

*Farmers
Working
Together*



*For a Clean
Lake Champlain
and Thriving
Agriculture*

Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition
Newsletter Update
July 18, 2015

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Welcome,

The Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition Board of Directors met last Wednesday and we decided that it was time for us to write a newsletter! Our goal is to better inform our members on what is happening within the Coalition and in the world of water quality and farm viability. We want to provide you with periodic, up to date information that will be important for you! This newsletter will cover topics that are important for all farmers in the Champlain Valley to know about. Latest happenings from the Coalition, upcoming events, latest research from universities, crop updates, NRCS deadlines, farmer advice, and MORE!

We are very excited about this newsletter as it will help us reach our goal of becoming more informed about what is going on in our area and how we can have a positive impact on the discussion.

We hope you take some time and read our first newsletter, and let us know what you think. This newsletter is meant to help YOU. So please don't hesitate to send us your thoughts!



Hop on the Bus!

The Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition is renting a large van and hitting the road! **THIS THURSDAY, JULY 23**, we will be going up to the UVM Extension Northwest Crops and Soils Annual Field Day in Alburgh. You can learn more about the event on their website:

<http://www.uvm.edu/extension/cropsoil/>

The bus leaves the Extension office in Middlebury at **8:30am**. If you live somewhere along the way (like you Chittenden County folks), let us know and we can organize a place to pick you up!

Transportation is **FREE** to Coalition members, and there is only a \$10 charge for lunch, so if you want to have fun and learn about the latest and greatest in farming in Vermont, **CALL TODAY AND RESERVE YOUR SEAT!** If you cannot go, we encourage you to send a representative from your farm to come to this great field day!

To reserve your seat TODAY, call Nate Severy at (802)-999-0025 or (802)-388-4969 ext 348 or email at info@champlainvalleyfarmercoalition.com. **We hope to see you Thursday!**

Upcoming Field Walks

We are starting to schedule field walks for the next several months! These will be short (1-2 hours) events held on-farm to showcase innovative and good management on local farms. Last year we had several field walks that were a great success, and we want to build upon that!

Things that we want to see: no-till/minimum till corn, cover crop seed production, cover crops, good pasture management, alternative crops, manure management, and anything else that people want to see and discuss.

We are hoping to have at least one field walk before the Addison County Field Days, so keep a lookout for more information, and call us if you have a field that we should visit!



Letter to NRCS

Many CVFC members utilize NRCS programs to implement best management practices. Among us, we have had many experiences working with NRCS staff. Recently the Board of Directors sent a letter to Vicky Drew, the NRCS Vermont State Conservationist, sharing our own experiences working with EQIP programs and specific issues that have been encountered recently. These included paperwork challenges as well as a desire to have more flexibility when contracting field-based practices. We value the NRCS and the good work that they do, and want to help foster a better working relationship between them and the farming community. In the letter, we also invited Vicky Drew to a future Board Meeting to discuss our concerns and see what we can do to help improve their system.

If you would like to read the letter in full or read Vicky Drew's response letter, call our Secretary, Kirsten Workman, at (802)-388-4969 ext 347

Double Cropping CAN Pay

The idea of harvesting two high quality crops in one season- corn and a winter grain- is very enticing. You reduce erosion, help dry out your soil, retain nutrients, spread out your risk for harvesting feed, and add diversity to your livestock's ration. But does it pay?

That is exactly what a recent research project in New York sought to find out. They looked at growing conventional corn with and without harvesting a winter grain and the impact it had on farm profitability over 30 farms throughout New York.

What they found: Harvesting your cover crop CAN be profitable. Even with the slight decrease in corn yield, the extra feed from your winter rye or triticale more than make up for it. They found that if you need to apply 75lb N to your cover crop at green up, and if you have a 1 ton DM reduction in corn silage (worst case scenario) from using a shorter-day corn variety, as long as you can harvest around 2 tons DM per acre of a winter cereal, you are in the green! Under favorable conditions where nitrogen was not needed in spring and corn yields were minimally impacted by delayed planting date, the break-even winter forage yield was around 0.7 ton DM per acre.

To read the paper in full, go to <http://blogs.cornell.edu/whatscroppingup/>

To learn more about harvesting cover crops, talk with your local UVM Extension Agronomist.



Meet a Member!

Hello, this is Brian Kemp current President CVFC. We wanted to start a new monthly newsletter with current events, news and upcoming events and have a brief Bio of board and current members each month.

I manage Mountain Meadows Farm for Dr. Amiel Cooper, a retired pathologist from Boston. Amiel started the farm 19 years ago with eight heifers and one bull. MMF is now a certified Organic beef farm growing 375 finished beef all born and raised on our 1900 acre farm. We direct market all of our beef to Wholefoods Markets from New York through southern New England.

Some recent projects we have implemented on our farm range from over 80 acres of CREP work in our pastures with over 1700 trees planted to stabilize stream banks and improve water quality in the Lemon Fair which is a tributary of Otter Creek. We decommissioned three small manure lagoons and built three new larger and more accessible lagoons. Currently all of our barnyards now have 100% containment of manure preventing unwanted runoff. The last several years we have been implementing grass waterways, buffers and manure setbacks which all meet VT Agency of Ag AAP's. Recently we have started using cover crops with our corn rotation and manure incorporation with the use of an airway which is leased when needed from our local conservation district.

Two years ago I joined eleven other prominent farmers from Addison and Chittenden counties to form CVFC. We all felt it was time for the farming community in our area to have a unified voice. We strive to educate other farmers, the general public, and state and federal agencies on the good things that are happening on our farms daily. We are all doing many water quality practices on our farms daily. We hope to share our accomplishments and failures with other farmers. I feel that we can all improve our farms and continue to help with the efforts to clean up Lake Champlain. These reasons are why I feel CVFC can play a key role in VT's future for a sustainable and viable Agricultural future.

Brian Kemp, CVFC president



