Cornell Cooperative Extension
Essex County

2019 Annual Report

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Dear Cornell Cooperative Extension Members, Volunteers and Friends,

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Essex County’s mission is to empower and strengthen community members with the knowledge and tools to improve their lives through programs, experiences, research and education. We are recognized as an inclusive, unbiased, educational resource with strong ties to its constituencies. We are fortunate to have a team of dedicated staff, tireless volunteers and committed Board members ensuring that CCE Essex provides the resources needed to respond to the vital needs and interests of our community. Essex County is our primary supporter providing funding through County Law 224.

Our Shared Business Network (SBN) utilizes regional Leads for Finance, Human Resources and Informational Technology. Essex County Cooperative Extension benefits from sharing the expertise of these individuals.

In these times of limited resources, CCE Essex County makes every effort to stretch dollars to achieve the maximum return. We continue to search for funding sources to add programs to meet the growing needs of our community. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Essex County has joined with several partners getting grants that help us sustain our quality educational programs.

In conclusion, Cornell Cooperative Extension seeks to educate our youth and adults to a healthier and improved lifestyle. It is truly a privilege to be the Interim Executive Director of this exemplary organization.

Respectfully yours,

James A. Seeley
James A. Seeley, Ed.D.
Interim Executive Director CCE Essex
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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Laurie Davis  Office Manager, Technology
Carly Summers  Agricultural Resource Educator
Laura Nicholson  Finance Manager
Eileen Longware  Nutrition Program Educator
Samantha Davis  Program Assistant
Meghan Brooks  Farm to School Educator
Jessica Tyson  4-H Educator

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Amy Ivy  Vegetable & Small Fruit
Ron Kuck  Livestock/Beef
Kim Morrill  Dairy Production
Kelsey O’Shea  Farm Business Management
Kitty O’Neil  Field Crops & Soils
Lindsey Pashow  Direct Marketing
Barbara Williams  Dairy Processing
Mike Basedow  Tree Fruit
Jim Meyers  Grapes

CCE Essex County
2019 Sources of Funding

- State & Federal Funding 33%
- County Appropriation 35%
- Grants & Contracts 25%
- Program Income 2%
- Gifts & Contributions 5%
- County Appropriation 35%
- Grants & Contracts 25%
- Program Income 2%
- Gifts & Contributions 5%

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.
The 4-H Program continues to impact youth and families throughout Essex County. What 4-H bring to the young people of Essex County is leadership, citizenship, STEAM, life skills and the desire to become lifelong learners. Volunteers provide programs and opportunities for county youth. Our volunteers include 4-H alum, parents, grandparents, teachers, local experts and partners such as Soil and Water Conservation District, Trout Unlimited, Farm Bureau, and Bluegrass musicians. 4-H is a flexible informal education program. Environmental Field Days, classroom clubs, afterschool and summer youth programs as well as traditional neighborhood clubs are just some of the pathways of delivering 4-H to our youth and families. Foundation pieces of the 4-H program continue to be successful such as animal science projects along with 4-H foundation pieces such as Career Explorations, Public Presentations and 4-H Fair Week remain strong with the youth and their families in our county.

This year’s highlights in sending Lydia Visser from the Coyote Ridge Riders and Equi-Riders onto the National competition in Lexington, Kentucky for Hippology to represent NYS 4-H. This rigorous knowledge based competition proved hard work and dedication pays off. Lydia’s state team placed 3rd and Lydia placed 3rd in individual standings. Way to go! The whole 4-H program rallied behind her on her year-long journey. Her success has inspired other 4-H’ers to achieve their own success in Hippology and other “bowls”.

Equi-Riders is a county-wide horse lovers group based out of the Sally E. Morehouse arena at the Crane Valley Mountain Horse Rescue. With studies on anatomy, nutrition, and equine health, the youth are able to use the rescue’s horses to complete educational assignments. This club is highly competitive and looks forward to annual horse quiz bowl and hippology competitions.

Adirondack Barks is a county wide canine club. These youth study everything about our favorite companion animal – dogs! Their project is Cynology and these youngsters learn breeds, training methods, anatomy, nutrition and canine behavior among other topics. In the spring and summer these youth enjoy spending time outdoors while they tackle agility and obedience training with their favorite dog.

The 4-H Bluegrass Experience club completed its 5th year. It is the only club of its kind in the state and is generously supported by anonymous donors. This unique club is comprised of both Essex and Clinton County youth from ages 5 to 18. Youth are partnered with local bluegrass musicians by instrument and the youth get together on a monthly basis to jam with each other as well as local and college bluegrass groups. A few members are so talented, they have been invited to play with local bluegrass groups at public performances.

Green Thumbs is our county wide Horticulture Project Club. Entering its 3rd year, members enjoy learning how horticulture impacts their environment. Youth have learn different seed starting techniques, soil health, water quality, environmental science, vegetables, flowers, and botany. The youth have incorporated salmon into their repertoire by participating in Salmon in the Classroom project that takes in schools across the state. The club members successfully hatched, raised, and released salmon from egg to release size. The project was made possible by a partnership with Lake Champlain Trout Unlimited. This was the only 4-H group to be acknowledged by the International Year of the Salmon.
Agriculture

Essex County Agriculture is diverse, with growers producing everything from maple products to flowers, milk & artisanal cheese, livestock & agroforestry products, such as mushrooms, and a wide variety of vegetables & fruits. One role of our agricultural programming is designed to provide resources for this wide array of commercial operations. We connect with farmers and establish an understanding of their needs and constraints in order to effectively link them with resources and create supportive educational programs. A key set of resources are the experts from the CCE Regional Teams and collaboration with other institutions & organizations. Focal program areas in our educational mission designed for growers includes: soil & crop health, livestock, dairy, agroforestry, value-added products, business management, & environmental sustainability.

In addition to this, promoting local food in the community is a key goal. The local economy is strengthened when our community buys local food, educational opportunities for students are enriched, preparation for job opportunities and entrepreneurship expanded, nutritional access increased, and labor sources for local businesses improved. In 2019, we launched the Power of Produce Club, a 7-week event series in three farmers’ markets, with taste tests of local produce and educational activities for kids. One year into the NYS Ag & Markets Farm to School Grant, CCE Essex has assisted eight school districts in Essex County in developing or expanding upon their Farm to School Program. This position has assisted food service directors in increasing local food purchasing, coordinated more curriculum in the classroom, and encouraged the planning of productive school gardens. The Farm to School Educator and Agriculture Resource Educator will continue to work together to include new farmers and farm products into the schools.
In 2019, Essex County CCE Agriculture collaborated with CCE Regional Specialists and Cornell University to provide a wide array of technical support for farmers and food producers. Essex County CCE Agriculture also independently organized and hosted various events including shiitake cultivation workshops, Beef Producers’ Meetings, a Farm to Chef Meet & Greet, and more. Ag Day is organized each year as an opportunity for our Board of Supervisors & county employees to meet & learn about farmers from around the county as well as other key agricultural players. Ag District enrollment and farmland protection program management, including the Strategic Planning Effort underway for Essex County, are also led by Essex County CCE Agriculture.
Essex County Agriculture is Diverse, Unique & Growing

- On only 4% of Essex County land, 196 farms\(^1\) grossed $13.2 million in 2017. (a 13% increase from 2012.)\(^2\)
- Direct-market farming expanded, with 97 farms grossing $4.4 million. (98% increase in farms and 1,205% increase in value over 10 years.)\(^2\)
- Value-added production brought in $3.3 million in 2017.\(^2\)
- Farms in Essex County are incredibly diverse, supporting the community food system, attracting new families to the area, and bringing over $3.7 million in wages to the local economy.\(^3\)
- Local food purchasing by restaurants and institutions remains an important growth opportunity, which has the potential to greatly strengthen the local economy and stimulate sustainable economic growth.
- 8 out of 10 Essex County School Districts participate in the CCE Farm to School Program,
- As half of farmers reach retirement age\(^2\), expanding local markets and supporting farmland transition grow in importance.
- Supporting farmland viability strengthens environmental stewardship, climate resiliency, community growth, and quality of life for farmers and community members.
- Sustainable, positive growth requires supporting the entire, interconnected System composed of economy, community, environment, agricultural production, and market components.

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1. Essex County Agricultural Districts profile, current, shows that a total of 49,203 acres in the county are used for farming. The entire county is 1,226,240 acres.

2. The 2017 Ag census, which is the most current census data available.

The Adirondack Harvest program sponsored several major events this year: the Adirondack Harvest Festival, Bike the Barns, the Food Justice Summit, Food from the Farm and the Essex County Cheese Tour. Combined, these events drew in over 3,000 participants and helped to promote and celebrate the proliferation of local foods and farmers in our county.

We welcomed a part-time temporary coordinator, Anna Isserow, to help us implement many of the work goals in our three-year Smart Growth Grant. Anna toured many farms and helped to promote them on social media. We successfully connected with over 20 forestry product businesses and welcomed them as new members to our organization.

With the help of board members, we are working towards getting state funding for Adirondack Harvest. This would allow us to hire a full time marketing expert/outreach person plus a part time administrator/grant writer.

Our logo continues to be used far and wide across the North Country as we look forward to becoming the premier marketing brand for Adirondack local foods.

This program helps home gardeners seek advice in selecting the best plants for their location as well as design and maintenance of their home garden which range from a small window box to a 5 acre vegetable patch and provides assistance for even more exotic plants such as orchids, home citrus or water gardens. Master Gardener Volunteers are able to provide researched based horticulture knowledge within their home communities at Community gardens, school, libraries and local garden clubs. Horticulture provides pH testing and is available to interpret lab results from Soil tests, insect identification and other gardening conundrums are diagnosed and fertilizer questions are addressed by phone, email, office visits and on site visits. Consumer horticulture also provides answers to homesteaders with small noncommercial livestock such backyard chickens, pollination and beekeeping questions, wildlife and nuisance animals and invasive plants and pest control. Throughout the year MGV and Consumer Horticulture provide education on a variety of topics such as tick borne diseases, beginning beekeeping, farmer’s market advice clinics, vegetable gardens and food safety, Invasive plants and pests in the ADK, and how to attract native pollinators to the home garden.
Range of Motion

The Arthritis Foundation Exercise Program is a recreational group exercise intended for, but not limited to, people with arthritis and related diseases. This program will help to reduce pain and stiffness, help maintain or improve mobility, muscle strength and functional ability, and make daily tasks easier. We inspire to educate Essex County seniors on a healthy lifestyle including physical activity, proper nutrition, and overall wellness. Through this program, we encourage them to make healthy food choices, be active outside of class and engage in positive social interactions.

The Ticonderoga and Au Sable Senior centers continue to increase participation Local seniors are taking advantage of the Range of Motion classes and pickle ball courts as well as the treadmill, incumbent bikes, and a seated elliptical. Ticonderoga has added a weekly Tai Chi for Arthritis class. The seniors are eager to add new ways to increase their activity level as an engaged and enriching social connection in their community.

Adirondack Medical Home:

Adirondack Medical Home has collaborated with CCE of Essex County’s Nutrition Program to provide a solid foundation in nutrition education. Primary care providers refer clients to the program. Clients benefit from one on one nutrition education. Clients are educated and supported to incorporate incremental changes in their lifestyle on nutrition topics such as portion sizes, interpreting nutrition labels, identifying nutrient dense foods, learning about food safety and more. AMH also supports CCE Essex County’s Nutrition Program in providing two healthy cooking classes each week at the JCEO and the Robert S. Long buildings in Plattsburgh. Our Nutrition Educator brings research based knowledge and local experience together helping our community to thrive by providing individual sessions as well as group presentations at local health clinics health fairs, schools and continuing education programs on a variety of nutrition, lifestyle changes, and food safety topics.

All photos in this report were taken by CCE staff and are property of CCE Essex County.
An education system which extends Cornell University’s land grant programs to citizens across New York State.

**Practical.** Programs are designed to solve real life problems, helping to transform and improve communities.

**Locally-rooted.** Citizens are key to identifying and creating programs which serve the needs of communities, businesses and individuals.

**Comprehensive.** CCE programming covers five primary mission areas: Agriculture, Community, Environment, Nutrition, Youth and Families.

**Research-based.** Educational programs are developed through interpretation and practical application of research conducted at Cornell University.

**Integrated.** A network of professionals includes campus-based faculty and staff, regionally deployed specialists, county-based educators and professional employees.

**Extensive.** High value educational programs are offered in every county and the five boroughs of New York City.