



Is there a best time to top your Brussel sprouts? A research trial in NH indicates there is an optimal window to top the crop before harvest.

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New decision support tools are being created to help growers make the most informed decisions in the face of a changing climate.

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NYS announced \$1 million to fund new farmer grant to help beginning farmers improve profitability through agribusiness expansion, diversification, and innovations.

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Governor Cuomo announces \$25 million to grow farms and agribusiness in the Southern Tier. Applications will be available beginning January 19, 2016.

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Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Cornell Vegetable Program

Brussel Sprouts – To Top or Not to Top?

Robert Hadad, CCE Cornell Vegetable Program

It is great to see so many customers buying long stems of Brussels sprouts. Growing up, I can't recall seeing that much interest with this crop. I know now is a little late for passing on Brussels sprout production information but since it is on my mind, I will bring it up anyway. When is the right time to top Brussels sprouts or should they be topped at all?

Brussels sprouts are one of those crops that gets seeded when we can remember to do, usually mid-May but often later. It is also the same crop that we need to remember to top. When looking into the recommendation for when to top, the answer is that it depends on who you are talking to. Often, when to top is prescribed as so many weeks before expected harvest date. This ranges generally between 3 and 6 weeks before harvest date. Often, we tend to forget to top and it ends up sometime in mid-September.

I had a planting of Brussels sprouts that I really had forgotten



Brussel sprouts, October 2015. *Photo: Cordelia Hall, Cornell Vegetable Program*

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VegEdge newsletter is exclusively for enrollees in the Cornell Vegetable Program, a Cornell Cooperative Extension regional agriculture team, serving 11 counties in Western New York.

The newsletter is a service to our enrollees and is intended for educational purposes, strengthening the relationship between our enrollees, the Cornell Vegetable Program team, and Cornell University.

We're interested in your comments. Contact us at:
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Information provided is general and educational in nature. Employees and staff of the Cornell Vegetable Program, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Cornell University do not endorse or recommend any specific product or service.

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CCE and its employees assume no liability for the effectiveness or results of any chemicals for pesticide usage. No endorsement of products or companies is made or implied. **READ THE LABEL BEFORE APPLYING ANY PESTICIDE.**

Help us serve you better by telling us what you think. Email us at cce-cvp@cornell.edu or write to us at Cornell Vegetable Program, 480 North Main Street, Canandaigua, NY 14424.



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The next issue of VegEdge will be published on February 1, 2016.

The Cornell Vegetable Program has released our 2015 Year in Review brochure which highlights some of our research and education projects from the year. We are proud of our work that supports the WNY commercial vegetable industry:

- Bird Repellent Tools Research in Sweet Corn
- Developing and Expanding Farm Food Safety Trainings
- Supporting Growth of the New York Table Beet Industry
- Pest Management Techniques in Winter High Tunnels
- Unraveling New Puzzling Leaf Disease of Onions
- Alerted Dry Bean Growers to Invasive Pest Threat
- Our team made more than 4,400 farm visits and crop consultations
- Our Specialists gave presentations in 108 educational meetings with nearly 4,900 attendees



[click to view](#)

Thank you to our grower cooperators for your assistance with our research trials, industry support, Cornell faculty and staff, and Cooperative Extension staff for your continued support.

about that the plants were out in the field. It was early October and the sprouts had only started to get large at the base. I stripped the leaves and thought I might as well top them and hope for the best. I topped about a half of dozen plants then wondered what would happen if I left the rest. So I left 12 plants untopped and 12 topped.

Thanksgiving week I went out to the field to grab the Brussels sprouts stalks because it looked like the field was going to be tilled under. After cutting the stalks, I sorted them by untopped and topped. I expected to find little sprouts on the untopped and larger sprouts on the topped. I wasn't expecting to find large sprouts since I had gotten to them so late.

The sprouts on the topped plants were decent looking. The sprouts average just over 1" in diameter. There was about 20% of the top sets of sprouts less than 0.75". The sprouts from the untopped plants looked even better. The average size was 1.45" and the sprouts nearest the top of the plant had only 10% less than 0.75". So, based on this less than scientific trial, topping didn't increase the yield over the untopped.

I attended the New England Vegetable and Fruit Conference in December which is held in Manchester, NH. I picked up a copy of their proceedings and came across an entry for a presentation that I hadn't attended. It was a trial on Brussels sprouts looking at different varieties and compared topped and untopped over two years of results. The research was conducted by Becky Sideman, UNH Cooperative Extension.

The varieties trialed were Catskill, Churchill, Diablo, Doric, Early Marvel, Falstaff, Gustus, Jade Cross E, Nautic, Nelson, Roodnerf, Octia. The variety I used was Jade Cross.

In a nut shell, the results proved that there are differences among varieties and between years. One year a topped variety did well while the next year an untopped different variety did well. There were no clear answers. Big help, right? Their conclusions suggests "that topping between 30-60 days before harvest, especially once lower sprouts have begun to reach marketable size, will result in the maximum benefit to marketable yields and appearance of Brussels sprouts". If your plan is not to harvest sprouts for at least 60 days then don't top and allow the plants to grow larger in size. ●



Photo: C. Hall, CVP

New York 2014 Organic Survey Results

USDA, National Agricultural Statistics Service, New York Field Office

[An Organic Dry Bean Discussion Group has recently organized, made up of organic and conventional dry bean and field crop growers, organic dry bean cleaners, and organic dry bean canners. If you're interested contact Carol MacNeil at crm6@cornell.edu or 585-313-8796.

Also, the NY Certified Organic [NYCO] group, focused on field crops and forage, will be meeting the second Tuesday in January, February and March, at Jordan Hall, NYS Ag Experiment Station, Geneva. If you're interested contact Fay Benson at afb3@cornell.edu or 607-391-2660 x410. ed. C. MacNeil, CCE CVP.]

The USDA/NASS released the results of the 2014 Organic Survey, which shows 917 certified and exempt organic farms in New York sold a total of \$164 million in organic products in 2014, up 56% since 2008, according to USDA's National Agricultural Statistics Service,

New York Field Office. New York accounted for 3% of the U.S. organic sales in 2014. Additionally, the industry shows potential for growth in production as 378 organic producers report they intend to increase organic production in New York over the next five years.

The selection of organic products sold by New York farms in 2014 was diverse, from dairy, livestock and poultry, to fruits, vegetables and grains. Some of the top commodity groups in organic sales were:

- Livestock and Poultry Products -- \$95.5 million
- Fields Crops -- \$29.7 million
- Vegetables -- \$16.3 million
- Livestock and Poultry -- \$16.0 million
- Maple Syrup -- \$2.7 million

Additionally, 529 of New York's organic farms reported selling products to wholesale markets. These sales accounted for 72% of New York's organic farm sales. Wholesale markets, such as buyers for supermarkets, processors, distributors, packers and cooperatives, were serving as the marketing channel of choice for New York organic farmers to get organic agriculture products to customers.

The complete 2014 Organic Survey report is at: http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Online_Resources/Organics/index.php ●

Climate Smart Farming: Cornell's Farmer-Driven Research and Extension Program

Darcy Telenko, Cornell Vegetable Program and Climate Smart Farming Team, and Allison Chatrchyan, Cornell Institute for Climate Change and Agriculture, climatesmartfarming.org

Extreme precipitation. Heat stress. Drought. New pests and diseases. Longer growing seasons. Farmers in the Northeast US are under increasing pressure to respond to extreme weather events and climate change. Cornell's Climate Smart Farming (CSF) program empowers farmers to adopt practices that will increase agricultural resiliency, reduce their impact on the climate, and help them profit from new opportunities. By fostering partnerships and engaging stakeholders, CSF delivers trusted, research-based climate information and decision-support tools for farmers, resource managers, and policy makers.

Climate Change and Agricultural Impacts

Agriculture in the Northeastern US is characterized by a diversity of products and production systems, scales of operations, and landscapes. Farmers need a variety of specific practices and tools to help them with climate change adaptation and mitigation.

Agricultural Products	Climate Change Impacts	Toolkit of Adaptation & Mitigation Practices
Dairy and Livestock	Heat stress, water impacts from heavy precipitation	Increased cooling, energy efficiency and renewables, water management
Vegetables and Field Crops	Disease, weed and pest pressure, flooding and short-term drought, longer growing seasons, heat stress	Integrated pest management, drainage or irrigation, soil health, cropping systems, shifting dates and new varieties
Tree Fruit, Berries, and Grapes	Unexpected freeze, short-term drought, reduced winter chill	Monitoring weather and protecting crops, siting, soil health and cropping systems, new varieties
Maple Syrup	Changing seasons, variable weather, contamination, tree health	Earlier tapping, new technologies, shifting production

Cutting Edge Tools and Resources

Our new decision support tools are built on state-of-the-art weather, climate, agricultural yield, and economic data to help growers make the most informed decisions in the face of a changing climate. These tools, ranging from a growing degree-day calculator to a frost risk predictor, are being built with farmer input and will be available on multiple platforms when, and where, farmers need them.

Extension

Our Climate Smart Farming (CSF) Extension team is the first of its kind in the United States. Spanning New York State, the CSF team has been trained on climate change science, impacts and responses, and is developing new resources and materials. The team provides commodity specific information to farmers and answers their questions about climate variability and farm management. This innovative extension team is strengthening statewide capacity on climate change, and can serve as a model for climate change extension efforts nationally.

Partnerships

We are building collaborations to deliver the latest research updates and guidance on policies that will support stakeholders' ability to adopt new practices. Partnerships include the Cooperative Extension system, agricultural and environmental

organizations, government agencies, industry, and foundations.

Acknowledgements

The authors gratefully acknowledge support from the USDA NIFA Federal Capacity Funds (Hatch and Smith Lever), collaboration with the USDA Northeast Regional Climate Change Hub and land grant partners (with funding from the Agricultural Research Service), as well as partnerships with foundations for support of this work.

Planned Weather-to-Climate Change Tools for Farmers in the Northeastern US

CICCA programmers are building several new user-friendly Decision Support Tools based on interest and needs identified by farmers, researchers, and extension specialists, with strong stakeholder input. The following tools are in development, or in planning stages, but we look forward to hearing more priorities for data and information from producers:

In development now:

1. Growing Degree Day Forecast Calculator
2. Frost Risk Calculator Tool
3. Evapotranspiration (ET) Calculator

Planned in 2016-2017 based on producer needs:

4. Dairy Heat Stress Tool
5. Seasonal Outlook Forecast Summary for Agriculture
6. Regional Drought Status/ Outlook for the Northeast
7. Economic Climate Crop Yield Tool
8. Watershed Runoff Calculator
9. Water Footprint Calculator
10. Cover Crop Decision Tool
11. Climate Anomaly Maps
12. Other tools: *as identified by farmers/advisors*

New Farmer Grant – Funding Agribusiness Across NYS

Empire State Development

New York State announced \$1 million for the 2nd round of the New Farmers Grant Fund. The grants will help beginning farmers improve profitability through one or more of the following program goals:

- Expanding agricultural production, diversifying agricultural production and/or extending the agricultural season;
- Advancing innovative agricultural techniques that increase sustainable practices such as organic farming, food safety, reduction of farm waste and/or water use;
- Creating or expanding partnerships with other entities such as farms, institutions or regional food-hubs for processing, selling and/or distributing agricultural products.

Grants may provide a minimum of \$15,000 and a maximum of \$50,000 for up to 50% of total project costs. The remaining 50% must be matched by the recipient. Eligible sources of recipient match are limited to cash, lines of credit and loans.

Eligible Farmers/Farms (*all of the following criteria must be met*):

- A farm operation of 150 acres or less located wholly within NYS which produces an agricultural product as defined by the Guidelines;
- The farm operation must have a minimum of \$10,000 in sales from products grown or derived from the farm as reflected in either personal or business 2014 or 2015 tax returns;
- All owners must be NYS residents of at least 18 years of age;

- All owners must be in the first ten years of having an ownership interest in any farm operation as of April 1, 2015;
- All owners must materially and substantially participate in the day-to-day production of an agricultural product grown or raised on the farm operation.

Eligible costs include the purchase of machinery and equipment, supplies, and/or construction or improvement of physical structures used exclusively for agricultural purposes.

Program application and guidelines can be found at: www.esd.ny.gov/BusinessPrograms/NewFarmersGrantFund.html

Applications must be postmarked by **January 22, 2016**. **Questions?** Bonnie Devine at: nyfarmfund@esd.ny.gov •

\$25M for Southern Tier Agriculture

NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets; published in Morning AgClips, 12/15/15

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the release of program criteria for the \$25 million Southern Tier Agricultural Industry Enhancement Program. The eligibility requirements are now available online at www.agriculture.ny.gov. The program will provide crucial **funding for projects designed to help farms and agribusinesses expand and grow their operations, as well as increase environmental enhancements in Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Schuyler, Steuben, Tompkins and Tioga counties**. Applications will be available beginning January 19, 2016.

"New York's agriculture industry is an economic engine in upstate communities – driving growth and expanding opportunity," Governor Cuomo said. "I'm proud to announce \$25 million in State funding for the Agriculture Industry Enhancement Program which will provide vital support to all farmers and agribusinesses in the Southern Tier and

keep New York's agricultural economy growing."

Eligible projects will increase agricultural production on farms and improve profitability, as well as support farmers in better managing and enhancing environmental resources. Projects that are awarded State funding may receive up to \$100,000 to help with expenses associated with construction, renovation, irrigation, drainage, environmental enhancements, fencing, trellis systems and greenhouses. Eligible applicants that demonstrate an exemplary commitment to protecting or enhancing natural resources, may also be entitled to an additional \$10,000 toward their project.

The Department of Agriculture and Markets will work in coordination with the County Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCD) to administer the program. The SWCDs will pre-qualify projects and oversee the implementation of awards. Awards will be made on

a semi-annual basis for a period of two years or until funding is depleted. Applications will be available and filed locally through each respective county SWCD. To find a list of the SWCDs, go to <https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/CountyAddressesAIEP.pdf>

Applicants must meet the Department's definition of a farm operation and meet additional criteria as outlined in the program criteria, including participation in the New York State Agricultural Environmental Management program within the past three years, or a commitment to participate in the program prior to being awarded. •

UPCOMING EVENTS *view all Cornell Vegetable Program upcoming events at cvp.cce.cornell.edu*

2016 Auction Growers Production Meeting (Yates County)

January 7, 2016 | 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Finger Lakes Produce Auction, 3691 Route 14A, Penn Yan, NY 14527



This course will educate growers on disease and pest management, varieties and marketing issues in open field and high tunnel vegetables. Topics such as disease resistant varieties, pest/disease, cultural management and appropriate spray options. An anticipated 1.0 hours of content is eligible for re-certification credits. FREE! [The agenda](#) is available on our website cvp.cce.cornell.edu. Contact Judson Reid at 585-313-8912 or jer11@cornell.edu with questions.

2016 Auction Growers Production Meeting (Seneca County)

January 11, 2016 | 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Seneca Produce Auction, 2033 Yerkes Rd, Romulus, NY 14541



This course will educate growers on disease and pest management, varieties and marketing issues in open field and high tunnel vegetables. Topics such as disease resistant varieties, pest/disease, cultural management and appropriate spray options. An anticipated 1.0 hours of content is eligible for re-certification credits. FREE! [The agenda](#) is available on our website cvp.cce.cornell.edu. Contact Judson Reid at 585-313-8912 or jer11@cornell.edu with questions.

Northeast Beginning Farmer Project Online Courses

The [Cornell Small Farms Program](#) is pleased to announce the winter roster of online courses available through its [Northeast Beginning Farmer Project](#). These courses help farmers learn from the latest research-based education.

Winter 2016 Online Course List

[BF 102: Markets and Profits - Exploring the Feasibility of Your Farming Ideas](#), Jan 14 - Feb 28

[BF 120: Veggie Farming - From Planning to Planting](#), Jan 13 - Feb 17. CVP Specialist Darcy Telenko is an instructor.

[BF 140: Small-scale Organic Grain Production - Is it Right for Your Farm?](#), Jan 19 - Feb 23

[BF 151: Intro to Maple Syrup Production](#), Jan 12 - Feb 16

[BF 201: Effective Marketing - Sell Smarter, Not Harder](#), Jan 11 - Feb 21

[BF 203: Holistic Financial Planning - Building Profit into the Picture](#), Jan 20 - Feb 24

[BF 231: Grazing Management - Improving Your Triple Bottom Line](#), Jan 14 - Feb 18

[BF 121: Veggie Farming - From Season-Long Care to Market](#), Feb 24 - Mar 23. CVP Specialist Darcy Telenko is an instructor.

[BF 150: Farm-Scale Mushroom Production - For Fun and Profit](#), Feb 23 - March 29

[BF 202: Planning to Stay in Business - Writing Your Business Plan](#), Feb 4 - March 10

[BF 103: Taking Care of Business - Understanding the Business, Regulatory, and Tax Implications of Your Farm](#), Mar 7 - Apr 11

[BF 220: Season Extension with High Tunnels - Know Before You Grow](#), Mar 22 - Apr 19. CVP Specialist Judson Reid is an instructor.

Each course is \$200, but up to 4 people from the same farm may participate without paying extra. See the course description page for more on the course learning objectives, instructors, and outline.

[Learn which courses would be best for you](#), [read about our team of experienced instructors](#), see answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#), and [view the calendar of course offerings](#).

Courses often fill very quickly, so don't miss your chance to sign up today! For more information contact: <http://www.nebeginningfarmers.org/online-courses/>.

2016 Empire State Producers Expo

January 19-21, 2016

Oncenter Convention Center, Syracuse, NY



The Cornell Vegetable Program Specialists are involved in organizing sessions on Processing Vegetables, Potatoes, Onions, Cabbage/Cole Crops, Soil Health, Weed Management, Climate Change, Beginning Farmers, High Tunnels, and Specialty Vegetables. The program and online registration are available from the NYS Vegetable Growers Association, <http://nysvga.org/>.



UPCOMING EVENTS

view all Cornell Vegetable Program upcoming events at cvp.cce.cornell.edu

NOFA-NY Winter Conference – Good Hard Work: Ecosystems, Economics, Energy & Equity

January 22-24, 2016

Saratoga Hilton and City Center, Saratoga Springs, NY

The full list of workshops, including several with Cornell Vegetable Program staff presentations, is available at <http://www.nofany.org/events/winter-conference>. Register is open online and continues through January 15. Questions about registration, call Stephanie at 585-271-1979 x509 or email register@nofany.org.

2016 Pesticide Training and Recertification Series (Ontario County)

February 1, 8, 15, 22, 2016 (Trainings) | 7:00 PM - 9:30 PM

February 29, 2016 (Exam) | 6:30 PM - 11:00 PM

CCE Ontario County, 480 N Main St, Canandaigua, NY 14424



Anyone interested in obtaining a pesticide certification and meets the DEC experience / education requirements **OR** current applicators seeking pesticide recertification credits should attend. 2.5 recertification core credits will be available for each class.

\$175.00 for certification which includes the training manuals and all 4 classes. Does not include the \$100.00 exam fee. Recertification is \$25.00 per class. For more information, contact Cornell Cooperative Extension-Ontario County, 585-394-3977 x 427 or x 436 or email nea8@cornell.edu or rw43@cornell.edu. Registration form is available on the website www.cceontario.org

Erie County Vegetable Growers Meeting

February 29, 2016 | 9:00 AM - 12:30 PM

CCE Erie County, 21 South Grove St, East Aurora, NY 14052

The program will include presentations by the Cornell Vegetable Program (CVP) specialists Darcy Telenko, Robert Hadad and Judson Reid, and will include research updates on sweet corn bird and weed management; living mulch; and the final ruling of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) – what it means for your farm planning, training and timelines. In addition, Dr. Elizabeth Lamb, NYS Integrated Pest Management Program, will discuss IPM in greenhouse vegetable transplants; Allen Young, NRCS Erie County, will discuss cover crops; and Megan Burley, CCE Erie, will lead a marketing roundtable session. The CVP team will also lead discussions during lunch about fresh market vegetable research priorities and needs, and the Western NY Food Hub. DEC credits will be available. More details will be available soon! Contact Darcy Telenko at 716-697-4965 or dep10@cornell.edu with questions.

Niagara County Vegetable and Small Fruit Grower Meeting

March 1, 2016 | 9:00 AM - 12:00 vegetable; 1:00 - 4:30 PM fruit

Niagara County CCE, 4487 Lake Ave, Lockport, NY 14094

The morning vegetable program will include presentations by the Cornell Vegetable Program specialists on research updates on sweet corn bird and weed management; the final ruling of the Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) – what it means for your farm planning, training and timelines; and living mulch. The afternoon berry program will include presentations by Cornell faculty addressing current issue in strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries. More details soon...

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VegEdge is the award-winning newsletter produced by the Cornell Vegetable Program in Western New York. It provides readers with information on upcoming meetings, pesticide updates, pest management strategies, cultural practices, marketing ideas and research results from Cornell and Cornell Cooperative Extension. VegEdge is produced every few weeks, with frequency increasing leading up to and during the growing season.



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