



CORNELL

Cooperative Extension
Niagara County

NIAGRICULTURE

February, 2003 Issue

2003 Events

February 25	Conservation options in Estate Planning, East Aurora (see enclosure)
February 25	Ag. & Markets with Farmers Market Federation – Farm Market information Day at Holliday Inn, Batavia (see article below)
March 4,6,18,20	Calf Manager Training 11 - 3:30pm, Call Wendy at 585-343-3040 Extension 138 for registration materials DEC office E. Avon
March 13	DEC Pesticide Certification Test 1-5pm, Lockport
March 18	Rural and Farm Safety evening. Niagara Frontier Equipment Sales, Inc. 7pm – 9:30pm
March 18	NYS Dry Bean Meeting
March 19 & 20	2003 Cornell Swine School
April 3	Pesticide Recertification Credits 6:45pm-10pm, Lockport
April 3 & 4	Dairy Goat Tour, Ontario Canada

Agricultural Land Tax Exemption

Who May Apply: Any farmer with over 7 acres of crops and has sold over \$10,000 of agricultural products (which now includes horse boarding) each year for the last two years. A new exception has allowed special circumstances to qualify with less than 10 acres if you can show \$50,000 of annual agricultural products. The farm must either be in an Ag District or be “committed” to agriculture by filing the appropriate forms with your local assessor. Agricultural landowners may also apply for exemptions even if they didn’t have annual sales over \$10,000 if they are renting (5 year rental agreement) to a farmer who will qualify by having over \$10,000 in gross agricultural sales.

When to Apply: NOW Start the process as soon as possible, especially if you have never filed for the exemption before. All the paperwork needs to be in the hands of your assessor before **March 1** and the offices involved get very busy as the deadline draws to a close.

What is the Procedure: If you have filed for the exemption previously or were in the Ag District before and filled out the soils group worksheet at your local Soil and Water Conservation District Office, then go to your local assessor and fill out Form 305-R. If you are renting your land to a farmer, the assessor will want to see your 5-year rental agreement.

If your property was committed (not in the Ag District) the procedure can all be handled by filing annually with your local assessor if you have previously provided your assessor with your soil worksheet.

Procedure to File for Exemption (first time):

1. Locate the tax bills for each of your parcels.
2. Request the appropriate forms for each parcel of agricultural land from your assessor.
3. Check with your assessor to be sure the parcels are currently in an Ag District. If no, you will need to file for an 8-year commitment on the parcels you would like considered for the Ag exemption that are not in the Ag District..
4. Call your local Soil and Water Conservation District Office and set up an appointment to have your land classified into soil groups and a soil group worksheet for each parcel.
5. Call your county's Real Property and Tax Office and ask them to make a copy of the maps for your parcels. You will pick these up and take them to the Soil and Water Conservation District Office to complete the soil group work sheet.
6. Bring the soil group worksheet, and Form 305 to your local assessor before February 28th. Also a 5-year rental agreement if you didn't gross \$10,000 from agriculture in the last 2 years.
7. Leave your assessor a stamped, self-addressed envelope so he can notify you of your exemption.

For Items Other Than Property: Silos, bulk milk tanks and coolers, and manure storage and handling facilities as well as some other feed storage buildings like commodity sheds will be given special consideration.

This is not automatic, however. A one-time application due by taxable status date (Form RP-483-a) for the exemption must be submitted by the landowner to the assessor. These forms are available through the assessor's office and the County Director or Real Property Tax Services.

Special Points of Interest:

- Start as early as possible.
- Be sure your land is in the Ag District or file with your assessor for the 8-year commitment on the land not in the Agricultural District.
- Realize that if you filed Form 306 commitment at the County Clerks Office in the past, you won't need to do this because the law has changed. Your assessor will now have all the forms for the 8-year commitment.
- To receive an exemption, the minimum you'll need to do is file Form 305R with your assessor before March 1st. **This needs to be done each year you want to be considered for an exemption.**

- Review the procedures describing your circumstances and if you are unsure call either your local Cornell Cooperative Extension Office, Real Property Tax Office, Soil and Water Conservation District, or your local assessor and get the situation cleared up as soon as possible.

New agricultural buildings may also receive an exemption by filing an “Application for Tax Exemption of Agricultural and Horticultural Buildings and Structures” form with your assessor the year the building is constructed. This form deals with Real Property Tax Law Section 483. Source: Keith Severson, January 2002

Nation’s 26th Census of Agriculture

Your agriculture census report form wouldn’t be hiding, would it? Steve Ropel, State Statistician for the New York Agricultural Statistics Service urges farmers to complete and return their forms today to **make it known – agriculture counts!**

“The nation’s agricultural sector has a critical stake in this census of agriculture,” said Ropel. “Whether a large feedlot or a very small fruit and vegetable farm, every response is important because it helps in the development of future farm programs. We encourage participants to return completed forms as soon as possible to ensure that Agriculture counts.”

Ropel points out that an accurate report of the farm operations in every state and county will help put together a complete, detailed picture of the nation’s agriculture. Everyone receiving a report form across the Nation’s 3,000 plus counties must report by law (Title 7, U.S. Code). Snapshots of U.S. agriculture dating back to 1840 are a valuable resource to farmers, farm organizations, agribusiness, farm media, and county, state and federal governments.

Census data are used to:

- Examine long-term trends and anticipate the future direction of agriculture.
- Allocate local and national funds for farm programs.
- Help agribusiness develop sales territories and marketing plans for fertilizer, seed, processing, storage, transportation and equipment.
- Help State and Federal government agencies evaluate effects of changes in farm legislation.
- Assess patterns in water use and irrigation to determine resource and management needs.
- Allocate Cooperative Extension funding, services, and research at the local level.

Anyone needing help completing their report form may call 1-888-4AG-STAT.

Results from 2002 Census of Agriculture will be published on February 3, 2004. They will be available on www.usda.gov/nass/, through your local NASS State office, as well as from many libraries and land grant universities. Individual reports are held strictly confidential by law (Title 7, U.S. Code).

Farm Labor Regulations

This popular 57-page booklet has been nicely updated from the 1997 version, you may have, by Cornell attorney, Dale Grossman and Jason Minard. It's updated through January 2002, at least. While not light bedtime reading, it's fairly easy to use as a quick reference on wage-hour law, insurance, migrant workers, youth employment safety/health and taxes. We keep little inventory but can obtain a bunch of these, which we can mail to you for \$10.

Six Regional Farmers Market Information Day

Meetings are scheduled around the State. The nearest location to Niagara County is in Batavia on Tuesday, February 25 at the Holiday Inn. The morning program is for market managers only from 9-12 and the 1-4 session will be for managers to speak to farmers.

The meetings will cover information and required training for the 2003 WIC and Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Programs (FMNP), Federation programs and provide networking opportunities. A \$10 luncheon buffet is available. Registration forms are at Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Farmers' Markets – Rules, Regulations and Opportunities

Available on-line, the 49-page research article by Neil Hamilton, National Agricultural Law Center is available from www.nationalaglawcenter.org/publications/index.html

In the Eyes of the Law: Legal Issues Associated with Direct Farm Marketing

University of Minnesota Extension Service (#BU-07683) \$10 plus \$3.50 s/h. 612-624-4900- order@extension.umn.edu, www.extension.umn.edu.

New York State Ranked 13th in a Survey of States Losing...

the most Prime Farmland from 1992-1997. The source is the 1997 National Resource Inventory. New York lost 89,100 prime acres, a 141% increase in rate of loss over the previous five years.

Do You Employ Young People to Work on Your Farm During the Summer?

Would you let them drive tractors or even operate some machinery if it were legal? Cornell Cooperative Extension and Farm Bureau have been concerned about

the need for safety certification. Fourteen and fifteen year olds must be certified to legally operate a tractor on a farm other than that of a parent or guardian. Thirteen year olds who complete will have their certificates made available at their 14th birthday. Older and slightly younger youth will benefit from the course but will not be certified.

ANTICIPATE YOUR NEEDS. CALL US IF YOU KNOW OF NEIGHBORS ALONG WITH YOUR OWN CHILDREN WHO WOULD BENEFIT (433-2651)

It is early to plan for sessions in January through March 2004 but let us know about the potential. Meanwhile, it may still be possible to sign up for Genesee County sessions.

Retail Farmers' Market

Retail Farmers' Markets and Rural Enterprise Incubation: The 12 most desired changes in vendors' farmers' markets by Gil Gillespie and Duncan Hilchey.

In a 1999 by-mail survey of 325 vendors in farmers' markets in New York and Iowa, we asked these vendors "How much do you think that each of the following possible changes at the (Name of their market) would help your business there?" We gave them five categories of responses that ranged from "None" (=0) to "Very much" (=4). The markets varied widely in size, market infrastructure, and characteristics of the communities in which they were located, The twelve items that were reported to be the most important on average are shown below (with the average score in parentheses).

Results of "12 Most Desired Changes" Farmers' Market Vendors Survey
Ratings Range: 0 = "None" 4 = "Very much"

- Increase market advertising and publicity (2.7)
- Attract other types of customers (2.5)
- Increase the diversity of products offered (2.1)
- Increase the number of vendors (1.8)
- Eliminate non-local products from the market (1.7)
- Increase cooperation among vendors (1.7)
- Increase the availability of public restrooms (1.6)
- Provide more or better customer parking (1.6)
- Eliminate reselling of products (1.5)
- Give vendors more input in how market is operated (1.5)
- Install a covered structure for the market (1.5)
- Improve market leadership (1.5)

Reports Show Untapped Market Potential

Three major marketing research reports completed for a USDA funded grant outline untapped high value markets that could boost farm and ranch profitability. The research was conducted on behalf of the North Central Initiative for Small Farm Profitability, a four-state, multi-institutional, farm-to-fork effort designed to improve the profitability and competitiveness of small and mid-size farms in the Midwest.

The Specialty Cheese Market - report presents an overview of the emerging specialty cheese market and how this may be a niche market for dairy producers. The report stresses that producer owner cheese making businesses need to be fully in tune with the marketing process, assuming final responsibility for all aspects of the marketing mix including choosing a product and promoting it. Producers who do not have a dairy operation can also benefit from the marketing information outlined in the report.

The second report, **Attracting Consumers with Locally Grown Products** - summarizes the findings of a survey of 500 households in the states of Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri and Wisconsin. Primary grocery shoppers were surveyed about their attitudes and opinions on locally grown and produced food, organic and all-natural food, and meat purchasing behaviors. The consumers were asked to rank the importance of numerous attributes in selecting the brand or products they purchase. The findings show that seven in ten households felt that it was very or extremely important that their food purchase supported a local family farm and was locally grown or produced.



Cooperative Extension

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