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**Summer Research Projects**

This summer, the Salem County Extension Team will be working on the following projects:
- Crop Insurance Education
- Secure Milk Supply
- Milk Quality Assurance
- Somatic Cell Count
- Bacteria (SPC/PIC)
- Hoof Health & Lameness Mgmt.
- Teat Dip Efficacy Studies
- Animal Waste Management
- Corn Fertility Trial
- Soybean White Mold/Purple Seed Stain Variety Trial
- Farm Pond Management
- Watershed Initiatives
- Financial Management Evaluation

If you have any questions about any of our projects, give us a call at (856) 769-0090.

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**LGM Sign-Up: May 29**

There is very limited funding available for Livestock Gross Margin (LGM) for May enrollment. 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. Sign-ups will begin on Friday, May 29 and continue through May 30, if funds are not exhausted.

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**NJ Dairies & Secure Milk Supply (SMS)**

The staff at Rutgers Cooperative Extension of Salem County will be serving the New Jersey dairy industry as consultants to help with voluntary compliance for the Secure Milk Supply (SMS) Program.

The SMS program should not be taken lightly because if there were ever to be an outbreak of hoof-and-mouth disease (HMD), only farms meeting the requirements and receiving a pre-event audit and certification from the NJDA state veterinarian will be eligible to continue selling milk.

If your farm is not pre-event certified and you are located within a restricted area, you will not be able to sell your milk!

If you would like to pursue a pre-event certification or would like more information about what parameters must be met, please feel free to contact Dave Lee, Jasen Berkowitz or Kelly Steimle at (856) 769-0090.
Conservation Compliance for Crop Insurance Participants

The Agricultural Act of 2014 (2014 Farm Bill) applies conservation compliance to Federal crop insurance premium subsidy eligibility requirements. Conservation compliance provisions are designed to reduce soil loss on erosion-prone lands and to protect wetlands for the multiple benefits they provide. Who needs to be in compliance? All persons must provide a certification of compliance (Form AD-1026) on or before June 1 to be eligible for premium subsidy for the following reinsurance year (beginning July 1). Additional forms and documents may be required depending on the operation and whether the person has an interest in land that produces or could produce an agricultural commodity. For conservation compliance purposes, an agricultural commodity is defined as a crop which is planted and produced by annual tilling of the soil, including tilling by one-trip planters; or sugarcane. Vegetable crops that are annually tilled are considered agricultural commodities. Orchards, vineyards, blueberries, and crops that are not planted by annually tilling of the soil are not agricultural commodities, but still need to file AD-1026.

How does a person comply?

If an AD-1026 is already on file and the information is still current, not further action is necessary.

Once filed, Form AD-1026 does not have to be refilled or updated unless the person makes changes to their land/operation that changes their certification.

Persons new to conservation compliance provisions file Form AD-1026 at the local USDA Service Center indicating they will not:

Producers are responsible for notifying the Farm Service Agency (FSA) when making any changes to their land/operation that may affect their compliance certification. If an AD-1026 is on file and needs updating, revise the AD-1026 at the local USDA Service Center to start the process with NRCS to determine whether a conservation plan or wetland determinations is needed.

Getting a Conservation Plan for Highly Erodible Land (HEL)

Land designated as HEL must be protected from excessive soil erosion when used to produce agricultural commodities by implementing and maintaining a set of conservation practices in an NRCS approved conservation plan. Contact NRCS for assistance with conservation plan development.

Wetlands

Before installing new drainage, modifying drainage or manipulating land that might impact a wetland, file or update Form AD-1026 with FSA to initiate a NRCS Wetland Determination, unless one already exists.

Eligibility of Federal crop insurance premium subsidy is not affected by wetland conversions that were completed, as determined by NRCS, before Feb. 7, 2014.

If a person converted a wetland after Feb. 7, 2014, as determined by NRCS, they are ineligible for Federal crop premium, unless an exemption applies. A person who converts a wetland after Feb. 7, 2014, as determined by NRCS, may regain eligibility for Federal-crop insurance premium subsidy by:

Paying a fee to NRCS. The option is only available when the wetland conversion imprison impacts less than 5 acres of an entire farm. Paying this fee does not make the person eligible for other USDA program benefits subject to conservation compliance.

Mitigating the lost wetland functions by restoring previously degraded wetlands or by creating new wetlands. Mitigation sites may be created, restored, or maintained on the producer’s land, or land held by a mitigation bank. Mitigation plans must be approved by NRCS.

Source: USDA Factsheet
With the warmer weather finally making its appearance this year, it is vital that we stay ahead of the game so we can function well under pressure. Rising temperatures can greatly affect dairy cattle, resulting in a decrease in production and future investments. Cows can begin to suffer from heat stress at temperatures slightly below 70 degrees, so while we are still in the process of heating up we must try to stay ahead and prepare for the hot summer months that are in our forecast.

Warm temperatures above 68o can have a negative impact upon cows, so summer months can be troublesome. Heat stress negatively affects a cow’s immunity, milk production/components, mammary gland cell proliferation, and offspring production. Heat stress results in an increase in a cow’s maintenance energy cost, shifts in nutrient breakdown, reduction of water and feed intake, increased chances of mastitis bacterial infections and somatic cell counts, and alterations in behavior patterns. Also, maternal heat stress causes a significant decrease in the milk production of her calves. There are some simple steps to help lessen the effects of heat stress, making it vital to invest in cow comfort and cooling now while we are still ahead of the game.

The most important tool with which we can fight heat stress is water! It may seem obvious, but ensuring your cows have plenty of water in multiple areas on the farm means that your cows will not be without it and will have adequate access to the most necessary of resources. Farmers ought to have clean waterers in multiple spots on the farm to ensure that cows do not have to wait for a drink or travel far from the field when they are thirsty; the idea of multiple waterers ensures that cows do not have to wait for a drink or travel far from the field when they are thirsty; the idea of multiple waterers ensures that cows do not have to wait for a drink or travel far from the field. If your feeders are located in the sun, perhaps you should consider constructing a source of shade for the animals as they eat. Large fans are a great way to circulate air in your stalls, creating a breeze to help with evaporative cooling. Cows can also be misted or showered before venturing out into the sun – when water evaporates off of a hot surface (such as the cow’s skin) it absorbs heat and cools the surface. However, farmers must be cautious about watering cows near feed sources since wetting feed that’s out in the sun speeds up any unwanted fermentation. A good solution could be to have the cows pass under a mister/shower after being milked, or putting a similar cooling source over an entrance out into a non-shaded area to avoid getting feed wet. It may also be wise to add an acid to a total mixed ration feed to control heating in the bunk, just be sure not to under- or over-mix.

While we cannot control the weather, we can help prevent added stress that a cow may be harboring due to the level of comfort she is provided. It is recommended that cows spend no more than 3.5-4 hours away from their feed, water, and beds, so it is important to supply a comfortable bedding material and enough of it to reduce any chance of injury or discomfort. Sand is a beneficial bedding source because it can conform to the cow’s body when she lies down, and since sand is inorganic it will not be as much of a concern when it comes to spreading bacteria. Studies show that cows can produce almost 4 extra pounds of milk per day for each extra hour spent in bed! A comfortable cow is a happy cow, and while this may require farmers to get out of bed a little earlier to work on these investments now, benefits will be reaped in the future.

Now is the time to act! Farmers need to consider coming up with plans to keep their cows cool and comfortable in the sweltering summer heat that surely is to come. To avoid negative impacts on production, take care of your cows and calves now while you still can. Diminishing the chances of heat stress in dry cows aids in the transition into lactation by increasing mammary cell proliferation, milk production, and immune function; by improving the comfort of your cows, you will be investing in your dairy’s production and performance.

After ensuring your cows have enough water to drink, other precautions can be made to keep them cool and comfortable in the heat. If your feeders are located in
Margin Protection Program (MPP) Progress

The table below illustrates the calculations used within the 2015 MPP Dairy Program. For the first pay period of January/February, the milk margin was slightly below $8, so those who bought up to a $8 coverage level would have been due a very small indemnity. Numbers for March/April pay period will be out shortly, but in that period the margin rose above $8, so none of the coverage levels triggered payment. The graph below illustrates the projections of the milk margin into 2016.

The registration period for MPP coverage in 2016 will be July 1 to September 30, 2015. Contact your local FSA office for more information.

Source: FSA Website

### Margin Protection Program (MPP) Calculations

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![Graph showing milk margin projections into 2016.](https://example.com/graph.jpg)

The colored bands show the middle 50% probability interval for forecast margins. There is a 25% chance that the margin could be above the green band and a 25% chance that the margin could be below the red band. The graph data and probabilities are calculated from futures market data available on 05/07/2015.

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Questions about crop insurance? Call a crop insurance agent or our toll free information line 800-308-2449
Or visit us online at

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Jasen Berkowitz
Kelly Steimle
Rachel Jeronimus

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.

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