



Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District

100 Grange Place, Room 202, Cortland, NY 13045
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NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2007 * VOLUME 12, ISSUE 1

SWCD...established to promote the conservation and wise use of our county's natural resources

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Mark Your Calendars!



*The 2007 Ag Day Luncheon is Scheduled
for March 20, 2007 at 11:30 a.m.*

Soil Group Worksheets

Landowners filing for an agricultural assessment in 2007 must file applications with their local assessor by March 1st. To complete an application for an agricultural assessment, landowners must have a Soil Group Worksheet (SGW) prepared by the SWCD for each tax parcel they intend to enroll. Landowners who have previously had an SGW completed for a tax parcel do not need a new one unless the total parcel acreage changed.



Landowners participating in the program for the first time, or those who need a revised SGW, should make an appointment with our office now. The worksheets should be completed as early as possible. All appointments must be made before Monday, February 19th. When calling, the landowner should have the appropriate tax map number, location, and acreage for each parcel. This information can be found on the most recent parcel tax bill. A fee of \$25.00 will be charged for each SGW, new or revised.

Agricultural land does not automatically receive an agricultural assessment. Landowners must apply each year to remain eligible. For more information, contact your local assessor, or Real Property Tax Service at 753-5040. Contact SWCD to make an appointment for your SGW.

Congratulations to Gene Wright on 40 years of service to Cortland County SWCD! Gene was recognized by the County Legislature at the November legislative session for his devotion and service to the county and district.

Left: Gene being presented with his award by Marilyn Brown, Chairman of the Legislature.





Oats and Beans and Barley Grow...

And so will can evergreens, shrubs and ground covers that you order from our *Annual Tree, Shrub and Ground Cover Sale*. Yes, it's that time of year again and enclosed in this newsletter is our order form.

We have a variety of conservation species available to help you bring birds to your yard, stabilize that stream bank out back, or create a butterfly haven. Whether you need wild-flower seed, trees, flowering shrubs, or ground cover, we've got something for you. We are offering a variety of evergreens and hardwoods, including black cherry and oaks. Shrubs include elderberry, burning bush, and a variety of our more traditional species. A number of packets have been specially selected to offer you a variety of species for special purpose plantings. All information regarding species, ordering, and distribution are included with the order form. So think "Spring" and place your order today. Orders are due by April 5th. It will soon be April 19th and the trees will be here, and it will be time to get growing!!!

NEW GRANT FOR GRAZING SYSTEMS

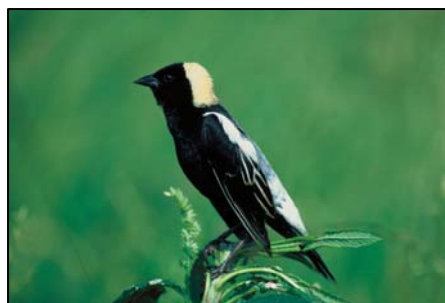
A new National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant has been announced for rotational prescribed grazing systems that promote grassland bird habitat. A few adaptations to a rotational grazing system can make it more compatible for grassland bird habitat.

Grassland birds are a group of bird species that only nest on, or near the ground in grassy fields. This group of bird species has suffered great population declines over the past 40 years. Loss of habitat through urbanization, re-growth of forest and intensive agricultural practices are the major reasons for these losses. Bobolinks, Eastern Meadowlark, Northern Harrier, Grasshopper Sparrow, Henslow's Sparrow, Savannah Sparrow, Upland Sandpiper, Vesper Sparrow and Sedge Wren all belong to the grassland bird group.

In order to qualify for a grant, the design of the livestock grazing system must include an unmown area, known as a refuge. This area must be adjacent to the grazing paddocks allowing the birds to forage throughout the season. In addition, the pasture grazing rotation and mowing schedule needs to be modified to allow much of the grass to be at a height useful to grassland birds.

Money from this grant can be used for fencing, water systems, stream crossings, and laneways. This is a great opportunity for landowners wishing to set up a grazing system to get cost-sharing assistance for their project. There are a few criteria that need to be met to be eligible for this grant, such as having a minimum of 25 animal units and having enough extra land to devote to the refuge area.

Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District can work with landowners to develop a prescribed grazing plan that will meet both their livestock and bird requirements. For more information on this program please contact Cortland County SWCD at 607-753-0851, ext. 3.



GRAZING WORKSHOP FEBRUARY 6, 2007; 7-9 P.M.

Speakers: Darrell Emmick and Tom Adams

Topics: Grazing Management; Choosing the Right Forage for the Job

Darrell Emmick, NRCS NYS Grassland Specialist, will discuss how to manage your grazing system to make the most efficient use of the forages. Tom Adams, owner of MaraSeed and a sales and support representative for King's AgriSeeds, will discuss how to select forage species based on the individual characteristics of each species and how it might or might not be suited to your farm. Bring your questions to ask Darrell and Tom about grazing and your own farm. Refreshments will be provided. *Call SWCD to register by February 2, 2007. Workshop to be held in the Grange Auditorium.*



By now, most farmers have heard of AEM-The Agricultural Environmental Management Program. But to the average county citizen, AEM blends in with the hundreds of other acronyms that we are so fond of using today. The fact is over 200 farms in Cortland County are involved in the New York State Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) Program to protect precious soil and water resources now, and for future generations.

AEM programs and services are delivered to farmers at the local level by the Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) and partners, specifically the USDA agencies and Cornell Cooperative Extension. "We farmers want to be good stewards of the land and maintain our resources for the future," said Eugene Wright of Wrihten Farms of Homer. "The Soil and Water Conservation District cooperates with farmers to plan and install practices that would be difficult for them to do alone."

The AEM process begins with an assessment of the farming operation to document current environmental stewardship and identify potential environmental concerns. Farm-specific plans are then developed and implemented to address concerns and protect water quality. The Cortland County SWCD is actively helping farmers plan and install conservation practices that protect water quality, such as barnyard runoff management systems, waste management systems, soil erosion control, and fencing that prevents livestock access to streams. Ongoing reviews and plan updates are also a component of AEM in order to assure that the farm's environmental objectives are being met.

Environmental regulations are in place to help ensure that larger livestock farms, known as Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs), continue to do their part to protect the state's water resources. These livestock operations are required to develop and implement a Comprehensive Nutrient Management Plan (CNMP) for their farm, which prescribes the amount and timing for manure applications to crops and fields. They are also required to maintain records documenting this process, make annual plan updates, and are routinely inspected by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation. Farm CNMPs are developed and updated annually by trained and certified AEM Planners. The AEM Planner Certification Program is an extensive training and certification process that assures farmers, environmental regulators and the public of quality AEM planning to address environmental concerns on farms.

Farmers know that in order to remain economically viable they need to be vigilant about protecting the environment, and AEM provides them with the resources to help accomplish both. "SWCD, USDA and Cooperative Extension work great together and provide us with planning assistance, education, and a lot of information. The possibility of financial assistance is a great incentive to get involved, and it will help us to make improvements on the farm that benefit our business, our neighbors and the environment," said Jim Chaffinch of Chaffinch Farms in Lapeer. "It's a good program!"

"It is in everyone's best interest to keep farming viable in New York to protect our supply of fresh, healthy food, preserve our scenic landscapes, maintain our rural quality of life, support our economy and safeguard our natural resources," said Amanda Barber, SWCD Manager. "Purchasing locally grown farm products is one way everyone can help to maintain the viability of our farms that provide multiple benefits to our community, and keep our countryside beautiful."

For more information on the AEM program in your county, contact Cortland County SWCD, or visit the New York State AEM website at www.nys-soilandwater.org.

GRAZING NEWS.....

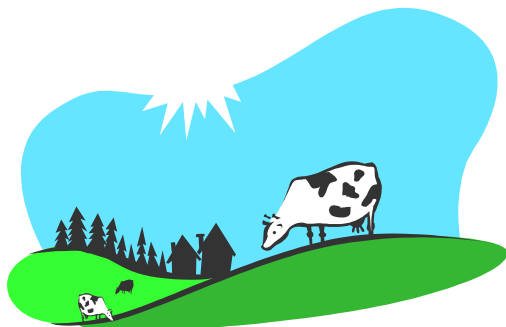
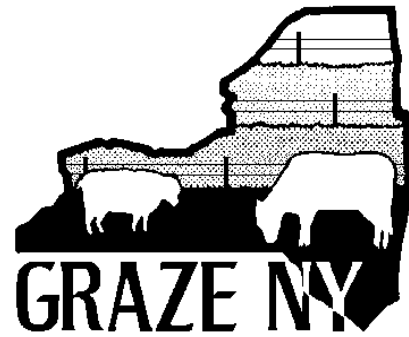
Pasture Management Tips: Reprinted from *GLCI Gazette*, December 2006

“Outwintering” is the practice of allowing animals to continue their occupation of pasture during the winter. There are several advantages and disadvantages to this method of “non-housing”, as well as strategies for making it successful.

It is important to remember that outwintered animals have considerably higher energy requirements (up to 30% more depending on the weather), so they need to be provided with both a higher quantity and higher quality feed. In some cases, feeding a little bit of grain or corn silage may be the only way to keep them growing, or even maintaining, their body weight. Don't be fooled by a long hair coat or thick wool - body condition score the animals periodically to make sure they are keeping enough flesh on - touch them over the spine, short ribs, and tailhead to assess. Also, depending on topography and prevailing winter winds, they should be provided with a windbreak or shelter area where they can escape the wind. Although most animals will stay out in very cold temperatures by choice, it is still wise to have another option available to them.

Outwintered pastures will take a beating, so it's also important to think through where you will outwinter. If you have a pasture that you'd like to renovate or improve the fertility of, that is your best choice. Your best pastures should be your last choice. You may also want to consider doing some “rotational outwintering” to minimize mud and muck if the winter stays fairly warm, and that may require some planning now to make sure feed can be easily placed and then accessed in a variety of locations.”

Winter is also the time to develop grazing plans for the coming season. Cortland County SWCD (607-753-0851, x3) is available to assist landowners in developing prescribed grazing management plans custom tailored to individual farming operations. This service is free. The development of a plan is the first step in applying for cost share assistance for infrastructure to implement the plan.



The *GLCI Gazette* is an email newsletter that has a nice calendar of events, pasture management tips and other grazing information. It is sent to your email once a month. To subscribe, send an email to karen.sullivan@ny.usda.gov and in the subject line type the word “subscribe” and you will be added to the distribution list.



GRAZING WORKSHOP MARCH 6, 2007 FROM 7-9 P.M.

Speaker: Darrell Emmick
Topic: Behavior-based Grazing Management

In this presentation by Darrell Emmick, State Grazing Land Management Specialist with the USDA-Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Darrell will share information and data on what is known about some of the adaptations, foraging strategies, and mechanisms used by grazing animals to make foraging decisions, and illustrate how you can use this knowledge to improve the efficiency and profitability of pasture-based production systems. Refreshments will be served.

Call SWCD to register by March 2, 2007. Workshop to be held in the Grange Auditorium.



SERVICES

AGRICULTURAL LAND CONSERVATION



EQUIPMENT RENTAL



CONSERVATION EDUCATION



FISH STOCKING PROGRAM



HOMEOWNER ASSISTANCE



LIVING SNOW FENCE



SEEDLING PROGRAMS



SITE PLAN REVIEWS



SOIL GROUP WORKSHEETS



SOILS INFORMATION



STREAM DISTURBANCE PERMIT ASSISTANCE



STREAM STABILIZATION ASSISTANCE



URBAN CONSERVATION



WATER QUALITY MANAGEMENT



CONTACT OUR OFFICE FOR MORE INFORMATION

AEM in the News...

Cortland County SWCD was one of three (3) counties recently presented with a "2006 Agriculture in the News" award by the New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee and the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets. This award recognized the success of AEM partners working to get local press on agriculture and continue the enthusiasm to foster public awareness of agricultural issues.



Above: Amanda Barber; David Reckahn (Wyoming County SWCD); Troy Bishopp (Madison County SWCD); and Rick Zimmerman (Department of Agriculture and Markets).

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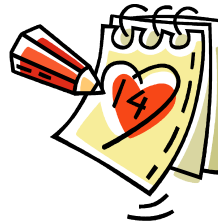
WE'RE ON THE WEB
SEE US AT:

WWW.CORTLANDCOUNTYSWCD.COM

2007 TREE SALE ORDER FORM ENCLOSED

Please contact our office if you wish to be added/removed from our mailing list.

ALL PROGRAMS AND SERVICES OF CORTLAND COUNTY SWCD ARE OFFERED ON A NONDISCRIMINATORY BASIS WITHOUT REGARD TO RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, RELIGION, SEX, AGE, MARITAL STATUS, OR DISABILITY.



Calendar

Board of Directors:

Michael McKee - Legislator
Carl Ritter - Treasurer
Eleanor Ritter - RC&D Representative
Patrick Snyder - Member at Large
John Steger - Legislator
Eugene Wright - Chairman

SWCD Staff:

Amanda Barber - Manager
Andy Breese - Natural Resource Conservationist 1
Melanie Dewey - Secretary to the Board
Jean Foley - Conservation Assistant
Pat Reidy - Water Quality Specialist
Stacy Russell - Natural Resource Program Specialist
Darrel Sturges - Conservation Assistant
Jean Swisher - Account Clerk

NRCS Staff:

Darrell L. Emmick - State Grazing Land Management Specialist
Suzette Kocher - District Conservationist
Elena Steele - Soil Conservationist



- 01/01/07 Office Closed for New Year's Holiday
- 01/09/07 Board Meeting (1 p.m.)
- 01/15/07 Office Closed for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
- 01/25/07 WQCC Meeting
- 02/06/07 Grazing Workshop (7 p.m.)
- 02/13/07 Board Meeting (1 p.m.)
- 02/19/07 Office Closed for George Washington's Birthday
- 02/22/07 WQCC Meeting
- 03/06/07 Behavior-based Grazing Management Workshop (7 p.m.)
- 03/13/07 Board Meeting (1 p.m.)
- 03/13/07 to 03/16/07 Water Quality Symposium
- 03/20/07 Ag Day Luncheon (11:30 a.m.)
- 03/22/07 WQCC Meeting
- 04/05/07 Tree Orders Due
- 04/10/07 Board Meeting (1 p.m.)
- 04/19/07 Tree Pick-Up