



Coös County Ag Update

April 2017

The North Country Ag Update from Coös County is a periodic email to let you know about upcoming events, interesting stories, disease and pest alerts, etc. that are relevant to agricultural producers in the area.

Do you have comments, questions, suggestions for future content?

Send us an email -

steven.turaj@unh.edu or
carolyn.mcquiston@unh.edu



Workshops & Events



Pruning Demo Scheduled in Colebrook April 15 - CANCELLED

In light of snow load and signs we are in for a protracted mud season, we are changing this event from a pruning demo to an early season blueberry meeting.

INSTEAD Plan to Join Us For an Early Season Blueberry Meeting

Friday, May 26

3:00pm-5:00pm

Topics to include: pruning, soil fertility, vole management, and witches broom.

Questions, please contact Heather.Bryant@unh.edu or call the Grafton Extension office 787-6944

More Information
&
How to Join this Event



Save the Date!
Wednesday, May 3
10:00am-3:30pm
North Country Resource Center, Lancaster

[More Information](#)

In The News



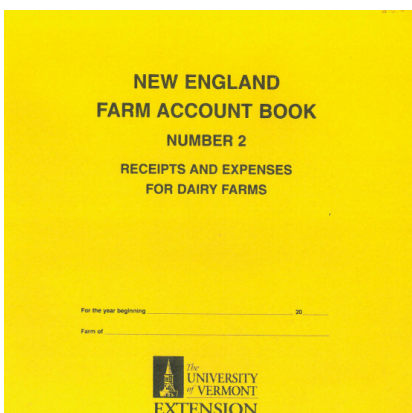
Crop Progress & Condition - Reporting Season Starts

In April, I begin these, every Monday morning, reports to the USDA's Agricultural Statistics Service. It's a synopsis of weather, crop, soil conditions, ag activities (ie corn planting, haying, etc) taking place in Coös County, NH. I appreciate hearing from farmers; what they are seeing, noteworthy activities, and especially anything eventful: untimely frosts, pests, flooding, and the like.

Although I do try to check what I call "bell-weather field locations" routinely when conditions seem right...ie for NCLBlight, Armyworm invasions, you are my eyes, seeing it on a daily basis. Besides giving all of us a "heads-up" so we might be able to respond effectively, these reports constitute a historical record for other agencies like FSA/USDA. Potential for crop protection, emergency programs. Email or phone calls from you should be received by 9:00am to add it to that week's report.

+On a similar topic, 2017 is the collection year of the 5 Year Census of Agriculture, I'm certain you will be hearing from their teams of census-takers. The data collected is important to many of us in agriculture.

[More Information Can Be Found Here](#)

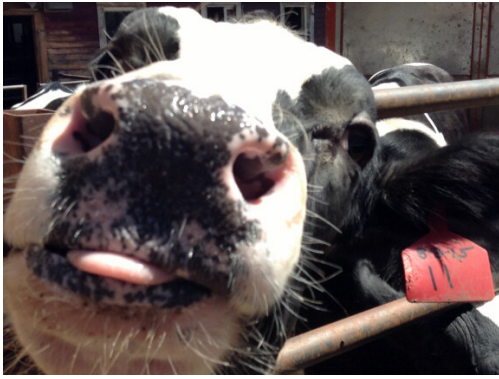


New England Farm Account Books

This UVM Extension publications will no longer be available at the UNH Extension office in Lancaster.

You can order them from the UVM Extension office in St Johnsbury, VT

374 Emerson Falls Rd, Suite 1
St Johnsbury, VT 05819
802-751-8307 or
800-545-8920 (toll free in VT)



Dairy Practices Committee Dairy Events in March 2017.

North Country Dairy Seminar & Trade Show,
Wednesday, March 15

Unfortunately didn't happen, a first in its over 30 year history, if that's any consolation.

Heavy snowfall, poor driving conditions for speakers, trade-show representatives travelling distances, farmers digging out, we decided to cancel early in the week. Hopefully all who registered (and many I guessed would attend) were either contacted by phone or email in a timely manner.

Dairy Management Conference & Trade Show,
Thursday, March 16, West Lebanon

This one was held, although one speaker giving his talk via internet connection!

Presentation by Maine's Assistant State Veterinarian on the whole antibiotic use on farms that is the focus of the VFD.



Last Month's Dairy Webinar

Mike Lunak gets the credit for putting these together. They were accessible either from home on your computer, or at a number of other locations, including the Coös Extension Office.... always coffee and maybe doughnuts if you're lucky... They seem to have been well received considering it was the first time we attempted it.

One nice feature is that it permits us to bring you high quality speakers –these from what has been called “The Golden Age of Agricultural Extension” -that we would not otherwise have the capability to do.

Here are the links to the recordings if you missed them:

Dr. Mike Hutjens, University of Illinois
Making a Profit in 2017:
Focus on Feeding and Management

Dr. Robert Parsons, University of Vermont,
Business Management Practices to Help
Survive Low Milk Prices

Willows

Coös Conservation District

For the third installment of the plants to be established, I am going with the whole genus of



Willows or *Salix* spp. Many of these are native to our region while others have been introduced for one reason or another. Pictured is group of Purple Osier or Basket Willow brought from Europe for that purpose. This stand had been “*Coppiced” a year or so before to yield the long, uniform wands useful for weaving, decoration or for replanting in soil stabilization purposes. Our plantings in Columbia will focus on native willows...there are a lot of them...with various useful attributes.

Many of willows qualities, like the popular use of pussy willows in vases, to herald the onset of Spring, seem obvious. One is not. That is, unless you are a bee-keeper. After a long winter their early blossoming catkins (Aments) are a welcome sight as they provide the much needed pollen (and nectar) to jump start hives. Some willow species are reported to be favored even over the beneficial dandelion.

* A bit on coppicing which is quite an ancient practice to stimulate new growth from older plants. Basically it involves cutting back top-growth to a couple inches or so from ground level, right about now. (dormant season) The long scion like wood that results -think watersprouts- may then be harvested for various purposes. It's said coppiced plantations dating back to Medieval times are still being utilized in England.



SpringTime Pasture Upkeep

Declining fertility, over-grazing, unclipped after grazing such are factors that give various problem weeds an in-road to farm pastures. Stout rooted biennials and perennial types can be a particular concern. They especially seem to like those protected spots along fence-post and wire. One notable is the Bull Thistle, *Cirsium vulgare*, also called Spear Thistle for obvious reasons. Those of Scottish heritage will know it as the national flower of Scotland. Originally chosen not for their large purple flowers but rather the “prominent spines” found on the plant.



The story goes that the presence of an enemy army was given away when one of their members gave a loud outcry when stepping on it...thereby alerting and saving the Scot's army. A bare-foot stroll through your own pasture will give you the point, so to speak.

Pictured is the biennial Bull Thistle in its (vegetative) “wintering over rosette” form. In the now beginning second year, its large storage root will send up a tall spiny, purple flowered column (reproductive), eventually spreading seeds looking for a home. Now, as the soil warms up enough, is a good time to tackle it with the right tool.

One that can work well is available through the Coös County Conservation District's tool loaner program. Hand-forged in the US by a skilled blacksmith it was originally purchased to target persistent, difficult to control weeds like Tansy, known to take over the corners of High-tunnels. It does a nice job at popping/levering up all manner of tap-rooted weeds out of the soil. Just takes a bit of practice. You may look like a Medieval Scottish Halberdier as you tramp along fence-lines this Spring but your efforts should be rewarded. Be sure to take along a large pocketful of red clover seed to -Frost-seed-sprinkle- in the holes you tamp down. Remember "Nature does not tolerate a vacuum" and will probably fill it with whatever is handy.

NH Farm Bureau



NH Farm Bureau's new **Veterans in Agriculture Committee** is looking for feedback from our members.

Are YOU a veteran? Would you like to learn more about opportunities for veterans in agriculture? Would you like to be a part of this new committee? Do you know a veteran in agriculture or who is interested in agriculture?

Contact the NHFB Office at (603) 224-1934 or e-mail Josh editor@nhfarmbureau.org with your name, county, contact info, and how you would like to be involved.

Veteran / Farmer Update

Two items of interest on this effort to help guide Veterans who are considering a career in agriculture:

1. First organizational meeting of NH Farm Bureau's new Veterans in Agriculture Committee in March. Very well attended by motivated Vets, Farmers, and other Ag Folks, of all ages and abilities. Mission is to recruit, educate, support, and promote Veterans and Veteran families in Agriculture. Right now we are compiling a list of resources and individuals who can help. Know someone? Email Diane at dianec@nhfarmbureau.org.

2. We, on UNH's Ag-Extension Dairy/Forage Crop/Livestock Team have signed on to receive a grant through the National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) Armed to Farm. All agricultural commodities will be considered, we are just taking the lead on this.

Its intent is to build farmer training programs, provide net-working opportunities for Military Veterans in the Northeast. This will give us funds for training materials, specialty speakers, facility use that would be needed. We are still planning a series of pilot workshops this summer. A lot is possible.

NH Farm Bureau



Questions, The Education Center Can Help



For answers to Homeowner questions,
please check our Education Center website

Coös Ag Newsletter Archives



If you missed a newsletter, they can be reviewed in our archive section.

You can also subscribe here to other UNHCE news letters that may be of interest to you.

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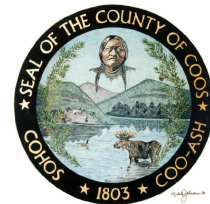
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Coös County Agriculture Webpage

UNHCE Agriculture Webpage

The UNH Cooperative Extension office in Coös County is located in the
[North Country Resource Center](#)
[629A Main Street](#)
[Lancaster, NH 03584](#)

For more information on
Coös County UNH Cooperative Extension
[visit our website](#), [email us](#), or call 603-788-4961



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