conditions, in either a liquid or frozen state. It subsequently states that "applications may not be made at a rate that creates or causes the soil to become fully saturated at the time of application." This change is also present within the new Federal Clean Water Act (CWA) GP-0-16-002 permit. Although this provides more flexibility than an outright winter spreading ban, it will prohibit spreading during some time periods, and not just during winter months. Storage availability will be crucial for compliance under either permit. The easiest way to comply would be to increase storage capacity. This is easier said than done.

The good news is that there are various potential sources of funding. The 2017-18 NY State budget has been released, and ag funding has received some serious dollar figures. Roughly $86 million through various programs, $2.5 billion in Clean Water Infrastructure, and an additional $50 million for state assistance programs for water quality projects has been allocated. Not all of these funds can be utilized for manure storage structures, but it certainly is worth investigating options. Among the programs funded is EQIP. Normally the deadline for signups under this program is in the fall, however, this year's deadline has been tentatively moved to the middle of June. I believe this is in anticipation of a greater number of applications involving storages. There is a ranking procedure to most any funding opportunity, whether through NRCS, SWCD, or other sources. One way to give your project a better chance is to have an engineered design and a line item cost breakdown of the project prepared in advance. Test pits and soil analysis also work to improve your score. These items are crucial to any application as they prove the project is "shovel ready". Although NRCS-employed engineers are available in some areas, they are extremely over booked and wait times may be up to 4-6 months. This is certainly not going to fit with most schedules, leaving engineering costs to the farm. Again, this may be easier said than done.

This brings me to one other possible avenue of funding. For facilities under the 700-cow limit, BMP design can be funded through the Dairy Acceleration Program (DAP). This program, administered by Pro-Dairy and Cornell Cooperative Extension, is headed up by Caroline Potter and has been an amazing asset to the ag community. The application process is rather streamlined, with the option of online or paper submittal. The project is then reviewed and contact made with the grower upon approval. At this point, it is a matter of employing an engineer to have the work completed. Funds can provide up to $5,000 for a single BMP or up to $10,000 for a system of practices but are limited to 80% of the total cost. Contact information for DAP is:

Caroline Potter
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272 Morrison Hall
Ithaca NY, 4853
Phone: (315) 683-9268
E-mail: dap@cornell.edu
Or visit online at prodairy.cals.cornell.edu/dairy acceleration/

Small, un-permitted facilities may want to take advantage of some of this funding as well. Regulations never seem to become less restrictive, and these spreading guidelines could one day become statewide regulation. Beginning the process now could position you for compliance when the time comes. One contingency for project funding under most programs is having a current comprehensive nutrient management plan (CNMP). The good news is that there are funding opportunities for CNMP development as well through EQIP and DAP. The DAP money may be of particular note, as the application process is fairly swift.

With all these funding opportunities, it is important to note that most, if not all, are not 100% funded. If schedules align, state and federal money can both be used, however, there is almost always a cost passed on

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to the facility. DAP money covers 80% of costs up to the specified cap, with the remainder charged to the farm. Some programs will take "in kind" work into consideration.

In the end, having a pre-engineered design of a structure is beneficial, as these designs, essentially, do not go bad. The advantage of a mostly "shovel ready" project in the environment of funding is big. In some programs, just to get your foot in the door requires having a design with cost estimate completed. In the current economy, it is important to look for these advantages, and capitalize on them.

Seed Corn Maggot in NY

by Andy Marusarz

With the beginning of planting season here, there are plenty of issues that growers have to deal with. Equipment maintenance, soil conditions, and seed and chemical purchases are in the forefront of everyone's minds. At this time of year, pest management usually falls by the wayside. Due to the growing concern about seed corn maggot, it might be worthy of some attention.

Corn and soybeans are the most affected crops, as larger seeds are very susceptible to attack. Adults are flies that look very similar to the common housefly, although a bit smaller. They lay eggs in the soil, typically where there is a lot of organic matter. This is becoming more of an issue as growers push to improve soil health. The trend from conventional tillage to reduced tillage, along with the growing use of cover crops, has led to improved soil health and increased organic matter and soil surface residue. This creates the perfect habitat for seed corn maggot to thrive. Fields that receive manure become even more susceptible to seed corn maggot due to the added organic matter.

Seed Corn Maggot Adult

Seed corn maggots live in the soil and feed on seed germ. Although damaged seeds may still germinate, there usually is not enough energy left in the seed for the plant to survive. Maggots also feed on the underground stems of sprouted plants, weakening plants enough to eventually kill them. Reduced plant stands can be seen in the field about one week after plant emergence.

So how do we control seed corn maggot? Most seed corn is treated with insecticide to prevent damage from seed corn maggot. However, this is not 100% effective, and damage has been steadily increasing though the years. In-furrow soil insecticides can be effective in fighting seed corn maggot. Also, any practices that aid in fast germination of seed, such as planting in ideal soil temperature and at proper planting depth, can help prevent damage. The timely killing of cover crops can reduce the amount of organic matter on the soil surface, limiting opportunities for adult flies to lay eggs. Seed corn maggots may be a growing problem but, with proper management, they can be controlled.

Seed Corn Maggots on Sprouting Soybean Seed

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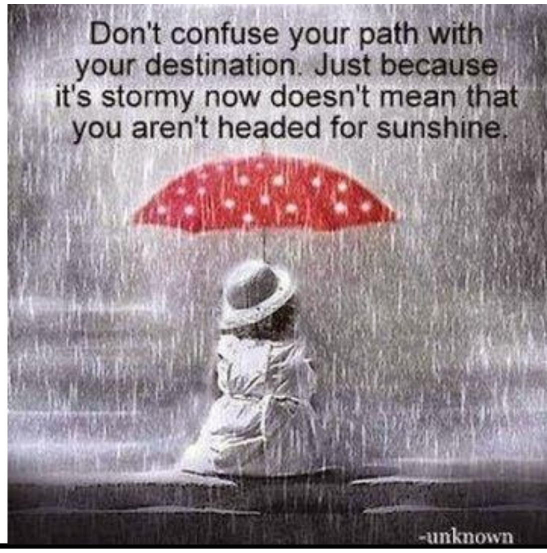

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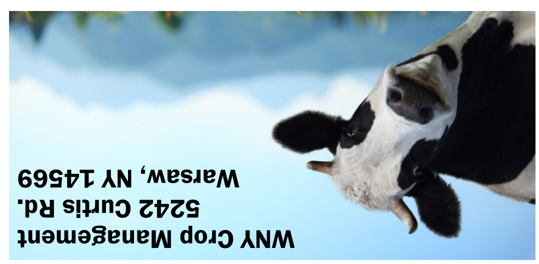

Did You Know?

WNY Crop Management created a Map App, Webmaps and even a database for members to utilize. These tools are free and available for all of our members to view and edit various farm information. You can enter manure applications, planting records and some of the required CAFO records. We even provide installation and training services. For more information, contact your consultant or call a CMA office.