



Agricultural Consulting Services, Inc.

"Helping You Grow Your Business"

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FAST FACTS

WHO KNEW... Here is a list of upcoming winter meetings and events that may be of interest:

- **Tri-State Tillage Conference** - February 2, 2010
- **WNY Soybean & Small Grain Congress** (Batavia, NY) - February 3, 2010
- **Finger Lakes & Small Grains Congress** (Waterloo, NY) - February 4, 2010
- **Western New York Reduced Tillage Systems Videoconference** - February 11, 2010 at the **Genesee** Cornell Cooperative Extension Office (420 Main St, Batavia, NY 14020) from 9:00 am – 3:00 pm. To register, please contact Carol MacNeil at 585-394-3977 x406, 585-313-8796 (cell) or crm6@cornell.edu.
- **Professional Crop Producers Conference** (Penn State) - February 16 & 17, 2010
- **Planter Adjustment Clinic** - February 18, 2010 from 10:00am—12:00pm at Martin Farms Shop (4021 Redman Rd, Brockport, NY 14420). For more information, please contact Carol MacNeil at 585-394-3977 x406, 585-313-8796 (cell) or crm6@cornell.edu.
- **NY Farm Show** (Syracuse, NY) - February 25-27, 2010

NOTICE

NEW STATEWIDE WATER WITHDRAWAL REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

Recently the New York DEC has instituted new statewide water withdrawal reporting requirements for any farm using more than 100,000 gallons of groundwater or surface water per day. While water use on farms varies widely, the 100,000 GPD threshold is most likely to be relevant for the Large CAFO farms and some crop farms using irrigation.

The DEC has issued letters to all farms for which these requirements apply. Please note if you have received a letter from the DEC with regards to these requirements, the deadline for your operation's application and processing fee is **February 1, 2010**.

For more information on these requirements please visit: <http://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/55509.html> or contact Richard Kruzansky at (518) 402-8182.



FIELDS & CROPS TIP

Before setting up your Rotation Plan for the year, take an inventory of field spreads and other applications with our list of summary reports. For example, check out the Manure Application Log (with "Show Only Summaries" option) and NMP Manure Application Summary for Manure spreads.

A QUOTE FOR THOUGHT

"What we hope ever to do with ease, we must learn first to do with diligence. Few things are impossible to diligence and skill. Great works are performed not by strength, but by perseverance."

~Samuel Johnson, English Poet (1709-1784)

THOUGHTS FROM YOUR PLANNER

Field and Crops

The increasing need for efficiencies in crop inputs and manure handling make Field and Crops a must for the modern farming operation. Targeting nutrients at field and sub field level is one goal of a crop manager that requires the recording of the applications at a level of detail only capable with Field and Crops. Accountability of manure applications for CAFO compliance can be done with ease through a linked database with your nutrient management planner that allows for more accurate and timely fertility recommendations. Have you ever wanted to create manure application work orders for your employees, graph Phosphorus or pH changes on a field over time, enter manure applications through your smart phone or create crop lists for your next FSA meeting? Better management decisions can be made on every farm using the Field and Crops software... are you ready?

Precision Agriculture

The tools for better precision in crop production are available today and can have a significant impact on the efficiency of your cropping equipment and the return on your crop inputs. Skip Hardie of Hardie Farms, Inc. in Lansing NY is showing a 60% increase in the acres of hay mowed per day through a higher operating speed (16 mph) using auto steer and allowing the Leica precision guidance systems to choose the most efficient route through the field. Do you deep till and zone till plant corn? The static accuracy of the Leica precision systems allow for efficient fall deep tillage work and the ability to align a planter on those zone with half inch accuracy 6 months later. 2007 research (Bregtold J.S. et. al.) has shown from a 24% to a 52% increase in yields when the zone tillage pass and planted row were inline. Even if you are a late adapter to the world of precision agriculture there are incremental purchases that can be made that will improve efficiencies and be compatible with future equipment purchases. Better precision is valuable on any farm and should be done with the expectation for a quick return on the investment. What sets the Farmland Environmental approach apart from other offerings in the precision agriculture market is the compatibility of the Lecia system with any brand of tractor or existing GPS systems and the agronomic consulting relationship that come with the Lecia package. We not only help to wire the system but have the knowledge to apply the agronomic features our growers are asking for. Pricing and purchasing are now available through Eagle Dairy Direct.

New York CAFO Clean Water Act Permit Update

The Department of Environmental Conservation has indicated that the draft CWA permit will not become available in New York until at least February and perhaps March. Any changes in the CWA permit will be discussed at the next CAFO work group meeting which will be attended by ACS staff and commented on in this newsletter. Stay tuned.

EXCELLENCE IN IPM AWARD GOES TO ACS CONSULTANT!

Congratulations to Colleen Daly for winning the 2009 Excellence in IPM award from the New York State IPM Program. Colleen's expertise in the IPM arena as well as her passion for employing these principles on a daily basis, brings value not only to the clients she work with, but to quality of service provided on the 250,000 acres across New York State she cares for.



CleanSweep



The New **CleanSweep Row Cleaner Adjustment System** provides precise cab control of depth and down force.

The CleanSweep System uses a two-way air cylinder to apply down pressure and/or lift pressure to the floating row cleaner. Air is supplied by a small electric compressor and air tank. A simple, single lever cab control box allows the operator to fine tune down force to optimize ground contact.

The system is an easy add-on to the two most popular models of row cleaners - the Martin C-125 and the Titan by Yetter. The CleanSweep bolts on to the face plate and floating arm of the row cleaner.

For more information, please contact any of the following Growmark FS offices:

Caledonia 585-538-6836
Knowlesville 585-798-3350
Gainesville 585-322-7273
Kennedy 716-664-3294
Sangerfield 315-841-8886

TEN COMMON MISTAKES THAT WILL MAKE YOU NON-COMPLIANT

Unfortunately, whether you've completed all of your CAFO required practices or not there is still great opportunity for you to mismanage your facility into non-compliance. Here's a bullet list of the most common mistakes that ACS Planners have found while helping farm operators manage CNMPs across New York State:

Filter Area Kill Zones: By far the most common problem I encounter. These can be caused by not collecting enough leachate, faulty systems designed to disperse water evenly across the filter area, or even too much clean water. Systems that include filter areas will not operate indefinitely without regular attention from someone who knows how they're supposed to work. A kill zone in a filter area will prevent you from claiming your farm has "zero discharge" and can limit your options for which permit to apply for.

Poor Manure Storage Operation and Maintenance: Many farms struggle with manure storage O&M. Be sure to keep fences and danger signs in good repair, berms mowed, maximum fill markers in place, and rodent holes filled. You may consider this trivial, but I assure you that DEC does not.

No Pasture Vegetation: The moment a pasture loses its vegetation it is no longer a pasture. It is now a barnyard and CAFO regulations require you to treat the runoff from barnyards. This is virtually impossible with areas that are several acres in size. Do whatever it takes to keep those pastures green!

Poor Mortality Composting Practices: With the high cost and scarcity of rendering services, more and more operations are handling their mortalities by composting. When composting you have two options: (1) Follow the Cornell document "*Natural Rendering: Composting Livestock Mortality and Butcher Waste*" or (2) Work with your CAFO planner and an engineer to design a composting facility that meets NRCS standards. Among other guidelines, composting sites should not be near surface waters of the state or wells.

Misplaced Snow/Spoilage Piles at the Bunk: This is the time of year that will dictate what your bunk filter area looks like for the upcoming summer. Give special attention to the location of snow and spoilage piles around the bunk. Be sure they aren't placed where the runoff from snow melt can cause leachate and solids to bypass the treatment system and kill the filter area. An empty spot in the bunk that drains away from stored feed is an ideal place to let snow melt.

Temporary Feed Storage: For medium and large CAFO farms, the days of creating a drive over pile in a field to handle extra feed are over. Also, the placement of an ag-bag can be problematic from a CAFO standpoint. Your CAFO planner is an excellent resource when deciding how to handle these situations.

Bad Calf Hutch Placement: Calf hutches are favored by many because they're easily moved and allow flexibility. For this same reason they can be problematic from a CAFO standpoint. Be cautious where these hutches are sited. Your CAFO planner can help you find a suitable location.

Erosion/Stormwater Control: When expansion projects disturb more than 1 acre of land additional requirements kick in for how you manage stormwater. Before starting construction projects you'd be well advised to consult with your planner and an engineer.

Increased Animal Numbers: If you are covered as a medium under the CAFO permit, pay close attention to your overall head count numbers as you expand. With 699 mature animals (milked and dry combined) you remain a medium CAFO but with 700 you are a large. Before becoming a large you must file the necessary paperwork with the DEC and your CNMP must be fully implemented.

Lack of Overall Cleanliness: While you won't find it written in any law, first appearances go a long way to help a farm's image. Manure and feed splashed outside of containment areas, spilled in farm driveways, or tracked onto roads should be avoided. Open burning is now restricted in New York so find an alternate method for handling farm trash. Random piles of pack manure or other wastes should not be found on any farm that takes environmental compliance seriously.

For more information or tips on ensuring compliance, please contact your ACS Planner.

10 MINUTES A DAY: A WAY TO BETTER RECORD KEEPING

Farmers are good at keeping records. Ask almost any farmer what was planted, sprayed, or harvested and he or she will reach into their shirt pocket, pull out the note pad, flip to the appropriate page and there will be the log of the event in question.

The information in that notepad is a treasure trove of data just waiting to be mined. But, questions like: "How many acres of corn have been planted to date?"; "How many gallons of a given pesticide were sprayed?"; and "What fields do not have Roundup Ready crops?" can be answered, but it requires much searching and scribbling to come up with the answer. And whether it is an FSA planting report, a state pesticide-use-report, a manure log for an environmental inspection, the data in that notepad needs to be entered onto what seems like an endless stream of paper documents.

Ten minutes a day; that's all it takes for you to start on your way to better record keeping. By using a software package like ***Fields and Crops Manager***, the data that is written on your notepad can be converted to useful information that can be used over and over again.

Think about the number of operations and tasks you do in a given day, whether it's plating five fields or spraying ten fields. This data is not an overwhelming amount to track, yet waiting a week or two weeks to record this data turns a 10 minute task into 120 minutes of drudgery. By taking the time at the end of the day to enter data is a surprisingly easy feat. Not only does daily data entry save time at the end of the week, but also inconsistencies in data figures can be addressed while the information is still fresh in people's minds.

If your consultant uses the "Advisor" version of ***Fields and Crops***, your data can be preconfigured with field names, fertilizers, crops, and crop protection chemicals that he or she recommends. This will save you time and improve the consistency of the data entered.

The pay-off of taking 10 minutes a day to record your data is that when you need that list of fields that have Round Up Ready crops it will only take you seconds to produce the report. Plus you reduce the chance of losing data by accidentally losing your notepad or putting it through the washing machine. For more information on ***Fields and Crops Manager*** contact your ACS Service Manager.



Agricultural Consulting Services, Inc.

1634 Monroe Avenue
Rochester, NY 14618

Toll Free Tel: 877-310-1100

Toll Free Fax: 877-315-2200

E-mail: acs@acsoffice.com

www.acsoffice.com

OFFICES LOCATED THROUGHOUT THE NORTHEAST