UNIVERSITY of NEW HAMPSHIRE
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

UNHCE Summary Impact Report for FY 2004

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Name of Program: Integrated Pest Management for Forages and Field Crops
Grass Farming and Pasture Management
Nutrient Management

Brief Program Description: These programs are targeted primarily towards area dairy, livestock, and forage producers. The major components of these programs are producer workshops (including a spring Pasture Management workshop, a fall Corn and Forage Meeting, and a Nutrient Management 'kitchen meeting' with Grafton County Extension EducatorTom Buob) and farm visits with individual producers that enable me to discuss pest management, forage production, soil fertility, and environmental quality issues in greater depth. The nutrient management program includes promoting the use of a set of portable scales (purchased jointly by Cheshire & Sullivan counties) to allow producers to maintain more accurate records of crop yields and manure applications.

Objectives: The overall objective for all three programs is to educate producers so that they will be able to produce quality forages and field crops efficiently in a way that protects soil and water resources. Specifically, the programs' objectives are to show the importance and benefits of such concepts as pest monitoring, effective nutrient allocation, and efficient forage production from pastures, and to teach specific skills such as pest identification crop scouting, use of alternative forage crops, intensive pasture management, and nutrient management practices.

Impacts: Approximately 40 producers and pesticide applicators attending the December Corn and Forage meeting were able to increase their knowledge and skills in pest identification, scouting techniques, and safe pesticide storage. Comments from producers' evaluations indicate that they intend to take the time to scout crops and keep better records in their pest management program.

- 25 people attending the Pasture Management workshop learned basic concepts in management intensive grazing, animal utilization of forage, and pasture plant growth patterns
- Approximately 20 people attended pasture walks in Cheshire and/or Sullivan counties and increased their understanding of soil fertility, weed management, pasture species identification, and paddock rotations. In an informal survey, attendees have commented that the information covered during these walks and the opportunity to share ideas and experience with other producers has been useful in their daily management of their grazing operations.
- The use of portable scales continues to enable producers to use manure more effectively in their soil fertility program. Two farms in Cheshire County used the scales to determine crop yields and/or manure application rates more accurately. One of the farms is using the information, along with soil test information and farmyard manure analyses to form a Nutrient Management Plan. These practices should save money on the farm by reducing commercial fertilizer purchases, and they should help improve environmental quality by allocating plant nutrients to meet crop needs instead of overloading certain nutrients.
- Four area producers gained experience raising BMR sorghum sudangrass as a forage crop, and two have expressed an interest in growing the crop again. This will encourage better crop rotations, and because the crop can be grown without using herbicides, it should help reduce pesticide use without sacrificing forage yields or quality.

Other Activities and Impacts:

Objectives: Other educational programs and activities within the Agricultural Resources program area target not only agricultural producers but also the non-farming audiences. The goal of these efforts is to increase participants' knowledge, skills, and awareness in efficient agricultural production, environmental stewardship, and the role of agriculture in Cheshire County.

- At the Dairy Farm Worker Training, 19 dairy farm employees increased their knowledge and skills in animal care and milking procedures. One farm owner whose employees attended wrote "The kids from our farm couldn't stop talking about it. They came back charged up. They also said the [UNH-produced "Joining a Milking Crew"] video was excellent and should be given to every new employee…Thanks for running such a useful program."
- An area vegetable producer suffered extensive crop losses due to corn borer in sweet corn. During a farm visit, I was able to show the producer how to scout for corn borer injury early in the season and help him develop a spray program for managing the pest. This year, the crop sustained only very minor corn borer injury, resulting in much lower losses and a higher-quality crop to sell.
- In response to a request from Cheshire Medical Center in Keene, I arranged a visit with Cathy Neal to look at damaged trees planted on the premises. Cathy determined that the damage was due to the use of stock not hardy in NH's climate, and that many of the trees were not planted properly. As a result, the hospital was able to have approximately 24 trees replaced, representing a substantial financial savings
- Approximately 700 non-farming residents in Cheshire County have received information for home gardening, care of livestock, home pest control, and the safe and responsible use of fertilizers and pesticides via workshops, lectures, office visits and phone contacts.
- This year, five new interns were admitted into the Cheshire County Master Gardener program. These interns have completed projects throughout the county to help educate the general public about gardening and horticulture. These projects included promoting use of the Keene Community Garden, working with youth in the Winchester Beautification Committee to design and install ornamental plantings around a town monument, and continuing work with youth in Gilsum at the Emerson Brook Forest Sustainability Project.
- Approximately 700 residents from New Hampshire and Vermont who attended the Cheshire County Open Barn Day gained a greater appreciation for the dairy industry in New Hampshire and have a greater understanding of how an area dairy farm operates.
- Information from monitoring for corn rootworm will help producers decide which pest management products are appropriate for their operation and which ones are unnecessary. This year's survey indicates that while rootworm numbers are increasing, they are not yet at a high enough population for producers to justify using genetically modified crops or insecticides to control them.