Letters from...

**The Association Executive Director**

Dear Friends of Extension,

On behalf of all of us, we are excited to present Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County’s 2017 Annual Report.

It has been another extremely productive year and we celebrate the success of so many educational outreach efforts. Thank you to all the staff, volunteers and community partners who work so diligently to educate Albany County residents and businesses on such a diverse number of vital topics. Additionally, we would like to recognize the many valued supporters of extension including our county, state, and federal government partners. We truly appreciate everyone’s support as we continue to strive to deliver high quality, research-based, outreach education to all members of the community.

Sincerely,

Lisa V. Godlewski
Association Executive Director

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**The Board President**

Dear Friends of Extension,

Happy New Year! Once again, I am so happy to pass along my thanks and to recognize all of our wonderful staff and volunteers who have accomplished so much over the past year. As described in this Annual Report, the Association has continued delivering a variety of essential programs to residents. Whether nurturing youth, strengthening households, supporting agricultural growers, or improving community services, our programs directly help people’s lives! We do this through long-serving programs, as well as new ones created to address emerging needs.

The Association could not accomplish all we do without effective partnerships - with all levels of government, with community organizations, with adjacent Cooperative Extension Associations, with our partners at Cornell University, and especially with the committed volunteers and the best staff possible.

It is a privilege to be part of this wonderful organization.

Kevin Millington
President, Board of Directors

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**Financial Report**

**Program Revenue**

- County Support 40%
- State Support 27%
- Federal Support 20%
- Other Support 13%

**Program Expenses**

- Employee Salaries 40%
- Equipment & Vehicle expenses 1%
- Rent, Maintenance & Misc 5%
- Employee Benefits 24%
- Program/Operating expenses 30%

Please note: information based upon most recent yearend data.
Youth participated in “Making A Difference” activities during the five-week 4-H Summer Scene program at Ridgefield Park in the city of Albany, with 45 counselors employed at the site through the Albany Summer Youth Employment Program.

Urban youth were educated at 23 sites in Albany County on topics such as recycling, composting, environmental sustainability, and healthy living.

Community garden sites offered nutrition and garden-based education to 100+ youth in the urban areas of Albany County.

Albany Youth CAN (Community Action Network) programming helps youth in the city of Albany develop their leadership skills through civic engagement and community service projects. The program collaborated with the Arbor Hill Community Center and Ezra Prentice Homes during the 2016-2017 year to host the meetings.

Teens enrolled in the Albany Youth CAN (Community Action Network) program completed a number of community service projects throughout the city of Albany.

Children participated in Earth Day educational programming in schools and public parks throughout Albany County.

Community garden sites offered nutrition and garden-based education to 100+ youth in the urban areas of Albany County.
The 4-H Youth Development program offers Albany County youth ages 5-18 the opportunity to learn and practice new skills in a safe and nurturing environment. A wide variety of projects are available for youth to participate in, including nutrition, natural resources and the environment, animal science, civic engagement, and community service. Through 4-H clubs, county-wide events, career exploration trips, after-school programs, camps, and special interest groups, youth are exposed to positive youth development and experiential learning as key components to assist them in developing a sense of purpose and direction in life.

15
Albany County 4-H teens attended the three-day Cornell Career Exploration Conference at Cornell University while six 4-H members participated in the week-long Wonders of Washington program in Washington D.C.

40
Albany County 4-H members participated in the Public Presentation contest, with six youth advancing to the Capital District event and one youth chosen to present at the New York State 4-H contest at Cornell University.

754
Residents from Albany County and beyond attended the first annual Family Farm Day at Stanton’s Dairy Farm to learn the importance of agriculture and experience first-hand the day-to-day operation of a modern working dairy farm.

50+
Albany County youth and adults participated in the 4-H Dog Obedience Program, and a new county-wide 4-H dog club has been formed as a result of continued interest in canine trainings and workshops.
45
Youth participated in the county-wide 4-H Shooting Sports Program; the disciplines of archery, air rifle and air pistol were taught by New York State 4-H certified volunteer instructors

150
Youth learned important concepts related to animal science and caring for small animals through 4-H’s participation in the Indian Ladder Farm’s Barn School Program

20
Youth participated in the 4-H Vet Science series to learn about careers in veterinary medicine and important steps youth need to take to work in the animal science field

105
4-H youth participated in the 4-H Equine Program, learning important aspects of equine care and safety

300+
Youth are currently involved in 4-H club programming, with more than 70 volunteers providing their time and expertise to help these young people grow into caring, productive citizens
The Capital Area Agricultural and Horticultural Program (CAAHP) Regional Agriculture/Horticulture Team

The Capital Area Agricultural and Horticultural Program (CAAHP) provides agricultural and horticultural education through workshops, newsletters and consultations, utilizing traditional and electronic means to:

- Improve business profitability and performance
- Assist producers in attaining goals for a better quality of life in their business and work environment
- Guide and support environmental stewardship
- Support growers in developing markets for their agricultural products
- Provide leadership for fostering relationships between the agriculture industry and the general public

The CAAHP educator team works with a wide variety of agriculture and horticulture producers across a six-county region, reaching a diverse clientele, from those who aspire to start farming as a profession to established, multi-generational farm businesses.

Commercial Livestock

The 9th Annual Winter Green Up Conference was held on January 28, 2017 at the Century House in Latham, NY. This one-day conference was attended by 121 participants, many of whom have attended Winter Green Up since its inception nine years ago. Speakers included Doug Carmichael, Director at Lake City Research Station in Michigan, Blain Hitzfield of Seven Sons Farm, Dr. Rachel Gilker of the On Pasture newsletter and Phyllis VanAmburgh of Dharma Lea Farm. The speaker presentations covered topics such as: nutrition, soil health, marketing, team-building and holistic resource management. Multiple vendors were also in attendance. The traditional Winter Green-Up lunch featured grass-fed meat and poultry, sourced from local farms.

1,002 Growers subscribed to the CAAHP quarterly newsletter

89 Farmers attended the 2017 Winter Green-Up Conference

1,820 Growers received the CAAHP E-newsletter weekly

Commercial Horticulture

One group of growers the commercial horticulture specialist focused on in 2017 was the cut flower producers. The educational needs of these producers include sustainable nutrient and pest management, crop rotation, and high tunnel construction. A variety of educational activities were specifically developed to meet their educational needs including the first New York State Cut Flower Conference and on-farm field workshops. In 2017, more than 105 Capital Region cut flower growers (prospective and commercial) have been reached through at least one educational outreach effort.
Agronomy

Since New York State instituted the Farm Brewery Law, interest in brewing and associated crops has been strong. The Malting Barley Education Program works closely with commercial growers to provide the best production techniques available. Crops are scouted through the season to help farmers make timely management decisions, then the harvest from each field is sampled and analyzed for malting quality. Local grower meetings and field days at Cornell variety test plots bring farmers together to learn about this new crop.

| 129 | Growers attended Pesticide Recertification Day 2017 |
| 28  | Classes and workshops were taught reaching 735 growers |
| 48  | Producers attended Cut-Flower Field and High Tunnel Production |

Farm Business Management

Much of the farm business management is focused around analyzing farm businesses and assisting the farm client in making decisions to improve their profitability. In light of dairy price challenges, CCE hosted ‘Strategizing the Future: The Future of Milk Markets and How to Develop an Economic Plan’ which was combined with the Dairy Farm Business Summary. Maintaining milk markets and finding ways to grow components and forage are the most vital options for long term dairy farm viability.

| 60  | Aspiring farmers attended a Beginning Farmer Workshop |
| 48  | People attended the Lavender and Mint Essential Oil Project Workshop |
| 44  | Producers attended Strategizing the Future: The Future of Milk Markets |

Beginning Farmer

During 2017, staff worked with various beginning farmers to assess the financial health of their businesses. One particular family was able to prepare financial statements and obtain an additional loan to expand their farm business. CCE’s beginning farmer educator also worked with farmers and growers in educating them to be mindful of marketing opportunities. Several presentations were offered on “Marketing Intelligence” to raise awareness of how to conduct market research. Additionally, staff helped to plan and conduct the Capital District Direct Marketing Conference which covered a variety of timely marketing concepts.
Financial Literacy Education

Financial literacy programming provides workshop-based education throughout Albany County on a variety of personal financial management topics including, budgeting, credit and debt management, understanding credit reports and scores, among others.

The focus of this education is to empower area residents with the knowledge and expertise to better achieve personal financial security and stability, while working towards future goals. The majority of programming is specific for limited-income persons and families. Many families, for a variety of reasons, struggle to make ends meet each month. Programming addresses how to better understand personal financial choices and options as a way to move towards financial self-sufficiency. Many program participants cite their success in understanding how to create a working monthly budget, or check their credit report online.

350+
Participants attended a financial literacy workshop this year in Albany County

13
Different workshops on a variety of financial literacy topics were developed and are available free of charge to any area organization (to host) or participant (to attend)

20+
Area organizations currently partner to offer financial literacy education

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Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP)

HEAP is a federally funded program that assists income-qualified individuals to help defray the cost of heating their homes. Energy saving information is reviewed with each applicant. Energy education is also provided through presentations to community groups and outreach dates.

2,500
Albany County residents were reached through our Ravena and Green Street offices in 2016/2017

20+
Outreach dates were held throughout Albany County

250+
Referrals were made to Weatherization, Eat Smart New York, Lead Education, Financial Literacy, and the Healthy Neighborhood Program
Community Nutrition

The community nutrition educator has been invited to present programs in over 65 different locations to more than 1,500 residents throughout the county in a variety of locations - from public libraries, college campuses, churches, and farmers’ markets, to senior housing centers and corporate offices. Popular topics include Nutrition and Brain Health, the Mediterranean Diet, Wonders of the Slow Cooker, Reducing Food Waste and Seasonings of the Heart, mostly using hands-on, interactive cooking and teaching methods. Home food preservation has experienced a renewed interest and over 62 residents in three locations learned to safely make salsa, jams, jellies, pickles, fermented foods like sauerkraut, or dried foods like jerky and fruit leather, keeping this tradition alive.

7 CDPHP Wellness Classes taught at the CCE Voorheesville office

62 Residents attended food preservation classes

1,500 Residents learned to cook healthy food from scratch
Master Gardener Volunteer Program

| **109** Master Gardeners Volunteers contributed over 6,200 hours |
| **1,250** Calls were answered through the Master Gardener Hotline and more than 400 emails and website inquiries were handled |
| **265+** Soil pH tests were conducted in the Consumer Horticulture lab and diagnosed with more than 215 specimens diagnosed |
| **694** People learned gardening tips at 30 Master Gardener tabling events |
| **13** Garden-based learning projects were initiated by Master Gardener volunteers |

Cornell Cooperative Extension Master Gardeners engage youth, adults and families in meeting the mission, vision, and values of both Cornell Cooperative Extension and the Land-Grant University system. They have built many relationships through garden-based education in a number of communities in Albany County. Each Master Gardener donates at least 20 hours of his/her time to answering gardening questions on the Garden Hotline, helping in the Horticulture Lab, performing soil pH tests, and diagnosing plants, insects and diseases. An additional 40 hours is donated through involvement in five demonstration gardens located throughout the county, Speakers Bureau presentations, and educating the public at farmers’ markets and community tabling events.

The Albany County Master Gardener Program celebrated its 40th anniversary in 2017. The program is currently 109 volunteers strong; one Master Gardener, Phyllis Rosenblum, is an original member of the very first training class and remains actively involved in the program to this day.

The Shoal Marine Lab on Appledore Island is operated by the University of New Hampshire and Cornell University. Four Albany County Master Gardeners were invited to help restore Celia Thaxter’s Historic Garden on the island. This was the beginning of a continued working relationship between Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County and these two land-grant universities.
**New York State Department of Health Hudson River Fish Advisory**

Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County was awarded a mini-grant in July to help disseminate the latest health advice to residents about eating local fish, especially for children, women of child-bearing age, low-income and new arrivals to the area. Displays were created and numerous events attended such as Altamont Fair, the New York State Food Festival at Empire State Plaza, neighborhood block parties, and DEC’s Five Rivers Fall Festival in order to reach as many people as possible. Outreach and surveying is continuing at food pantries, public housing centers, town halls, libraries and centers for immigrants and refugees. In the first quarter, interactive display tables were set up at 10 events and more than 700 people were reached directly.

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**Strengthening Families Program**

The Strengthening Families program is an interactive series that allows parents/caregivers to spend special time with their youth and help him/her be successful in the teen years. During each session, parents/caregivers and their youth learn ways to build on existing strengths, improve communication skills, and have fun together as a family. Topics for discussion and activity include how to set limits while supporting growth, the challenges of peers and peer pressure, keeping family love alive and giving compliments, among others. In an effort to remove potential barriers for family attendance, dinner and transportation assistance are provided. Families also receive a family-fun gift basket for attending.

This program is funded by the Albany County Department of Children Youth and Families, and targets families within the county prevention system, though any interested family may attend. Parenting during the teen years can be challenging, and this program strives to empower families by celebrating family strengths, improving communication skills, and providing support to both youth and parents/caregivers. Educators are trained through the Iowa State Extension System to deliver the Strengthening Families curriculum. The program is also delivered in a three-week series, or a one-night program depending on the needs of the community.

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**Major events were attended with educational displays about the program**

- 10

**Residents engaged in discussions about their fishing activities**

- 700

**Community agencies have become partners to support Hudson River Fish Advisory education**

- 13

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One participant said, “I felt it was a great program. I felt I could talk honestly and my child could talk honestly without judgement.”

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**95%**

Of program participants reported having a positive shift in their family dynamics and communication skills during the course of the program

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**20+**

Families (40+ participants) participated in a Strengthening Families Program
The Healthy Neighborhoods Program (HNP) focuses on improving the health, safety, living environments, and overall quality of life for residents in targeted homes, neighborhoods, and communities. Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County (CCE) works closely with the Albany County Department of Health (ACDOH) and offers the HNP in the following areas in the City of Albany: zip codes 12202, 12206, 12208, 12209, 12210.

Research has shown the correlation between unhealthy housing and unhealthy residents. The neighborhoods that are targeted for the HNP have been identified as having an above average presence of substandard housing. The majority of these dwelling units were built prior to 1950 and have significant lead paint hazards. Median house values are below the New York State average for property values. The incidence of residents having asthma in these communities and the asthma emergency department (ED) visit rate and asthma hospitalizations for these identified zip codes rank highest compared to other zip codes in Albany County. In addition, basic safety items such as smoke detectors, fire extinguishers, and carbon monoxide detectors do not exist in most of these homes.

The HNP in Albany County consists of trained educators assessing the home environment for hazards, educating residents about these issues, providing educational resources and intervention materials, and referring individuals to additional assistance in the community. The HNP environmental health concerns focus on reducing residential injuries, lowering childhood lead poisoning, controlling asthma, decreasing exposure to indoor air pollutants, and preventing fire deaths. Additional topics include smoking cessation, radon testing, mold prevention, and adopting Integrated Pest Management (IPM).

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889
Homes received a HNP initial visit/revisit learning how to improve their living environment and their health

30%
Of homes visited reported having at least one resident with uncontrolled asthma and were referred to Albany County Department of Health's certified asthma educator

506
Smoke detectors were provided to households that did not have a working smoke alarm

4,000+
HNP intervention products were provided to residents

1,200+
Referrals were made to the HNP by organizations and agencies
Radon Education Program

Radon is an invisible, odorless, tasteless gas found in rock and soil. It disperses in outdoor air. However, radon can reach harmful levels when trapped in buildings. Scientists are concerned about the health risk of radon. There is overwhelming proof that exposure to elevated levels of radon causes lung cancer in humans. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates that radon is responsible for more than 21,000 lung cancer deaths per year. (Nationally, radon caused more deaths than falls in the home and home fires combined.) Because radon cannot be seen or smelled, people tend to downplay the health effects and ignore the possibility that there might be a silent killer in their homes.

Testing is the only way to find out if you are being exposed to radon. It is easy and inexpensive to test a home for elevated levels of radon. You may check the radon level in a house at any time, but winter is ideal because windows are closed.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County, the New York State Department of Health, and the Albany County Department of Health have been working together for more than 15 years to educate residents about the dangers of radon exposure and to encourage individuals and families to take action to protect their health.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Education Program

Lead poisoning is a serious community health concern. The most common way poisoning occurs is by lead (dust) inhaled, swallowed or even absorbed through the skin. Young children and unborn babies are at greatest risk for health problems. Living in older, poorly maintained housing increases the risk of lead poisoning. However, lead poisoning is preventable.

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Albany County educators work closely with the Albany County Department of Health, local health departments, and the New York State Department of Health to provide a comprehensive approach to reducing childhood lead poisoning. Albany County’s Healthy Neighborhoods Program staff offer extensive lead prevention in-home education and identify residences and children that are at risk. These families are then referred to the health departments for childhood blood testing, a lead home assessment, medical follow-up, or a combination of these free services. As EPA accredited training providers, CCE Albany County educators also provide free courses for individuals to become certified renovators. Workers are required by federal law to take these classes if they are disturbing more than 6 square feet of a painted surface in housing built before 1978.
Local Agriculture

Agriculture is an important economic engine in Albany County with 494 diverse farms maintaining over 63,000 acres of open space. The total market value from these farms is $45,957,000.

- The local agriculture program has been working closely with a private consultant and the Albany County Department of Economic Development Conservation and Planning to develop a revised county agriculture and farmland protection plan. This plan will look closely at market development, farmland protection and local foods distribution.
- Grass-based agriculture is a growing agriculture industry in Albany County. To provide the most up-to-date information on the grass-based industry, the local agriculture program hosted and helped to plan the 2017 National Grass-Fed Exchange Conference.
- The local agriculture program continues to chair the Albany County Pest Management Committee which limits the use of pesticides in county facilities, helping to protect county employees’ health.
- CCE Agriculture educators also support farmers’ markets; urban agriculture initiatives, youth and agriculture efforts, and animal emergency response committees and initiatives.

ALBANY COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS

Resource provided by Albany County

In 1971, the New York State Legislature created an Agricultural Districts Program in response to concerns that non-agricultural land uses were expanding into valuable farm areas. This program, based on Agriculture and Markets Agricultural District Law Article 25-A, and implemented at the County level, allows the creation of Agricultural Districts where agriculture is encouraged and protected. There are three Agricultural Districts in Albany County:

1. District #1: Berne, Knox (27,739 acres)
2. District #2: Westerlo, Ravena-Caroga (9,707 acres)
3. District #3: Bethlehem, Coeymans, Cohoes, Colonie, Guilderland, New Scotland (28,594 acres)

State Legislators, County Legislators and Town officials participated in a one-day tour of three agricultural enterprises in Albany County to learn about the current state of agriculture in the county.

Producers from 28 states and 4 countries attended the Grassfed Exchange Conference held at the Desmond Hotel in Colonie.
Capital Region Eat Smart New York is a regional initiative, serving eleven counties in the greater Capital Region. The goal is to provide nutrition education workshops, materials and messages, and environmental, policy, and systems change activities and support, to assist SNAP and SNAP eligible youth and adults to:

1) Eat more fruits and vegetables
2) Drink less sugar-sweetened beverages
3) Exercise more and balance calories eaten as part of a healthy lifestyle. Educators reach numerous limited-resource families, pregnant women, youth, individuals, and seniors each year.

### Reported Behavior Change:

**Adults**
- 79% consumed more fruits or vegetables
- 61% increased their physical activity
- 66% consumed fewer sugary beverages
- 91% made at least one diet-related change

**Youth**
- 92% increased their knowledge about healthy eating
- 65% increased their physical activity
- 75% consumed fewer sugary beverages
- 94% made at least one healthy diet-related change

**14,925**
Adults and youth reached through 39,992 contacts

**2,656**
Workshops and events

**33**
Schools received nutrition education

**4,836**
Healthy food items donated through Nourish Your Neighbor Drives

**42**
Healthy food drives
Our Mission:
Cornell Cooperative Extension puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability and social well-being.
We bring local experience and research based solutions together, helping New York State families and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Staff

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<th>Association Executive Director</th>
<th>Information Technology Coordinator</th>
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<td>Lisa Godlewski</td>
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<td>Lisa Buenau, Nancy Lerner, Kathleen McAllister, Barbara Stevens</td>
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<td>John Carrigan, Thomas Dolan, Elmore Lawyer</td>
<td>Leslye Benson, Wendy Daignault, Kathryn Fontana, Anthony Gagliardi, Joanna Patterson, Talene Schaffer, Carrie Waldbillig</td>
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<td>Erik Yager</td>
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Board of Directors

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<td>Mary Burke, Kristen Camponera, Deborah Carriero, Ellen Doolin, Beth Gould, Anne Guyer, Jennifer Hunt, Malcolm Thorpe</td>
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<td>Deborah Carriero, Ellen Doolin, Susan Lewis, Teri VanWie</td>
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Cornell Cooperative Extension
24 Martin Road, Voorheesville, NY 12186
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