



**Press Release
June 2010**

Contacts: See last 2 paragraphs

Jpgs: EFD.Grasslands2009Winner – The 5th Annual NYS Grassland Evaluation Contest, a project of the Seneca Trail Resource Conservation and Development Council, is coming to the 2010 Empire Farm Days on August 12 in Seneca Falls, NY. Council President Al Ormond congratulates 2009 winner Elizabeth Martens from Penn Yan Central School.

EFD.GrasslandsContestYouth.jpg – These students from across New York State competed in the NYS Grassland Evaluation Contest in 2009. The 5th annual contest will be held August 12, 2010 at the Empire Farm Days event at Rodman Lott & Son Farms in Seneca Falls, NY.

Team Registration for NYS Grassland Evaluation Contest at 2010 Empire Farm Days Due August 1

Seneca Falls, NY – Student teams interested in competing in the 5th Annual NYS Grassland Evaluation Contest at the August 10-12, 2010 Empire Farm Days must register by August 1, 2010. Contest rules, study guide and registration form are available on the Seneca Trail RC&D Council website at www.senecatrailrcd.org. The 2010 Contest will be held Thursday, August 12, 2010.

This contest, a project of the Seneca Trail Resource Conservation and Development Council with support from the NYS Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative Steering Committee, is designed for a team of 3-4 high school students and is open to FFA and 4-H students.

The NYS Grassland Evaluation Contest has awarded more than \$3,500 in continuing education scholarships and provides an opportunity for the student teams to travel to compete in the Mid-America Grassland Evaluation Contest in Missouri.

The students will use their skills and knowledge for managing grassland resources for a modern dairy, beef or sheep operation in a sample grassland field at the Empire Farm Days at Rodman Lott & Son Farms in Seneca Falls, NY. They will evaluate the field for available forage resources, herd management decisions balanced against resource condition; site conditions for wildlife needs; and the life cycle and nutrient needs of specific grass species.

Contest and Seneca Trail RC&D Coordinator JoAnn Kurtis says, “This event challenges the students to apply their knowledge of a variety of subjects to real life conditions for managing a grazing herd in a typical livestock operation. With the addition of the contest to Empire Farm Days in 2010, we hope more schools, FFA and 4-H groups will send teams for this fun learning and scholarship opportunity.”

One recent scholarship winner wrote: "The entire contest was a great opportunity. Now I can walk out into a field and name off most of the grasses and forbs that cover it. I can go for a walk with my family and explain to them what plants are poisonous and the difference between mustard and yellow rocket. Thank you so much for sponsoring the NYS Grassland Evaluation Contest."

For more details on the contest, contact JoAnn Kurtis, Seneca Trail RC&D Coordinator at 716-699-2375 x5, joann.kurtis@ny.usda.gov.

The 300-acre Empire Farms Days agricultural extravaganza also includes DairyProfit Seminars, live animals, an Equine Center, farm safety and family life displays and activities, 600-plus representatives of agricultural institutions and organizations, GPS-equipped and compact tractor test drives, and chicken, beef and pork BBQ. For more details, contact Empire Farm Days Manager Melanie Wickham at 877-697-7837, mwickham@empirefarmdays.com. #

Empire Farm Days is hosted By: Rodman Lott & Son Farms, Seneca Falls, NY
Contact: Melanie Wickham, Toll Free 877-697-7837, mwickham@empirefarmdays.com