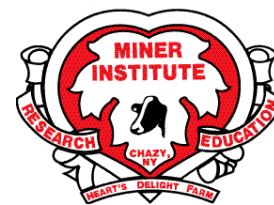


# William H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute FARM REPORT



Chazy, New York 12921

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February 2004



## FROM THE PRESIDENT'S DESK— LEARNING FROM THE TRANSITION

During March and April we hope to finally move cows from our current barn to the newly constructed barn. Everyone here at the Institute has been anticipating the transition, but we also know that it will be a learning experience for us. Specifically, it will be an excellent opportunity to make observations, conduct applied studies, and document as much as possible how cows respond behaviorally and productively to the challenges inherent in moving to new facilities. We have decided this semester that all of the undergraduate research projects for the Advanced Dairy Management students will focus on important management aspects of moving the cows to new facilities. Our overall goal is to share this information in future *Farm Reports* and in publications, videos, and other decision-making tools for dairy producers and allied industry. Here are the eight projects that we have planned:

- ❖ Comparing TMR particle distributions between two mixer types (Keenan, Knight) with two feed delivery systems (center drive-through alley, conveyer system). A larger goal here is to refine the use of the Penn State Particle Separator so that it accurately determines physically effective NDF (peNDF needed for ration formulation) and predicts chewing response of cows.
- ❖ Evaluating heifer behavior and health when they are used to “condition” a new barn prior to moving in lactating cows. Heifers are used as tools to improve cow performance, but are there any negative consequences for the heifers?
- ❖ We will use heifers to condition the new barn, but also leave some pens unconditioned. Then we will evaluate this effect on lactating cow behavior and performance. To our knowledge, no one has system-

*(Continued on page 2)*



The new research facility (under construction) is located near the holding area of the new barn. The sixteen tie stalls will allow our research staff to conduct research requiring individual dry matter intake measurements.

## SMALLER SOYBEAN SEED IN 2004

Low yields in many soybean seed production areas resulted in smaller seed size for 2004, especially for the early maturity varieties commonly planted in the Northeastern U.S. Some seed is running 3800-4000 per lb vs. the normal 3000-3400. Since most soybeans are sold by the bag instead of in 80,000 kernel units as with corn, the result is that in some cases a bag of soybean seed will plant up to 25% more acres than normal. There are also shortages of some varieties. Seed quality, however, is excellent. Check with your seed supplier and adjust the size of your order as necessary. The good news is that prices haven't increased in proportion to the increased number of seeds in these bargain bags.



(Continued from page 1)

atically measured the effect of first populating a barn with heifers on subsequent cow performance.

- ❖ Documenting how cows adapt to a parallel parlor (new barn) compared with a herringbone parlor (current barn). The student will also conduct surveys of dairy producers to obtain field experience from farmers who have transitioned cows to new milking systems.
- ❖ Evaluating use of western-grown alfalfa hay incorporation into TMR. The cost of western alfalfa hay, with prevailing low milk prices and lack of controlled research, raises questions regarding the cost: benefit ratio of purchasing the hay. We want to know if we should adopt this strategy in the new barn.
- ❖ Comparison of 60- versus 80-day voluntary waiting period for presynch protocols. A significant challenge for the Institute herd has been reproductive performance. Going into our new barn, we want to initiate this long-term study to measure any economic value of extending our current 60-day VWP to 80 days.
- ❖ Environmental comparisons of cold, warm, and modified free stalls in midwinter in Northern New York and Vermont. The goal here is to monitor temperature and humidity, feed intake, and milk production in four facilities representing the range from cold to insulated barns. We intend to continue this project year-round.
- ❖ Conduct a study to evaluate the use of measuring water-soluble phosphorus in manure as a predictor of dietary phosphorus levels fed to dairy cows. We intend to evaluate the indicator over a wide range of feeding conditions, animal ages, and stages of lactation.

If you have any additional suggestions or feedback, let us know. Look for research updates on these topics in future *Farm Report* articles this spring and summer.

**Rick Grant**  
grant@whminer.com

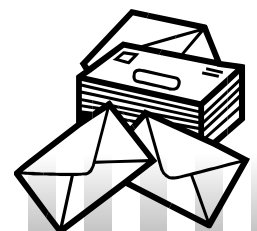


## MAILBAG

In addition to the usual spam advertising generic Viagra (The Bride mumbled something about pouring gasoline on a bonfire), elixirs guaranteed to enlarge a certain body part (no comment from T.B.), and from Cpt. T.L. Teteri of Liberia (the “Presonal Assistance” for ex-President/dictator Taylor) who has \$18.5 million burning a hole in his pocket and wants to give me some, my email included a few honest-to-gosh questions. Such as:

- ❖ *How do you estimate the amount of silage in a bunker silo?* The easy part is calculating the volume: Length x width x average height, measured in feet. The tricky part is estimating silage density since this depends on crop type, chop length, packing, processing and silage depth. Density is often expressed as pounds of dry matter per cubic foot, with 14 lbs/cu. ft. a reasonable goal. Of course, you need to know the percent dry matter of the silage. If the silage isn’t well packed (tractor packing occasionally or only at the end of the day), figure on a density of 12 lbs, while if one or more large tractors have been packing continuously, silage density could approach 18 lbs/cu. ft.
- ❖ *What is the average length of the grazing season in Vermont?* This person obviously has more faith in my pasture knowledge than is warranted, but fortunately there’s a dandy website, [www.forages.org](http://www.forages.org), that through its “Species Selection Tool” estimates monthly forage production for a wide variety of pasture species. The answer: 160-170 days for the Champlain Valley.
- ❖ *For dry cow grass fields, when the soil test indicates a need for potash should we apply some?* For these fields I wouldn’t rely on the soil test as an indicator of potassium needs; base potassium fertilization entirely on the grass K analysis. That’s because grass is such an aggressive seeker of potassium in the soil. If grass K drops below 1.5%, then add potassium as manure or fertilizer. Even then, only add enough to replace the amount of potassium the grass removes—40-50 lbs of K<sub>2</sub>O per ton harvested.

**Ev Thomas**  
thomas@whminer.com





## WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE FARM...

The cows simply refused to get out of bed. So much for the cliché “until the cows come home”—ours refused to leave! When the temperature in the old barn bottomed at minus 27°F it took a lot of pushing and pulling, enticing and threatening to get our lactating cows out of their well-bedded freestalls and up into the holding area. Then, once they were in the heated milking parlor, trying to get them back to their beds required practicing the virtues.

Although the animals are certainly eating more and refusals are down, not much of the added protein and energy is going into milk production; it's been used to keep their 1500 lb bodies warm. Why people would prefer a “cold” barn over a “warm” barn in these northern climes is quite a stretch of the imagination, especially when you have employees who are literally getting frost-bite, waterers freezing solid, feed in the bunk turning to chunks of ice, and the manure-covered floors becoming impressive hot-dogging runs. We are all currently living in hope for the completion of the new, warmer dairy barn.

Sawdust supply problems have become quite an aggravation. The arrival of the loads is erratic, the drivers are irritable and short-tempered, and some of the deliveries are wet and snow-covered. The result? An SCC that is creeping upwards again. The supply of sawdust is apparently a common concern amongst dairy farmers, as apart from using sand bedding—which has its own set of management problems—there is little market option for mattress covering. There has been word, though, that a new product from Europe called ‘Mistral’ is soon to be available. The literature mentions

it being a powder that is super absorbent, is guaranteed to lower SCC, lasts longer, and is less abrasive on legs and hocks than sawdust or shavings.

Repro continues to be a challenge. There are various camps in the battle. Some suggest a shorter VWP (Voluntary Waiting Period); others indicate that their many years of veterinary experience show that a longer VWP is better. Many farmers blame lowered repro rates on the use of rBST, some complain that it's these high-producing animals who are difficult to breed back, still others claim that there is just a small window a few weeks after freshening to breed her or else the calving interval gets too wide. There is no one farm that is right at everything (irrespective of the oft-heard comment of, “well, on our farm ...”), no one farm that has the best answers for every issue confronting farmers on other farms. But, with an open-mind we may indeed find suitable results for a specific problem, at a specific time, on a specific farm. Do we need to be looking at the short-term financial and maximum production results or the long-term longevity of the sustained producing milking cow?

This BSE story has put a damper on our steer growing. Add to this the news that the Swanton Packing Plant is looking at shutting down, and the dairy beef outlook is not promising in this immediate area. What are we going to do with our cull cows? As it is you can longer send in downers. A few years back when the sugar price fell, plantation owners in South Africa got together and built their own methanol plant to use the “trash” and surplus cane. Should local farmers perhaps consider a co-operative venture for cull cows?

**Marco Turco**  
turco@whminer.com

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF MINER INSTITUTE

- 1862**—William H. Miner born in Juneau, Wisconsin.
- 1872**—Orphaned following the death of his father, moves to Chazy to live with his aunt and uncle on the old homestead farm of his grandfather.
- 1880**—Receives a letter and one-way train ticket from his brother-in-law in Lafayette, Indiana, offering “Willie” a job at the Wabash Railway Company as a machine shop apprentice.
- 1891**—Awarded a patent on a draft rigging that provided twice the protection of the shock absorbers. Starts his own company in Chicago, W.H. Miner.
- 1895**—Willie marries Alice Trainer, also an orphan.
- 1898**—Miner Tandem Draft Rigging in use on 15,000 rail cars. Willie becomes rich.
- 1902**—William and Alice's only child dies at two weeks of age.
- 1903**—William and Alice return to Chazy to undertake the development of the original 144 acre homestead willed to him by his uncle into Heart's Delight Farm.
- 1908**—Electricity comes to Heart's Delight farm, one of the first to milk cows with a vacuum system. Heart's Delight Farm has electricity before the Governor's mansion in Albany.
- 1918**—The farm has grown to 12,000 acres, including 300 buildings, 1.3 million feet of tile drainage, 4000 acres of tillable land, 3000 head of livestock, 40,000 chickens, 500,000 brook trout and 800 employees.
- 1930**—William Miner dies.
- 1951**—William H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute chartered by the Board of Regents of the State of New York “for the operation and maintenance of an experimental farm, for training young men and women in practical and theoretical farming.”
- 2004**—We're still doing what we set out to do 50 years ago and 100 years after William Miner returned to Chazy.

## VET CORNER

At last fall's Miner Institute farm management team meeting, the proper Voluntary Waiting Period (VWP) was a hot topic of discussion. For the past twenty years University studies have reported conflicting economic results when short and long VWP were compared. Traditionally, short VWP has been promoted to reduce cost associated with longer days open, speed up genetic selection, and reduce involuntary culling due to poor reproductive performance. Conversely, the proposed advantage of longer calving interval is that the cow is not subjected to increased health risk (DAs, RPs, Milk Fever, Ketosis, etc.) associated with more time spent in early lactation. Another advantage to waiting is that the high producing cow could be more fertile after three or four ovulations when repro hormone levels are higher.

Working with the VTC/UVM 2+2 students during spring semester is an enjoyable part of my involvement with the Institute herd. One of the student projects this spring will be to investigate the economics of extending the VWP from 60 to 80 DIM. Previous studies have gone out to 165 DIM, but 80 days was chosen because the herd is in expansion mode to fill stalls in the new barn and it was felt speeding up genetic improvement was paramount.

To implement the program, Presynch timed insemination (two prostaglandin injections preceding OvSynch) will be started on day 22 or 42 after calving for every other cow which has been vet-checked and pronounced ready-to-breed. This semester, a student will evaluate the cost of the Presynch program and conception rates. Subsequent students will be challenged to evaluate total milk production over defined time periods, lactation persistency, and health of the cows.

On a different note, what a wild

start Northeastern U.S. dairy farmers have endured in the first month of 2004! There seems to be a new challenge every week. The BSE outbreak knocked the bottom out of the cull beef market, but the US beef-eating public showed confidence in our food safety system and beef prices have rebounded. As a precaution, USDA banned slaughter of downer cows but did not pick up any financial responsibility of its action. Hopefully, there will be money available in the new Omnibus bill to cover the increased rendering cost.

Another new challenge for 2004 will be to deal with rBST rationing. If predictions of 1-3% milk production reduction for the U.S. as a result of rBST shortage are true, how much production will individual farms using rBST lose? With sky-rocketing soybean prices increasing the cost of producing milk, how can profitability be maintained on these farms? We have been reviewing herd production records to find which groups of cattle benefit the least from rBST supplementation. Many will abandon start-

ing new cows and pushing back starting DIM, others will not supplement first calf heifers. Vets are especially fearful that late lactation cattle will be taken off shots too early, which is feared to predispose them to Fatty Liver Syndrome and major fresh cow transition problems in the subsequent lactation.

On Friday, January 30, the long time slaughterhouse in Swanton, VT closed its doors. Decreased slaughter volume due to the USDA downer cow ban was cited as one of the reasons for closure. It is very sad to see a small community lose one of its major employers and the loss will be felt throughout this dairy area. Farmers have been forced to make another adjustment, seeking reasonable compensation for their slaughter cull cows. Cows are being culled sooner to ensure they can handle a longer truck ride to market or to prevent the catastrophe of going down.

Kent E. Henderson, DVM  
cowdoc@adelphia.net

### 2004 VERMONT LARGE FARM DAIRY CONFERENCE THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 19<sup>TH</sup>, 2004, 8:30 AM—4:00 PM SHERATON HOTEL, BURLINGTON, VT

Speakers and topics include:

- ✓ Vermont Governor Jim Douglas
- ✓ Dr. John Fetrow, University of Minnesota, "*Marginality & Effective Business Management*"
- ✓ Dr. David Reid, Bou-Matic, "*Management Techniques to Improve Milk Quality*"
- ✓ Andy Werkhoven, Washington State Dairy Farmer, "*Using Protocols on Your Dairy Farm*"
- ✓ Ellen Hankes, On-Farm Assessment and Environmental Review Program (OFAER), "*Environmental Management Solutions*"
- ✓ Dr. Kerry Rood, VT State Veterinarian, "*What to do with Downer Cows*"

For more information, contact Colleen Leonard, UVM Extension (802) 334-7325 ext. 13 or e-mail at: [colleen.leonard@uvm.edu](mailto:colleen.leonard@uvm.edu)



## WINTER CHECK-UP FOR HORSES

Those thick, woolly coats can hide a lot! With the cold weather going on and on, it's easy to spend less time in the barn or fields with the horses and more time with a good book by the fire. Take the time to feel through that fur for signs that your horse may need a little more attention.

A horse in good condition needs at least 6 lbs. more per day (about 3 flakes) of hay on zero (F) degree days to just maintain proper body condition—that's not including wind chill factor! At Miner Institute, we've been feeding the mature horses that live on winter pasture at a rate of more than 3% of their body weight per day and they've been eating it all. They can lose fat over the ribs very quickly and before you can see it, so run your hands over their sides.

At the same time, feel for skin problems that often occur in the winter. The creepy crud of rain rot or other fungi just love long, matted coats that horses can get in the winter. A bath is impossible this time of year, but spot-treatment of affected areas with iodine or nolvasan solutions is usually enough to get it under control.

Finally, check for hydration levels with a skin-pinch test. Cold water is better than no water; warm water is best. Impaction colics are more common this time of year due to decreased water intake. Keep water as ice free as possible and add a couple of gallons of hot water to those buckets overnight.

"No bad weather, only bad outfits," someone said to me once. Dress yourself well and spend a few extra minutes with your horse. Looking at frosty eyelashes on furry faces is one of my favorite things this time of year.

**Karen Lassell**  
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## BST ALLOCATIONS REDUCED

Starting March 1<sup>st</sup>, current users of BST will be limited to 50% of their normal usage. This allocation, down from the originally announced 85%, is expected to continue for the rest of 2004 and perhaps longer, and there's no guarantee that the allocation won't decrease further. Also, for the first time since BST was introduced 10 years ago, prices will increase by 9% or 50 cents per shot.

What effect will this have on U.S. milk supply and milk price? Will BST users find that by being more selective in who gets a shot, milk production isn't reduced as much as they feared? Since withholding BST from late lactation cows often results in their essentially drying up, what effect will this have on culling decisions? And when BST supplies are once again ample, will farmers resume normal BST use? Food for thought...

## FARM COMPOSTING

As agricultural regulations tighten across North America and heightened Mad Cow Disease concerns cause the closure of rendering plants, livestock farms struggle with the disposal of down animals. (*Editor's note: Swanton Packing in Swanton, VT, went out of business on Jan. 30.*) On-farm composting, a technique used by Miner Institute, has been both economically and environmentally effective in the disposal of down animals, spoiled feed, used bedding, and manure. In the composting of bedding, feed, and manure, small piles or windrows tend to be more moveable and easier to turn. Frequently turning the compost will ensure a more usable end product.

Nobody likes to deal with dead animals. What we do at the Institute is to bed and cover the deceased animal using waste straw, sawdust, or hay, then encase it in compost. This process is repeated every two weeks until the animal has fully "dissolved" into usable compost. On-farm composting at Miner Institute has provided an inexpensive and environmentally friendly way to manage dead animals and farm waste.

**Derrick McDonald**  
(Derrick works in our dairy operation)

- ➔ Roundup and other products containing glyphosate are applied directly to plants, but what happens when these herbicides come in contact with the soil? Are there adverse effects on soil microbes? Research in **Texas** and **Georgia** found that not only does Roundup Ultra not have any adverse effects on soil microbes, but the herbicide is readily mineralized, which actually increases the microbial population and activity.
  
- ➔ **Washington State University** dairy scientists studied the economics of cloth vs. paper towels in milking parlors. They found that a 200-cow farm milking 2X would spend \$790 per year on cloth towels—including the cost of towels plus washing and drying costs, or just over two cents per cow per day. Therefore, any economical alternative to cloth towels would have to cost not much more than one penny per milking.
  
- ➔ A **Mayo Clinic** study found that the incidence of fractured arms in children has increased by 42% in the past 30 years. Most vulnerable appear to be 12-year old boys. (What a surprise!) The researchers say that children aren't getting enough calcium, because they're drinking too much soda pop and not enough milk. We'll drink to that.



**GM crops and pesticides.** The Leopold Centre was one of six organizations that helped fund an analysis of U.S. Department of Agriculture data on pesticide use by crop and state between 1996 and 2003. The November 2003 report, "Impacts of genetically engineered crops on pesticide use in the United States," showed that use of GM corn, soybeans and cotton has *increased* overall pesticide use. It was prepared by Charles Benbrook, who directs the Northwest Science and Environmental Policy Centre. It can be viewed on the Ag Biotech InfoNet at [www.biotech-info.net/technicalpaper6.html](http://www.biotech-info.net/technicalpaper6.html).



**Brucellosis found in Wyoming.** Hot on the heels of the BSE scare comes news that four slaughter tracebacks with high brucellosis titers have been found in cows that originated in a herd in Sublette County, Wyoming, on a ranch adjacent to one of Wyoming's elk feedgrounds, where there are known brucellosis-infected elk. A whole-herd test of the index herd was done on December 2 and 3, and there were 31 reactors and 20-plus suspects found out of 319 cattle tested. Three states (Nebraska, California, and Colorado) have placed restrictions on Wyoming cattle as a result of finding the infected herd. It just gets ever-worse for the beef industry. (USAHA January 2004 Newsletter)



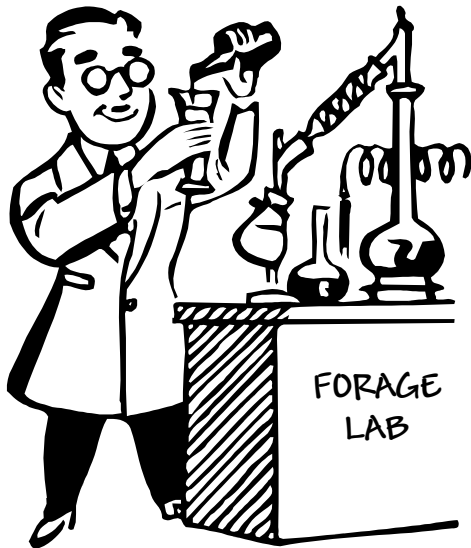
**Green Revolution pioneer supports small farmers.** Dr. M.S. Swaminathan, distinguished plant geneticist and father of the Green Revolution in India, astonished and delighted his audience by turning his back on big agribusiness in favor of small farmers during his speech to the plenary session on agriculture. "Progress in agriculture is the best safety net against hunger and poverty in many countries," he said. Unfortunately, there has been polarization between two models: agribusiness, or commodity farming with agrochemicals, supported by agricultural subsidies, and small-scale farming. "It's 'production by the masses' versus 'mass production' farming systems." (*Science in Society*, Issue 16)



**Pod borer control.** A small village in rural India is the center of a massive breakthrough in agriculture. Scientists working there are using material derived from caterpillar carcasses to develop a naturally occurring enemy to the pod borer, one of the world's most pervasive and destructive agricultural pests. (*Future Harvest*, "Pod Borer Plague Stopped Short," Jan 2004)



**Known to be an effective anti-inflammatory in cattle with respiratory disease,** new research shows flax also offers big performance and carcass benefits. Plus, there's an added bump—a 10-fold increase in omega-3 fatty acids in muscle tissue. Adding flaxseed and flaxseed oil to rations can help improve health. The flax diet seems to slow the production of a certain inflammatory substance (tumor necrosis factor alpha) usually produced in excess during many inflammatory diseases. Another interesting finding was that when animals were fed flax, death loss was reduced. (Thomas, S.H. "Facts on Flax," *Beef*, January 2004)



January marked the beginning of our Advanced Dairy Management course in conjunction with the 2 + 2 program formed between Vermont Technical College and UVM. We eased the students into the class with a dose of realism, hypothetically having to purchase 1000 T each of corn silage and haylage. The students were given 8 forage analyses of corn and haylage. Their task was to determine which haylage and corn silage they would buy based on the forage report. We reviewed the numbers, DM, NDF, ADF, NFC, CP, just the basics to begin with. The students were asked to rank the best, worst and intermediate forages. From the best, they then chose the feed that they would be spending \$25,000 to \$30,000 on. We ended up with a split of which were the 2 or 3 best corn silages and haylages based on the reports.

Next we asked what type of analyses they would like to have in order to make a more informed decision. Invariably the responses were VFA analyses, sugar and starch, and NDF digestibility. Minerals were mentioned with regards to nutrient management and dry cow nutrition, but since this purchase is for the milking herd and

the farm is well within nutrient compliance, we did not concentrate on the mineral data.

Then we went into the lab, where unbeknownst to the students were the same forage samples that they just reviewed by analyses. Their task was to judge the forages by sensory evaluation, smell, feel, particle length, kernel fracture, estimation of cutting, etc. It was interesting to note differences between feeds when there was an array of 10-15 forages. Differences in fermentations became easily apparent: High butyric, high acetic, high ethanol in corn, weed contamination has a peppery smell and corn silage that sometimes just has no smell.

We then compared the sensory rankings with the analytical rankings and noted the differences.

This year, a sweet smelling 1<sup>st</sup> cut grass silage beat out the alfalfa haylage in the sensory evaluation, while a slightly acetic acid fermentation corn silage took top choice over the higher NFC sample. That sample was high in starch, but the kernels were big, fat, and intact.

This year at Corn Congress we will have a similar display for visitors to test their sense of forage evaluation, matching analyses to the actual feeds. Included will be VFA analyses to match to the feeds as well as actual pure VFA standards that we use to calibrate our equipment. Hope to see you there.

Kurt Cotanch  
cotanch@whminer.com

### NOTABLE QUOTES—FOCUS ON FOOD

- ➔ You see fast food merchants like Hardee's touting their low-carb burger (wrapped in lettuce instead of a bun). You see Miller Lite boasting "half the carbs" of Bud Lite. A diet craze that lets marketers turn even burgers and beer into a "healthy choice" has got a lot going for it. It'll take more than one mad cow to stop it. **Dan Manternach**, Editor, *Doane's Agricultural Report*, Jan 2, 2004.
- ➔ Last time I saw somebody eat oysters, he squeezed lemon juice onto them, and they flinched. I never eat anything that can still flinch. **Stone Barrington**, in Stuart Woods' novel *Cold Paradise*.
- ➔ You know you are getting old when the candles cost more than the cake. **Bob Hope**
- ➔ Adam and Eve had an ideal marriage. He didn't have to hear about all the men she could have married, and she didn't have to hear about the way his mother cooked.

**Kimberley Broyles**



## NEED PESTICIDE RECERTIFICATION OR CCA CREDITS?

Once again Miner Institute will offer several opportunities to earn NY and Vermont Pesticide Recertification credits and Certified Crop Advisor (CCA) Continuing Education Units. All meetings will be in the auditorium at Miner Institute at the corner of the Ridge Rd. and NY Rte. 191.

**Weed Control in Field Crops**—Several area custom pesticide applicators will join Ev to discuss what they consider to be the most serious weed problems and what herbicides have been working best for them. **Tues., Feb. 17<sup>th</sup>, 1:00-3:00 pm. 2 Credit Hours.**

**Insect Control in Field Crops**—Ev will discuss the current insect pest situation, the effectiveness of biological controls, and changes in insecticide recommendations. **Wed., Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, 1:00-3:00 pm. 2 Credit Hours.**

**Corn Congress**—Elson Shields, Cornell University entomologist, will discuss insect control in corn, including how the new seed treatments compare with soil insecticides for cost and effectiveness. **Thurs., March 4<sup>th</sup>, 11 am-3:00 pm. 1 Credit Hour for Pesticide Recertification, 2 Certified Crop Advisor CEU.**

Credit hours and CEU are subject to change since they haven't yet been approved, but we've submitted the required paperwork and don't anticipate any problems.



## CLEANSWEEP 2004

Several NY agencies are sponsoring a free one-time disposal program for obsolete and unwanted agricultural pesticides, as well as properly rinsed, empty pesticide containers. This program is only for farmers, former farm owners, and commercial applicators involved in production agriculture in 19 New York counties. Most of these counties are North of the NY Thruway, including all six counties in Northern NY. The spring program generally includes counties from Franklin County east, and the fall program from St. Lawrence County west. The spring collection program is scheduled for the week of April 26<sup>th</sup>, and the fall program for the week of November 1<sup>st</sup>.

In order to participate you must enroll by April 1<sup>st</sup>. Details and lo-

cations of collection sites will be posted at <http://www.cleansweepny.org/>. (As of late January this website didn't include information on the Northern NY disposal program.) Additional info and enrollment forms can be obtained by contacting the local DEC Pesticides Office, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Soil and Water Conservation District, or by phoning (877) 793-3769. *Contact one of these agencies to enroll and to confirm whether your county is in the spring or fall program.*

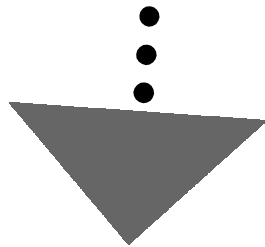
Don't miss this chance to get rid of obsolete and unwanted pesticides! Most pesticide disposal programs don't include the farming community, and with the many changes in pesticide registrations there has to be a lot of nasty old stuff lurking in the darkest recesses of pesticide storage buildings.

—E.T.



## AG INCOME UP IN '03

Net U.S. farm income totaled \$55.8 billion in 2003, an increase of over \$20 billion from 2002. However, across all farms the income from farming is a rather small portion of total farm household income. For example, in 2002 off-farm earnings totaled over \$131 billion, representing about 95% of farm household income. With the significant increase in net farm income, the 2003 numbers will be considerably better, but net farm income will still represent considerably less than half of farm household income.



## TOP TEN LIST

Rich Pottorff, Chief Economist for *Doane's Agricultural Report*, has published his list of the top ten "defining developments" for U.S. agriculture in 2003:

10. The collapse of our domestic textile industry.
9. Soaring natural gas and fertilizer prices.
8. The beginning of the economic recovery.
7. The short wheat crop in Europe and the former Soviet Union.
6. Policy developments by Congress, or the lack thereof.
5. The collapse of World Trade Organization negotiations.
4. August weather toasting soybeans.
3. The emergence of China as a market maker.
2. Net farm income soaring to record levels.
1. Mad cow disease.

## NORTH COUNTRY CORN CONGRESS THURSDAY, MARCH 4<sup>TH</sup>

- 10:00 Commercial exhibits  
11:00 Introductions, program announcements.  
11:15 Making the most of fiber digestibility—Rick Grant, Miner Institute  
11:45 Insect control in corn—Elson Shields, Cornell University  
12:15 Lunch, view commercial exhibits  
1:15 Corn hybrids for silage: What we're learning—  
Ev Thomas, Miner Intitute  
1:45 Insect control in alfalfa—Elson Shields, Cornell University  
2:15 Corn silage research update—Ev Thomas, Miner Institute  
2:45 Door prize drawings

**Pesticide Recertification credits (NY and VT)  
and Certified Crop Advisor credits will be available.**

## EQUINE SEMINAR AT MINER INSTITUTE

EquiDay's on its way: Saturday, March 20<sup>th</sup> at Miner Center. Topics to include: Training the horse to drive, equine rescue, breeding management and more! Free admission and open to the public; pre-registration is not necessary. For more information, contact Karen Lassell at [lassell@whminer.com](mailto:lassell@whminer.com) or (518) 846-7121 ext. 120.

## 16<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL EQUINE REPRODUCTION WORKSHOP

On April 2 and 3, the UVM Morgan Horse Farm, Middlebury Large Animal Clinic, and Miner Institute will collaborate to offer a comprehensive short course on equine breeding in Middlebury, VT. Lecture topics include anatomy and physiology, breeding program management, handling stallion semen—cooled and frozen—and foaling out. The hands-on portion of the program has participants learning to assemble and use an artificial vagina, semen preparation, reading an ultrasound, mare teasing and artificial insemination. Pre-registration is required; \$175 covers workshop, materials, and meals. Contact the UVM Morgan Horse Farm to sign up or get more information at (802) 388-2011 or [uvm.morgans@uvm.edu](mailto:uvm.morgans@uvm.edu).

## CLOSING COMMENT

One good turn  
gets most of the blanket

