Letters from…

The Association Executive Director & Board President

Dear Friends of Extension,

It is our pleasure to provide Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County’s Annual Report for 2016. In witness to our outstanding efforts, this Annual Report contains numerous examples of our successes and highlights the positive impact that our educational programs and outreach opportunities are having on a wide range of audiences.

Educators and volunteers alike are responding to growing consumer, business, community, and school requests with many new and innovative educational programs, trainings and outreach events. Likewise, our efforts on grants and contracts highlight our nimble and timely response to changing demands. Our successes are seen in our results of implementing these unique opportunities; having a positive impact on participants’ lives, businesses and communities each and every day. Furthermore, administrative staff and regional shared business network leads have been productive at streamlining business functions and embracing new found efficiencies throughout the year. We look forward to continually offering much needed educational programs and strive to continue to be that trustworthy support to all that utilize and rely on our services.

We would like to thank our many community partners. Our linkages between county, state and federal agencies is essential to the foundation necessary to carry out our mission. We sincerely appreciate the efforts made by all that assist us each year. We are committed to the residents of Albany County, helping them be resourceful and thrive in all aspects of their lives.

Sincerely,

Lisa V. Godlewski
Association Executive Director

Dear Friends,

Happy New Year! From my perspective, we accomplished as much last year as ever. As described in the Annual Report, the Association has continued to expand long-standing programs, as well as nurture new programs to address emerging issues.

The following are highlights from last year:
- **The Healthy Neighborhood Project**, well into its second year, benefitted over 780 households throughout Albany County, resulting in residents learning how to maintain a healthy and safe living environment;
- **Eat Smart NY**, an eleven county regional nutrition program, assisted a total of 35,722 adults and youth in its second year;
- During its third year, **The Youth CAN** project helped more than 25 at-risk high school youth identify opportunities for employment and college preparation, while contributing to various civic engagement projects;
- Nutrition educators completed a three year **Sodium Reduction Program** in collaboration with the Albany County Department of Health, contributing to a reduction in high sodium offerings in area hospitals and congregate meal sites throughout Albany County;
- The long-standing **Master Gardener Volunteer Program** provided consumer horticulture guidance to residences throughout Albany County;
- **The Capital Area Agriculture and Horticulture Program** grew to a six county regional program, and the team added two new regional specialists this year;
- **4-H Clubs and Special Interest Projects** continued to develop throughout Albany County, especially into urban settings; and
- **The Weatherization Program**, assisted more than 150 homes with energy upgrades during 2016.

Our outstanding success is the result of, what I consider to be, the best staff, volunteers, and trustees of any county association. Of course, we could not accomplish all we have without the effective partnerships fostered with Albany County and local governments, community organizations, and, of course, with Cornell University. In addition, our Association has played a pivotal role in developing regional programs which foster better efficiencies and allow us to assist more people.

Again, my sincere thanks to all of you who have truly made a difference in strengthening our community. It is a privilege to be a part of this wonderful organization!

Kevin Millington
President
Agriculture & Food Systems

- **Capital Area Agricultural and Horticulture Program**—Members of the Capital Area Agricultural and Horticulture Program (CAAHP) provided technical assistance and education to hundreds of individuals in the farming community in the capital region. The CAAHP team welcomed two new staff members in 2016. Lily Calderwood joined the team in January as the Commercial Horticulture Educator and Hank Bignell came on board in April as the Commercial Livestock Educator.

- **Dairy Production Programming**—Cornell Cooperative Extension educators held several dairy discussion group meetings during the year, covering a variety of topics relevant to dairy producers. Additionally, a soil health workshop was held at a dairy farm to discuss practices that will improve soil health.

- **Solar Power**—During 2016, landowners throughout the capital area received inquiries from solar energy companies regarding placing solar farms on their property. In response to many questions from landowners, the Capital Area Agricultural and Horticulture (CAAHP) team held a multi-county meeting to discuss the ramifications of leasing land for solar farms, with an eye to helping rural landowners make informed decisions about such a move. Representatives from the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets attended this meeting and addressed the audience of rural landowners. A representative from the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority was on hand as well. A local attorney offered suggestions on critically reviewing the legal documents landowners received. More than 60 landowners were in attendance from all over the region and all meeting resources were posted on CAAHP’s website. These resources continue to be accessed frequently.

- **Winter Green-Up Conference**—Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County agriculture program organizes and facilitates a Winter Green-Up conference annually to help prompt local beef producers to raise and market grass-finished livestock products. One hundred thirty-five livestock producers from 7 different states attended the conference and learned the importance of soil health in relation to the production of nutrient dense food.

- **Farm Land Protection**—Each year, Cornell Cooperative Extension fights to protect farm land in Albany County by utilizing the Albany County Right to Farm Law and the New York State Agriculture District Law. These laws were instrumental in helping two farms in the county protect their land from development.

- **Beef Quality Assurance Program**—Cornell Cooperative Extension agriculture program protects consumers from exposure to antibiotic residues by certifying local beef producers under the Beef Quality Assurance Program. Thirty-five beef producers received their level I and level II certification after completing a written test and demonstrating their ability to administer antibiotics.

- **Animal Response Team**—The agriculture program works closely with the Albany County District Attorney’s office and the Albany County Animal Response Team (CART) to help resolve large animal cruelty cases. Cornell Cooperative Extension trained 45 volunteers in the handling of cattle and responded to two large potential animal cruelty cases.
• **Agriculture Production Education**—Cornell Cooperative Extension partnered with Cornell University to provide research-based information, programs and technical assistance to dairy, field crops, vegetable, tree fruit, small fruit and grape producers all across eastern New York. Locally, information is provided to all agriculture producers by electronic newsletters, Facebook, seminars, tours and one-on-one consultations.

• **Training for Town Assessors**—Twenty-eight town assessors attended continuing education credit approved programs with Cornell Cooperative Extension to learn about relevant agricultural issues when assessing land and buildings.

• **Programming at the Normanskill Farm**—Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County partnered with the Delaware Avenue Community Association to host educational visits to the city-owned Normanskill Farm, reaching more than 800 students from seven City of Albany elementary schools during 2016.

• **Albany County Pest Management Committee**—Cornell Cooperative Extension facilitates the Albany County Pest Management Committee which helps protect county employees from exposure to pesticides at 24 county-owned facilities.

**Children, Youth, Family & Community**

• **The Strengthening Families Program**—This program uses a parent, youth and family skill-building approach to prevent teen substance abuse, strengthen parenting skills, identify and build on family strengths, and open the lines of communication between parents and their children. In 2016, three six-week series were held in collaboration with the LaSalle School, Hackett Middle School and Parsons Child and Family Center. Program referrals also came from Albany County Probation, Albany County Children, Youth & Families, and the Children’s Mental Health Clinic. Fifteen families were in attendance, with 16 parents/caregivers and 18 youth participating in the activities. The program was well-received by families in attendance. One youth said, “What I learned from this program was to respect others.” And another said, “I liked getting to spend time with my dad.” One parent said, “This program has helped me be able to set limits and stick to them.” Another said, “I’m learning things about my son I didn’t know before.”

• **Financial Literacy Education**—In 2016, CCE Albany County provided financial literacy education to over 350 consumers (youth, adults and families) through educational workshops. Eleven different workshops were offered on topics ranging from Budgeting on a Limited Income to Credit/Debt Management Strategies. This year these workshops were provided in collaboration with a variety of community partners, including Albany County Department of Social Services (DSS), Albany Community Action Partnership (ACAP), and the Colonie Youth Court, among others.

• **Parenting Programs**—Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County offers the parenting education program, *The Magic Years*, for parents/caregivers of youth ages 0-4. Program content was developed by CCE Jefferson County and Cornell University and has been adapted in Albany County. Program modules such as Handling Stress & Under-
standing Child Development, Setting Routines, and Parenting Styles & Discipline Tools all offer parents practical, evidence-based strategies to improve and support parenting skills. A trial program was presented in the fall of 2016 to residents of the Schuyler Inn with a full rollout of the program offerings beginning in 2017.

- **Agriculture Literacy Week**—The literacy theme for the 2016 program was *The Apple Orchard Riddle*, educating students in grades first through third about the importance of apples in our diet as well as the impact of the apple industry in New York State. A total of 606 elementary school students participated in the program from the following schools: Berne-Knox-Westerlo, Thomas O’Brien Academy of Science and Technology, Pieter B. Coeymans, Voorheesville Elementary, Elsmere Elementary, North Albany Academy, Delaware Community School, and Heatly School in Green Island.

- **4-H Summer Scene**—2016 marked the 44th year of operation for the 4-H Summer Scene day camp which provides a safe environment for youth to learn and play. The theme, *Making A Difference*, focused not only on environmental education and the importance of being good stewards for a healthy planet, but youth learned that a healthy body is essential to a healthy lifestyle. Nutrition education and physical activity were included in the curriculum, along with a garden-based learning component. Ninety youth ages 6-12, eleven counselors-in-training, and forty-six junior and senior counselors participated in a number of hands-on learning opportunities throughout the five-week session. Additionally, each teen counselor participated in a job readiness program which began with a full day orientation workshop followed by positive reinforcement each day to help build workforce development skills.

- **Altamont Fair**—Youth who are enrolled in the 4-H Program are provided the opportunity to participate in hands-on learning activities at the Altamont Fair. This year, a variety of 4-H projects were evaluated and on display and a number of youth showed their animals during the week. A total of 98 youth entered 745 exhibits and shows during the six-day time period.

- **4-H Regional Small Animal School**—Formerly known as Regional Poultry School, this event was expanded this past year to include information about caring for poultry, rabbits and cavies. Sixty-three youth and their families attended the program which included hands-on demonstrations and activities, and tips for showing animals at the county and state fair.

- **Urban 4-H**—During 2016, Albany County 4-H Youth Development partnered with a wide variety of not-for-profit agencies, municipal agencies, and schools to bring the nation’s largest youth development program to over 660 urban youth at 32 sites in Albany County.

- **4-H Capital Days**—This event provides an opportunity for 4-H youth to learn about state government, speak with legislators about current issues facing youth and their families, and tour a number of state agencies. This past year, four youth from the 4-H Albany Youth Community Action Network were chosen to represent the Albany County 4-H Program and were commended for their efforts at the event.
- **4-H Shooting Sports Program**—A total of 32 youth and seven certified New York State 4-H Shooting Sports volunteer instructors participated in several shooting sports disciplines, including archery, air pistol, air rifle, and living history. Youth involved in the program learned valuable information related to environmental education and stewardship, and conserving natural resources.

- **4-H Public Presentations**—Forty 4-H members participated in the 4-H Public Presentations event which gives youth an opportunity to research, create and present on a topic of their choice while receiving constructive feedback in the process. Six youth were then chosen to present at the district level, and two youth went on to present their information at the state level. This program provides an excellent experience for the youth to achieve essential skills in public speaking, gain insight into how to improve their presentation, and reduce the fear of speaking in front of future audiences, especially when giving presentations at the college level or participating in the job interview process.

- **4-H Career Explorations**—Twenty Albany County 4-H teens joined more than 500 4-H members from across New York State for the annual Career Explorations conference at Cornell University. The teens learned about college life by living on campus and participating in a variety of career-related programs, including animal science, science, engineering and technology, food science, education, and green jobs. Three youth attended the two-day Agri-Business Career trip to SUNY Cobleskill to learn about careers in agriculture and tour the campus as a college visit.

- **4-H Vet Science Program**—This four-week series provided an opportunity to introduce youth to the world of veterinary science and the various career options available to them. Twelve youth participated in hands-on learning experiences presented by veterinarians and vet technicians from around the county.

- **4-H Teen Action Group (TAG)**—The 4-H Teen Action Group has been in existence for more than twenty years and provides a way for 4-H teens to give back to the community by participating in service-learning opportunities. Teens adopt families for the holidays and facilitate a number of educational activities for younger members and the public to promote community-minded service in the county.

- **4-H Spring Brunch**—This event served as a way for the public to help support the 4-H Program in providing scholarships for higher education and opportunities for 4-H members to attend career trips and other educational activities. More than 100 individuals participated in the program which was planned and implemented by twelve 4-H Teen Action Group members with the help of 4-H staff and three 4-H volunteers.

- **4-H Club Program**—During 2016, the 4-H Club Program offered more than 350 youth an opportunity to master and apply new skills they’ve learned in a variety of project areas, including animal science, nutrition and health, creative arts, shooting sports, public speaking, and career exploration. Hands-on learning opportunities were offered in a number of communities in Albany County, including: the city of Albany, Altamont, Berne, Coeymans, Cohoes, Colonie, Delmar, Glenmont, Guilderland, Knox, Menands, Ravena, Slingerlands, Voorheesville, Watervliet, and Westerlo.
Summer Youth Employment Program—In 2016, Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County assisted 67 youth in finding employment and other workforce development activities in the Hilltowns and Coeymans through the Albany County Summer Youth Employment Program. A financial literacy education program for youth participating in the 2016 Summer Youth Employment Program was also implemented. Workshops were held in Ravena/Coeymans and the Hilltown communities reaching 54 youth. Participants were provided education on how to create a spending plan and save toward a goal. Youth were also encouraged to save for a specific goal throughout their summer employment and discuss their progress upon picking up their paycheck each week.

Energy, Environment & Natural Resources

Home Energy Assistance Program—During 2016, Cornell Cooperative Extension processed over 4,000 Home Energy Assistance Program (HEAP) applications to alleviate issues with paying home heating bills, prevent utility shut-offs, and repair or replace inoperable heating systems.

Asthma Prevention Program—Working with the Albany County Department of Health’s asthma nurse, Healthy Neighborhoods Program educators referred more than 300 people with asthma for a free assessment/education home visit. These one-on-one asthma referral sessions resulted in residents reducing their asthma triggers, understanding their medical treatment plan, and improving their quality of life.

Healthy Neighborhoods Program—Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County Healthy Neighborhoods Program educators conducted 677 home visits this past year, identifying environmental hazards and offering more than 1,300 residents solutions for a healthier home.

Energy Bike—The Cornell University energy bike is a main attraction at “Green” and Earth Day celebrations where youth and adults can ride and learn how to use different lightbulbs to conserve energy. This year, more than 200 Albany County residents rode the bike to actually feel the difference in the amount of energy expended to light incandescent, compact-fluorescent, and LED bulbs.

Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Programming—Working with Cornell University’s Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program, Cornell Cooperative Extension educated more than 100 code officials, homeowners, tenants, landlords, and county workers about bed bugs and how to control them.

Lead Prevention Education—In 2016, Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County offered OSHA courses, EPA lead risk assessor, and EPA lead inspector trainings, certifying more than 100 professionals.

EPA Certified Renovator Training—As an EPA accredited training provider, Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County offered 40 EPA Certified Renovator classes, training more than five hundred workers annually. To date, more than 2,000 EPA Certified Renovators are now in compliance with the United States Environmental Protection Agency’s RRP Rule after being trained by Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County educators.

Weatherization Assistance Program—This program has been meeting the needs of residents by conducting in-home energy audits, providing energy conservation education, and making referrals to other programs offered by...
Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County. In 2016, the Weatherization program completed over 80 energy audits in 1-4-unit family homes, and extended services to over 80 homes in Albany County through its Weatherization and Empower programs. Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County has also partnered with Conifer Reality to help provide Weatherization services to a 24-unit senior living complex in Ravena, NY. Work will be complete in early 2017.

- **Mold Education**—Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County educators are trained in the new state mold laws and have offered numerous trainings teaching several dozen homeowners, tenants, and code officials how to safely prevent and reduce mold for a healthier living environment.

## Horticulture

- **Master Gardener Volunteers**—More than 100 Albany County Master Gardener Volunteers work throughout the year to demonstrate, teach, and write about best gardening practices that follow Integrated Pest Management guidelines. In 2017, the Master Gardener Volunteer program will celebrate 40 years of successful garden-education programming in Albany County.

- **Educational Demonstration Gardens**—Master Gardener Volunteers maintain a number of demonstration gardens throughout Albany County. They use the gardens at the Cornell Cooperative Extension office in Voorheesville as outdoor classrooms to teach vegetable gardening techniques, perennial garden maintenance, edible landscaping, Shaker herb gardening, and reduced maintenance gardening. In addition, the volunteers maintain a series of demonstration gardens at the Pine Hills Library to show people how to attract pollinators and what plants are native to Albany’s unique Pine Barrens ecological system. Two other gardens are located at the Schuyler Mansion and Ten Broeck Mansion historical sites where the public can view period gardens and learn the importance of plants not only as aesthetic accents but also as food and medicine.

- **4-H Forest Pest Outreach Project**—The Albany County 4-H Program was chosen to oversee a regional Forest Pest Outreach education project which was funded by a grant from New York State Agriculture and Markets. 4-H educators from Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Schoharie, Columbia and Greene counties presented workshops and created exhibits to educate more than 1,300 youth and adults about the impact of the Emerald Ash Borer and Asian Long-horn Beetle on the tree population in the region.

- **Rain Gardens**—Nine demonstration Rain Gardens have been installed through a partnership with the Soil and Water Conservation District, the Storm Water Management team of Albany County and the Cornell Cooperative Extension Albany County Community Horticulture team as a way to show green infrastructure practices at work in Albany County.

- **“Preserving the Garden”**—During 2016, this popular educational program provided a way for more than 100 families to preserve and consume nutrient dense produce.
• **Garden Education Day**—More than 300 local gardeners attended the annual Garden Education Day event to purchase plants and meet with Master Gardener Volunteers to ask questions and have their soil tested. Information provided helps participants to be more successful when planting and maintaining their gardens.

• **Garden-Based Education**—Garden-based learning is the umbrella of horticultural education that Cornell Cooperative Extension offers to the gardening public. This year, over 7,000 gardeners were given research-based information to garden more successfully. Community Horticulture staff and Master Gardener Volunteers are involved with over 30 ongoing garden-based learning projects throughout Albany County.

### Nutrition & Health

• **Community Nutrition**—Community nutrition programs provide opportunities for creative application of the Dietary Guidelines for Americans, reaching more than 1,200 seniors, adults and youth in 2016. Libraries, businesses and community agencies are the classrooms for nutrition programming, providing county residents with education on a variety of contemporary nutrition topics. The programs are creative, diverse and hands-on. There are many offerings to choose from, some of which include Winter Soups and Stews, Fast Family Meals, Savor the Season, It’s Bean Great and Mediterranean Cooking. In Preserving the Bounty, participants learn how to use the fruits and vegetables in season to cook and sample healthy and delicious recipes made from local and seasonal foods.

• **Capital Region Eat Smart New York Program**—This nutrition program worked with 37 local food pantries to provide healthy eating messages through more than 150 educational posters and 300 food shelf signs. Program educators also provided over 2,371 nutrition activities this past year for adults and children, including workshops, events, classes and food demonstrations.

• **Nourish Your Neighbor Campaign**—Capital Region Eat Smart New York program educators offered a Nourish Your Neighbor campaign toolkit to over 40 local organizations interested in conducting healthier food drives in order to promote local change to make it easier for people living and working in the Capital Region to eat well. In November, Shop Rite Supermarkets hosted four healthy food drives at their store locations around the Capital Region. Healthier items such as whole-grains and low-sodium canned vegetables contributed to more than 80% of the total donations received by The Regional Food Bank of Northeastern New York.

• **Family Mealtimes Matter Program**—Entering its eighth year, Family Mealtimes Matter—a collaboration between Capital Region Eat Smart New York and Price Chopper Supermarkets—encouraged shoppers in eight Capital Region locations to enjoy more meals together. During the in-store event, Eat Smart New York Community Nutrition Educators offered family meal ideas, nutrition information, recipes and a family photo booth activity. Campaign coverage was provided by the Times Union in both their print and online newspaper as well as 518LifeMagazine—distributed to more than 40 Price Chopper locations.
Financial Report

Program Revenue

- County Support 36%
- State Support 31%
- Federal Support 14%
- Federal Support 14%
- Other Support 19%

Program Expenses

- Employee Salaries 43%
- Employee Benefits 26%
- Equipment & Vehicle expenses 1%
- Program/Operating expenses 24%
- Rent, Maintenance & Misc. 6%

Please note: information based upon most recent yearend data.
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.