

We Want Your Input!!!

Agricultural Environmental Management Five-Year Strategic Planning

By Amber Luke, District Technician

The Agricultural Environmental Management Program (AEM) is a statewide program that is administered by Soil and Water Conservation Districts across New York State. Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) has been administering the (AEM) Program in Washington County for many years, providing technical assistance to inventory and assess resource concerns, plan, and implement best management practices (BMPs) and evaluate performance of those BMPs on hundreds of farms. The basis of the AEM program is to provide a framework that helps farms make cost effective decisions while protecting and conserving New York State's natural resources. This is accomplished by utilizing a 5-Tiered approach for technical assistance along with education, outreach, program evaluation, and partnership activities that help support Washington County SWCD's AEM goals. The fluidity of the AEM program allows Washington County SWCD to alter our goals to best fit the current and future state of Washington County farms. Every two years we write an Action Plan which sets forth quantitative goals for us to reach for during the set two-year AEM funding round. Every five years Washington County SWCD puts together a strategic plan that helps guide the AEM program over the next five years with more qualitative goals. This is where your input could be very important to the success of the AEM program!

The mission of our AEM Program is to assist farms to improve and protect natural resources while maintaining economic viability of farms. The strategic plan is a place where we discuss work that has been done and all the things we have accomplished through the AEM program,

as well as areas within the watersheds that we need to focus on. Through the AEM strategic plan we can identify underserved areas within watersheds, current and potential partnerships, important natural resources in the county, and the changes to the rural landscape over the past five years. We set inventory, assessment, planning, implementation and evaluation objectives for the Lake Champlain and Upper Hudson River Watersheds based on evaluating what work has been completed during the previous five years and beyond.

Our five-year strategic planning has begun for our 2026-2030 AEM Strategic Plan and we are looking for input. If you have ever participated in the AEM program and you have suggestions on watersheds, resource concerns, local partnerships and outreach or just concerns with the changing landscape we want to know! If you have not participated in our AEM program but own a farm (big or small) we want to know why? Do we need to do more outreach and education to make people more aware of the program? Any suggestions are gladly accepted and will be taken into consideration during the strategic planning process. Remember this program is meant to help support Washington County farms improve and protect natural resources. Your input will help us better understand your needs and concerns so we can continue to improve the AEM program to better serve Washington County farms in the future!

If you have any questions on the AEM Program and how to get started with the program or you want to submit a suggestion for the AEM Strategic Plan, please contact amber.luke@ny.nacdnet.net or (518) 692-9940 ext. 117. ■



AEM is for Everyone

By Robert Kalbfliesh, District Technician

Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) is a voluntary, incentive-based program available to all farmers in Washington County through the Soil and Water Conservation District. AEM is designed to help farmers make common sense, cost-effective science-based decisions to achieve their farm goals, while protecting and conserving New York's natural resources. By participating in AEM, farmers can document good stewardship while finding possible resource concerns that can be addressed through proper Best Management Practices (BMP's).

The best part of participating in AEM is that it is for Everyone. Whether you are a large, medium, small, or beginning farm, AEM can help you operate an environmentally sound and economically viable business. Over the past few years Washington County SWCD has worked with sheep, goat, beef, vegetable, maple, orchard, and vineyard farms. The diversity of farms keeps things interesting on my end, complimenting the dairy farms in the County very well.

It's easy to get started. Complete a Tier I questionnaire. We will then schedule a Tier II farm site visit to identify and prioritize environmental concerns. The farm site visit and worksheets take about 1-1/2 to 2 hours to complete. A summary of the farm visit is sent back to the farmer. If some possible environmental concerns were identified, the farm could choose to move on to Tier III, a Conservation Plan to address resource concerns. If a farm follows through with a plan, Tier IV, technical and possibly financial assistance could be available to implement BMP's. Tier V would occur after any BMP's are implemented and would evaluate and monitor the BMP to ensure that it continues to help protect the environment and the farm business.

Whether your farm is big, small, or somewhere in between and no matter what your commodity, give us a call and we will get you started.... after all, AEM is for everyone.

If you would like to find out more about the AEM program, please give us a call at 518-692-9940, Ext. 5. ■



Please Welcome our New District Technician - Ashley Leemans



Hello! My name is Ashley Leemans, and I was recently hired as the new District Technician for Washington County Soil and Water Conservation District. I am very excited to start my journey here and assist the community in environmental stewardship! I received a Bachelor's degree in Environmental Studies from SUNY Empire State College and I am currently working on my Master's degree in Biodiversity, Conservation, and Policy at UAlbany.

I grew up in Warren County where my parents owned a small campground. I spent many happy summers assisting my parents at the campground, delivering firewood, cleaning up sites and rental units, and working in the camp store. I had the opportunity to meet many different people each summer, without even having to leave my own backyard.

In 2015, I spent the summer working as an intern for Warren County SWCD, working on their hydroseed program, mapping roadside erosion, and conducting environmental education events. I also spent two summers - 2019 and 2020 - working for the Poughkeepsie-Mettowee Natural Resources Conservation District assisting in their native plant nursery, planting riparian buffers, and managing their Lake Education and Action Program.

During my first year here at the District, I will have the opportunity to assist my new co-workers on site visits as I become familiar with the programs we offer. I will also be working to revitalize the Water Quality Coordinating Committee and I am excited to meet community members who are also enthusiastic about water quality! I am looking forward to utilizing the knowledge and skills I have gained in other field technician positions to serve Washington County and work with the residents and landowners to protect our natural resources! ■



John Stokowski & Sons, Inc.

233 Route 22A
Middle Granville, NY 12849
518-642-1610
518-642-3571 Fax
john@digandcut.com



SALES (518) 642-1610



WEL-DUN, Inc.

Water Treatment

384 Dunbar Road
Cambridge, NY 12816

Office: 518-677-3306

Fax: 518.677.1510

Email: office@wel-dun.com

Timothy J. Jansen

Cell: 518-791-1111

www.wel-dun.com



DYDO & COMPANY

INCORPORATED

POND CONSTRUCTION & REHABILITATION
EARTHMOVING - CLEARING - EXCAVATING
CRANES

44 ROUTE 30

DORSET, VT 05251

TELEPHONE: 802-362-1328 FAX: 802-362-6180

WEB SITE: dydoponds.com

E-MAIL: dydoco@comcast.net

NOEL DYDO



Scott Michel

152 Hoag Rd, Valley Falls, NY 12185

518-753-9931(H) or 518-269-2222(C)



The authorized dealer for Kubota, Case IH, Gehl, Krone and Kuhn/Knight farm equipment, serving New York and New England from Salem and Claverack. When it comes to the equipment you need to get the job done, we are the obvious choice.

Our Showrooms:

841 Rt 9H 5109 State Route 22
Claverack, NY 12513 Salem, NY 12865
1-800-352-3621 1-800-999-3276



CAPITAL TRACTOR INC.

1135 State Rt. 29, Greenwich, NY 12834 Since 1966
(518) 692-9611 FAX (518) 692-2210 www.capitaltractorinc.com



Design **Print** Finishing Large Format

LOCATED AT

632 County Line Road
Queensbury, NY 12804
P: 518-747-6606

Delivery now available

www.kingsburyprinting.com

Korb Land Improvement, LLC



Excavating

Residential & Commercial
Fully Insured • Free Estimates
Gravel • Sand • Stone



Office: (518) 686-4941

Barry: (518) 461-0577 • Walt: (518) 424-9041 • Travis: (518) 461-0515

126 Dickenson Road • Buskirk, New York 12028

email: korblandimprovementllc@yahoo.com

Purple Loosestrife Beetles

By Ashley Leemans, District Technician

In June, District Technician Ashley Leemans, went with members of the Grassland Bird Trust to collect purple loosestrife beetles. The Grassland Bird Trust has conserved over 250 acres of bird habitat, located in Fort Edward, designated as an Important Bird Area (IBA). The Grassland Bird Trust has been working on eradicating invasive purple loosestrife from inside the IBA. Over the past couple of years, they have been introducing the galerucella beetles (also known as purple loosestrife beetles) as a biological control. The first time the beetles were introduced to the IBA, they were purchased from out West, a common practice requiring a permit. This time around, the Grassland Bird Trust wanted to dip their toes into capturing and relocating local beetles.

Since 1992, galerucella beetles have been released in New York by biologists and scientists as a biocontrol for purple loosestrife. As with any biocontrol, scientists have had to conduct extensive research on the beetles to ensure there will be no catastrophic impacts of beetle introduction. Thus far, the beetles have proven to be a safe alternative to chemicals for purple loosestrife management. Being able to go out and collect your own local beetles does not require a permit, and it can be a fun experiment to rear and release the beetles over the summer. Ashley and the Grassland Bird Trust members took a trip over to Hovey Pond Park in Queensbury to look for and collect beetles to release in the IBA and bolster the current population. With the use of jars and aspirators, the crew was able to collect between 30 and 50 beetles. Since 2015, the population of purple loosestrife has appeared to have decreased at Hovey Pond, and beetles were hard to find on this trip.

While the beetles are very tiny, they can easily defoliate a purple loosestrife plant. They are native to Europe and Asia where their main food source is purple loosestrife. Galerucella beetles lay their eggs on the loosestrife in May-June, and when the eggs hatch, the larvae feed on the new growth of the loosestrife, until they make their way down to the soil to pupate. They will emerge once again during the summer as adults and continue to consume the loosestrife. If you keep your eyes peeled, you will no doubt notice purple loosestrife plants with holes all throughout their leaves. This is a sure sign that galerucella beetles are around. They eat the plants all throughout the summer, as they are actively growing. In this sense, the beetles are actively working against the growth of the plants.

While the beetles are a good alternative to chemical application, they are a long-term project. They will not defoliate loosestrife overnight, but they continue to be studied and monitored by DEC and many regard them as a good control option. They certainly are an interesting and exciting method of invasive species management. ■



This is an aspirator used to collect beetles by sucking air through an apparatus of metal and rubber straws.

Conversations and Lessons about Community, Collaboration, and Cooperation

By Corrina Aldrich, District Manager

Sometimes we have opportunities through work to attend trainings that not only teach us skills, but inadvertently expand our thought processes in ways we had not anticipated. I had the good fortune to hear Dr. Christine Jones of Australia speak at a local grazing event in a county adjacent to us.

She went into detail about the interconnectedness of relationships within the biological community that exists in soil. I was drawn into what she was describing to the extent that I didn't take a lot of notes but just tried to actively listen to the message being conveyed.

The words community, cooperation, and collaboration come up in her conversation a lot!

She talked about how a diverse community of plants from a range of plant families work together to contribute to the success of all. Rather than competing for the same types of resources that is created through monocultures, a diverse community helps to create, attract, and disseminate a larger network of resources that enriches the soil biology and nutrient structure. Thus, a community of diverse species work in alliance to achieve a common goal of success and survival.

A few days later, I was tuned into the local PBS station in the evening after work and heard a new take on the same message I had received at the grazing workshop. This time in the form of a documentary about sea life in the oceans, called the "Soul of the Ocean" which is part of their Nature series.

It was amazing to watch, and amplified the message of community, and collaboration among diverse species that created mutual benefit to those species. Stories of sea turtles that travel thousands of miles to "cleaning stations" where there are fish who willingly clean their shells, removing bacteria and detritus to the benefit of the turtle and the fish.

Shrimp and gobies, corals and algae, shrimp, and eels, these are all kinds of relationships that exist to the benefit of both species. Back to the turtles, they like to graze on sea grass, sea grass meadows in turn provide habitat for a vast number of creatures to live, reproduce, and feed in. In effect more collaboration and community among diverse species within a system to achieve success for many.

This message of community and collaboration was further enforced at the end of the week when I had the opportunity to attend an Agroforestry event. The focus was on generating income within the forest other than just the typical harvesting of trees. Mainly, particular types of understory plants, some of which have historically had high value and have been reduced in wild populations due to over harvesting.

These are ginseng, ramps, and to a lesser degree, goldenseal, black cohosh, and bloodroot. The conversation wandered into the realm of proper site selection as these plants have very specific requirements of where they like to grow in a forest landscape. One way to help identify if you are in the vicinity of a proper site to cultivate these types of plants is not only the orientation of slope and soils but the composition of the "indicator or companion species" that like to exist in the same type of environment. A "community" as it were, of diverse species that desire the same habitat, and quite likely have relationships through the microbiology that connects them.

So, to wrap up this idea of community and cooperation within soil biology, plants and animals; it reminds me a lot of the relationships that connect the many Soil and Water Conservation Districts across New York State and their ability to create partnerships amongst each other with likeminded organizations and local landowners, for the purpose of preserving the long-term health of the natural resources in this State. ■



Dr. Christine Rice talks about soil biology and how diverse plant communities create a multiplier effect Photo Credit Troy Bishopp Madison County SWCD

Farm Service Agency Offers Assistance to Dairies Affected by Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (H5N1)

By Tina Williams, County Executive Director
Washington/Warren/Saratoga Counties

I want to preface this article with the fact that we hope there will continue to be no active cases of H5N1 in dairies in New York State. USDA continues to work with the Food and Drug Administration, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and State Veterinary and Public Health officials to investigate H5N1 among cattle. USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) continues to provide confirmatory testing samples from livestock as well as guidance for producers, veterinarians, and state health officials.

Farm Service Agency, through the Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees and Farm-Raised Fish Program (ELAP), provides compensation for decreased milk production from dairy cows due to the removal of adult dairy cows from the milking herd due to the H5N1 virus. To be eligible producers must have received a positive test from USDA's APHIS National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL). Producers will be compensated for 21 days of zero production milk and another 7 days of 50% milk production, based on the month of removal and the production of milk or that month according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) monthly production records at the all Milk price for that month.

To apply for ELAP H5N1 assistance producers should contact the USDA Farm Service Agency office to complete a notice of loss form (CCC-939) and an application for payment (CCC-939H5N1). To apply producers need to submit the following information:

Proof of herd infection through a confirmed positive H5N1 test (based on USDA APHIS H5N1 case definition) on individual animal or bulk tank samples confirmed by APHIS' NVSL;

A notice of loss indicating the date when the loss is apparent, which is the sample collection date for the positive H5N1 test; and

An Application for Payment certifying the number of eligible adult dairy cows removed from production, the month the cows were removed from production, and the producer's share in the milk production.

Producers must also be willing to provide milk production records, if requested, to support the eligible number of adult dairy cows removed from production.

Once a producer files a notice of loss with a positive H5N1 test confirmed by APHIS NVSL, a producer's notice of loss can be used for losses up to 120 days from when the positive H5N1 test sample was collected. If losses are still occurring 120 days after the sample collection date, then a new notice of loss and a new positive H5N1 test is required.

The final date to file a notice of loss and application for

payment for eligible losses is 30 days after the end of the prior calendar year which is January 30, 2025 for the 2024 year.

UNITED STATES DEPT. OF AGRICULTURE

Tina L. Williams

County Executive Director

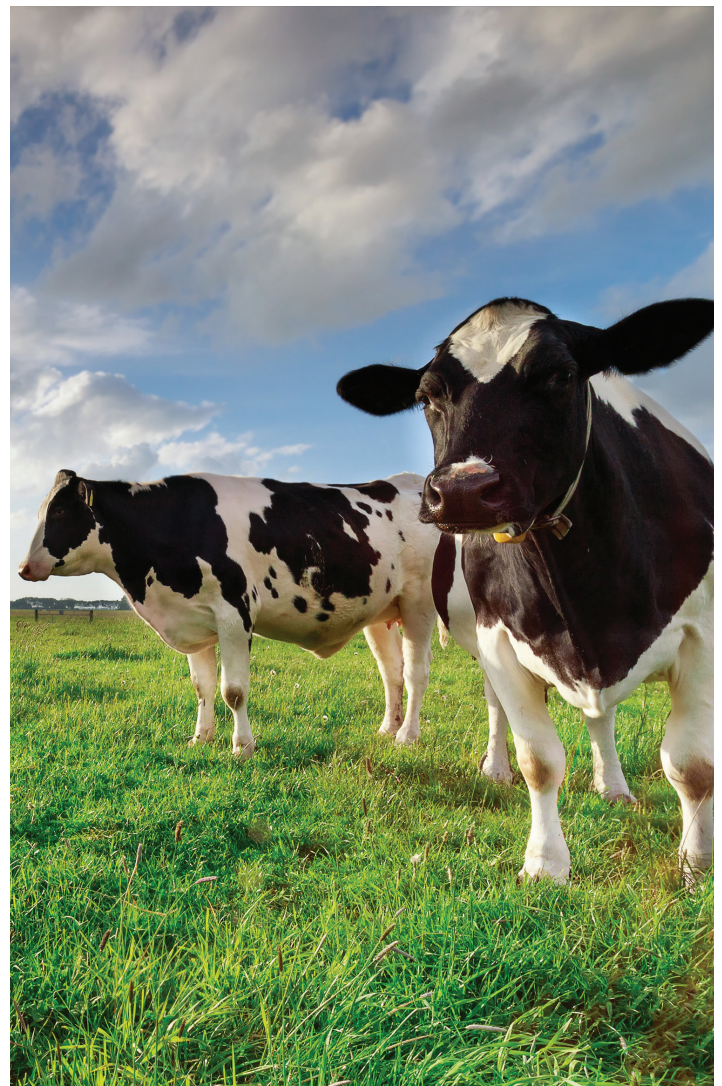
Washington/Warren/Saratoga Counties

2530 State Route 40

Greenwich, NY 12834

Phone: (518) 692-9940 Ext. 2

tina.williams2@usda.gov ■



Inter-Seeding

By Korey Evarts, District Intern

I'm back for the summer and ready to work with you! I have been busy calibrating, preparing, and operating the inter-seeder (Figure 1). It's been a learning curve, but I am working out all the kinks. So far, 30-acres have been inter-seeded, and the cover crop is already emerging (Figure 2 & 3). What are the benefits of inter-seeding you may ask? Many farmers struggle to get a cover crop in the fall due to a wet and cold fall season when they are also trying to harvest corn. Inter-seeding allows you to plant cover crops in your corn fields when the corn is around the V4 growth stage. At this stage, the cover crop can get enough sunlight to emerge and get established before the corn canopy closes. Once the canopy closes, the cover crop goes dormant until the corn is harvested. When the harvest is over there is already healthy cover crop established and growing before it gets too cold and wet. Benefits of having a healthy cover crop include but are not limited to soil retention, break up compaction, nutrient cycling, and so much more. Call us today about cover cropping or the inter-seeder. We would love to help! ■



Figure 1 Calibrating the inter-seeder



Figure 2 One week after inter-seeding, radishes are emerging.



Figure 3 Two weeks after inter-seeding, rye, radish, and the clover have emerged and established.



**Contact us at:
USDA Service Center**

2530 State Route 40
Greenwich, NY 12834
Phone: 518-692-9940 ext. 5

www.washingtoncountyswcd.org

Directors

John Dickinson, Chairman

Jay Skellie, Vice Chairman

Kate Ziehm, Treasurer

Cassie Fedler, Director

Sherri Slater, Director

Staff

Corrina Aldrich, District Manager

Lori Sheehan, Office Manager

Bob Kalbfliesh, Technician

Amber Luke, Technician

Ashley Leemans, Technician

Olga Vargas, Soil Scientist

Korey Everts, Intern

Country Power Products, Inc.
Country Living Center

True Value.

2339 State Rt 40

AGWAY

STIHL

Rts. 29 & 40S

Nutrena

Greenwich, NY 12834

Carhartt

Phone: 518-692-1015

6.0 WING SHOES

MUC

WHEEL & STATION

We Ship!!

ups

Fax: 518-692-1236

DR

D&G
DOMINION
1.000000 AC

John A. Rieger, President

Email: John@countrypowerproducts.com

GENERAC

Sales & Service

MTD

ARE YOU INTERESTED IN CONSERVING YOUR LAND?



ACCREDITED
LAND TRUST

Agricultural Stewardship Association

www.AgStewardship.org / 518-692-7285
2531 State Route 40, Greenwich, NY

Protecting our community's
working landscape of farms and
forests and promoting a vibrant
future for agriculture and forestry
in the region.

**OVER 31,000 ACRES CONSERVED IN
RENSSELAER AND WASHINGTON
COUNTIES SINCE 1990**

Washington County SWCD

USDA Service Center
2530 State Route 40
Greenwich, NY 12834

Return Service Requested

NONPROFIT RATE
US POSTAGE
PAID
Permit # 15
Fort Edward, N.Y.