

GYF MAY NEWS

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GYF MEMBERS DISCUSS MARKETS

A small but interested group of the GYF membership met on April 27th to learn about commodity markets and explore the potential of forming a marketing group.

Guest speaker and resource person for the session was Alan Zepp from the Center for Dairy Excellence. Alan is a long time Adams County farmer who is personally acquainted with many of the GYF members. Alan and his family operated a dairy for years until recent times when the dairy was closed and Alan began working for the Center. The Center for Dairy Excellence is a partnership of producers, industry and government whose mission is to grow Pa.'s dairy industry profitably.

The session began with a discussion of why producers might sell commodities and purchase supplies through a contract instead of on the open market. A couple of members in attendance shared experiences they have had with selling and buying through market contracts. Alan shared some slides from a power point presentation he had developed to take on the road. A key point both from Alan and members with experience in marketing is that margins are the important indicator to watch. Margins are the difference between cost and return. During times when milk prices were high, grain and feed cost were also inflated. The margin at this time between cost and return was smaller than during a previous period when milk prices were closer to historic average but feed and grain costs were low.

Alan discussed some common terms with the group such as "put" "call" and "margin call" and prepared the participants for what they could expect if they begin marketing. Another important point to understand, Alan explained, is that the future's market does not predict the future price of commodities with any measure of reliability. A producer's best source of advice on when products are selling at a good price and input costs are low is his/her own judgment formed from reviewing past performance and in discussion with other producers. Most important for producers who decide to try out the markets is to develop a rational plan and then stick to the plan regardless of daily market fluctuations. This can be tough to do but Alan shared several examples of producers who abandoned the plan midway and suffered a significant loss as a result.

Some concluding thoughts from Alan and those members with marketing experience:

- ◇ Marketing commodities and/or purchasing supplies through contracting is not a "get rich quick" scheme, but it can be a valuable tool to level out some of the highs and lows of commodity prices.
- ◇ A local marketing group would be a valuable resource to share experiences and provide support for those new to the game.

DATES TO NOTE

May 20, 2010

"Keeping Preserved Farms Profitable" Lebanon Co. contact Dennis Hall at den-hall@state.pa.us or 877-475-2686. Registration requested.

June 2, 2010

Small Grains Field Day, Landisville Research Center, see below

June 25, 2010

Manure Happens Workshop Mains Dairy Farm, Cumberland County, see below

July 12-13, 2010

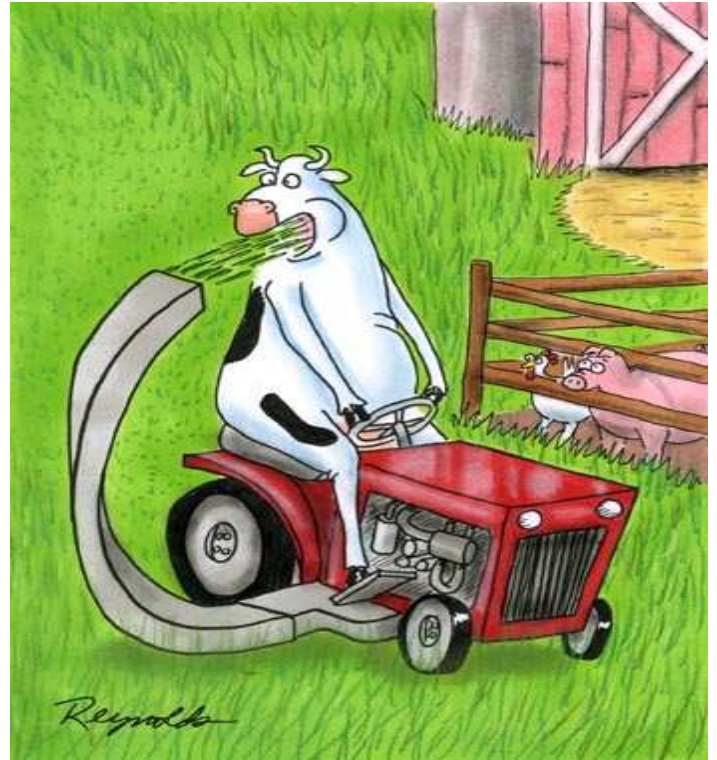
PAAE /PYFA summer convention, Raystown

July 25, 2010

GYF summer picnic, location to be announced

FARMERS DEVELOP HIGHLY EFFICIENT FORAGE

HARVESTER!!



Summer Field Days

Small Grains, June 2, Landisville

- Penn State will host a small grains field day at the Landisville Research Farm to discuss variety selection, pest management, and row width issues Topics include wheat and barley variety performances, wide row performance, weed and insect management in small grain including head scab update, nitrogen management, yield assessment and the economics of double cropping.
- Speakers include PSU agronomists and a grain marketing specialist.
- \$15.00 registration fee includes lunch. Register by May 26 Only one (1) registration form per person (for additional forms, visit our website at <http://lebanon.extension.psu.edu> then select Agriculture tab located on the top left side). NO REFUNDS after the deadline.

Manure Happens, June 25, Newville

- A meeting about using nature's free fertilizer responsibly will take place on June 25, 2010 from 9:00AM to 3:30PM. The field day is being hosted by Mains Dairy on Mt. Rock Road, Newville, PA, Cumberland County. Plan to attend and check out business displays, a tour of Mains Dairy manure digester and separator, and various equipment demonstrations. Speakers at this event will include Dr. Doug Beegle, Robb Meinen, Justin Dillon, and others. In addition a Dairy Farmer No-till Panel will address your questions on using manure with no-till. There is no cost for this meeting and lunch will be provided free of charge for those who pre-register. For more information contact: Genny Christ 717-240-6507 or genny@psu.edu. To pre-register please call the Cumberland County Extension Office at 717-240-6500.

CANADA THISTLE MANAGEMENT

Bill Curran, Weed science, Field Crop News

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Canada thistle is a creeping perennial that reproduces from vegetative buds in its root system and from seed. It is difficult to control because of this extensive underground root system that stores the energy that the plant produces via photosynthesis. An integrated approach is the best method for management and being persistent in your control efforts is important. The biggest control mistake that I hear about is individuals thinking they can kill Canada thistle in spring time. Canada thistle emerges from its root system in mid to late spring (late April through May) forming rosettes. However, Canada thistle emergence can occur anytime during the growing season when soil moisture is adequate. Spring tillage or spraying Canada thistle with burndown herbicides can destroy above ground growth, but generally will not do much to the underground vegetative structures. Tillage will also cut up root segments and actually stimulate new shoots to emerge. Root pieces as small as 1/8 inch in diameter have enough energy to develop new plants.

A key principle for successful control is to stress the plant and force it to use stored root reserves. This can be accomplished with herbicides, tillage, or mowing. Frequent tillage (e.g. every 30 days) or herbicide use (multiple times/season) would be necessary to significantly impact established Canada thistle. Better yet, growing hay crops that are harvested 3 to 4 times per year anyway can greatly reduce a Canada thistle infestation. With legume forages, it is important to suppress the weed prior to seeding a new crop since effective herbicides are not available and the crop is only competitive after it is established and the frequent mowing occurs. Allowing Canada thistle shoots to grow and thrive can quickly build up underground root reserves making the problem worse.

Canada thistle begins to flower in early summer (late June/early July) depending on your location. Interestingly, male and female flowers are found on different plants (dioecious habit). Applying a systemic herbicide at the bud to bloom stage can be effective, but its usefulness depends on previous efforts to reduce underground root reserves. The most effective time to spray Canada thistle with a systemic herbicide is in the fall when translocation to underground plant parts will be greatest. Herbicides including glyphosate and the plant growth regulators (2,4-D, dicamba, clopyralid, etc.) are generally the most effective, but even with a well timed application, retreatment will be necessary every 1 to 3 years. A program that combines early season suppression to reduce vegetative growth and prevent seed production (mowing, tillage, or herbicide) followed by a well-timed systemic herbicide application in September will have the greatest impact on longer-term control.

PYFA SUMMER CONFERENCE

Join state board officers and PAAE members at beautiful Raystown, Huntington County

Tentative schedule: Monday, 7/12/10, 6:00 pm BBQ with PAAE

Tuesday, 7/13/10, 7:30-10:00 am business session

10:15-11:45 tour kick off at Huntington Area HA

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*"Young farmers are any farmers
willing to learn"*

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