

1999 Annual Report

April 1999

NYS Weekly Livestock Market Report

By John Mann,
Market Report
Coordinator

The Weekly NYS Livestock Market Report, featured in Country Folks Farm Weekly, has provided a good opportunity to highlight SoCNY RC&D projects such as the Agri-Cluster, FastTrac, Pastured Poultry and Meadow Raised Veal. Editorial style articles create an awareness forum that has produced some excellent responses.

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FASTTRAC'ing AGRICULTURAL & RURAL BUSINESSES

Phil Metzger, Project Coordinator



It seems not too long ago that the SoCNY RC&D Council identified that proverbial 3rd leg of the stool to their rural landowner assistance program. SoCNY RC&D has always been responsive to rural landowners interested in producing agricultural products, often livestock or poultry related (Leg 1), and to accessing financial assistance through the "Limited Resource Farmer Agricultural Loan Program" (Leg 2). What was missing was assistance to the entrepreneurial rural business owner who needed help starting or expanding unique rural businesses, including agricultural enterprises.

Recently 18 candidates signed up for one of the two 5-session business plan development courses through SoCNY RC&Ds FastTrac program. The classes were held in Candor and Norwich, NY. The course, taught by

Martha Brower, Brower Communications, Inc., addressed all aspects of the business planning process aimed at the unique features of operating rural businesses.

The result was 18 completed business plans that lay the groundwork for those operations to start or expand their enterprises and play their part in helping retain a prosperous rural landscape. This work continues through the Chenango Entrepreneur Coalition which includes as members, organizations interested in assisting entrepreneurs.



TIOGA COUNTY AGRICULTURE & FARMLAND PROTECTION PLAN

Linda LaRosa-Mosner

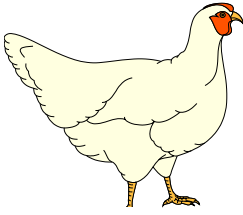
The Tioga County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan concluded that farmers are motivated to farm if they can do so profitably. It also determined that the future of a viable agricultural industry in Tioga County depends on the commitment and united efforts of the farming community, the non-farming community and the leaders who establish policy within the County.

The plan designated specific goals and implementation

strategies that incorporate agriculture as a key player in the Tioga County Business Community. It encouraged and supports historic, traditional agriculture, as well as the entrepreneurial endeavors of small, diversified farming enterprises. The focus of the Tioga County Agriculture & Farmland Protection Plan is agricultural economic development and it compliments the County's Comprehensive Plan.

PASTURED POULTRY CONTINUES TO GROW

Jim McLaughlin, Farm Management Technician



The pastured poultry project is growing faster than a 3-week-old broiler! 1998 continued to see an increase in the number of producers as well as an increase in the number of birds produced per farm.

According to a survey conducted at the end of the 1998 growing season, those who responded plan to raise pastured poultry again in 1999. More than 50% of the producers said they would increase production to meet the demand from their growing customer base. "Backporch" marketing, the process of marketing products directly from your door yard, continues to prove to be a successful way to market poultry as well as other value-added farm products. Producers also report that sales of other meats, eggs and home made products increased as people were drawn to the farm for pastured poultry. Farm sales increased without additional advertising but through well

thought out displays at the farm. Satisfied customers brought in many new customers through word of mouth advertising.

Considering the excellent responses from surveys about the raising of Pastured Poultry, this concept should continue to be a viable option available to family farms.

Due to the success of the Mobile Processing Unit (MPU), as well as the MPU homepage, hosted by Craig Cramer, staff have responded to requests for information and plans for the unit from all around the world! Thanks goes to George Vanderrwoude for hosting the Pastured Poultry Association of South Central NY web page (see below).

SoCNY RC&D has also partnered with Hudson Mohawk RC&D to build a MPU for use in their region. The unit will be unveiled at the 1999 New York State Pastured Poultry Expo in April.

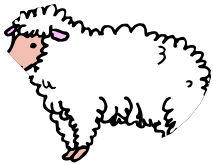
"Backporch marketing continues to prove to be a successful way to market poultry!"

PASTURED POULTRY WEB SITES:

www.sunsite.unc.edu/farming-connection/grazing/pastpoul/mpu.htm
www.people.delphi.com/dvdw/ppa.htm

LIVESTOCK PROGRAM

Nancy Morey, Livestock Specialist



The Livestock Program has been the backbone of the SoCNY RC&D for 21

In the past, under Heifer Project International (HPI) guidelines, sheep & goats were placed on farms and paid back with breeding age ewes and does. As the Program has begun receiving funding from sources other than HPI, the program has changed from an animal payback system to one of financial paybacks.

It was recognized that there was a need expressed by many producers wanting to expand sheep flocks or goat herds. To assist these producers, a low-interest loan program was developed for the purchase of more breeding stock.

Continuing loans for rams, bucks and bulls has provided many producers with the resources to improve their herd/

flock genetics. There is also a loan program for purchasing electronet fencing which allows sheep and goat producers to more effectively manage their farm's grazing resources.

Providing on-farm assistance to sheep and goat producers in all aspects of livestock production remains a high priority. This assistance, coupled with marketing assistance, enables many producers to maintain viable, profitable farm businesses.



WILLOW BIOMASS PROJECT

The SoCNY RC&D Forestry Committee decided to join the Salix Consortium in 1995. The goal of the Willow Biomass Project is to explore the establishment of willow shrubs as a commercially viable, locally grown renewable resource fuel to be co-fired with coal in electric power plants. The use of wood in the fuel mix reduces sulfur emissions and in some cases nitrous oxide emissions. Dedicated energy crops such as willow are considered carbon dioxide neutral because the growing crop absorbs the CO₂ released during production, transportation and combustion.

Willow is easily established and grows rapidly in a double row system designed for special combine harvesters. Harvest occurs after leaf fall in the third growing season. Willow resprouts from the original rootstock, so replanting is not required for approximately 20 years when production begins to decline. Willow is a hard wood, and although it is less dense, it provides the same btu's on a ton for ton basis as other hardwoods. This planting system produces 5-7 oven dry tons per acre per year.

Research conducted by SUNY Environmental Science and Forestry in willow and other woody crops has been ongoing since 1983. This research has been supported by USDA, NYS Energy Research and Development Authority, and others. Further support for demonstration of commercialization has been secured through the US Department of Energy's Biomass Power for Rural Development Program.

SoCNY RC&D hired a Biomass Field Representative in November of 1996. Stacie Edick has worked with the Salix Consortium to identify landowners and farmers for participation in the project, assist in writing contracts, promote the project through news articles and educational outreach efforts and encourage community input by organizing public community meetings. Ms. Edick is also investigating the possibility of

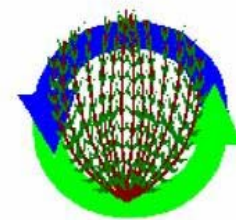
incorporating timber stand improvement residues and other forestry by-products into the willow fuel stream. Supplemental markets for willow such as composting material, pellet fuel, fiber board, basketry and furniture are also being explored. As the willow acreage increases and more landowners and farmers become involved, Ms. Edick will inquire about their interest in establishing a grower's cooperative or other marketing mechanism.

The original scope of the project included the area around NYSEG's Greenidge plant in Yates County, but with deregulation and the sale of NYSEG's fossil fuel plants; scale up acreage in this area has been postponed until the Consortium meets with the new plant owners.

During the spring of 1998, 100 acres of willow were planted in Chautauqua and Cattaraugus counties in proximity to Niagara Mohawk's Dunkirk Power Plant. An additional 200 acres have been contracted and prepared for planting in the spring of 1999. Niagara Mohawk is also selling their fossil fuel plants. The hope is that the new owners will see the value of willow biomass and join in the project. It is due to this type of uncertainty that SoCNY RC&D insisted upon a removal clause in the grower leases. If the landowners are not convinced of the future of willow biomass, the Consortium will remove the crop after the first harvest. Growing concerns over global warming and climate change, and the increasing value of emission reductions are encouraging for the biomass to energy industry.

SoCNY RC&D will continue to support the efforts of the Salix Consortium while balancing the needs of landowners and farmers in a rapidly changing electric power generation industry.

Several changes were made in 1998 to ensure that the program continues into the next century.



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Making it Happen!



The SoCNY RC&D Project, Inc. mission is to improve the regions economic vitality through the wiser use of available human and natural resources.

South Central New York Resource Conservation and Development Project, Inc., is a 501-C-3 not-for-profit organization, located in Norwich, New York. The SoCNY RC&D region covers twelve counties; Broome, Cayuga, Chenango, Cortland, Delaware, Madison, Onondaga, Otsego, Schoharie, Sullivan, Tioga, and Tompkins.

SoCNY RC&D is a leader in natural resource conservation and rural economic development actives in the Central and Southern Tier regions of rural New York State. The partnership of federal, state, local and private organizations/agencies results in dollars brought into the region and the empowerment of rural residents.

MEADOW RAISED VEAL

Marty Broccoli, Marketing Coordinator, CADE

Positive strides continued during the second season of the "Meadow Raised Veal" project. The effort continues to develop livestock products that can be raised economically and marketed for profit by small farms.

Seventy veal calves were raised and sold by twelve producers from the central and south central regions of New York State. A logo and product identity has been developed that has real marketing potential. A great deal of exposure and subsequent interest in veal

products by restaurants, small meat retailers and direct homebuyers, was generated through an advertising and sample give-away campaign.

The New York State Pastured Veal Association has officially begun to incorporate as a marketing cooperative. The original time frame of 3 to 5 years to make pasture raised veal a new viable marketing option for dairy farmers looks to be realistic. The project needs additional fine-tuning but all indications are that it will have a positive impact on the region.