



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 that may be of interest:

WNY Corn Congress (Batavia, NY) - January 13, 2010
Finger Lakes Corn Congress (Waterloo, NY) - January 14, 2010
NOFA-NY Organic Farming & Gardening Conference - January 22-24, 2010
Empire State Fruit and Vegetable Expo (Syracuse, NY) - January 26 & 27, 2010
New York Corn Growers Corn Expo (Liverpool, NY) - January 28, 2010
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
Professional Crop Producers Conference (Penn State) - February 16 & 17, 2010
NY Farm Show (Syracuse, NY) - February 25-27, 2010

FIELDS & CROPS TIP

Crop name management made easier. Cornell Crop Definitions have been added to standardize naming of crops. When in Farm Setup | Crop/Varieties, select a three(3) letter crop ID for any of your custom named crops. A default name is shown to help link your custom names to the Cornell definitions. This linkage helps make reporting more accurate as well as track growing days.

EQIP FUNDING DEADLINE: AN UPDATE FROM YOUR SERVICE MANAGER

Source: http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/PDFs/Blank_EQIP_CCC1200.pdf

NRCS has set an application deadline of January 22, 2010 for New York farmers and private forestland landowners interested in 2010 Conservation Program funding from the following programs:

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
- Chesapeake Bay Watershed Initiative (CBWI)
- Agricultural Management Assistance Program (AMA)
- Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program (WHIP)

EQIP, CBWI, AMA and WHIP are voluntary conservation programs that provide financial and technical assistance to landowners willing to implement practices to improve natural resources and wildlife habitat on privately owned agricultural and forest lands.

EQIP in particular is a comprehensive program that helps agricultural producers to implement practices that reduce soil erosion, improve water quality, enhance grazing management, manure management, wildlife habitat management, and more. Assistance can be in the form of engineered structures, such as manure handling facilities, and conservation field practices such as grassed waterways. Additionally, EQIP includes incentive payments for adopting new management techniques that achieve greater environmental benefits. This year producers will be able to apply for eligible practices under several EQIP Focus Areas including: Livestock Waste, Cropland, and Grazing. Private forestland owners will also have the opportunity to apply for practices that improve the health and productivity of their woodlands under the EQIP Forest Management Initiative.

For more information on EQIP funding and/or this application process visit http://www.nrcs.usda.gov/programs/eqip/PDFs/Blank_EQIP_CCC1200.pdf or contact your Service Manager.

UPDATE FROM YOUR PLANNER: WHAT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW ABOUT CAFO IN 2010

As we put up the 2010 antique tractor calendars and clear the desk for another year of business I thought it would be helpful to summarize what we know about NY CAFO policy for a new year.



Among the most significant change is that 2010 will be the first year in New York's CAFO program that the public will have access to the details of any large farms Nutrient Management Plan. Regardless if you choose the Clean Water Act (CWA) Permit or the New York State Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) Permit your friends and neighbors will have access to information that was formerly only between the farm and their consultant. What will be significant to watch for in the final ECL permit is any change from the draft permit that eliminates the notification requirement for expansion's above 20%, manure storage greater than 1 million gallons or public notice before manure applications on new ground. Look for the final version of this CWA permit to be released late January and effective in February. March will be a decision month for these large farms as they choose between the CWA permit and ECL permit as well as completing the annual report (appendix D) and submitting the new Nutrient Management Plan Submittal to the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

Regardless of farm size it's vital that farms have a solid relationship with their CAFO planner. Aside from the policy changes and the uncharted waters of the new permits your CAFO planner is your farm advocate to the DEC. The DEC is elevating the value of planner Best Professional Judgment in 2010 and demanding that only certified planners and the conditionally certified "junior planners" are able to represent a farms CAFO plan.

Record keeping is king in 2010. Advancements in ACS software for rainfall records, manure spreading and weather reporting will make this a break out year for efficient and profitable record keeping information.

What's clear is that 2010 will represent another escalation of CAFO law in the United States and the challenge to the American livestock producer does not lie in meeting these standards but in recognizing the operational efficiencies and increased planning that will come from this escalation. The ACS Planners are ready to work with you to help you meet your goals.

PRECISION AG YEAR END SUMMARY

Another year has come and gone, and for precision ag at ACS it was a very busy year. Some of the highlights for 2009 were:

- ACS spun off its software and precision ag group into an ACS wholly owned subsidiary named Agrinetix, LLC.
- Agrinetix became a distributor for Leica Geosystem's mojoRTK – an RTK GPS system that can use a CORS network. This GPS system can easily be setup to be used with most of the auto-steer ready tractors on the market today.
- **ACS's CropComp** was renamed to **Fields and Crops Manager**, and the user interface received a complete make-over.
- Soil Mapping using Veris EC was initiated.
- Agrinetix hired Trevor Mecham, from Leica GeoSystems, as the Director of the Precision Ag Group.

Things in-store for 2010:

- **Fields and Crops** will continue to have improvements and new features added throughout 2010.
- Look for Agrinetix to continue to increase the set of solutions and consulting that it offers for precision ag.
- With yield monitors for forage finally coming on line, ACS/Agrinetix will start to process and analyze this yield information.
- On the go pH samples: With the on the go pH sampling system the pH value of a sample is available in the field (the sample does not have to be sent to a lab). This service will allow a greater number of pH samples to be taken in a field which can then be transformed into a pH map of the field. As a part of the system a variable rate lime spreading map will also be created.

HOW DID WE DO?: MAKING GOOD ON OUR 2009 NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Resolution #1: Did we improve our communication with clients and raised community awareness for the benefit of our clients?

YES. (1) ACS and its employees on took a leadership role in helping to positively position agriculture in the public eye by volunteering at several Farm Days and Farm Tours including Noblehurst Farms' Picnic and Farm Day to raise funds for patient care for the Pluta Cancer Center in Henrietta, NY. (2) ACS made a point in our monthly newsletter to highlight some of the major milestones and accomplishments that some of our clients' had achieved this past year. (3) ACS responded to several newspaper solicitations for comment on agricultural issues. (4) ACS is continually dedicated to providing quality customer service to our clients, and have done this by adding additional customer support staff to our organization and training current employees.

Resolution #2: Did we save and make clients money using their existing assets this year?

YES. (1) We've helped clients decrease fertilizer purchases by optimizing where and when manure is spread to optimize the use of all on farm nutrients. (2) Knowing the dollar value cost of manure for N, P and K, we've made a point to help prioritize low P and K fields in fall for clients. (3) We continue to stress the value of taking spring and fall manure samples, so we can know exactly what nutrients are going on the fields. (4) We are helping farms attain funding for manure systems, as draglines and separators save farms money over the long term. (5) We are encouraging clients to use lagoon covers, because less rain and snow in the lagoon means every load has more N, P and K nutrients and less overall volume to handle. (6) We are employing the use of Veris technology to identify management sections of fields for variable rate spreading of nutrients. Combined with better soil sampling and GIS maps to overlay onto yield maps, means we can help clients make better management decisions using existing assets.

Resolution #3: How has ACS improved business operations so that it is a better place for employees to work?

YES. We know that at the heart of our business is our employees. Their continued dedication, and sense of ownership and responsibility to the work they turn out is truly what makes this business successful. As we have in the past, we have continued to nurture and grow each employee relationship by developing challenging career paths, providing professional development opportunities, improving our program and project management systems, improving our communication channels, and providing feedback and recognition to each employee. Our employees are what make ACS a great business to work with, and for this we will continue to make our business one that is great to work for.

PROVIDING VALUE TO OUR CLIENTS: WHAT SETS OUR BUSINESS APART FROM OUR COMPETITON

ACS is an organization dedicated to anticipating and responding to the current and future needs of our client base. By anticipating the emerging needs of our clients especially in the areas of agriculture & environmental management and precision agriculture & field data management systems, we are able to align our business aspirations, capabilities, and expertise with these needs, to provide a vast number of services of superior quality.

Ever mindful of how the global marketplace and global trends in agriculture affect our regional and local markets, economy, and agricultural industries, ACS works to incorporate new technologies, systems, and ideas into the services we provide to our clients to help keep our clients competitive.

We take a systems based approach in the way we run our business, manage and organize data, and work to provide services to clients. We work to apply disciplined management systems that typically firms outside of agriculture sector employ to manage overall operations. Using these systems helps us to more effectively and efficiently serve our clients in a timely manner.

We have well established computing and data management systems that we continue to utilize and improve for the benefit of our clients.

We take responsibility and ownership for the work we turn out, how we present ourselves, and how we interact with clients. The pride we have for our organization is something that is unmatched in the industry and we are proud to stand behind the work we turn out.

It's not unusual to find ACS consultants working around the clock, on nights, weekends, holidays, or whenever clients need us. We realize the number and kinds of hours our clients work and we are committed to working just as hard to serve these clients, because the type of work we do is never done.

ACS' 2010 NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

Resolution #1: *We at ACS take great pride in providing recommendations to clients to help them improve their business operations and better manage their assets, yet we don't always know how our recommendations impact each client, some of the challenges they face implementing these recommendations, and overall challenges they face during the course of normal business operations. In 2010, we will strive to work with clients more closely to understand how they farm, the tasks they undertake, the challenges they face, and what impact our organization and to the work we do for them impact their operation. We will strive to do this because we want to do more for our clients to help them innovate and identify ways and opportunities that we can help them improve their business.*



Resolution #2: *We resolve to be more responsive to client inquiries, issues, and challenges.*

Resolution #3: *We resolve to better communicate and nurture our client relationships to develop quality and sustaining relationships that are mutually beneficial*

Resolution #4: *We resolve to be more operationally efficient by improving the communication channels, programs, and project management systems we employ to run our business.*

Resolution #5: *We resolve to continue to nurture our employee relationships to make ACS a wonderful business to work for.*



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