As you may know, my term as President of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County (CCE of Cayuga County) and on this board at large has ended. I hope that during my term I have been able to make a positive impact on both the current and future of CCE of Cayuga County. Thank you for the opportunity to lead and for your patience as I grew into my position. This is definitely one experience I will never forget!

My journey in leading the Association wasn't done alone. I was accompanied by a team of dynamic individuals, both elected and not, who shared in our successes and learned from our failures.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank a number of people for their hard work and dedication, and without whom running CCE of Cayuga County wouldn't have been possible.

In particular I'd like to thank my First Vice-President, Emily Robertson, and Second Vice-President, Bob Ingham, for all their support and filling in for the few meetings I could not attend, all the members of the Executive Committee and the Board of Directors for their dedication in serving with me.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize our dedicated committee chairs and their volunteer members. There are not enough words to express the thanks and appreciation of these great leaders. I sincerely thank you for your passion and undying commitment in devotion of additional volunteer hours to this Association.

My sincerest thanks to: Doug Ververs, our Executive Director, for his mentoring and guidance, Judy Wright for her tireless work in overseeing all the educators and her personal dairy resource education outreach, and Jill Williamson for taking all of the minutes at every board meeting throughout the year. I am certain that we can count on their valuable support of the Association this upcoming year, as well as all the staff here at CCE of Cayuga County. All our staff’s dedication to this Association does not go without notice!

But most importantly, my thanks go out to you, the Board Members, for all your support during another challenging year. For without you, the Association might not exist the way it does. It has been my pleasure to serve you.

In closing, I do have one final request. I ask that each of you pledge your continued support to CCE of Cayuga County and help our 2017 Association leaders continue the journey to deliver the success our Association deserves.

As you know, we can do this, but only together.

Sincerely,

Felicia Franceschelli
Board President 2014—2016
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County

“Production agriculture presents exciting opportunities in spite of ever present change and volatility. Be it through commodity markets to meet global demand or intersecting with consumers with diverse preferences and palates. Flexibility, profitability, and collaboration when it makes sense, are keys to success.”

Roberta “Bobbie” Severson, Director
Cornell University Cooperative Enterprise Program,
Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management
2016 Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County
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Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County Financial Support for 2016

- Employees Benefits from Cornell: $179,138 (33.7%)
- County Appropriation: $244,673 (39.0%)
- Program & Operating Income: $44,513 (7.9%)
- Other Grants & Contracts: $30,064 (6.0%)
- State Grants: $75,434 (12.1%)
- Federal Grants: $44,513 (7.9%)
- Total Revenue for 2016: $626,295
The Community Nutrition Educator position is partially funded by the eleven county regional Fingerlakes Eat Smart New York (FLESNY) grant. Education is delivered through several methods – one time workshops delivered mainly in Auburn, series of classes, food demonstrations at local farmers markets, and social media.

The grant has set goals for behavior change which have been exceeded for 2016. One of the goals was for 60% of participants to increase the number of servings of fruit they consumed per day, with 83% of adults and 77% of youth managing to achieve this.

Similarly, another goal was for 60% of participants to choose veggies daily. Actually, 84% of adults and 82% of youth did this. Another goal was for at least 40% of participants to increase their physical activity. 66% of adults and 74% of youth achieved and exceeded this goal.

The grant chose two environmental changes to focus on for 2016 and the region chose farmers markets and school and community gardens as priorities. Weekly food demonstrations were conducted at the Auburn Farmers Market through FLESNY because an EBT terminal was available and able to offer incentives for low income families to shop at the market.

FLESNY educators also reached youth and adults at Brogan Manor, a low income housing unit in Auburn. Auburn Housing Authority (AHA) partnered with CCE of Cayuga County to offer cooking classes to residents of Brogan Manor and Melone Village, another AHA location, in early Spring 2016. Many of the participants that took the class then utilized the new raised bed gardens and began to grow their own vegetables.

Workshops were offered throughout the growing season to support residents and offer harvesting and cooking information for the produce. All of the gardens were fully utilized this season and there are plans for additional gardens to be added next year.

With funding provided by Partnership for Results, approximately four hundred students at five Cayuga County schools participated in nutrition education. CCE of Cayuga County educators worked with school staff on several project based learning series like gardening at Herman Avenue school, food preservation at Auburn Junior High and basic life skills cooking at Auburn High School. These workshops are also offered to parents at all participating schools.

Over 730 elementary school students from eight schools throughout Cayuga County were introduced to agriculture during March’s 2016 Ag Literacy Week. Students were read The Apple Orchard Riddle written by Margaret McNamara and illustrated by G. Brian Karas.

New York State, ranks second nationally in apple production, providing over 17,000 direct and indirect jobs. There are over 680 apple producers on 55,000 acres across the state.

This introduction to agriculture is in cooperation with Cayuga County Farm Bureau and our volunteers. Thank you!

With funding from the Cayuga Community Health Network (CCHN), CCE of Cayuga County was able to offer a six-week Cooking Matters class to six families in Port Byron. Funding from CCHN also brought two food demonstrations to the Aurora Farmers Market, as well as, provided support for the start up of a walking club at Brogan Manor to try to increase physical activity.

Mini Gardening Grants

Genesee Elementary school and the new Permaculture Park in Auburn received FLESNY mini gardening grants in 2016. New raised beds were added at the school and youth series education took place in the early summer of 2016 and again in the fall when the students returned. The fourth grade classes planted a salsa garden and harvested tomatoes, peppers, and basil. After school students planted watermelon and strawberries, which were watered over the summer by the custodial staff and enjoyed in the fall by many people including the custodians and the school’s crossing guard.

Partnering with Cayuga Community Health Network (CCHN)
Over the past few decades, deer populations have risen across New York State. Many factors have contributed to this, including hunting trends, lack of predators, suburbanization, and fragmentation of land. People also feed deer, either intentionally or unintentionally, and this can allow deer to be big and healthy, and more likely to survive and reproduce - especially when they find this food in the cold winter months. Deer populations are estimated to have soared to over 25 deer per square mile in many parts of New York.

With their increasing population, deer are impacting our landscapes: urban, suburban, and rural. Not only do deer have a physical impact on our landscape, they also contribute to the spread of lyme disease by increasing deer tick populations, and increase the likelihood of automobile accidents. In addition, forest regrowth is being jeopardized by particularly high deer browse.

From a forestry perspective, deer impact forest health and forest stand regeneration. A study in 2009 of 700,000 forest acres concluded that 25% of forests were suffering from a ‘complete failure’ to regenerate. A further 45% were only experiencing marginal regeneration. Of this, nearly 75% of regeneration problems were attributed to deer browsing. What this means is that woodland species diversity will be lost, and valuable species like maple, oak, or cherry will fail to regrow. All this means woodlots will provide less income to owners, be less supportive of wildlife, and more susceptible to invasive species and disease.

In some local communities, the deer population has gotten so bad that big steps have been made to reduce them. Various villages in Central New York have recently implemented deer management plans to strategically reduce deer populations. When deer populations grow, especially in suburban or urban areas where hunting is not allowed, their populations can quickly become unmanageable.

In an effort to determine how the public felt about the deer population, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) enlisted Cornell’s help in conducting a pilot education program and public stakeholder input session. CCE of Cayuga County joined as a partner on the program.

During the program, participants were introduced to a wealth of deer information – everything from life cycle and habitat to current population trends to positive and negative social, environmental, and economic impacts. Participants also learned about survey results that indicated what the public thought about deer.

After the extensive education program, select participants were asked for feedback on what they thought about ideal deer populations: were there too many, too few deer? Recommendations were made, which the NYS DEC will use for future decision making and use of available tools dealing with deer population. It was an exciting program that generated a lot of passion, discussion, and interest throughout our community.

This being a pilot program, CCE of Cayuga County stayed on board for several months, providing feedback and ideas on how to improve the program, which will be replicated across New York’s Wildlife Management Units (WMU’s) in coming years.

### The Master Gardener Program

Long time Cayuga County Master Gardener volunteer Chris Zippel identified the first sample of the Lillie Leaf Beetle in 2015 but only after significant damage occurred. 2016 was a different story! We were expecting them and the inquiries were heavy and swift. CCE of Cayuga County submitted an article and photo to the Citizen, which made the front page, alerting homeowners to their appearance, habits, method of damage, and some potential control measures. CCE of Cayuga County provided information to retail suppliers as well so they too could be prepared.

The increased awareness was important to homeowners who have planted lilies into their landscape. Lilies normally have no pest concerns and are a showy individual in the flower garden. The Master Gardener hotline received over 330 total calls between April and October of which approximately 80 were related to Lillie Leaf Beetle in 2016.

### Eco Talk

2016 boosted the Environmental Program’s Citizen column to weekly status, and over the past year nearly fifty Eco Talks have been published. Given the lack of coverage devoted to environmental issues in the media, it is extremely important to have this voice present to introduce people to climate change, forestry topics, and other environmental issues.

Spring 2016 Electronics Recycling Event had over 700 persons dropping off old electronic equipment which included computers, video game systems and tv’s. Included in the collection were other hard to dispose of items such as propane tanks, toner and ink cartridges and fluorescent light bulbs. CCE of Cayuga County partnered with Cayuga County Solid Waste.
Cayuga Dairies Become “Representative”

CCE of Cayuga County was the site host for the 2015-2016 Agriculture and Food Policy Council (AFPC) representative visit for dairy policy in November of 2015. Central New York is one of three locations for the AFPC in the northeast. The AFPC conducts analyses of the impacts of government policy proposals and/or implementation procedures on farmers, agribusiness’s, taxpayers, and consumers. Its primary constituency is the U.S. Congress, particularly the Agriculture Committees.

Two sessions were conducted on dairy policy which is among the most complex in agriculture. A select group of seven dairy farmers representing approximately 2900 cows came together to respond to inquiries from the AFPC Team; responses were then combined to develop a ‘representative central New York dairy farm’ which is used to test various conditions of proposed federal policy.

In October 2016, central New York was again asked to respond to a request specific to participation in the federal programs for price supports for dairy known as Livestock Gross Margin for dairy insurance and the dairy Margin Protection Plan (MPP). Until the fall of 2015 this work was going through Cornell University but now has shifted to CCE of Cayuga County.

Addressing Water Quality Concerns

Quality water is important to everyone—depending on the user it may have a different definition but water is required for life as we know it to survive. Following a countywide kick-off meeting in the fall of 2013, CCE of Cayuga County has participated in numerous meetings related to the drafting of the County’s 14 point manure management plan and hosted a forum on cyanobacteria at the Ward O’Hara Ag Museum where Dave MacNeil from NYS Sea Grant and Dr. Nelson Hairston, of Cornell presented to over 25 interested community members.

The current focus has been on implementing the 14 point manure management plan which has involved developing strategies, recruiting an agricultural advisory committee and reporting to and working with the county’s Water Quality Management Agency’s Nutrient Workgroup. CCE of Cayuga County is working on these issues with other partners to include but are not limited to Cayuga County Department of Planning and Economic Development and Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District.

It is estimated that over 50 hours of Ag Educator time has been devoted to water quality meetings during this reporting period.

The Search Continues . . .

In 2016, Cornell undergraduate students involved in multiple studies were paired up with Cayuga County agricultural producers to determine the presence/or lack of diseases and insects potentially impacting our food supply:

- CAPS tomato survey (funded by the USDA and administered by NYS Department of Ag and Markets) searched for disease pests and a currently un-named virus, as well as, confirmation that the tomato leafminer, bacterial wilt and bacterial spot were not present in NY.
- A wheat and barley study searched for pathogens that directly reduce crop yields and indirectly reduce commodity value and food security. The study was specifically aimed at understanding fungicide resistance and improve management on conventional and organic farms.
- An additional study conducted in Cayuga County attempted to map floral resources available to pollinators on a regional scale. Plant samples from multiple habitat types, both agricultural and natural, were taken to determine availability of food sources for pollinators.

Adapt-N

In 2016, CCE of Cayuga County Field Crop agricultural research again highlighted nitrogen (N) efficiency plots with corn (Adapt-N). For the past 4 years, focus has been on applied research to help farmers predict the most effective rate of nitrogen for corn. The most recent EPA report listed agricultural N management as the fifth largest source of greenhouse gas emissions in the United States. Corn production accounts for a large fraction of loss because of its large acreage, high N use, and low N use efficiency. The high N fertilizer use in corn also implies that this cropping system is very energy intensive. The Adapt-N tool is an excellent adaptation strategy for climate change, because it explicitly adapts N management recommendations to site- and year-specific weather conditions. It also helps mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and energy use by facilitating more precise N management, thus reducing nitrous oxide losses and energy consumption. For farmers, better N management improves the bottom line, because N fertilizer is typically the most expensive crop input in corn grain production systems. Three Cayuga County farms devoted 45 acres to trials and 5 farms have adopted this practice on 3,000 acres.
4-H Youth Development

Cloverbud Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) Programs

In 2015-16, Cayuga County 4-H youth aged five to seven were introduced to many aspects of Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM) by introducing scientific concepts along with hands-on experience making it come to life in an exciting way. Topics in the areas of Food Science, Chemistry, Physics, Polymers, architectural principles and more were explored.

Studies show that early youth experiences are important in the development of key skills related to STEM. These experiences help young people to make the important connection between STEM skills, careers and values that grow with them.

In this STEM introduction, children learned about some complex and high-level science topics, such as polymers. Through applications using gelatins and making their own “slime”, youth were able to dive into the science behind polymers, learning about molecular reactions and bonding, while creating something that is meaningful and fun to them.

Additionally, youth were able to explore physics and motion through using toy cars and objects that are normally used for play. They also learned about safety and distracted driving, and how they might be able to help make their car riding experience safer.

Youth curiosity and excitement are essential components of these programs, as is the desire to have youth excited about science, and also encourages them to grow, learn and explore potential careers in STEM fields.

Animal Quality Assurance Program Offered

CCE of Cayuga and Seneca Counties teamed-up to offer a dairy cattle workshop in June 2016. A total of eight youth and five adults from both counties participated in this event. Using The Ohio State University Extension Youth Food Animal Quality Assurance Curriculum Guide, youth learned about animal quality assurance as it relates to the dairy industry, particularly with cull cows. Youth were exposed to a variety of topics including: food safety, drug administration, needle use, proper injection sites and how these protocols relate to finished meat products. They learned about proper drug storage, label reading and accounting for animal health products/feeds. Hands-on activities were a portion of the program which allowed youth to “practice” administering drugs, subcutaneous (SQ) and intramuscular (IM) using bananas as animals.

In addition, youth engaged in a dairy cow bedding activity. They learned that bedding is an essential element to creating comfortable resting areas for dairy cows, as well as the importance bedding provides in overall cattle health, and how this relates to milk quality. Youth were given a variety of bedding materials including: straw, sand, and sawdust; and through experiential activities, they witnessed benefits/challenges of each material. Discussion revolved around the results of the activity and that bedding choices can vary among producers based on personal preference, facilities, local cost and availability of these materials.

Cayuga-Onondaga BOCES Internship

In Spring 2016, the Cayuga County 4-H program welcomed Emily Wellington, as a Plant, Animal and Life Sciences BOCES program intern. During her 5 week internship, Emily's main focus was with the 4-H animal science program. She assisted with preparation for the county dairy bowl and horse extravaganza programs. Emily gained extensive knowledge about the 4-H program, and how positive youth development plays an important role in the life of young people. Emily has a passion for agricultural sciences and is pursuing her career with SUNY Morrisville.

We are excited to be a host location again for another Plant, Animal and Life Science BOCES program intern for the 2016-17 school year. Amber Renslow, a senior with Auburn High, began her internship with CCE of Cayuga County 4-H in October. Amber has a strong interest in plant sciences and enjoys learning about the science behind growing plants and floral design. She has a passion for agriculture and sharing this with others. We are excited to continue the partnership with BOCES, and can’t wait to see what Amber does going forward.

Casey Park After-School Program

Three animal science sessions were offered with the after-school program this year; including veterinary science, soils/soil composition and sheep-to-wool. This program was successful in delivering agricultural education to 18 youth in grades 5 and 6 who gathered to take part in these hands-on learning opportunities. At first, the youth were squeamish about the topics being presented; stating “ew, I am not touching that. It stinks” to “wow, that’s really cool. I didn’t know that.”

By the end, the kids were really excited to learn more and started asking what the next month’s topic was going to be. At the last session of “sheep-to-wool”, the youth were touching and smelling raw wool, and each youth walked away making a sheep craft with a real wool fleece. We all had a blast! We are looking forward to see what the 2017 school year program brings!
Expansions at 2016 4-H Youth Fair & Remember the Big 6 Events

The Cayuga County 4-H Youth Fair & Remember the Big 6 events, held at the Ward W. O’Hara Agricultural and Country Living Museum & Dr. Joseph F. Karpinski Sr. Educational Center in Auburn, proved to be another great success in July 2016! Among the traditional activities featured at our annual event, we were thrilled to add a 4-H small animal display tent and a 4-H & open beef cattle exhibit and show! Revitalizing the 4-H beef cattle project area (a vacancy for over 10 years in Cayuga County 4-H), has increased program participation, as well as, interest for expanding into other 4-H livestock project areas.

Over 100 Cayuga County 4-H youth exhibited animals and/or youth building projects in the 2016 4-H Youth Fair. During the 3 day event, over 4,800 community members participated in a variety of activities. Youth and adults alike became empowered from the program, and many youth qualified to participate in the 2016 NYS Fair in August.

Baking Pies—Community Service

If you have ever heard the 4-H pledge, then you are familiar with the saying, “hands to larger service”. One of the four H’s in 4-H stands for Hands. 4-H members pledge their hands to larger service because they need to feel that their lives have meaning and purpose. Using skills youth have learned to help others, meets that need, while developing a feeling of generosity. Community Service is the action piece of the 4-H Citizenship and Civic Education Program and 4-H members are encouraged to participate in at least one service activity per year.

Community Service

We choose to spotlight the annual pie baking event this year, as it is one community service event that several Cayuga County 4-H clubs and families participate in uniformly. Clubs and families gather to make pies for donation to the Salvation Army Thanksgiving meal. Over the past 7 years, Cayuga County 4-H has donated over 450 pies collectively. This is a group effort performed by all, including the youngest members all the way through adult parents and volunteers. Great job and thank you to all participants!

National 4-H Conference 2016

In April 2016, 4-H youth from all parts of the United States and military installations came together for the National 4-H Conference in Chevy Chase, MD. Cayuga County 4-H member Brittney Lillie was one of seven New York State Delegates that attended.

For this working conference, youth were put into small groups and were responsible for preparing a presentation to share with a federal agency or department. Topics included: Choosing Peace, Climate Change, issues related to Bio-terrorism and more. Individuals did not know each other before being grouped, but worked well together as they spent many hours researching, preparing and practicing their presentations which were given to agencies such as: NOAA, USDA, and NASA.

Youth were also able to spend a day on Capitol Hill, meeting with their senators and congressmen. Here, they were able to talk with their elected officials about issues that mattered to them personally. Congressman John Katko graciously hosted Britney.

In addition, New York Delegates were able to sit in on the Ways and Means Committee session, get a night tour of the national mall, participate in the 4-H Grows Campaign kick-off, and much more.
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