Connecting with the Community

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Clinton County is part of a larger state and national land-grant system that extends research-based information to local residents, families and the agricultural community. CCE is an integrated network including campus-based faculty and extension associates, regionally deployed specialists, and local county-based educators. As a result, CCE in Clinton County has access to current research findings from across the country and the world which it puts into practice by providing high value educational programs and university-backed resources.

Programming Outreach 2017

Direct Youth Participants Reached: 2,750
Direct Adult Participants Reached: 1,486
Volunteers Supporting Youth & Community: 477
Instructional Activities: 139
Instructional Activity Contact Hours: 29,816

2017 Program Highlights

Our mission is to enable Clinton County residents to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research based knowledge to work.

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.
Better Living From the Ground Up

Healthy Living Outreach

- On-going programming to educate participants with performing functional tasks of everyday living both safely and independently.
- 2,271 classes were attended in one or more of our weekly fitness education programs which was an increase of 487 classes attended, an average of 2 classes per week attended by each participant; 20 individual ‘pre-skill’ evaluations were provided.
- 15 individuals attended at least 1 of 3 food preservation classes offered by our Master Food Preserver.
- Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) provided educational programs that focused on reducing sweetened beverages, increasing physical activity, food security, USDA’s MYPlate, disease prevention and utilizing local foods. 113 youth in 9 groups received EFNEP nutrition programming. 84 of these received 6 or more hours of nutrition education.
- EFNEP enrolled 150 adults of which 105 received a minimum of 6 hours of education and successfully graduated from the program. This was done in 762 hours of direct programming.
- Eat Smart New York, SNAP Program reached out to over 3,000 youth and adults this year. This included 40 activities each month with a minimum of 75 direct participants.
- An EFNEP Facebook Pilot program was submitted and approved to commence in 2018. Clinton County will be the first county to offer online, interactive lessons to program participants.

Parent Education Awareness Program

- Certified by New York State Parent Education and Awareness Program of the Office of Court Administration, this program helps divorcing, separating, or in-conflict parents understand the impact and reduces the stress of breakup on their children.
- Collaborates with Clinton County Department of Social Services and the Clinton County Family Court
- 26 parents providing parental care adopted developmentally appropriate and effective parenting behaviors and methods.
- 26 parents reported experiencing positive changes in parent-child relationships and parenting skills that they attribute to implementing new parenting behaviors and methods learned in parent education programs. This is the final year that this program is being offered.

Cornell Cooperative Extension utilizes the latest research-based information to empower Clinton County residents in creating and maintaining healthy life styles and communities.
Youth Development

- 207 youth members enrolled with 59 enrolled volunteers and 23 individual 4-H clubs. We had a total of 1,626 school age youth participating throughout the year in programs.
- Over 294 youth in grades 1-5 were reached through Beekmantown Elementary school’s Adventure Zone (BAZ) program & the Extended Learning Time (ELT) grant. The structure of this program allowed 4th & 5th grade students to be reached during their lunch periods for the entire school year. Younger students participated in BAZ group which met 4 days a week for 6 week cycles during the ELT period. Chemistry was the primary focus of these groups. Students reported learning about chemical reactions, atmospheric changes and more.
- 4 teen members participated in the Career Explorations program at Cornell University this year. This program gives youth the chance to learn more about different career opportunities.
- One youth member worked as a NYS Fair Teen Superintendent for a full week.
- We collaborated with Eastern Adirondack Health Care Network and OFA to provide 50 container gardens to senior residents in the County. Master Gardeners and 4-H youth worked together to assemble them.
- Year 2 of our 4-H Bluegrass Club was a collaborative effort with Clinton and Essex Counties, 4-H Bluegrass For The Next Generation, Inc. Foundation, SUNY Plattsburgh and local musicians. Twenty-nine youth participated and a total of nine musicians, who volunteered their time, met monthly to learn about Bluegrass Music and take lessons on the instrument of their choice. Funds were donated and each youth was given an instrument for their personal use. Instruments included; banjos, guitars, fiddles, mandolins and bass.
- STEM Programming continued throughout the year with Beekemantown Elementary School students participating in 6 weeks of related topics. Youth members reported an increase in science knowledge due to 4-H programming at their school. Adirondack P-Tech created a 4-H club at their school with a focus on engineering and design, computer programming, technology and more. Our 2 home-school clubs focused on STEM and competed in many local and out-of-state robotics competitions such as FLL Robotics. STEM is a major focus in Clinton County, with a full-time Vista staff developing project books/curriculum, and is part of everything we do on a daily basis.
- Additional County wide programs included 4-H Babysitter’s Course which was opened to 4-H and non-4-H members. This 3 day course covers ages and stages of youth development, healthy and easy snack and meal preps, and age appropriate activities to use when caring for youth. One parent reported how much their daughter learned in the class and said that she and her friend, who also participated, were already babysitting in their neighborhood. 4-H Archery has proven to be very popular program. Classes and week-long program filled all slots. Parents reported that their children “gained confidence” and one member was so inspired he went home and made his own wooden bow. Woodcarving offered by a master carver hosted 2 multi-week sessions for the new woodcarving program this year. Youth enjoyed this program so much that many of them joined the North Country Wood Carver’s Association.

Cornell Cooperative Extension creates supportive learning environments in which diverse youth and adults reach their fullest potential as capable, competent, caring citizens.
Master Gardener Volunteer Program

- This year the Farm Bureau’s Day on the Farm found Master Gardener Volunteers engaging children in a project while learning about pollinators. They were able to get a close up look at bees, wasps and other flying insects that frequently instill fear in kids. Hearing about the importance of these insects and the job they do, as well as how our food supply is dependent on pollination, hopefully gave the participants a better understanding and healthy respect for pollinators.

- Our theme for the Northern Home and Lifestyle Association Home Show was “For the Birds.” Master Gardener Volunteers were on hand to speak with residents, answer questions, provide resources, and give out directions for building bird houses for a variety of birds (they do have preferences for where the nest) and bat boxes. This is an annual event we look forward to each spring and the theme is different based on what is topical or what we are receiving many questions about. We are always open to suggestions!

- We have always been happy to help with the Dannemora Community garden and this year was no exception. The many raised beds are tended by families for the harvest that is to come, as well as some beds dedicated to growing vegetables for the local food shelf. The children enjoy monthly craft projects brought to them by Master Gardener volunteers, and the chance to work in the gardens watering, weeding and most importantly, learning about how a seed grows into a plant, its needs and how to respect and nurture our environment.

- Thanks for the funding we received again this year from the Chapel Hill Foundation, we expanded our grow light program to the Watson Memorial Senior Living Center in Mooers, and helped the residents start vegetable plants from seed, to be transplanted into the raised beds, which we also installed in this location.

- Grow lights and seed starting programs were given to the participants at the Ted K Center. The kids were so enthusiastic and have raised beds into which they transplant the vegetables they’ve grown. Everything gets eaten because kids are more apt to eat, or at least try, a food that they have an investment in.

It is the mission of the Master Gardener Volunteer Program
“to train volunteers to teach others how to protect the environment and grow plants more effectively!”
Agricultural Program

- We held our 7th annual Food from the Farm event in March. It was only seven degrees outside and we still had over 500 people come out to attend the event at the US Oval in Plattsburgh. Twenty-eight farms participated in the meet and greet and four restaurants were present for the public to taste local food.
- Young Farmer events grew in number and attendance this year reaching fifty-three total participants. We toured a local winery, had several local agencies present to the group on how they can serve farmers, and toured a local hops yard.
- A Commercial Driver’s License program specifically for farmers in the North Country was established with Champlain Valley Education Services. Six farmers and employees obtained their licenses with the help of Workforce Development Institute funding. The program will continue to be in place for farmers who wish to obtain their CDL license in the future.
- Small ruminant meetings continue to be held. This year we had 15 participants at a pasture walk in Plattsburgh. Pasture walks continue to be a successful way for both small ruminant and livestock farmers to learn what to grow and how to grow it. How to rotate your animals is also discussed in these walks.
- A fertilizer meeting for farmers was also held this year. Seven farmers had an in depth discussion with our regional field crops and soils specialist, Kitty O’Neil about how and when to fertilize specific fields.
- The Clinton County Farmers Facebook group continues to grow. One hundred and twenty-six members see our messages regularly. We use this as an outlet for information sharing and advertising of programs.
- We continue to hold the Agriculture Tour of Clinton County annually for our legislators and local officials. This year we increased attendance and had participants from the Chamber of Commerce, our local Assemblyman’s office, six local legislators and our local NYS Senator’s office.

Farmers gain knowledge and understanding of new and relevant information to improve their business through Cornell Cooperative Extension Clinton County’s agricultural program.
This year team members worked on over 20 research projects. Topic areas include: dairy cattle lameness, calf health, milk quality, development of protocols and employee training, western bean cutworm, field comparisons of crop varieties, use of nematodes for control of corn rootworm, viability of sheep AI, feed efficiency of beef cattle, and the economic impact of the VFD.

We reached thousands of program participants through dozens of single and multi-session educational events. A full slate of educational programs is planned beginning in winter 2018 with Crop Congress, Quality Milk programs, the Hay School/Pasture Workshop series, Calf Management Workshops and many others.

We continued to work with farmers to evaluate their current calf housing situations and help work through challenges.

We worked through cow comfort opportunities with dairy farmers as well as assisting possible facility changes such as ventilation.

We assisted farmers who want to look at goal planning and transition planning. Examples would include transitioning the farm to another generation, selling the farm, or transitioning from dairy to beef.

We continue to research Western Bean Cutworm (WBC) for our North Country farmers through research of two different Bt traits. This corn pest has steadily increased in population since it was first discovered in NYS back in 2009.

Mike Hunter and Kitty O’Neil, both North Country Regional Field Crops Specialists, were named to the Cornell technical hemp team to assist those looking to evaluate hemp as a field crop. The field crops specialists have fielded inquiries from interested farmers in the North Country and assembled information to facilitate decision making and planning for hemp production.

Understanding just how big a role facilities play, improving existing facilities, and designing new facilities for the future were the focus of the 2017 Cow Comfort Conference in Syracuse, NY, this March. The conference was organized by the North Country Regional Ag Team, in partnership with the South Central New York Dairy & Field Crops team, PRODAIRY, and the Miner Institute. The first conference brought in about 80 people in attendance from across the state.

Currently, about 98% of nation’s milk supply is coming from dairies that are part of the National FARM (Farmers Assuring Responsible Milk) Program. Specialists perform mock FARM evaluation programs for farmers who are not sure what this new evaluation entails.
Champlain Valley Apple Production

- With NNYADP funding, we set up a trapping & scouting line to monitor economically significant orchard pests. Pest activity and IPM control recommendations were provided in weekly e-alerts, allowing growers to better time their sprays so they are most effective in controlling the targeted pests.
- In collaboration with post doctoral students in Dr. Terence Robinson’s lab, we continued to conduct research on precision high density orchard management. Precision management allows growers to produce higher quality fruit, bringing them greater per acre returns. A mobile app has been developed so growers can view all of these models conveniently in one place.
- With ARDP funding, we continued a project investigating bitter pit (BP), a physiological disorder that greatly reduces the storage potential of Honeycrisp apples in Eastern New York. 36 survey sites were monitored for factors that may contribute to BP development. Spray trials were performed in the Champlain and Hudson Valleys in the spring, leading to new grower management recommendations to aid in controlling the disorder.
- Apple thinning meetings were held in May with timely recommendations on thinning practices, and insect and disease pest controls. These recommendations allow growers to produce well sized, high quality fruit.
- Over 70 people attended the NENY Commercial Tree Fruit School. Presentations were given by specialists from Cornell and other private & academic institutions on topics ranging from plant growth regulators, orchard weed management, and the economics of orchard mechanization, allowing growers to stay up to date on the latest technologies and research.

Cold Climate Wine Grape Production

- Jim Meyers joined the ENY team this summer as a full time viticulture specialist covering our entire region. He has been meeting the growers and assessing their needs.
- The March Grape School in Lake George covered pest, weed and nutrient management and included a ‘wine faults’ sampling workshop with enologists from Cornell which trained winemakers to detect minor flaws in order to improve their product.

Vegetable and Berry Production

- With NNYADP funding we continued research in the Willsboro Farm high tunnel. This year we continued the cherry tomato pruning trial and added a sweet red pepper variety and training trial.
- We regularly monitor vegetable and berry farms for new and recurring pest problems including corn worm, leek moth, spotted wing and swede midge so that growers can fine tune their control programs for efficiency and better results.
- Through summer on-farm meetings, newsletter articles, grower discussion groups and one-on-one consultations we advise and coach growers and collaborate with colleagues at Cornell to troubleshoot and provide pest management options and best management practices.
- Soil health is of keen interest to growers and we work closely with them on soil fertility, weed management strategies to reduce tillage, soil amendments and cover crop considerations to improve soil health.
- High tunnel fertility management continues to improve.
Benefiting the Public-at-Large

4-H Youth Development
The 4-H Youth Development program is helping to grow and strengthen the next generation of community leaders, inventors, entrepreneurs and problem-solvers so that our nation can compete globally and help communities locally and internationally solve problems.

Nutrition
Participants select and prepare foods better matched to nutritional needs which leads to consumption of fewer calories which increases health and decreases obesity. Healthier citizens lead to a more productive workforce and reduced public costs for health care.

Small and Beginning Farmers and Fresh Market Produce
Small scale, diversified farms are on the increase in Clinton County. As they adopt new production systems and enterprises they keep farm land in production, invest in the local community and provide a product that can be directly consumed locally.

Fresh Market Vegetable Production
Season extending structures help growers raise produce over a longer period of time and with fewer weather-related problems. This enhanced production expands grower revenues and profitability which strengthens the fresh market economy and makes more food available for local consumption.

Consumer Horticulture
Gardening is a popular activity for families and communities. Youth learn responsibility by seeing their efforts turn into a productive garden, community members are engaged in helping each other succeed in their gardening efforts and healthy, active lifestyles are put into action.

Parent Education Awareness Education (PEAP)
Parents improve family functioning through positive communication skills, understanding child developmental behaviors as well as the role of a child in a divorced, separated or in-conflict family.

Staff and Program Areas
Mary P. Breyette—Executive Director/4-H
Sara Bull — Agricultural Educator
Ann Chiarenzelli—AmeriCorps VISTA 4-H
Chelsea Denny — Youth & Family Educator
Amy Ivy — Commercial Vegetable Specialist
Jordy Kivett — Nutrition Educator
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Shannon Sorli—SNAP Community Nutritionist
Natalie Sullivan—Nutrition Educator
Jolene Wallace — Horticulture Educator

Funding Sources

- ENYCHP: 8%
- 4H Program & Grants: 4%
- County: 31%
- EFNEP: 8%
- State & Fed: 32%
- Program Fees, Grants, Contracts & Donations: 17%

Program Areas

- Agriculture
- 4-H Youth Development
- Family & Community
- Admin & Facility

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