



More Farmers Using Manure-Based Technology to Generate Electricity



While the cost of using cutting edge technology is not inexpensive, farms are hoping that the payoff is worth the upfront expense.

Management of organic wastes such as animal manure and food waste has become increasingly difficult and costly because of tightening environmental regulations as

well as shrinking landfill space. However, by using appropriate technology such as anaerobic digestion (AD), organic wastes can be converted into biogas for energy while harvesting environmental and economic benefits. Since New York is the third largest dairy state and a host of many food-waste generators, there is a good potential for farm-based co-digestion of both manure and food waste.

The importance of anaerobic digestion was highlighted at an August “Yogurt Summit” held in Albany. Governor Cuomo called together members of the farm community, along with representatives from the Departments of Agriculture & Markets and Environmental Conservation, the New York Power Authority and various legislators to discuss the possibilities of expanding the use of anaerobic digestors on New York State farms.

The American Dairy Association reports that digesters - which extract methane out of cow manure and then burn the gas to generate electricity - have been around since the energy crisis of the mid-1970s, but that operational problems hampered early machines. Recent technological improvements have helped bring them back to the forefront, and illustrate how farms can benefit from energy advancements.

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More Farmers Using Manure-Based Technology to Generate Electricity

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Currently, there are about 20 farms in New York State using digesters – and between 150 and 200 operating nationwide at livestock farms with cows, poultry and swine.

Pro-Dairy, a project of Cornell University which works to facilitate New York State economic development by increasing the profitability and competitiveness of its dairy industry, is currently part of a group working on expanding the digester workforce. The Pro-Dairy team has been training people such as technicians, mechanics and engineers on how to use and service the machines, and has conducted tours of existing digesters and workshops at Cornell Cooperative Extension.

While the cost of using cutting edge technology is not inexpensive, farms are hoping that the payoff is worth the upfront expense. The goal is to have energy produced on the farm serve the entire farm and generate more electricity than the farm uses, which can be sold back to the grid.

As an added bonus, manure that comes out of the machine can then be pushed through a screw press, and the solids extracted from it turned into bedding for the cows. Through its processing and extraction of the different components of the manure, the machine is able to dissuade its smell, allowing for less-offensive emissions during storage and spreading. The remaining liquid is what is put into storage and used as fertilizer.

Commission Passes New Laws to Assist Rural New York

2012 was an exciting year for the Commission on Rural Resources. Following a January roundtable on telehealth and telemedicine, the Commission worked successfully to pass a landmark telehealth credentialing bill, which was signed into law as Chapter 390, L. 2012 (see below). Several other initiatives were advanced in support of New York's rural regions, while a proposal put forth by the Commission to evaluate the quality, cost-efficiency and health outcomes of home telehealth also received a \$50,000 appropriation in the 2012 Enacted Budget.

Commission bills signed into law in 2012 include:

Municipal Annexation – Chapter 190, L. 2012

This land use proposal will extend the ability to initiate the annexation process to the governing bodies of two or more municipalities, provided the land is not entirely uninhabited, in an agricultural district or eligible for an agricultural assessment. Including municipalities within the permitted group will provide an additional tool for enhancing economic benefits and public services to both the annexed and annexing territories. This extension is balanced with several protections for non-resident property owners, including notice requirements.

Increase in SWCD Reimbursement Cap – Chapter 316, L. 2012

After more than 10 years, and under the provisions of this new law, the reimbursement cap for Soil and Water Conservation Districts will be increased from \$30,000 to \$60,000. This enables SWCDs to continue working with agriculture communities to maintain water quality, while recognizing the significant changes to both inflation and the costs of doing business in New York State over the last decade.

Telehealth Credentialing Bill – Chapter 390, L. 2012

This initiative will allow a hospital where a patient is located to rely upon a distant hospital's peer review and credentialing information of a physician, who is located at the distant hospital, in order to grant privileges to or in reviewing the treatment provided via telemedicine by that physician to the patient at the patient site hospital. In enacting this legislation, a major roadblock to telemedicine is removed, enabling better access to healthcare.

Critical Access Hospitals – Passed Both Houses/Vetoed

Despite concerted efforts in 2011 and 2012, this measure was again vetoed in 2012. Due to the importance of critical access hospitals in providing services to the medically underserved and geographically isolated communities, the Commission will continue its work next year to ensure that these low-volume hospitals remain in operation to provide needed health care services to medically underserved areas.

Home Telehealth Delivery Demonstration Program – Chapter 56, L. 2012

WILLCARE, a home health organization based in Chautauqua County, has been selected to implement the program, and will be charged with studying the costs, quality of care and patient outcomes associated with providing home telehealth services. This select group of patients has been diagnosed with congestive heart failure, diabetes and/or chronic pulmonary obstructive disease and is already receiving home telehealth services. An analysis of the costs and benefits of home telehealth will provide a complete picture of how these services can best be utilized to maximize both quality healthcare outcomes and efficiencies.

Focus On Economic Development

Projects and Progress Across New York State

Livingston County Manufacturer Balances Demand and Plans for Expansion

Once Again Nut Butter Co., founded in 1976 and based in Livingston County, produces natural, organic and Fair Trade Products (certified products which meet fair wage standards).

With a relatively low profile in Nunda, a village about 60 miles south of Rochester, Once Again had annual sales of \$19.1 million in the 12 months ending in September 2011, thanks in large part to natural products experiencing double-digit growth. They are on track to reach more than \$26 million this fiscal year, representing an increase of more than 36 percent.

The largest private employer in Nunda, Once Again employs 40 and plans to hire 30 more in the next few years, more than tripling its numbers from four years ago. Something which draws many employees is the fact that they own the company and make all major decisions by vote. Health insurance premiums are paid in full by the owners and profits are shared in the form of bonuses. In addition, the CEO can make only 3½ times as much as the lowest-paid person in the plant.

With all their success in recent years, Once Again is planning major expansions. In the short run, this will mean new equipment, a new production line and a new building in the Nunda area. Looking ahead, the company is looking to locate a plant in California so it can produce almond butter without trucking almonds across the country.

The company recently worked with local economic development organizations to submit a Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) to the Finger Lakes Regional Economic Development Council to aid in its expansion plans. In addition, the company is a Livingston County candidate, along with five other companies, for the recently funded "Economic Development Gardening Project" through the Greater Rochester Enterprise and Empire State Development. RIT and MCC are also working with Once Again through their Food Processing Cluster Initiative project for workforce training.

Once Again manufactures 59 products under its own label. Sunflower seed butter is their biggest seller, as consumers with peanut allergies may use it as an alternative to peanut butter. The company also co-packs about 300 different items for store and private-label brands, and supplies nut butter as an ingredient for products such as granola bars. Once Again's own label, co-packed products and industrial customers each account for about one-third of the company's business.

Interesting Fact:

All of Once Again Nut Butter's products carry the image of a raccoon spreading nut butter on a slice of bread. The logo is based on a pet raccoon, Rocky. Rocky was raised by company founders Jeremy Thaler and Constance Potter, who found Rocky and his three siblings orphaned on the factory grounds. The raccoons are gone and the founders have since retired, but Rocky's image lives on.



Focus On Economic Development

Projects and Progress Across New York State

New York's Booming Yogurt Industry

The rapid expansion of New York State's yogurt industry demands significant increases in milk production. Three companies which recently participated in our State's August "Yogurt Summit" have made great headway in the nationwide market, and call New York their home.

Fage – located in Johnstown, Fage is the second largest producer of Greek yogurt in the United States. Its state-of-the-art production facility is located in Fulton County, and employs 240 people. Fage expects to hire another 150 workers and double its capacity in the next few years. Fage chose Fulton County due to its proximity to the NYS Thruway, easy access to a wastewater treatment plant, and because of the availability of power, land and labor.

Alpina – a Miami-based company with South American manufacturing plants, Alpina announced its plans to build a \$15 million, 28,000 square foot yogurt plant in the Genesee Valley Agri-Business Park in April 2011. Alpina chose Batavia due to its skilled workforce and the region's strong reputation for dairy and agriculture. Since then, Alpina has benefited from its proximity to RIT and Cornell, which help with training, and the company plans to double its workforce and plant within three to five years.

Chobani – holding 50% of the Greek yogurt market in the country, New Berlin is home to Chobani. The company plans on investing \$97 million to construct a new dairy processing facility in Columbus, New York, which will help retain 386 employees while creating 450 new jobs. According to company officials, production will increase from 1.5 million cases each week to more than 2 million when the expansion is completed this year.



Yogurt Facts

- **More than 800 NYS dairy farms have 100-199 cows.**
- **Dairy farming + processing = \$8.9 billion economic impact to NYS.**
- **There is one farm job for every 40-50 cows added.**
- **Between 2000 and 2012, the number of NYS yogurt processing plants has increased from 14 to 29.**
- **From 2005 to 2011, New York's yogurt plants doubled in production. Over the same time period, the amount of milk used to make yogurt in New York increased dramatically from 158 million pounds to about 1.2 billion pounds.**
- **In 2011, New York's dairy manufacturers employed 8,070 people with total wages of \$414 million - a 14% increase from 2005.**
- **For every new job created on a dairy farm, an additional 1.24 jobs are created in the local community.**

Focus On Economic Development

Projects and Progress Across New York State

The Upstate New York Rural Initiative – SCORE

The Upstate New York Rural Initiative at SCORE's Northeast NY Chapter started in 2005 when Senator Betty Little was approached with the idea of SCORE expanding their services to clients in Warren, Washington, Southern Essex and Saratoga counties. The chapter's activities had historically been focused on providing services to residents of Albany, Schenectady and Troy, but the program soon got off the ground, and SCORE opened their first "northern area" office in 2006 at the Adirondack Regional Chamber of Commerce in Glens Falls.

Currently, there are three northern area offices, and more than 650 clients have been served by 25 northern office counselors and 8,500 service hours devoted to helping them start, expand and acquire businesses in their local communities. The northern team has partnered with the Washington County LDC, the Warren County EDC and LDC, the Saratoga County EDC and numerous community loan programs and regional financial institutions to secure more than \$ 3.2 million of startup, expansion and acquisition funding during the past 36 months.

One of SCORE's first clients in the Glens Falls office was Jim and Laura Zwyneburg, who own Associated Polymer Labs, Inc., with facilities in both Warren and Washington counties. This established laboratory helps clients find the right answers to difficult polymer science and plastics engineering material and processing questions. They serve material providers and manufacturers across the US including many local and upstate New York clients. Their client base has greatly expanded, revenues have more than tripled, service offerings have been expanded and business and financial management processes have been improved. Jim and Laura continue to use SCORE as mentors and advisors, meeting with SCORE every 6 to 8 weeks to review their planned vs. actual performance and offer suggestions on initiatives to improve operations, reduce costs and increase revenue.

As rural upstate communities are under increasing pressure to maintain and improve healthcare services to both their human and animal populations, one of SCORE's most challenging and complex client engagements began when Jim Angus of the Saratoga Economic Development Corporation referred Dr. Frank Akawi to SCORE for assistance in developing a business plan to start a new medical and surgical veterinarian practice in Greenfield, Saratoga County. Dr. Akawi, who relocated to Saratoga County from California and had been a co-owner of Upstate Medical and president of the Northway Animal Emergency Clinic in Moreau, had never written a business plan or sought funding from a financial institution. SCORE entered the picture in July 2010, and by the end of October, had helped Dr. Akawi secure financing for his \$800,000 project. Ballston Spa National Bank, the Town of Greenfield's Economic Development Revolving Fund and the Empire State CDC provided more than \$650,000 of start-up financing. The Greenfield Professional Center, Inc. and Greenfield Veterinarian Hospital, PLLC opened for business in April 2011 and exceeded its planned first year financial and employment objectives.

Financing rural business is always a challenge. Entrepreneurs wishing to start up small businesses in the tourism, hospitality, value-added agriculture and service sectors are faced with the reality that many financial institutions tend to limit their investment in these industry segments. Many have been helped through partnerships encouraged by SCORE, including: Pucker's Pickles, Greenwich; Dancing Ewe Farm, Granville; Camden Valley Flower Farm, Shushan; Express Computer Restore, Hudson Falls; Adirondack Tubing Adventures, Lake Luzerne and Peach Tree Day Care Center, Queensbury.

More information is available at score.org.

Allegany/Western Steuben Rural Health Network Launches Allegany County Network of Care for Healthy Communities – A Community-Based Web Site to Enhance Health Decision-Making

In September 2011, Allegany became the first county in New York to implement the innovative new Network of Care for Healthy Communities website (www.allegany.ny.networkofcare.org), which provides nationwide news, social networking, a directory of health services, a leading encyclopedia and health library, as well as legislative tools and more. According to the Network, the site provides a Community Dashboard of more than 100 local health and quality-of-life indicators specific to Allegany County. For example, for a topic such as obesity, users can view current county values, trends and comparisons to national targets, ranking compared to other areas in the state and related GIS maps from Health Landscape. Additional content is available, including news, reports, services and legislation – all specifically related to the topic of concern. Providers are also able to build their own free websites in the “For Providers” section.

This unique program is a collaboration between the National Association of Counties, the National Association of County and City Health Officers and Trilogy Integrated Resources, in partnership with the Healthy Communities Institute. Trilogy Integrated Resources LLC of San Rafael, Calif., the leading information provider in the field of social services, created, developed and maintains the Network of Care for Healthy Communities and all of the other Network of Care websites, including Children & Families, People with Disabilities, Care for Kids, Care for Seniors and Care for Service Members, Veterans & Their Families. Currently, 25 states offer services through the Network of Care.

To increase accessibility and accommodate the Allegany County Network of Care for Healthy Communities users, the site's innovative technology provides near-universal access, regardless of literacy or income level, to web-based services through a text-only version of the site and other adaptive technologies.

Allegany County Network of Care for Healthy Communities also is available in multiple languages.

**For more information about
the Network of Care for Healthy Communities,
contact Bruce Bronzan at BBronzan@trilogyir.com
or 415-458-5900.**

RHENDOMS Educational Programs Serve Children in a Variety of Healthy Ways

Kids benefit when school and home work as a partnership – as evidenced by this program offered to students in New York’s Central/Mohawk Valley Regions...

The Rural Health Education Network of Delaware, Otsego, Montgomery and Schoharie Counties (RHENDOMS) is offering many opportunities for schools to promote nutrition on a low budget, without taking too much time away from their regularly scheduled day. This is especially important as the number of children who are overweight - or who are at risk of becoming overweight - is increasing. With a focus on the whole child and health and wellness as a lifestyle, RHENDOMS offers programs to school districts to educate children about how to prevent disease and promote their overall well-being.

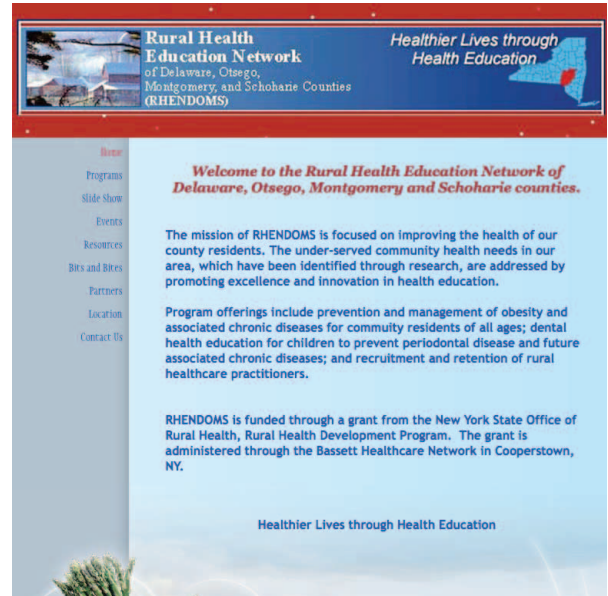
Workshops and Programs

Workshops in middle and high schools are being offered to help those students learn how a healthy diet is an important part of a balanced lifestyle and to choose healthier meals in light of our nation’s “fast food” environment. Interactive workshops are conducted either in 90 minute segments or in two 45 minute sessions. They are held at various locations, typically with anywhere from three to 250 people attending.

Workshops on more specific topics are also being offered to the schools through RHENDOMS. Elementary school students are finding healthy choices exciting through the Nutrition Detectives Program. Nutrition Detectives ensures that the children know how to read food labels, make healthy food choices and understand how nutrition affects health. The program lasts 90 minutes, and focuses on “food literacy,” giving students five clues to help them make good choices. The program was designed for students in grades two through four, and post-tests and pre-tests are available to judge student knowledge. Best of all, the program is free to schools.

In an era promoting the importance of exercise and stress relief, another workshop called YogaKids is also offered to schools. The idea behind YogaKids is that consistent yoga practice may help children deal with stress and remain grounded – while simultaneously balancing school, sports and recreation. Yoga also promotes strength, confidence, concentration and creativity – and may help with relaxation and improved sleep. YogaKids workshops are taught at participating schools by highly trained certified teachers, and are appropriate for all ages. They even have their own website at: YogaKids.com.

Another opportunity specifically aimed at girls in third through eighth grades is called “Girls on the Run.” Girls on the Run is a 12 week program focused on health and well-being, designed to help girls establish their own identity, learn to stand up for themselves, recognize their unique characteristics and accept their bodies. The culmination of the course is a 5k walk/run event, celebrating their commitment to girls’ health and to themselves.

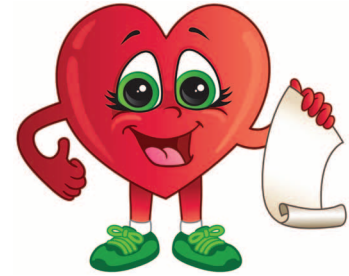


RHENDOMS Educational Programs Serve Children in a Variety of Healthy Ways

continued...

Medical

Seventh grade students are the target of a program called UpClose Cardiac Surgery at Bassett Medical Center. The three hour program held at Bassett Hospital teaches that certain behaviors lead to heart disease and includes interactive discussions with hospital staff. A video or even a live open heart operation is shown so that students can see the actual consequences of cardiovascular disease. During the surgery, students have the opportunity to speak with the surgeon, ask questions about the procedure and learn what they can do to prevent the disease. Pre-tests, post-tests and a nutrition quiz are part of the program, and are given to measure the value of the students' experience.



Dental

RHENDOMS is also very active in dental care for children. Although children are generally born with healthy teeth, one out of five has Early Childhood Caries (ECC). Also known as bottle rot and toddler tooth decay, ECC has been found to cause pain, eating problems, speech problems, crooked permanent teeth, low self-esteem, lack of concentration and lost time at school. ECC typically occurs when children go to bed with a bottle of milk, juice or anything other than water, and also may occur when children are allowed to carry a bottle or sippy cup with them throughout the day. Even excessive breast-feeding can lead to ECC.



To prevent ECC, the following recommendations are very important:

- Only allow children to drink water other than at meal time; use a pacifier at other times;
- Mobiles, rocking and singing are soothing alternatives to bottles; and
- Children should switch from a bottle to a cup after 12 months of age, with the switch beginning when the child is as young as six months old.

Adults should begin to brush their child's teeth with a soft cloth as soon as they start to come in. At the age of one year, a small amount of non-fluoride toothpaste may be used. Parents should also help their child brush their teeth until the child is around seven to ensure their teeth are truly clean, and even babies' mouths should also be cleaned directly after breast feeding.

According to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry, children should be taken to the dentist for their first check-up as soon as their first tooth comes in, and early checkups are instrumental in preventing future problems. The AAPD also recommends children do not suck their thumbs after age four, as this can lead to future speech and tooth problems. As always, a healthy diet, with limited amounts of sugar or starch, is also essential to good dental health.

As a Follow Up:

Herkimer County HealthNet & Cornell Cooperative Extension Publish 2nd Edition of the Local Foods Map

To follow up on our first mention of the Local Foods Map in our Fall 2011 Issue, and as part of a continuing effort to create healthy places to live, work and play in Herkimer County, Herkimer County HealthNet and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Herkimer County have designed and printed the 2nd edition of the “Herkimer County Local Foods Map.” With funding assistance through the New York State Department of Health, the Map lists foods that are produced and available for sale in Herkimer County by local producers.

The Map lists 63 farmers, contact information, foods produced and locations in Herkimer County, along with nine farmers markets. Maps are being distributed to local businesses and organizations throughout Herkimer County and the Mohawk Valley.

For more information or to pick up copies, individuals can call Herkimer County HealthNet at (315) 867-1499 or Cornell Cooperative Extension (315) 866-7920. The online version of the Map is available at: <http://blogs.cce.cornell.edu/herkimer/files/2009/04/Herkimer-Cty-Local-Foods-Map.pdf>

Emerald Ash Borer Creeps Towards Connecticut

We reported in our Summer 2011 Issue about the Emerald Ash Borer invading New York State. WNPR reports that, as of July 2012, Connecticut is stepping up its monitoring of the Ash Borer’s advance...

Connecticut’s Ash Trees have been spared infestation from an invasive insect so far this summer. But trees along the New York border with Connecticut have not been as lucky.

The emerald ash borer, a small green metallic looking beetle was discovered in May in Rhinebeck New York, just 25 miles from the Connecticut border. The beetle is native to Asia, and feeds exclusively on the ash tree. According to the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) Forestry Division’s Christopher Martin, the bug kills the tree by depriving it of nutrients.

“It basically lives just underneath the bark in the wood where all the nutrients and water flow up and down the tree,” said Martin. “It slowly strangulates the tree by cutting off its supply.”

Martin says the DEEP and the Connecticut Agriculture Experiment Station have stepped up monitoring of the emerald ash borer by setting hundreds of large purple traps known as “Barney Traps” throughout the state. So far there are no signs of the emerald ash borer. DEEP is urging residents to use only local wood for firewood, and to never bring firewood home from out of state, which can inadvertently spread the beetle to unaffected areas.

Esri and Microsoft to Provide Online Maps and Applications During Disasters

With natural disasters hitting our State hard during the past year, it is interesting to follow what other states are doing as far as their response plans go.

The State of California, which is no stranger to natural disasters, was the site of a strategic alliance announcement between Esri and Microsoft to assist public and private agencies and communities around the world during disasters.

Microsoft, along with Esri - a market leader in Global Information Systems (GIS) technology – will align their services to provide emergency management, responders and citizens more access to more detailed knowledge about the impacts of impending or occurring disasters.

Specific benefits include the following:

- Rapid data dissemination to targeted audiences and the general public during a disaster
- Better situational awareness through Esri and Microsoft technologies for critical decision support
- More information management resource availability for governments and leading response organizations through the combined efforts of Esri and Microsoft

These growing efforts will exponentially increase situational awareness and information sharing during disasters.

More information is available at: www.microsoft.com/disasterresponse and esri.com/news.



New Efforts to Assist Farmers and Ranchers Impacted by Drought



According to the USDA, since July, the Conservation Reserve Program has been opened to emergency haying and grazing, lowered the borrower interest rate for emergency loans and worked with crop insurance companies to provide more flexibility to farmers. USDA has also announced the following:

- Authorized \$16 million in existing funds from its Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program (WHIP) and Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) to target states experiencing exceptional and extreme drought.
- Authorized the transfer of \$14 million in unobligated program funds into the Emergency Conservation Program (ECP) to help farmers and ranchers rehabilitate farmland damaged by natural disasters and for carrying out emergency water conservation measures in periods of severe drought.
- Authorized haying and grazing of Wetlands Reserve Program (WRP) easement areas in drought-affected areas where haying and grazing is consistent with conservation of wildlife habitat and wetlands.
- Lowered the reduction in the annual rental payment to producers on CRP acres used for emergency haying or grazing from 25 percent to 10 percent in 2012.
- Simplified the Secretarial disaster designation process and reduced the time it takes to designate counties affected by disasters by 40 percent.

Gluten Problems or Faddish Eating?

Ten years ago, very few of us living in the US seemed to have problems eating the gluten pervasive in bread and other foods, or even knew about celiac disease. Today, eating gluten-free is almost commonplace in some parts of the country. The sales of gluten-free products are skyrocketing - and even restaurants boast of meals with no gluten. But is it a fad or a legitimate epidemic? Agriculture newspaper *Capital Press* reports that faddishness is a big part of it. Americans will spend an estimated \$7 billion this year on foods labeled gluten-free, according to the market research firm Mintel. Best estimates are more than half of these consumers have no medical reaction to gluten, but think that by buying gluten-free they will lose weight, or because they seem to feel better or because they mistakenly believe they are sensitive to gluten. Fads aside, research suggests more people are truly getting sick from the gluten found in wheat, rye and barley, but the reasons are not so clear. In the most serious cases, gluten triggers celiac disease. When a research team led by the Mayo Clinic's Dr. Joseph Murray compared blood samples taken from Americans in the 1950s with those taken from people today, it was determined that better diagnosis was not the only thing driving up numbers. Scientists suggest that there may be more celiac disease today because people eat more processed wheat products like pastas and baked goods than in decades past.

USDA-APHIS Removes Barriers to Trade and Expands Market Access for U.S. Farm Exports

The USDA-APHIS worked in conjunction with federal, international and industry partners to arrange for the release of 209 shipments of American products which had been detained at foreign ports of entry pending resolution of various animal and plant health questions in 2012. These goods are valued at more than \$39 million. In addition, APHIS has helped to open or maintain more than \$51 million in overseas markets for U.S. agricultural products. The USDA has aggressively worked to expand export opportunities and reduce barriers to trade, helping to push agricultural exports to record levels since 2009.

New Program Flexibility for Livestock Producers



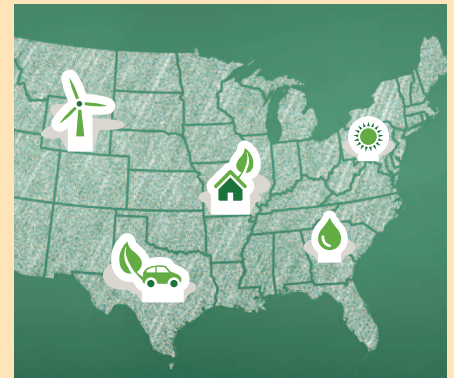
U.S. Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced new flexibility in the USDA's conservation programs to expedite drought help for livestock producers. Secretary Vilsack said that more land can be used for emergency haying and grazing. That land is to include not just D2, D3 and D4 counties, which refers to increasing degrees of drought severity, but would also include the less severe D0 and D1 counties. The agency will also continue to allow that haying and grazing result in returning just 10% of the CRP rental payment instead of the usual 25%, said Vilsack. And only for this year, said Secretary Vilsack, the USDA will allow hay harvested under emergency circumstances to be sold. *Brownfield Network*

Congressmen Urge Renewable Fuels Standard Waiver



A bipartisan group of 156 members of the House of Representatives signed a letter urging the Environmental Protection Agency to act immediately to reduce the Renewable Fuels Standard mandate to head off anticipated corn shortages from this year's drought. The letter stated, "Relief from the Renewable Fuels Standard (RFS) is extremely urgent because another short corn crop would be devastating to the animal agriculture industry, food manufacturers, foodservice providers, as well as to consumers. We urge you to adjust the RFS mandate for 2012, to account for the anticipated severe shortage in corn." The letter was organized by Congressmen Bob Goodlatte (R-VA) and Mike McIntyre (D-NC).

Renewable Energy Potential in Every U.S. State, Study Shows



A new study of renewable energy's technical potential finds that every state in the United States has the space and resources to generate clean energy. The U.S. Department of Energy's National Renewable Energy Laboratory produced the study, U.S. RE Technical Potential, which looks at available renewable resources in each state. It establishes an upper-boundary estimate of development potential. Economic or market restraints would factor into what projects might actually be deployed. The study includes state-level maps and tables containing available land area (square kilometers), installed capacity (gigawatts), and electric generation (gigawatt-hours) for each technology.

New E-Currents Now Online for Those Interested in NY's Great Lakes



New York Sea Grant recently announced a new online resource for people who live, work or play along New York's Great Lakes shoreline. Debuting in mid-August, anyone can now sign up for *Currents*, the Sea Grant's quarterly e-newsletter, which highlights research, extension, education and information endeavors for New York's Great Lakes and marine waters. Individuals can access *Currents* online and free of charge at www.nyseagrant.org/nycoastlines, which also offers *New York Coastlines*, the Sea Grant's quarterly publication. Both *New York Coastlines* and *Currents* will be e-distributed 3-4 times a year. Updates on Sea Grant activities are also available at: www.nyseagrant.org.

Facts and Figures About States With High Rural Student Populations

Question: More than half a million students attend rural schools in these three states.

Which states are they?

Answer: Texas, where 834,140 students attend rural schools; North Carolina (685,409 rural students); and Georgia (574,965 rural students)

Ruraledu.org

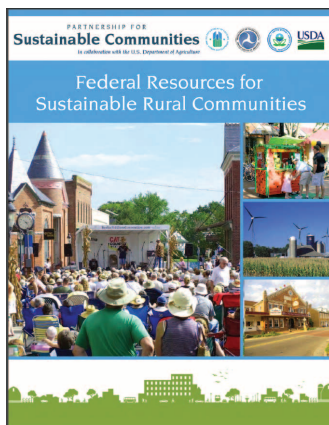
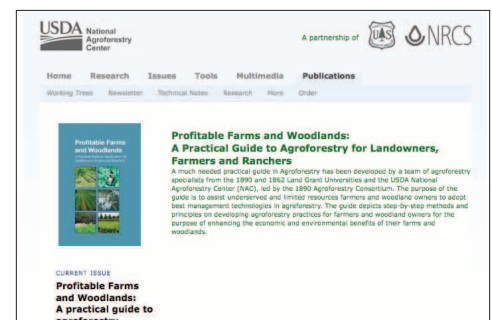
Females Outnumber Males in Agricultural Undergraduate Programs

A recent USDA Food and Agricultural Education Information System report reveals that the number of female undergraduates enrolled in land-grant agricultural programs surpasses the number of enrolled men. Gender breakdown was examined for 67 universities within six programs: agricultural economics, business and management; agricultural mechanization and engineering; animal science; agricultural public services; plant sciences; and food science and technology. Overall figures include each of those six programs as well as eight additional related areas. The study, which examines trends from 2004 to 2011, found that gender breakdown has shifted over the last eight years, with the number of enrolled males exceeding the number of enrolled females between 2004 and 2008. In 2008, the numbers were roughly equivalent, and from 2009 to 2011, the number of females enrolled outpaced the number of males.



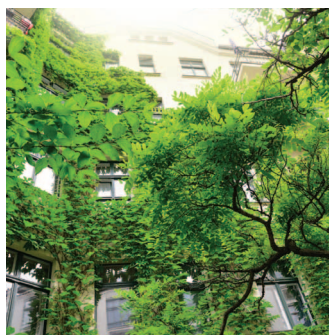
USDA Releases Agroforestry Guide for Farmers, Woodland Owners

A first-of-its-kind agroforestry handbook produced by the USDA is now available to reveal better ways of managing lands and boosting profits. Written for underserved and limited resource farmers and woodland owners living in the Southeast, the handbook - *Profitable Farms and Woodlands* - contains information to help establish, manage and market agroforestry projects that are profitable and sustainable over time. http://nac.unl.edu/profitable_farms.htm.



USDA Announces Federal Resource Guide Aimed At Rural Communities

The USDA's Rural Development Office recently announced publication of *Federal Resources for Sustainable Rural Communities* is a collaborative effort among USDA, the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Transportation and the Environmental Protection Agency. The guide ensures rural communities have access to all of the federal resources that can support their efforts to promote economic competitiveness, protect healthy environments modernize infrastructure and provide services to residents. It has key information on funding and technical assistance opportunities available from the four agencies, as well as examples of how rural communities across the country have benefitted from federal resources. The resource guide is available online in the Spotlight section of the USDA Rural Development homepage at: www.rurdev.usda.gov/supportdocuments/RD_FedResourcesSustainableCommunities.pdf.



Green Plants Reduce City Street Pollution Up to Eight Times More Than Previously Believed

Trees, bushes and other greenery growing in the concrete-and-glass canyons of cities can reduce levels of two of the most worrisome air pollutants by eight times more than previously believed. A recent report in *Environmental Science & Technology* concluded that judicious placement of grass, climbing ivy and other plants in urban canyons can reduce the concentration at street level of NO₂ (nitrogen dioxide) by as much as 40% and microscopic particulate matter (PM) by 60%, much more than previously believed. The authors even suggest building plant-covered "green billboards" in these urban canyons to increase the amount of foliage. Trees were also shown to be effective, but only if care is taken to avoid trapping pollutants beneath their crowns.

EPA Provides \$950,000 to Help 17 Communities Use Green Infrastructure to Improve Water Quality

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced in July that it is providing \$950,000 to help 17 communities expand green infrastructure use to improve water quality, protect health and benefit communities. Green infrastructure uses vegetation and soil to manage rainwater where it falls, keeping polluted stormwater from entering sewer systems and waterways in local communities. The EPA funding is intended to increase incorporation of green infrastructure into stormwater management programs, protect water quality and provide community benefits including job creation and neighborhood revitalization. EPA is awarding the funds to diverse communities across 16 states. Some communities – like Beaufort, South Carolina and Neosho, Missouri – are small towns in urban growth areas interested in preserving and protecting their healthy waterways. Others – such as Camden, New Jersey and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania – are large cities interested in adding green infrastructure into their redevelopment projects to restore degraded urban waters and help revitalize their communities. The selected communities also provide an opportunity to demonstrate the potential of green infrastructure across a range of climate zones.



Organic Dairy Health Not Cut-and-Dried

Though the National Organic Program has established stringent guidelines for organic management of livestock, producers still have to make important decisions to save their animals. The toolbox for keeping an animal healthy, which includes a wide variety of biological and botanical based remedies, comes with a caveat. A recent NOP webinar on dairy health stated that: “the producer of an organic livestock operation must not withhold medical treatment from a sick animal in an effort to preserve its organic status...and all appropriate medications must be used to restore an animal to health when methods acceptable to organic production fail.” When it comes to deciding which therapy to use, the farmer knows the animal best. The NOP says natural materials are allowed unless a material has been petitioned to the National Organic Standards Board and then prohibited by the USDA. Strychnine, for example, is natural but prohibited. The NOP also says synthetic materials are prohibited unless petitioned to the NOSB and allowed by the USDA. Those include alcohols, copper sulfate, hydrogen peroxide, iodine, and oxytocin and parasiticides in emergencies. The Organic Materials Review Institute – OMRI – is largely agreed to be the gold standard.

Southern Tier Health Care System Plans Paramedic Training

As part of the Arnot-Ogden Medical Center’s ongoing paramedic training program, Jamestown will be the site of a training program which is critical to increasing the number of paramedics in Chautauqua County. A large number of EMS providers from Chautauqua County expressed an interest in taking this training, and health industry leaders from Albany to Jamestown worked together to make the training possibility a reality. This underserved area will undoubtedly benefit from the excitement and support provided by trainers and participants alike. The Southern Tier Emergency Medical System serves the 91 New York State Certified EMS agencies that cover over 260,000 citizens in the three-county region of Southwestern New York, spanning more than 3,400 square miles.



Forest Service Announces \$4 Million for Alternative-Energy Projects

The U.S. Forest Service recently announced the award of nearly \$4 million in grants to help develop affordable woody biomass energy projects around the country to help expand regional economies and create new jobs. The grants, totaling \$3.9 million, will be distributed to 20 small businesses, tribes and community groups to develop renewable energy projects which will use woody material such as beetle-killed trees removed from forests to aid in wildfire prevention. The material will then be processed in bioenergy facilities to produce green energy for heating and electricity. Awardees will use funds from the Woody Biomass Utilization Grant program to secure the engineering services necessary for final design, permitting and cost analysis. USDA Deputy Under Secretary Butch Blazer reports that “the Forest Service works in more than 7,000 communities across the country to support projects that provide green jobs and boost local economies...these grants continue our legacy of improving access to affordable energy for rural schools, community centers, universities and small businesses.” The Forest Service Woody Biomass Utilization grant program has been in effect since 2005 and has provided more than \$36 million toward various projects, ranging from biomass boilers for schools and prisons, to helping businesses acquire equipment that improves processing efficiencies. During this time period, over 150 grants have been awarded to small businesses, non-profits, tribes and local state agencies to improve forest health, while creating jobs, green energy and healthy communities.



Clean Water Act Guidance Challenged

The federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Army Corps of Engineers are in the midst of finalizing their Clean Water Act (CWA) “Waters of the United States” guidance. If implemented, this guidance will remove the word “navigable” from the CWA, wrapping into the CWA regulatory programs all waters – to include waters such as stock ponds. Congress has declined to pass legislation expanding the jurisdiction of the federal government under the CWA, however. In both the 110th and 111th Congress, the Clean Water Restoration Act not only failed to garner enough support to become law, it failed even to be brought to a vote in committee in the House. The agencies’ authority under the CWA remains limited to “navigable” waters, and the United States Supreme Court has been very clear that the terms “navigable” and “waters of the United States” have significant meaning. Bill text available at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:S.787.RS>:

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On Behalf of Those Who Bring Dairy to Your Table

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DAIRY FARMERS ENDURE AND INNOVATE
The ongoing drought has permanently impacted lives and livelihoods on dairy farms across the country. Not only have dairy farmers battled difficult climate conditions, the drought has come on the heels of severe economic downturn. Many farmers are left with decreased equity, lower yields and no reserves. Yet they keep on going.

More: FOX Business News: Rising Corn Prices Hurting Dairy Farmers | Read Our Farmer Profiles

HEALTHY PEOPLE
It's not new news that childhood obesity is an epidemic in the United States; however, did you know that many children in America are not only overweight, but also undernourished? It is heartbreaking to know that over 16 million children live in food insecure households, meaning many go to bed hungry.

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES
The U.S. dairy industry has long played a significant role in our nation's food system, communities and economy by providing wholesome, nutrient-rich

RELATED ARTICLES

- Dairy Farmers Challenge Drought (Spotted Cow Review)
- Midwest Drought Hurts Dairy Farmers in Region (Post-Gazette)
- The Drought Affects Vermont Dairy Farmers (WCAX.com)
- Rain Makes Crops Grow (The Dairyman's Blog)
- Dairy Farms in Arkansas Feeling the Drought (KTHV)
- Drought's Toll Harsh, Varied in County (NW Herald)
- Miss. Dairy Farmers Squeezed by High Drought-Related Feed Prices (Minnesota Public Radio)

CONVERSATIONS

#DAIRYFARMS

- about an hour ago @DairyWomen @DairyWagon @rayprock How are #dairyfarms dealing with the drought? Fox Business News learns more: <http://t.co/pw1yQvZL>
- about a day ago RT @DairyFarmToday: Fox Business News shows how #dairyfarms continue to innovate <http://t.co/Uq1w1Tev>

New Website Promotes Dairy

A new website is uniting the dairy industry with consumers – www.dairygood.org has been developed to promote the dairy industry and relay to consumers the importance of dairy in promoting healthy people, healthy communities and a healthy planet. The site, which reinforces the dairy industry’s role in providing a safe, affordable and abundant food supply, includes personal accounts of dairy producers, facts and statistics, news stories and resources available to farmers and consumers alike.



SAVE THE DATES!

**NYS Rural Housing Coalition, Inc.
33rd Annual Conference
OCTOBER 1-3, 2012**
Desmond Hotel, Albany, NY
conference@ruralhousing.org
518-458-8696

**Finger Lakes Cheese Trail
Open House
OCTOBER 6, 2012**
Various Locations around the Finger Lakes
cctompkins.org/cheesetrail/Finger Lakes
Cheese Trail on Facebook
E-mail: mr55@cornell.edu

**Growing Health 2012
Rural Health Network of
South Central New York, Inc.
OCTOBER 16-17, 2012**
Binghamton Riverwalk Hotel, Binghamton, NY
888-603-5973
growinghealth.rhnsncy.org

**Southeast NY Stormwater Conference
New York State Conservation District
NOVEMBER 7-10, 2012**
Ramada Inn, Fishkill, NY
emily@lhccd.org

**New York Farm Bureau
State Annual Meeting
DECEMBER 4-6, 2012**
Desmond Hotel, Albany, NY
www.nyfb.org/news_and_events

**Group-Housed Dairy Calf Systems
A Symposium for
Producers and Advisors
Cornell University
PRO_DAIRY Program
DECEMBER 12-13, 2012**
Doubletree Hotel, Syracuse, NY
www.ansci.cornell.edu/prodairy/calfsystems/registration