**Who We Are**

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Genesee County seeks to empower individuals to improve their lives and communities through educational partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th><strong>Staff</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tr>
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Cornell Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity, affirmative action educator and employer.
The Master Gardener program combines horticultural research and local knowledge to provide relevant, effective, unbiased information to the community.

Master Gardener Partnerships Inspire Beauty

Another participant said the class inspired her to go home, walk through her garden, and pick a bouquet of not just flowers but also clippings from her shrubs and herbs.

What Does a Master Gardener Do?

Not only do Master Gardeners answer gardening questions and host educational workshops, they also provide free plant and weed identification, insect identification, and plant disease diagnosis. Additionally, Master Gardeners provide soil pH testing for a nominal fee. Why test your soil? Flowering plants and vegetables grow best in soil with the correct pH. Soil testing is one of the first steps to a successful garden. Don’t know how to take a soil sample? Call the Master Gardener Helpline for guidance.

Master Gardeners are also available for on-site assessment visits. For a small fee a Master Gardener will come to your home or business and provide on-site diagnosis and suggestions for your lawn and garden. You will receive information to help you make decisions on where and how to best plant your bushes and ornamentals.

Over 80 MG Volunteers donated 4,018 hours to serve residents of Genesee County in 2019. This is worth more than $121,263!

The Master Gardeners partnered with GCASA’s Recovery WOW program to hold “Bouquets From the Garden”, a flower arranging hands-on program. Eleven participants watched as two Master Gardeners shared their love of flowers. Everyone learned how to create their own floral masterpieces, from simple bouquets to more formal centerpieces.

Because of the generosity of Master Gardener volunteers who donated flowers and greenery, each participant was able to make and take home two lovely arrangements. All of the participants were excited to share their creations. One participant commented how happy the flowers make her.
The Cornell Vegetable Program (CVP) specialists and staff work together to provide cutting-edge research and educational programing to the commercial vegetable, greenhouse, potato, and dry bean industries.

**Muck Onion Growers Question Excessive Fertilizer Use After Touring Cornell Field Trials**

Luxurious use of fertilizer by muck onion growers is “cheap insurance” to ensure large onions and high yields. It is a tradition passed down through generations of successful muck onion growers that is very hard to change because small-sized onions from lowered fertilizer rates is not worth the risk. Interestingly, for over a decade now, Cornell researchers have struggled to find any onion yield responses to reduced fertilizer rates in their on-farm muck trials. Undeniably, this is an indication of excessive fertilizer use in muck onion production. To capture the attention of onion growers regarding this matter, this summer the Cornell Vegetable Program Onion Specialist took 45 onion growers and allied industry representatives into their own fields to see for themselves.

At the Elba Muck Onion Twilight Meeting, participants walked through sections in a commercial field treated with standard and half rates of nitrogen, phosphorous and potash (NPK) fertilizer, and no applied NPK. When asked to guess which section had no NPK applied, growers’ responses were mixed because there were no obvious visual differences among the three treatments.

In disbelief during the demonstration, a grower asked the grower cooperator, “Did you really not apply any fertilizer?”, and he responded, “No, I really didn’t.”

Growers also viewed the Big Fat Onion Variety Nitrogen Rot Project in Elba and Oswego. For this project, eight varieties were grown with nitrogen rates of one-tenth, one-quarter and one-half of typical grower rates, and with rates of phosphorous and potassium that were only one-third of typical grower rates.

Again, onion plants showed no signs of malnourishment and there were no apparent differences among them, or compared to the growers’ onions adjacent to the trial sites. The Cornell Vegetable Program shared the previous research results, which suggested that excessive fertility may be contributing to abundant growth of weeds and to bacterial bulb decay without any boost to onion yield. In the Elba meeting evaluation, 60% of the onion growers indicated that they would reduce their rates of nitrogen/fertilizer in the next growing season.

Genesee County has 66 farms that produce vegetables on 21,927 acres and 13 farms that grow dry edible beans on 1,192 acres (2017 Ag Census).
Agriculture

The NWNY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops team is extensively active throughout Genesee County providing services to farms of all sizes, focusing on dairy, livestock, hay corn, wheat, and soybean. The team is part of the Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences’ Pro-Dairy program outreach.

Why I Pursued a Career In Dairy Management

I didn’t grow up on a dairy farm, but I got here as soon as I could. I have always had a passion for large animals, but it was not until an internship during my junior year of college at the University of Vermont, where I met and interviewed dairy farmers, that I decided I wanted to have a career that involved the people and community of the dairy industry. From there, I became more immersed in the dairy industry attending workshops, conferences, classes, and events that had anything to do with bovine beauties and farming systems. Most of what I know, I have learned from the cows and those who work with them. In 2013, I completed a herd management internship at the William H. Miner Agricultural Research Institute in Chazy, NY where I learned hands-on skills in the areas of cow, crop, and people management, which set a solid foundation for my career in the industry. This led me to other opportunities in dairy research, nutrition, teaching, and management; from each I have gained a unique experience and perspective of the industry.

The main reason I got into the dairy industry was the genuine hard-working people, and my love of dairy cows and their amazing capabilities to use and recycle resources (that we are unable to use as people) and turn them into highly valued and nutritious products for our families and communities.

While working alongside and managing farms in other parts of the country and state, I have learned that the coolest part about dairy farms is that they can operate in all types of ways with different management systems and resources. Farmers in the area benefit from and attend Dairy Skills Trainings put on by the NWNY Dairy, Livestock, and Field Crops Team such as Hoof Trimming and Artificial Insemination Workshops, Young Farmer Discussion Groups, and Corn Silage Pre-Harvest Meetings. We also collaborate with local county extension programs to bring the larger community closer to cows, help them understand the benefits of dairy in their life and community, and get them involved. I really enjoy visiting farms and serving many of Genesee County dairy farms.

Margaret Quaassdorff, hosting a dairy skills workshop on hoof trimming. 
Photo: RJ Anderson
Youth participating in 4-H develop valuable life skills, increase their knowledge about the community, the environment and the world around them, and learn how to lead through service and citizenship.

4-H Spreads Care For Others

The Genesee County 4-H Dairy Club participated in several community service projects during the past 4-H year. Community Service projects give youth an opportunity to learn about local organizations and how they help members of their community. Dairy Club members partnered with Care-A-Van Ministries to pack care packages for families in need and Northgate Free Methodist Church to pack Thanksgiving packages for local seasonal working families. Dairy Club members also made holiday cards for veterans and our active duty service men and women to spread holiday cheer.

STEM Education a Result of Cornell Partnerships

The NYS 4-H Geospatial Science Program is coordinated locally and state-wide. This program is a model example of working directly with a Cornell Department, (IRIS of Crops and Soil Science) to work cooperatively on engaging youth to learn about remote sensing, GIS and GPS in a close working relationship with the actual research happening at the university. It has resulted in new kit resources, Mapping projects, training resources and workshops for adult and teens as well as extensive interactive community displays and exhibits. Local training and resources have led to Genesee County youth undertaking Geospatial Science projects at county and state fairs, and county-wide STEM Summer Camps.

♦ Youth 4-H enrollment is reporting 15% growth year over year: 275 youth in 23 clubs with 67 adult volunteers
♦ 2019 County Fair involved 205 4-H exhibitors, a 37% increase from 2018
♦ 3 new clubs have been formed along with a new 4-H Cooking Workshop
♦ Market Auction proceeds have increased an average of 16% over each of the past 4 years; the 4-H Market Animal Auction generated gross sales of $164,269.55 in 2019

In partnership with Genesee County BEA, GCC and Alexander Central school, the annual STEM Camp was held at Genesee Community College. Topics this year included the 4-H National Project – Drone Discovery, Wired for Wind – renewable resources, The Science of Fire – 4-H Bio fuel science, and Precision Agriculture. Photo: Staff
Leadership Genesee is a year-long immersive experience designed to raise awareness of the needs and challenges that affect Genesee County while enhancing individual leadership skills with a focus on civic responsibility and community stewardship.

Developing Strong Leaders Through Community Partnerships

Leadership Genesee develops well-prepared community stewards for Genesee County. At the end of 2019, there will be 515 alumni from the public (57%) and the private (43%) sectors. Leadership Genesee is now in year 19, growing participants to take positive actions, act responsibly and provide leadership that will benefit community vitality. Since 2015, class size has grown to more than 30 participants each year which speaks to the community’s support for LG. The Class of 2019 includes several new participating organizations: Woodward Memorial Library, Merrill Lynch, Student Transportation of America, Inc. and Habitat for Humanity.

LG Alumni Work Together to Improve Their Communities

In Genesee County, as with all counties in NYS, the lack of active membership in volunteer fire departments is increasing, a trend recognized as early as 2000. Leadership Genesee alumnus Bill Schutt, LG ’15, Deputy Coordinator, GC Emergency Management Services, has been working with numerous organizations within the county, region and state to address this need. The GC Emergency Management Office initiated a task force that produced a report outlining the issues, but no action items were developed. LG Alumnus Erik Fix LG ’09, Manager, M & T Bank has co-facilitated a number of training sessions with Leadership Genesee Director, Peggy Marone LG ’02 for LG alumni. Bill took advantage of this training network and asked Erik to facilitate a workshop in order to move the group to action. Representatives of the 13 counties in the western fire district attended the workshop and by the end of the day, a list of action items had been created. In addition, an agreement that the NYS Fire Coordinators Association lead by the western district, would lead the entire effort. Work groups have been created, data is being collected and in the process of being analyzed, all as a result of the Leadership Genesee network. More than 500 LG Alumni are working to connect organizations and people every day to help improve the lives of our citizens.
Nutrition

Nutrition insecurity is a significant national health concern, especially among low-income populations that disproportionately experience poor health.

Celebrating 50 Years of Nutrition Programming

EFNEP is celebrating its 50th year in 2019. The program helps low income families eat better for less. Trained nutrition educators deliver a series of 6-8 nutrition education lessons in participant’s homes and at collaborating agency partners. The nutrition education is delivered in a learner centered manner using evidence based curricula on the topics of healthy eating, healthy eating with diabetes, parenting and the feeding relationship and budgeting for healthy foods.

Nutrition Programming Helps a Family Eat Healthier and Learn Together

A mom of 4 shares that the family is making positive changes to eat healthier as a result of [EFNEP] nutrition programming. Growing up as a picky eater herself, mom has had difficulty ensuring her children make healthy choices both at school and home. Mom realizes the importance of her children’s health and is gaining confidence in her ability to provide this for them. Each week, she is eager to show how she is implementing changes in her family’s eating habits and including the children in the decision making process.

After participating in a series of meal planning classes, her children are helping to plan meals, make the grocery lists, and assist in both the shopping and food preparation. Easy healthy options now fill the refrigerator and cupboards.

Eat Smart NY Is Coming to Genesee County!

Eat Smart New York Nutrition Education is FREE to all individuals who qualify for and/or receive benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and will be offered to Genesee County residents in 2020. The program provides skill-based nutrition education classes and sponsors obesity prevention events in local communities on a variety of topics like: healthy eating on a budget, smart shopping for vegetables and fruit, healthy meal planning, basic cooking and food safety skills, weight control and physical activity. The goals of the Eat Smart New York program are to: eat more fruits and vegetables, drink less sugar­sweetened beverages, exercise more and balance calories eaten as part of a healthy lifestyle.
Our Finances

CCE-Genesee is part of the national cooperative extension system, an educational partnership between County, State, and Federal governments.

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Genesee County is a subordinate governmental agency with an education mission that operates under a form of organization and administration approved by Cornell University as an agent for the State of New York. It is tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

Each Cornell Cooperative Extension is an independent employer that is governed by an elected Board of Directors with general oversight from Cornell. All Associations work to meet the needs of the counties in which they are located as well as state and national goals. CCE-Genesee wishes to acknowledge the support of the County of Genesee as a primary funder.

Healthy funding provides the root system in which CCE-Genesee grows. The stronger our funding, the more capacity we have to reach audiences throughout Genesee County. As our roots become strong, our reach becomes wider.