



Coös County Ag Update

June 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 -

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carolyn.mcquiston@unh.edu



Vernal Pools -

Are those Spring-time, here now, then gone pools of water only seen by those intrepid folks tramping about, braving the black flies this time of year. Right now they're full of polliwogs and other species adapted to this temporary environment absent of fish.

In The News



Planting into Green Cover Crops

Readers of this newsletter will have noticed our coverage about how New Hampshire farmers are working on establishing cover crops in their field corn plantings. This has usually involved aerial seedings by helicopters in late summer into standing corn, other methods are also being experimented with. An especial challenge in northern-most NH and VT is establishing a suitable cover after corn harvest, our growing season being so short.

Various cover crops have been tried including Winter Rye, Oats, and Tillage Radish. The overall goal is to reduce soil erosion, scavenge up any leftover nutrients for a succeeding crop, and perhaps improve soil structure. In Spring, getting it planted can also be a trial of sorts. Most home gardeners are aware of just how "Aggressive" a



Rye cover can be, if not attended to early. Here is a look at the specialized no-till equipment needed to get the job done.



Milkweed and All That

Forage Crop Perspectives by Steve Turaj

Getting a head start on weeds makes later cropping more do-able. Here are some thoughts on that subject:

Different situations, same solutions...Ok, **A.** You planted that **TAR** seed mix (Timothy, Alsike and Red Clover) they recommended at the feed store. What's all that other stuff growing there, and what do I do about it now? **B.** I leased this field for a pretty low price last Fall, seeing it now, I'm not sure it was such a bargain! Common enough things we hear this time of year, especially from newer landowners wanting to improve their pastures, grass meadows. I'll mention a few useful resources throughout this article; an approach that may help.

First, get a soil-type map of your land from the local NRCS office, or off the internet using [Web-Soil survey](#). This gives you a graphic picture of your soil's true potential. There is a reason why so many NH farmers went West during the mid-1800s. Our rocky, wet soils were a big part of that, "*so rocky you had to pry up the sun with a crow-bar*" comes to mind.

If the land looks promising for forage crops, follow-up with an in-the-field assessment. It should be done by you and a knowledgeable individual, someone with a trained eye who knows what are desirable plants, what are not. An experienced farmer, crop advisor,

seed/fertilizer salesman, Extension or USDA representative are possible candidates. All tend to be rather busy this time of the year; you may have to go it alone.

Some things to-do, discuss during this field visit include:

1. Doing a darn soil test – This will give you an idea of the fertility of the soil and what's needed to improve it. Unlike the 'NRCS **soil type** ...and coffee I brew' this is something that can be changed. I'm biased and like the one run by UNH Extension through Penn State. At \$12 for the basic test, it identifies your soil's fertility status and tells you the specific nutrients needed to benefit the intended crop. You can get a soil test form off our [web-site](#) or at the local Extension office. It's the "Commercial Corn, Forage, Pasture' one.

2. Take a Look – Try a fairly zig-zag course across the field to truly understand it's potential. This is also important if you're popping soil test samples along the way. Both a representative test and close-up look is what you're trying to achieve. It would be good to record your observations either on a hand-drawn sketch map or something using more exacting technology, as you like. The Crop Record sheet on our [web-site](#) may work.

3. Talk it over– This is your farm and whatever you hope to accomplish should be at the top of the list. Some subjects a crop advisor might ask are: How has the land been managed in the past, and most recently? (grazing, mowing, seeding, fertilization practices, what, how and when) What and how many animals do you have, plan to have, is the land for grazing, haying, an exercise yard or combination...all are hard to do at once. What equipment do you have available? What do you have time to do?

*This should lead to an overall discussion about what's there **now** and how the land will be managed in the future. I recall a wise Agronomist who once said: "you can spend a small fortune planting a field to alfalfa, but if you manage it like grass, you'll get grass", True for other crops as well.*

4. Weeds Telling you Something? As my role-model Yogi Berra might say "You can observe a lot by watching". -This is the part about all those weeds -

They are terrific indicator/survivor plants that have adapted themselves to whatever conditions are now prevailing. They're usually less than optimum for useful forage plants. Once established many have aggressive, spreading root systems that help keep them there. Lots of suspects in that category: Canada Thistle, Milkweed, Yellow Rattle. By studying past management, current soil fertility and physical limitations, **why** they're growing there becomes understandable. Is it really all that surprising that there is no usable grass when pastures are closely grazed, the pH is acid-low and no nitrogen fertilizer has gone down for many seasons? Yes, herbicides can eliminate weeds (be sure to check label restrictions on harvest, grazing intervals..) but they don't address root causes...pun intended...

*During the crop season I do tie myself to the office desk most Mondays to help discuss anything that happens over the weekend; give me a call if you'd like to talk over these sorts of crop plans. Steve 788-4961.

Soil Test, Plant Disease, Insect ID

Reminder - this is the time of year you will want to have this information handy.



[Link to Soil Test Webpage](#)



[Link to Plant Diseases How & Where to Submit Samples](#)



[NH IPM News and Alerts Sign up for newsletters and more](#)



[Link to Insect Identification](#)

Coös Conservation District



Coös County Conservation District Nursery Update Fencing going up. Poles were first order of business by the District Supervisors, who are a Hands-On, get it done bunch. A tractor mounted post hole auger made the job a bit easier. Black flies were also there to keep us company.

Next job is deer fencing mesh followed by northern adapted native, pollinator plants of types not readily available elsewhere.

NH Farm Bureau



Farmer–Veteran Workshops

As we develop our workshops for this year, we are asking for help for both Veterans and Farmers who want to be involved. We will be sending out this survey through various methods. Here is first look, please complete and send back to us here in Coös Extension:

For Veterans:

- 1) List two(2) skills you gained when on active service that can be helpful in farming.
- 2) What type of farming are you interested in pursuing? Your own farm or to work on a farm?
- 3) List three(3) Farming/Agricultural skills in which you would like to become proficient.

For Farmers:

- 1) When employing a military veteran, what are the most important skills you would like them to have?
 - 2) Would you be willing to host an on-farm workshop for aspiring farmer veteran? If yes, please call Diane Cleary at the NH Farm Bureau (224-1934).
 - 3) Do you have an on-farm/job training program that would be helpful to aspiring farmers veterans? If yes, please describe the training program.
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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

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

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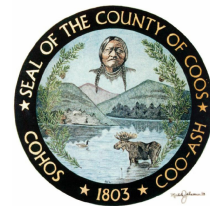
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The UNH Cooperative Extension office in Coös County is located in the [North Country Resource Center](#)
[629A Main Street](#)
[Lancaster, NH 03584](#)

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



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