



Winter Educational Opportunities for Fruit Industry

2013 Empire State Producers EXPO – LOF and Eastern NY Fruit Specialists coordinated 7 sessions at the 2013 EXPO with a total of 695 participants over the 2-day period. Participants learned about increasing workforce productivity, growing practices for new Cornell bred apple varieties, NY1 & 2, how growers dealt with frost and freezes in 2012, how to meet new pest challenges in fruit crops, irrigation, managing a fruiting wall canopy, weed management, and mechanization in fruit production. There were sessions on labor management and food safety as well. Growers reported that they would be paying closer attention to water needs and making changes in how and when they irrigate, use platforms for various purposes on the farm, manage weeds, understand where to look for brown marmorated stink bug, make some adjustments on sprayers to reduce airflow and drift, and more.

2013 Becker Forum: Over ninety people attended the forum on “Managing Human Resources in Agriculture: Creative Steps when Public Policy Fails”. The morning session focused on improving grower input in public policy development concerning immigration issues and the afternoon session on improving grower human resource management skills. Comments from participants on: “What one or two things will you start doing or do differently as a result of what you have learned at the conference?” included:

- Searching for alternative labor sources or retaining what we have.
- Focus on farm owners as leaders and being a better leader.
- Improve workers training and career opportunities and employ additional strategies to get work force.
- Check out: agworkforcecoalition.org - nceaonline.org and national council of farmer coops.

2013 LOF Winter School – CCE-LOF continue to have record attendance at these annual schools, with a total of 371 participants from across the region. Participants learned about many aspects of growing fruit to improve their profitability of their businesses. They bring employees to increase understanding of fruit production practices. The Spanish sessions continue to grow with 59 Hispanics attending the Spanish sessions. Growers will make changes in frost protection techniques as needed in 2013, were interested in sprayer technology changes, will adjust pruning methods in 2013, and more.

Eastern Apple Precision Orchard Management Summit – The entire team was involved in developing program and content for this in-depth school for 220 apple growers in the Northeast. There were participants from 47 NY farms, and others from Eastern US, Michigan, and Eastern Canada. Alison DeMarree provided the use of her Net Present Value Workbook to determine the economic impact of various practices for the school where data was available. DeMarree, Breth, and Miranda gave presentations on various aspects of fruit production to support the theme proposed by Terence Robinson. A proceedings has been published. There was discussion at the LOF Advisory meeting and Fruit PWT meeting to put content on the web.

Food Safety GAPS: From January through March, four GVRMA-funded plus 1 additional two-day food safety workshops were held in Geneva, Mt. Morris, Batavia, Penn Yan, and Long Island. These were a continuation of the workshops held last year for farmers and other produce industry personnel to help them understand the importance of produce safety, identify and reduce food safety risks on their farms, and to write their own individual farm food safety plans in preparation for a 3rd-party audit, if necessary. A total of 93 growers from 58 farms attended the four workshops. In addition, eleven attendees were from other farm-related organizations including crop consultants, representatives from the produce industry, and other extension educators from outside the region who were interested in how to conduct the workshop in their own state. While the pressure of produce buyers forced some growers to participate in third-party audits to maintain

their markets and thus, attend the two-day training to prepare, a unique subset of growers we encountered this season were experiencing no pressure at all to participate in audits. Interestingly, the regulatory climate had driven them to attend the workshop and even though not required, all of these attendees were enthusiastic and focused on finishing their food safety plans. Participants cited their motivation stemmed from the desire to “do the right thing”, and keep their farms ahead of the curve.

Weed Management: Many questions arise around weed management requirements in the higher density plantings going in in Western NY, how to use new herbicides, and how to avoid damage suspected from using glyphosate. Debbie has presented her data from the 2-year NESARE project to 530 participants in several audiences this winter. The plots will be evaluated once more and data analyzed for the final report due June 15. The fall weed control plots at Lamont Fruit Farm were evaluated this spring and another set of spring herbicides under development have been set up in Lyndonville. The Apple Research and Development Program (ARDP) awarded funding for a proposal, “Weed Management Requirements in High Density Orchards,” to determine the critical timing of weed free strip in tree rows the newer greater density orchards. This project will have 2 sites, one in Western NY at Kast Farms and the second in the Hudson Valley coordinated by Mike Fargione. Growers are learning how critical weed control is in high density orchards and how to manage weeds better. They can harvest approximately \$1000/acre more fruit with good weed control.

Pruning Demonstrations 2013:

The Benefits of Using Motorized Platforms for Dormant Pruning and the Cornell Concept for a Fruiting Wall

The CCE Lake Ontario Fruit Program organized two pruning workshops for growers and employees in Feb. 18 (Wayne County) and Feb. 19 (Orleans County). More than 160 people attended both meetings and learned about the benefits of proper pruning, minimal pruning, limb renewal pruning, and limb bending. This year Dr. Robinson introduced the Cornell Fruiting Wall Concept using Tall Spindle Trees and Mechanical Pruning at the VanDeWalle site (only at the Wayne County site). At each of the pruning sites, we had platforms for attendees to prune with loppers and pneumatic pruners.



Pesticide Safety and Certification: Mike Stanyard of the NWNV Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Team, and Debbie Breth updated PMEP training materials to match the new Core Manual for Pesticide Certification for the training in Wayne Co CCE. We had 30 participants on March 13 and 18 who prepared to take the exam. Of the 27 who took the exam, 22 passed and are now certified applicators. Liz began preparations for DEC Special Permit Training by combing through 129 labels to update study materials.

Success Story: Extension Programs Respond To 2012 Seasonal Extremes In Orchards. See attached.