

# **Final Project Report to the NYS IPM Program, Agricultural IPM 2000 – 2001**

**Title: Integrated Pest and Field Crop Management Outreach Project**

**Project Leader(s): Lisa Fields, Extension Educator, CCE Schoharie County**

**Cooperator(s): Ken Wise, NYS IPM Eastern NY Field Crops Specialist,  
Project Outreach Farms: Boulder Brook Farm, Davis Meadows Farm and  
Stone House Farm**

**Type of grant:** Public Education

**Project location(s):** Schoharie County

**Abstract:** This project entailed a new approach to delivering IPM/ICM education to the local dairy farm community. The concept of on-site demonstration was employed by having volunteer host farms to serve as data collection and field meeting sites in three different areas of the county. The intent was to pique the interest of area farmers as they could see the process and result of employing specific practices close to home. The relationship to their own farm would be drawn from the similarities and differences of the project outreach farms. One accomplishment of the IPFCM project was that weather data was obtained along with crop data. Having similar weather conditions on three farms with differing crop yield/quality outcomes could be useful in breaking the barrier of acceptance by producers of the value of certain management practices. Examples are crop pest scouting, nutrient management, non-pesticidal fly control in barns and limiting secondary tillage in field corn. Conversely, having data that details the varying weather conditions between farms can convey the importance of choosing varieties and tillage regimes suited to your farm's conditions. Project outreach stated that changes will be made as a result of this program (see attachment A). Regarding the outreach component, a challenge was that 2001 was a crop

disaster year due to rainfall of about 10" below normal for the season. During such conditions of duress, people are not open to examining management practices that have a long term impact but do not provide immediate relief. Prior to the next season would be a more opportune time for such educational efforts.

**Background and justification:** In the two years prior to this project there's been a drop in attendance at pest management field meetings . Those meetings were subject focused, some held on-farm, some at the local college farm. There was not the greater context of pest and crop data from the growing season at those sites. Site specific weather information has not been gathered on farms involved in crop/pest data collection in the past. A fresh approach seemed called for. It was hoped that the connection of farm specific data to the subjects at hand would increase interest. It should be noted that other types of meetings offered by the Project Leader are consistently well attended.

**Objectives:** Impart IPM and ICM principles to farm producers who rely upon well managed grass production in addition to alfalfa and field corn as essential forage crops. Contribute to improved quality and yield of grass, legume and corn forage for livestock feed on participants' farms through the delivery of experiential learning of IPM and ICM concepts and techniques. Collect local data as stated in the abstract of the project proposal and detailed under procedures. This facet of the project will enhance its outreach value via the field meetings as well as contribute valuable information to both local and statewide databases.

**Procedures: Monitoring and data collection:** a rain gauge and high-low thermometer were installed on each farm. Summer assistant Carrie Evanoika checked these at least once a week, and one farmer checked his weather station daily. None of the participants utilize pasture as forage, so that objective was not applicable. Fields checked were corn, alfalfa, alfalfa-grass and grass-mixed legumes. An alfalfa seeding with a spring barley companion crop was included. Soil temperatures were taken at 2-3" depth, PEAQ measurements on two fields, a forage sample from two, crop heights, growth stage weekly, penetrometer readings and weed and insect pest monitoring as appropriate. Soil samples were taken on fields lacking current information, plant population checks and PSNTs

performed as appropriate. Two field meetings were held (see attachments) Evaluation was not done as attendance only included one person other than the host farms. The extreme dry conditions and low interest negated the value of holding additional field meetings. Interviews were conducted with the project outreach farms at the end of the season. See references, below.

**Results and discussion:** The project outreach farm interviews describe accomplishments of this project from the host farms' perspectives. The initiation of farm specific weather data collection in correlation with crop performance is valuable and instills further educational efforts. Although all 3 farms had similar weather conditions, the only farm of the three that realized poor yields makes at least two passes with a disk after primary tillage. Although this project was not research, this is an indicator that continuing this type of effort could be valuable in delivering an educational message regarding soil quality management. In spite of the accomplishments and the fact that a weather disaster can legitimately be partially blamed for the low interest of the farm community, this program did not succeed as an outreach project and I would not recommend continuing it further in its current framework.

**References:** Attachment A: Project Outreach Farms comments, Attachment B: Fly Data, Attachment C: Crop Data, Attachment D: Field Meeting flyers, mailed to 170 producers.