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New York’s farmers and livestock producers succeed by utilizing all available tools for maximizing production of their land and resources, and they must do so in the most efficient and economical way. I believe that all good farmers already know that there are no silver bullets when it comes to solving pest, weed or disease problems. I also believe that despite occasional negative press and misconceptions by some non-agricultural sectors of society, most farmers already engage in and promote sustainable practices that reduce negative environmental impacts whenever possible in order to conserve resources and increase profits. Our farmers attend field days and extension meetings not just for pesticide/DEC credits, but to stay current on research results in order to expand their toolboxes for successfully managing pests, weeds and diseases. Livestock/dairy and forage/feed production is the largest sector of NY agriculture, and we have some incredibly innovative farmers on the cutting edge of technology and research who are always eager to try new things to solve old problems, even if they can't expect immediate results. These are the main reasons why I believe that a livestock and field crops IPM program is important and successful for New York State.

My personal philosophy of IPM is simple: Any approach to pest management and crop protection that minimizes health and environmental hazards by the most economical means should be evaluated and thoughtfully implemented wherever the situation is feasible. By following the principles of IPM, growers are able to detect problems early, estimate potential losses, decide on the best course of action and then evaluate the effectiveness of the action for future decisions. Through this process, wasteful treatments may be avoided and other 'softer' approaches may be successful. That is good for both the environment and the farmer’s bottom line. By utilizing all the tools in the IPM toolbox, including scouting and accurate sampling to determine the economic injury level and action threshold, growers and livestock producers are better able to manage their farms responsibly by reducing potential negative environmental impacts by considering and implementing a wide variety of management options, including biological, cultural, mechanical and chemical approaches.

Effective ways of promoting and evaluating IPM implementation would include working closely with our farmers and crop consultants to survey and determine what their specific issues are, conducting on-farm trials of various IPM tactics toward solving those problems, and then evaluating the results. It’s also critical that IPM recommendations and results are shared widely at field days, extension meetings, workshops, CCA trainings, and through extension materials including websites, apps, newsletters and social media. Through collaborations with CCE and Cornell faculty research programs, and pooling our collective expertise, we can conduct cost-benefit analyses of implementing various IPM practices. Thereby providing strong data and results, in addition to promoting IPM concepts.

Our field crops growers and livestock producers face many challenges, both new and old. New York has some of its own unique agricultural challenges due to our variable climate, seasons and geography/topography which can result in different pest and disease issues for our farmers each year. As New York’s land grant university, it is our responsibility to help our farmers manage these issues in responsible ways that promote sustainable agriculture for generations to come.