



New York State
Department of
Agriculture &
Markets

Crop Insurance

FARMER SUCCESS STORY

Farmer Encourages Neighbors to Insure Future

In the aftermath of last summer's flooding in New York's Southern Tier, Whittaker Farms near Whitney Point almost lost 200 acres of corn silage on the 480-cow dairy operated by Scott and Judi Whittaker and their son Brock. Their corn tested toxin-free and they were able to harvest. Many of their neighbors lost entire crops.

"The loss of crops throughout Broome County alone will be in the tens of millions of dollars. Thousands of acres of corn were washed away along with acres and acres of squash, apples, mums and all types of livestock feed, human consumption and cash crops," Whittaker says.

Statewide, an estimated 200,000 acres of cropland were impacted by Hurricane Irene and Tropical Storm Lee. Over \$38.4 million in crop insurance indemnities were paid to New York farmers in 2011.

"Farmers who have crop insurance have a bit more control over their destiny," says Whittaker. "Many of our neighbors suffered the recent flooding without insurance. Some may lose their farms."

"Our first experience with crop insurance was because FSA (Farm Services Agency) required a history with it to be able to apply for future programs," Whittaker says.

Whittaker, a long-time respected agricultural advocate, says, "At minimum, CAT insurance is a must because you never know what might impact your crop."

Minimal CAT (catastrophic) insurance subsidized by the federal government costs farms a flat \$300/crop/county application fee to cover 50 percent of the farm operation's actual production history yield. Losses are reimbursed at 55 percent of the established crop price. Payment is triggered after a more than 50 percent qualifying loss.

Growers can "buy up" additional coverage for a higher premium. Buy-up coverage is partially subsidized by the federal government. Farmers generally pay 33 to 62 percent of the cost.

A number of different crop insurance options are available to New York's dairy farmers to insure the diverse aspects of their farm businesses. Multi-peril coverage insures against losses due to weather, price fluctuations, and unavoidable pests and diseases.

Late planting and prevented planting coverage is available for corn grain and silage crops, soybeans, wheat and barley. Replanting coverage is possible for some crops if a given level of loss occurs. Forage seeding and forage production



Judi Whittaker, Dairy Farmer Whitney Point, NY

coverage is available in eight New York counties (up to \$267/acre in 2011) for alfalfa or a forage mixture containing at least 50 percent of a locally recognized and approved forage legume. Forage production coverage protects against yield loss due to unavoidable causes. Dairy farmers in all New York counties can insure hay and pasture crops against a lack of precipitation, with no record-keeping requirement. Claims are paid on the county's hay prices and the difference between long-term average precipitation and actual precipitation for the months insured.

"I hope that seeing the devastation here will prompt farmers to learn about what crop insurance can and can't do for them. Attend crop insurance education meetings, ask questions, spend time with a willing crop insurance agent and then decide what's best for their operation so that they never have to face this type of loss again," Whittaker says.

"We encourage others to do their homework to find a good agent and to learn how insurance can help them better manage the risks of farming."



The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets has partnered with USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) to provide crop insurance education to New York State farmers. For more information, please visit the NYS Crop Insurance Education website at www.agriculture.ny.gov/AP/CropInsurance.html or call 518-457-4531. The RMA website is: www.rma.usda.gov. To find a crop insurance agent, ask a neighbor for a recommendation, contact your local Farm Service Agency (FSA) office or use the USDA RMA crop insurance agent locator tool on the web at www.rma.usda.gov/tools/agent.html