



## Reference Guide for Researchers and Educators

### Homer C. Thompson Vegetable Research Farm, Freeville

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This document is intended to provide essential information for faculty, staff and students conducting work at the **Homer C. Thompson Vegetable Research Farm** in Freeville, NY, one of nine farms managed by The Cornell University Agricultural Experiment Station (CUAES). It is **highly recommended that you review this document** for farm-specific information, and, to be aware of farm-specific safety and compliance requirements, emergency procedures, general cultural requirements and the general availability of labor.

#### Farm Staff - Contact Information:

□ **Farm Address:** 133 Fall Creek Road, Freeville NY 13068

□ **Farm Manager: Steve McKay**



- Office Phone: 607-844-8167
- Cell Phone: 607-279-6656
- Email: [spm8@cornell.edu](mailto:spm8@cornell.edu)

□ **Back-up Farm Contact:** Rick Randolph, Field Assistant



- Office Phone: 607-844-8167
- Cell Phone: 607-279-6606

□ **Back-up Farm Contact:** Ethan Tilebein, Field Assistant



- Office Phone: 607-844-8167
- Cell Phone: 607-279-6608

□ **Organic Land Contact:** Betsy Leonard, Organic Coordinator



- Office Phone: 607-255-5428
- Cell Phone: 607-423-8366

## Facility Information:

- The 260-acre farm has both **conventional and certified organic field areas**. A 30-acre fenced parcel of the farm is certified organic.
- Facility resources include a diverse collection of **tractors and implements** for small plot horticultural research. The facility includes spaces for **equipment storage, lab and offices, pesticide storage, fueling stations, meeting space, coolers, drying ovens, a greenhouse, high tunnel and a farm shop**.
- Soil nutrient and pH information** is available for each field, and can be obtained by contacting the farm manager.
- Soils** at the farm are predominately either a Howard gravel loam or an Eel silt loam.
- Weather data** for this farm is available in print at the farm office and at:  
<http://newa.cornell.edu/index.php?page=weather-station-page&WeatherStation=fre>
- Irrigation** is possible for most fields via the use of overhead sprinklers and/or drip lines. Hydrants are present near to most fields. The farm maintains a limited amount of irrigation pipe and related irrigation equipment for use by request.

## Map of Facility and Fields:

- A **map of the farm**, including fields, can be found at: <http://cuaes.cals.cornell.edu/farms/maps>.

## Expectations:

- Sustainability is a cornerstone** of how we operate research farms at Cornell. Please work with CUAES farm staff to encourage sustainable practices within your program and to be good stewards of the resources at your disposal. We are always open to ideas to make sustainable improvements.
- Be considerate of fellow faculty, staff and students**. Fields, facilities and equipment are shared resources.
- Timing in agriculture is critical. Please consult with the farm manager regarding the start and end dates of your research project(s). At Freeville, **fields in non-perennial research must be cleaned and vacated by October 1<sup>st</sup>**.
- Research field trials must conform to standard dimensions which allow for access of field implements and spray equipment. **Please discuss your plot dimensions with the farm manager** in advance of planting.
- All requests for land should be accompanied by a completed land request form, available at:  
<http://cuaes.cals.cornell.edu> >> Research Farms >> Homer C. Thompson Research Farm >> For Cornell Researchers >> Land Request Form
- Once a project ends**, remaining crop residue must be incorporated or mowed off. **All non-organic** (e.g. plastic mulch, drip tape, flags) **and woody materials** (e.g. wooden plot stakes) **must be removed from the field**.

## General Requirements:

- Vehicle parking** is available in the paved lot to the north of the Thompson Lab Building.
- Use of **shared building spaces, equipment and shop tools** must be coordinated by the farm manager.
- After use, **equipment and implements must be cleaned of soil and debris** at the wash station south of the Farm greenhouse. **Equipment should be returned to the area in front of the farm manager's office** as soon as possible such that other programs can access shared equipment.

- **Special rules apply for organic field operations.** Equipment to be used on the organic fields must be clean of soil, prohibited materials and crop/pesticide residues prior to entering organic fields. Field operations and equipment clean outs/washing must be recorded in the **Organic Field Book located in the farm office**. Use organically grown seeds or untreated, non-GMO seeds (after checking and documenting 3 sources) and materials/amendments listed on our approved product list (in the Organic Field Book). Please direct any questions to Betsy Leonard, 607-423-8366 or [bai1@cornell.edu](mailto:bai1@cornell.edu).
- **Safe use of farm equipment is mandatory.** All technicians and faculty using CUAES farm equipment must attend an **annual on-farm tractor safety course** to be offered each spring, in cooperation with the N.Y. Center of Agricultural Medicine and Health (NYCAMH). To become certified to drive tractors, **new operators must first pass a written and an in-the-seat tractor exam** demonstrating their ability to operate a tractor capably and safely. **Experienced and certified program technicians and/or faculty are then responsible for the proper training of all necessary equipment operators for their program.** Learn more about the [Tractor Certification Process](#). The Farm Manager has the authority to prohibit or restrict on-farm tractor usage by any individuals that are found to operate equipment in an unsafe or reckless manner. **If you are not comfortable with the operation or function of a piece of equipment, stop and see the farm manager or farm staff.** If something seems faulty with a piece of equipment, stop and see the farm manager or staff immediately.
- Use of the farm forklift requires completion of **forklift training and obtaining forklift certification**.
- **Department of Transportation (DOT) regulations impact all drivers** intending to use the following two Freeville farm vehicles, with a GVWR of >10,000#: Dodge 3500 Stake Truck; Ford F250 pickup. **Additional driver testing and compliance measures are required;** please see farm manager for details.
- Produce that is grown in accordance with **Good Agricultural Practices (GAP)** and without the use of restricted testing agents may be consumed or donated via the farm's relationship with the Food Bank of the Southern Tier. More information on GAP training can be found at: <http://www.gaps.cornell.edu/>. Please see the farm manager for more information on the donation of produce.
- **All individuals supporting research on the Freeville farm, where crops may be treated with pesticides, must have completed Worker Protection Standard (WPS) training. In addition, all individuals applying pesticides must also be licensed as a NYS applicator or working under the direct supervision of a NYS applicator.** More information is available at: <http://oeh.cals.cornell.edu/pesticides/>.
- Individuals cleared to **use shop areas must comply with all applicable EH&S regulations**, including demonstrated competency with tool operation, proper eye and ear protection and completion of hot work permits (if applicable).

## Emergency Procedures:

- **In case of a life safety emergency, call 911** from the nearest land or cellphone. Land lines are present in the Thompson Lab conference room and in the office of the farm manager. The farm manager should be informed ASAP of all on-farm emergencies/accidents, including non-critical incidents.
- **Fire Extinguishers** are present in all facilities, fixed to the wall in prominent locations.
- Projects are responsible to carry **first aid kits** for their use while at the farm. A first aid kit is also located in the farm office, as a backup option. An **Automated External Defibrillator (AED)** is located in Thompson Lab.
- Projects are responsible for supplying and carrying appropriate **personal protection equipment (PPE)** to their staff and students. Individuals operating equipment, including hand tools (e.g. hoes) must wear closed-toe footwear.

- **Essential postings** for the farm, including **information on recent pesticide applications and labor regulations** can be found on the bulletin boards just outside the office of the farm manager.
- The farm is in compliance with Spill Prevention, Control, and Countermeasure (SPCC) Rules, specifically in regards to petrol tanks. **Individuals using farm fueling stations must be aware of the location of spill kits and what to do in case of an accidental spill.** More information on SPCC requirements can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/oem/content/spcc/>. All spills should be immediately reported to the farm manager.

## Cultural Practice Requirements:

- **Pest management is critical** to avoid negative impacts to your and other projects. **Active scouting for pests – insects, diseases and weeds – is the responsibility of each project.** Projects should have a management plan in place for common pests and work closely with the farm manager. Projects with specific pest requirements (e.g. a late blight screening trial) may require isolation.
- Research on **regulated genetically-modified organisms (GMOs); heavy metals; planned disease and insect releases, or; involving the use of radioactive isotopes, animals, or aerial drones,** must be pre-screened for strict compliance with Cornell policy and to assure that such work will not impact the safety of other farm users or the robustness of neighboring research. The Cornell policy library is available online at <https://www.dfa.cornell.edu/tools-library>. More information and contacts for Cornell Environmental Health & Safety can be found at <http://sp.ehs.cornell.edu/Pages/Home.aspx>
- The Freeville farm has a variety of **tillage implements for field preparation**, including moldboard, minimal and no-till equipment. Please work with the farm manager to select the tillage practice that best aligns with your project.
- Farm staff maintain baseline **fertility levels**, and a near neutral pH, for each farm field. Farm staff will source and provide conventional fertilizer formulations for projects when advanced notice is given. Farm Staff will source and apply a CUAES generated certified organic compost for transitional and certified organic farm plots.
- **Crop rotation** is actively practiced at the Freeville farm to minimal pest buildup and carryover effects between growing seasons. Cover cropping is mandatory following field experiments. Field assignments must be made in consultation with the farm manager, who can provide relevant historical information on fields.
- **Irrigation tracking:** The Freeville farm is part of the NYSDEC Great Lakes Water Shed. Annually reporting of all irrigation water withdrawal is required at this location. The Farm Manager will provide program irrigation water usage recording sheets and collect at season end to generate annual irrigation reporting.

## Labor Availability:

- Farm staff at Freeville include the farm manager, two field assistants, and a seasonal temporary employee. **The farm staff endeavor to meet all requests for general horticultural services and support.** Our aim is to provide world-class support of the applied research, teaching and outreach goals of Cornell faculty. **Labor is not, however, infinite.** As such, farm staff may occasionally have to decline or delay the provision of services which fall outside their scope of duties or when available labor is simply insufficient.