Cornell Cooperative Extension
Albany County

2018 Annual Report
Dear Friends of Extension,

We are very excited to present Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County’s 2018 Annual Report.

This report showcases many of our educational programs and highlights the positive impact we have had on residents, businesses and communities throughout Albany County and the Capital Region. It has been another exceedingly successful year for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Albany County. Please join us in congratulating our staff, volunteers, and our many partners who make all the difference!

Lisa V. Godlewski
Association Executive Director

Susan Dwyer
Board President
Albany Youth CAN (Community Action Network) is a program designed to help youth in the city of Albany develop their leadership skills through civic engagement and community service projects. Albany Youth CAN programming was held at the Arbor Hill Community Center and Ezra Prentice Homes during the 2017-2018 year, enrolling a total of 20 teens. Some of the projects implemented by the teens included: a safe Halloween Party, adopting a family for the holidays through Albany County Department of Children, Youth and Family, making Valentine’s Day cards for local nursing homes, donating activity kits to the Albany Medical Center Children’s Hospital, and volunteering at the 4-H Milkshake Booth at the Altamont Fair to raise money for 4-H scholarships and trips.

Urban 4-H offered a variety of programming to numerous agencies throughout Albany County, including schools, libraries, religious organizations, rehabilitation centers, and childcare agencies. The programming topics offered at these sites focused on STEM, nutrition, environmental science, and urban gardening.
4-H Clubs & Special Interest Programs
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.

1,000
Attended Family Farm Day at the CN Tommell Cattle Company in Berne, where participants learned about farming and agriculture. They enjoyed hands on activities, visiting with beef cattle, goats, poultry, ponies, and touring the operation.

25
Agriculture and Canine Camps were held at the extension office this summer with great success! Agriculture Camp’s theme was Farm to Plate, and Canine Camp’s theme was Dogs with Jobs.

177
Youth participated in animal science projects through the 4-H Equine, Vet Science, and Livestock programs.

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.

JOIN THE CLUB
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.

Agriculture Entrepreneur & Market Development

Extension educators received a grant to promote crop insurance to farmers and growers in the region. Educators gave 13 presentations to 489 participants on concepts of crop insurance and the importance of using crop insurance as a risk management tool.

CCE educators also conducted a meeting for farmers to provide updates on income taxes. One participant had this to say about the workshop: “Actually, I was thinking on my way home it was the best $20 I’ve ever spent! I learned more than I thought I would. I think all the questions were really helpful; it might seem like it only applies to your situation, but usually, it can be useful for someone else too.”

Additionally, Hudson River Tractor collaborated with Cornell Cooperative Extension to conduct an Adult Tractor Operation Workshop. Over 40 participants were given the opportunity to receive “hands-on” training in the operation of farm machinery. The consensus of participants was that the workshop was quite helpful in understanding the safe operation and maintenance of farm equipment.

Commercial Horticulture

The Second Annual Cut Flower Conference was attended by more than 60 cut flower growers and people interested in diversifying their operations by adding cut flowers to their crops. The conference was held at the Carey Institute for Global Good and attracted growers from the Capital Region and beyond.

Topics included adding cut flowers as a crop to a family farm, high tunnel nutrient management, dahlia production, weed management on small farms, an update on CAAHP’s lavender and mint SARE project, and a farmer-to-farmer panel discussion.

53 85 30
Attended the Producers attended the Producers participated in a
Bedding Plant Conference Managing Dairy Manure Managing Pasture and
Systems Workshop Forage Quality Workshop

1,033 1,741 107
Growers subscribed to the Growers received the weekly Farmers attended
CAAHP quarterly newsletter CAAHP E-Newsletter Winter Green-Up 2018
Farm Business Management

Assisting farmers to better understand their business and make decisions to improve profitability and long-term viability is a key part of our education program, both in groups and one-on-one. “Ag Issues Facing Assessors” was a class designed to provide information about farmers and their land-based businesses. The two-day class provided 12 continuing education credits as well as insight into how farms operate. Rated highly by the attendees, one participant stated, “This was really helpful. Best class I’ve been to.”

35 Assessors attended Agricultural Issues Facing Assessors

144 Pesticide applicator’s licenses were recertified at Pesticide Recert Day 2018

42 Producers attended the Adult Tractor Operation Workshop

Field Crops/Agronomy

CAAHP presented a workshop, “Hay is for Horses, But What Kind?” in conjunction with the Albany County Farm Bureau. Horse owners and farmers were educated about hay that is appropriate feed for horses with Cushing’s Disorder, Insulin Resistance, and Hyperkalemic Periodic Paralysis. These metabolic disorders are a challenge for horse owners and an opportunity for hay growers to tailor specialized products for a growing market.

CAAHP held its first annual “Spring Turnout Grazier Meeting” to discuss “Managing Pasture and Forage Quality to Meet the Nutritional Needs of Meat and Fiber Livestock.” Farmers learned how to match the varying nutritional needs of livestock with the variety of forage they produce on their farms. As the livestock industry grows, CAAHP’s educational programs are helping farmers refine their skills and knowledge to be successful.

30 Participated in Lavender/Mint Field Day

30 Beef producers received Level 1 and 2 Beef Quality Assurance certification

160 Ag professionals began to develop a plan for the future NYS livestock industry

Livestock

Livestock production is a vibrant component of New York’s agriculture industry with high potential for growth. Although most livestock in New York is raised on small farms, this industry contributes $893 million in sales to the rural New York economy as well as an extensive and diverse range of products to local markets.

Members of the CAAHP team hosted one of eight New York Small Farms Summits held around the state. The summits brought together 160 farmers and industry participants along with 450 New York livestock farmers that were surveyed electronically. These summits resulted in the development of a plan to secure the future of the New York State livestock industry.

Beef quality assurance (BQA) is a nation-wide certification program which was developed to help ensure a safe, wholesome and quality beef product for consumers. A BQA meeting was held in Albany County where 30 beef producers received Level 1 and level 2 certification.
# Financial Literacy Education

Financial literacy education has long been a key programmatic component of Cornell Cooperative Extension’s Division of Human Ecology. Our financial literacy educator 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. Our programming teaches how to better understand personal financial choices and options as a way to move towards financial self-sufficiency. Many program participants cite our programming as a key part of their understanding how to create a working monthly budget, or check their credit report online.

## 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 conservation methods are reviewed with each applicant. Energy education is provided through presentations to community groups and outreach dates.

Applicants to the HEAP Program were referred to Eat Smart New York, Lead Education, Financial Literacy, the Healthy Neighborhood Program, and other services and programs.

## 250
Participants attended a financial literacy workshop this year in Albany County

## 13
Different workshops on a variety of financial literacy topics have been 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

## 2,520
Albany County residents were reached through CCE offices in Ravena and Green Street Albany, and weekly outreach at the Cohoes Senior Center during the 2017/2018 HEAP season

## 20+
HEAP outreach dates were held throughout Albany County
Community Nutrition and Wellness Program

The community nutrition educator has presented programs to more than 1,250 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 using hands-on, interactive cooking and teaching methods. Popular topics include Harvest Soups and Stews, Mediterranean Diet Cooking and Mindful Eating. Additionally, the nutrition educator was featured on Spectrum News early morning show on two separate occasions presenting on the topics of Food Safety during the Holidays and the Mediterranean Diet. Home food preservation has been of continued interest and Albany County residents took part in home food preservation technique classes such as making jams and jellies, pickles, fermented foods, salsa, soups, applesauce and dehydrated herbs and fruit leather. In collaboration with Hudson Valley Community College, Cornell Cooperative Extension held a three-day Master Food Preservation class enabling participants to be certified to share their knowledge with others in their communities. This year, our nutrition educator served as a spotlight speaker for prediabetes classes educating more than 50 adults on how to take an active role in preventing this disease. In addition to the regular nutrition programming, education regarding the Hudson River Fish Advisory has been disseminated throughout the county in more than 60 locations, targeting those most vulnerable to contaminated fish exposure.
Master Gardener Volunteer Program

The Master Gardener Volunteers of Albany County contribute numerous hours educating and assisting the local community with their horticultural requests. Each active Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) contributes a minimum of 60 hours/year, 20 of which is spent answering our gardening hotline, providing soil pH testing, and diagnosing plant pests and diseases in our lab. The other 40 hours are spent educating the public through a variety of projects such as community tabling events, our demonstration gardens, speaker presentations and workshops.

Many hours are also dedicated to teaching our youth about the importance of gardening, composting, and horticultural practices. This year the MGV’s conducted garden-based learning programs with youth throughout Albany County. The programs included inner-city School Garden Clubs, Seedfolks Projects, Friendship Garden, and visits to the Normanskill Farm. For the first time, a Gardening Summer Camp was held at CCE using our demonstration and vegetable trial gardens. The MGV’s collaborated with the Police Athletic League (PAL) which helped to provide transportation for inner-city children to attend.

101
Master Gardener Volunteers contributed over 7,985 hours including 1,850 hours on our Gardening Hotline

350
Soil pH tests and specimen identifications were conducted by Master Gardener Volunteers

1,450+
Calls, emails and web inquiries were answered through the Gardening Hotline and lab

1,049
Attended Master Gardener Volunteer Speaker’s Bureau presentations and workshops

28
Master Gardener Volunteers devoted 690 hours engaging youth in garden-based learning activities

2,300+
People participated in 37 community tabling and demonstration events
The Strengthening Families program is an interactive series of workshops that allow 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 will 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, we provide dinner and transportation assistance. 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, a one-night program depending on the needs of the community, or a just for parents/caregivers program.

"This program really helped me connect with my teen and be a more patient parent."
- Strengthening Families participant

95
Percent of program participants report having a positive shift in their family dynamics and communication skills during the course of the program.

72
Family members participated in a Strengthening Families Program.
Healthy Neighborhoods Program

Working in conjunction with the Albany County Department of Health, the Healthy Neighborhoods Program (HNP) continued its fourth year of helping improve the health, safety, living environment, and overall quality of life for residents in targeted communities in Albany County. Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County (CCE) educators focused their HNP home visit education in the following areas in the city of Albany: zip codes 12202, 12206, 12208, 12209, 12210 and in the past year, expanded to the cities of Cohoes and Watervliet.

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).

- **218**
  Carbon detectors were distributed and education provided to households that did not have a working CO monitor

- **543**
  Fire extinguishers were provided along with education and a demonstration to residents that did not have one in their home

- **1,765+**
  Referrals were made to the HNP by organizations and agencies

- **371**
  Smoke detectors were provided to households that did not have a working smoke alarm

- **7,490+**
  HNP intervention products were provided to residents

- **786**
  Homes received a HNP initial visit/revisit learning how to improve their living environment and their health

- **1,280+**
  Individuals were educated about healthy homes at more than three dozen community events
Radon Education Program

There continues to be growing concern about radon gas in homes. Studies have shown that long-term exposure to elevated levels of radon can cause lung cancer. Because radon gas cannot be smelled, seen or tasted, testing is the only way to assess radon exposure. In the past year, CCE provided free radon test kits and educated individuals and families about radon through a variety of educational classes, presentations, and radon displays held at the Altamont Fair, health and wellness events, lead trainings, workplace sites, and environmental days.

Lead Poisoning Prevention Education Program

Lead poisoning continues to be a serious community health concern. Children under six years and unborn babies are at greatest risk for health problems. Poisoning occurs when lead (dust) is inhaled, swallowed or absorbed through the skin. Living in pre-1978, older, and poorly maintained housing increases the risk of lead poisoning. Individuals that have been educated about lead poisoning know that is preventable.

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Albany County educators work closely with the Albany County Department of Health, Capital Region health departments, the New York State Department of Health, local doctor’s offices, and medical entities 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 referred to the local 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 trainings 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.

In the past year, CCE Albany County offered several dozen free EPA training classes certifying hundreds of contractors, landlords, homeowners, tenants, and tradespeople as EPA qualified renovators. These individuals now know how to work safe and prevent lead poisoning. The federal renovator accreditation is good for 5 years. Also in the past 12 months, 18 residents learned about preventing lead poisoning and living in a safe environment by participating in one of CCE Albany County’s Window Replacement Courses.
Local Agriculture

Albany County’s 494 farms constitute a large working landscape with activities as wide ranging as forestry, dairy, livestock, horticulture, vegetables, fruit, craft beverages, beekeeping, and sugaring to name a few.

The local Agriculture Program...

- Chaired the Albany County Pest Management Committee which limits the use of pesticides in county facilities. This year, the committee granted a variance to allow a harmful algae bloom control pilot study to take place at Lawson’s Lake, applying an algaecide (Green Clean) to the lake.
- Served on the Albany County District Attorney’s Animal Cruelty Task Force, providing information on livestock production and management.
- Participated in the review of Albany County Agricultural District #3 was completed in 2018. District #3 includes the towns of Colonie, Coeymans, Guilderland, New Scotland and Bethlehem.

Community members and Agriculture and Farmland Protection Board members worked together to complete the Albany County Agriculture and Farmland Protection Plan Update 2018.

Youth from eight city of Albany elementary schools visited the City of Albany Normanskill Farm and were presented lessons on beef, sheep, blacksmithing, ice houses, Erie Canal, dairy farming, bees, recycling, fish, watersheds and stream ecology.
Capital Region Eat Smart New York (ESNY) 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:

**Youth**
- 92% increased their knowledge about healthy eating
- 63% increased their physical activity
- 83% consumed fewer sugary beverages
- 97% made at least one healthy diet-related change

**Adults**
- 80% consumed more fruits or vegetables
- 69% increased their physical activity
- 75% consumed fewer sugary beverages
- 96% made at least one diet-related change

2,449
ESNY workshops and events

20,430
Adults and youth reached through 39,992 contacts

50
Schools received nutrition education
**Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI)**

Green & Healthy Homes Initiative (GHHI) is a national program that works to break the link between unhealthy housing and unhealthy families. In 2017, GHHI was introduced to the Capital Region. With funding support from MVP, CCE Albany County educators have played a significant role from the beginning by providing home assessments, resident education, data collection, and resources and referrals. Problems in homes such as mold, lead, insufficient heat or cooling, and lack of smoke and carbon monoxide detectors are being addressed by the GHHI.

Examples of repairs or improvements to homes and residents' health include providing and installing smoke alarms and CO detectors, arranging for an asthma educator home visit to provide education and products to control asthma, making referrals for a lead inspection/assessment or to an abatement program to reduce lead exposure, providing HEAP assistance/installing an air conditioner to those homes unable to pay heating bills or that don't have any cooling device, and making referrals to local home repair programs to fix electrical or accessibility problems.

CCE educators work collaboratively and successfully with several dozen administrators and staff representing numerous agencies toward GHHI’s goal of improving health, safety, and energy efficiency and lowering housing and health care costs for limited income residents in the Capital Region.

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**40+**

**Individuals from 30 different agencies are involved with the GHHI to improve housing environments and residents health and safety**

**183**

**Residents were educated through GHHI with 85 homes receiving assessment**

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**Integrative Pest Management**

There are numerous venues where Integrative Pest Management (IPM) methods are used. Farms, schools, golf courses, and ballparks are some of the common settings. In Albany County CCE educators that visit people in their homes recommend IPM techniques daily.

Trained by New York State IPM Cornell staff, our CCE educators have learned about the economical and health benefits of IPM through webinars, hands on inspections, bed bug presentations, and pest management trainings. Most of the questions that residents ask CCE educators during home visits focus on ants, mice, cockroaches, and bed bugs. Residents are taught how to implement IPM practices to solve common pest problems in a safe and “environmentally friendly” way.

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**78**

**Individuals learned pest exclusion methods including an opportunity for hands-on activities during two IPM exclusion workshops held recently**

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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.

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