Crop Insurance Deadline!

Funding for the Dairy Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) Program is readily available for the February sign-up period. The program is authorized in the lower 48 states, and with this widespread availability, funding will likely be quickly utilized. Dairy producers should give the LGM for dairy program consideration based on the extreme volatility in feed pricing alone. A policy could help to set a guaranteed margin and provide relief in an unstable environment.

LGM Sign-Up: March

If you feel that dairy LGM may benefit you, contact your crop insurance agent as soon as possible to get details for your farm and to take care of pre-enrollment issues. Due to Easter, sign ups will begin one week earlier than usual on Friday, March 22 and continue through March 23, if funds are not exhausted.

Bird Control

The Culprits

Bird Control Methods

Less Birds = More Milk!

LGM Dairy Basics

Upcoming Deadline: March 15

Friday, March 15 is this year’s deadline for the enrollment and/or policy change for the following crops:

- Corn (grain and silage)
- Soybeans
- Grain Sorghum
- Processing Beans
- Processing Tomatoes
- Fresh Market Sweet Corn
- Spring Forage Seeding
- Spring Oats

The revenue plan AGR-Lite holds the March 15 deadline as well. If you are planning on utilizing crop insurance with any of the crops listed above or AGR-Lite, contact your crop insurance agent as soon as possible. As we approach the March 15 deadline, crop insurance agents will become inundated with work. Don’t procrastinate and call now to assure you have ample time to discuss options and create the best possible policy for your operation with your agent. If you have any questions, please call the New Jersey Crop Insurance Education Team at 1(800) 308-2449.

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If you have any questions, give us a call at:

(856) 769-0090
There is no doubt that birds can have a negative impact on the profitability of a dairy farm. A single European starling can consume up to 4 oz. of feed per day. A group of 10,000 European starlings could consume as much as 1.25 tons of feed from a dairy in one day! With the high expense of feed, losses of this magnitude can result in hundreds of dollars of revenue per day just from lost feed. Birds often consume the most expensive components in the ration such as protein pellets and grain, seldom consuming roughage. Another concern with the presence of birds on the dairy is disease transmission. As many as 65 different diseases transmissible to humans and domestic animals have been associated with pigeons, European starlings and house sparrows. Diseases carried can include viruses: meningitis and seven forms of encephalitis, bacterial disease: diseases (erysipeloid, salmonellosis, paratyphoid, Pasteurelosis, Listeriosis), fungal diseases: aspergillosis, blastomycosis, candidiasis, cryptococcosis, histoplasmosis, sarcosporidiosis, protozoal diseases: American trypanosomiasis, toxoplasmosis and rickettsial/chlamydial diseases: chlamydiosis and Q fever. It is estimated that the overall bird population causes an annual loss of $100 million to U.S. agriculture.

Portions reproduced from the following references
UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ANIMAL AND PLANT HEALTH INSPECTION SERVICE WILDLIFE SERVICES
"Reducing Pigeons, European Starling, Common Grackle, Brown-headed Cowbird and House Sparrow Damage through an Integrated Wildlife Damage Management Program in Pennsylvania"

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**The Culprits: Common Problem Species**

**European Starling** - Starling droppings may cause components of steel buildings to degrade. A potential health risk arises from soil enriched with starling droppings, which can promote fungal growth and lead to diseases. The bird has an excellent memory for locating food and its digestive system adapts quickly to major dietary changes.

**Common Grackle** - The Common Grackle inhabits croplands, fields, parks, lawns, and open woodland. The grackle has an extremely varied diet, which includes insects, sprouting and ripened grains, seeds, and fruits. These birds form large flocks during migration and in winter roosts and often form breeding colonies.

**Pigeons** - Pigeons are highly dependent on humans to provide them with food and sites for roosting, loafing, and nesting. They are commonly found around city buildings, bridges, parks, farm yards, grain elevators, feed mills, and other man-made structures. Although pigeons are primarily grain and seed eaters, they will readily feed on garbage, livestock manure, spilled grains, insects, and any other available bits of food.

**Brown Headed Cowbird** - Brown Headed Cowbirds are common throughout the United States and often is found near livestock. This bird inhabits agricultural land, fields, woodland edges, and suburban areas. The preferred food of brown-headed cowbird includes: insects, small fruits, wild seeds, grain.

**House Sparrow** - House sparrows are found in nearly every habitat except dense forest, alpine, and desert environments. They prefer human-altered habitats, and are abundant on farms and in cities and suburbs.
**Bird Control Options**

**Electronic Bird Control** – Electronic systems utilize the innate power of the natural survival instincts of birds to effectively repel them from crops, orchards, barns, feedlots, airports, boats, marinas, homes and building. Digital recordings of distressed and alarmed birds, along with the sounds made by their natural predators are broadcast through high fidelity weather-resistant speakers. This triggers a primal fear and flee response. Pest birds soon relocate to where they can feed without feeling threatened.

**APHIS** – The Wildlife Services (WS) program, part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS), responds to requests from the public, organizations, and agencies in need of help in dealing with wildlife conflicts. Upon request, WS can provide on-site assistance to a facility where starlings are causing damage and develop plans to reduce the damage caused by the birds. An integrated wildlife damage management approach is used and may include recommendations for exclusion, harassment, and/or lethal control methods.

**Natural Predators** – Natural predators of problem species can be used to control pest populations. Predators such as owls and falcons can be encouraged to roost and live on site to control bird populations. With the use of nesting boxes, these natural predators will roost on site and prey on pest birds species. Through natural fear and prey tactics many problem species can be removed from the site.

**Harassment/Deterrents** – Examples include distress or alarm calls, noise makers, exploders, propane cannons, bright objects, laser beams, eye spot balloons, hawk kites, and mylar tape.

**Repellants**– Includes the use of sticky products on ledges or beams, to discourage roosting.

**Live Trapping** – Trapping and removing starlings can be successful at locations where small static populations are causing damage.

**Bird Proofing** – Where starlings are a problem inside of buildings, close all openings greater than 1" with bird-proof netting, welded wire or plastic strips.

**Less Birds = More Milk!**

Reducing bird numbers on your operation will create a more comfortable environment for your cows reducing stress, leave more valuable feed in the ration so it may be consumed by the cows and reduce manure on animals and equipment. Beyond the return gained by eliminating feed loss, bird control = more milk in the bulk tank!

Unfortunately, there is no ‘silver bullet’ that will work to eliminate all birds from the dairy. Problem species respond differently to the varied control methods. For best results, adopting several methods and diligent implementation works best to control bird numbers.

After implementing bird control practices on the dairy, a local dairyman saw a 2.7% gain in production immediately. At that rate, the initial investment he made to control the birds was regained in about one week!

If you have any questions about bird control, give Chad Stanczyk or Jasen Berkowitz from the Salem County Extension office a call at (856) 769-0090.
Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) for Dairy

Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) for dairy is an insurance program that provides protection against unexpected declines in the gross margin of a dairy operation. The market value of milk (gross revenue) minus feed costs (variable cost) equals gross margin. This expected value is calculated based on the futures prices of milk (Chicago Class III) and feed (corn and soybean meal) based on the futures market of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. Unlike crop insurance where the majority of revenue risk exists with production, the risk with LGM dairy lies predominately with price of milk and feed. This program does not set a support price on milk nor does it consider variable costs beyond feed. Instead, LGM for dairy strictly covers the difference between the expected gross margin and the actual gross margin. Other causes of revenue loss such as production loss, damage to livestock, livestock death, etc. are not covered. LGM for dairy is a risk management tool for dairymen to help them remain sustainable.

To participate in the LGM for dairy program, expected prices would be determined for both feed and milk in the futures market. The next step would be to determine how many cwt of milk are to be insured. Once this is determined, the gross margin guarantee is established and then at month’s end, the actual prices of milk and feed are determined. Actual gross margin may then be calculated to determine if an indemnity payment is owed.

Any amount of milk may be insured assuming that specified amount can in fact be produced. The limit of milk that can be covered in a year is 240,000cwt.

Premiums are determined using a premium calculator program based the amount of milk insured, expected gross margins for each period, and deductibles. Producers may select deductible levels between $0 and $2.00 per hundredweight of milk in $0.10 increments.

An application must be completed and filed while funds remain available but not later than the sales closing date of the initial insurance period for which coverage is requested. Coverage for the milk described in the application will not be provided unless the insurance company receives and accepts a completed application and a target marketing report, premium is paid in full, and the insurance company sends the producer a written summary of insurance. Coverage begins one full month following the sales closing date of the policy. In the eleven months in an insurance policy, ten months are insured because the month following sign up is not covered. To participate in the LGM for dairy program, consult your crop insurance agent.

This newsletter is brought to you by the Garden State Crop Insurance Education Initiative, a partnership between the USDA Risk Management Agency, New Jersey Department of Agriculture and Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Salem County. For additional information about crop insurance, contact your crop insurance agent, locate a crop insurance agent at www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html, visit our website http://salem.rutgers.edu/cropinsurance or call our toll free hotline 1-800-308-2449.