Dear Friends of Cornell Cooperative Extension,

It is with mixed emotions that I announce my retirement effective this December 31st. I have spent 17 years in Herkimer County as the Executive Director and 37 years in Cornell Cooperative Extension overall. The staff of CCE Herkimer and the Extension volunteers of Herkimer County have made these years the very best of my working life. To all of you I say thank you.

No life of leisure awaits me as my wife Barbara and I work a farm and kennel business along with training and competing with our Border Collies throughout the northeast and Canada. Yet, I am also looking forward to doing a few things that I have postponed for so many years. Linda Robbins will serve as Interim Executive Director until my replacement has been found.

With that, I can only wish all of our Extension family and friends the very best for the future, good health and good luck. It’s been a great ride!

Bernard M. Armata
Executive Director
2018 Board of Directors and Committees

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*Committee Representative to Board of Directors
The 4-H Government Intern Program is sponsored by the Herkimer County Legislature and administered by the Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Youth Development Program. Twelfth grade students from all Herkimer County school districts are invited to participate each semester in exploring current issues confronting county government and learning more about the functions of county government through its committee system. Numerous county employees and elected officials assist in delivering insights, which enhance this educational opportunity. Sixteen students from six school districts participated in the spring and fall sessions this year.

Sixteen students from six Herkimer County school districts visited Albany in April as a culmination of the Government Intern Program. The trip was chaperoned by teacher Tim Leach (Town of Webb), Herkimer County Legislator Peter Manno and Cornell Cooperative Extension 4-H Program Educator Wendy Richardson.

The students had a tour of the Capitol, visited the Court of Appeals and were welcomed by Senator James Seward’s office. Then they visited the NYS Museum and Corning Tower.
Farm Business Management Specialist Added to the Team
Nicole Tommell was hired as the new agricultural business management specialist on the Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops team. Her primary goal will be to provide business analysis, planning and development support for agricultural businesses in the region. Nicole received her Bachelor of Technology degree from SUNY Cobleskill in Agricultural Business. She also holds a Masters in Agricultural Education from North Carolina State University.

Central New York Dairy Day
New milk analysis tools that can help people to manage their herd better was the main focus of this year’s Dairy Day held at the Otesaga Resort in Cooperstown in March. Attendees were also able to interact with vendors at a trade show.

Dairy Acceleration Program
The Dairy Acceleration Program, under Governor Cuomo’s leadership, and in partnership with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets and the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation look to assist farms with planning for the future. Since the program began, the team has provided facilitation for twenty-nine dairy farms that received funding. This past year we facilitated for five more farms including one farm that had expansion plans in place (organic dairy) and another four are working on improving production and/or improving day to day efficiency.

Dairy Feeder Schools
Although proper dairy nutrition is an important part of profitability on dairy farms, an equally important part is actually delivering the feed to the cows the diet the nutritionist put together. The dairy feeder schools are for those who are feeding dairy cows and want to learn more about the how and why of what they’re doing. Topics include proper bunk silo and feed bunk management, adjusting for dry matter concentration and feeder safety. The twenty-eight participants of these 2-day schools received a combination of classroom and hands on experiences at a farm.
The year 2018 was actually quite good as far as most gardening is concerned. We received reports of most vegetables growing well. If there was a downside, it consisted of the increased wetness which we experienced towards the end of summer and early fall; conditions which are ripe for fungal and other diseases. Nevertheless, last season was overall a good one for most gardens.

The Herkimer Extension office takes approximately 240 phone calls and 50 to 100 walk-in clients per season, extending from April to the end of October. The office can handle a basic pH test for $5, but a full soil test is recommended for an in-depth analysis and sent to Agro-One in Ithaca. Cost for a full test is $12 with a turnaround time of about two weeks.

Beginning in 2019 an updated Farmland Protection Plan will be developed for Herkimer County. This will include the latest data available along with new considerations such as agricultural education in Herkimer County schools and a website where constant updates and opportunities will be available.

2018 was also a year for Cornell Master Gardener training which was held in Cooperstown at the CCE office. Twelve Master Gardeners from four counties were graduated after a 10 week course, with three attending from Herkimer.

In early December a panel presentation on industrial hemp was sponsored by the Herkimer IDA and CCE Herkimer County. This reflects a growing interest in this very versatile crop. Many farmers are seeking alternatives with which they may supplement a regular income from a traditional source.
March 2019

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Cornell Cooperative Extension
Herkimer County
During 2018, 118 families representing 473 family members participated in a 6-8 session series of nutrition education through EFNEP. 96% improved in at least one behavior construct. 78% showed improvement in one or more food resource management practices (i.e. plan meals before shopping, compare food prices, or make a list before shopping). 95% showed improvement in one or more diet quality indicators (i.e. eating vegetables, fruit, drinking less regular soda, and cooking dinner at home). 77% showed improvement in one or more physical activity behaviors (i.e. exercising for at least 30 minutes or making small changes to be more active).

Comments from graduates about what they learned from EFNEP include: “We now do a shopping list before we go to the store. We drink even more water than before and cut back on junk food, eating more fruits and veggies.”; “I eat more fruits and veggies so my son will feel more confident in eating them more.”; “Walking more, eating healthier and being more active with my kids.”; “I buy more fresh vegetables and fruits and I try to exercise and move around more.”; “I have learned how to budget my money more often and to eat healthier.” “I’m reading labels more, shopping wisely, and not buying sugary snacks.”

Staff also worked with 204 youth in 10 groups with the 6-session “Choose Health: Food, Fun and Fitness” curriculum at Benton Hall Academy Grade 5, Jarvis Middle School Grade 6, West Canada Elementary Grade 6, and Dolgeville Summer Learning Camp Grades 5 and 6.

Networking with County Departments and community agencies continues as a high priority for visibility and marketing of EFNEP efforts. Referral networks have been established with DSS (including Herkimer County Employment Readiness Program), Herkimer County WIC Program, Catholic Charities of Herkimer County (including all the food pantries in the county), Herkimer County BOCES (including the Family Literacy Zone), Public Health (including Healthy Families Program), Arc Herkimer (including Valley Commons program), Care Net Pregnancy Center of Central NY (Herkimer office), and Bassett Healthcare Herkimer.
There are twelve active 4-H clubs with 188 members and 34 independent 4-H members located throughout Herkimer County. All 4-H members are encouraged to take part in community service activities in various ways. These include participating in parades, caroling, bake sales for fire departments and scholarship funds. Members also cleaned up watersheds, read for Ag Literacy week, led an incubation project in a classroom, donated food & supplies to the Herkimer County Humane Society, and built & donated bird feeders.

Several 4-H members participated in “make & take” activities in the youth building at the Herkimer County Fair. The public watched demonstrations on cooking, making jellyfish, learning how to fish and coloring craft.

4-H’ers showed their creative side at a canvas painting workshop, painting a cardinals scene. Many items on display at the fairs were a result of club projects.

4-H members also improved their horticulture knowledge with a seed starter workshop and participation in the Utica Zoo Garden Project. 4-H volunteers helped plant flowers around the Utica Zoo as part of the Community Partners for the Association of Zoos & Aquariums (AZA) Accreditation. 4-H volunteers also planted and maintained the five raised-bed vegetable gardens at the zoo.
**May 2019**

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Cornell Cooperative Extension
Herkimer County

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CCE of Herkimer County continues to promote local foods through the “Herkimer County Local Foods Map.” In 2018, 59 farms were listed on the map along with ten farmers’ markets. Five thousand copies were distributed at 80 organizations and businesses in Herkimer County. Funding for this map was provided in part through a grant from Herkimer County Mental Health through the Farm Family Assistance Project and the Herkimer County Office for Aging.

Eating locally grown and raised foods increases awareness of where your food comes from, local growing seasons, and the importance of supporting local agriculture. Local foods are fresher and more nutritious than foods that have traveled many miles and days to get to your table.

When you buy direct from local farmers, your dollars stay within your community and strengthens the local economy. This helps preserve farming as a livelihood and rural landscapes as farmland in Herkimer County.

To view an online version of this map, please visit http://blogs.cornell.edu/cceherkimer/programs/nutrition-programs/herkimer-county-local-foods-map/

CCE also coordinated pre- and post-season meetings for Herkimer County Farmers’ Market Managers who shared market plans, successes, and challenges for the 2018 season and discussed ideas for the 2019 season.
Throughout the year, 4-H members participate in horse, dairy cattle, sheep, beef cattle, dairy goat, swine, poultry and rabbit projects by attending clinics and various shows on the county, regional, state, and national levels. 4-H members also participate in animal quiz bowls, challenges and judging contests.

4-H clubs celebrated National 4-H Week by constructing displays in their communities. The theme for 2018 was “Inspire Kids to Do.”

To celebrate New York “Ag Literacy Day 2018,” the book “Before We Eat” by Pat Brisson and illustrated by Mary Azarian, was read to second grade classes in Herkimer County and then donated to the school library. This was made possible by the Herkimer County Farm Bureau. Reading this book gave the children a glimpse on what it takes to bring the food we eat to us in order to nourish our bodies and spirits.

Seventy-two members participated in Public Presentation events throughout the 4-H year. Four Herkimer County members went on to the District Public Presentation event in Oriskany and all four received blue ribbons.

Thirty-five Herkimer County 4-H members exhibited dairy cattle, beef, swine, dairy goats, and sheep at the 71st Annual Farmers’ Museum Junior Livestock Show in Cooperstown. 4-H members also exhibited projects and animals at both the Herkimer County Fair and the New York State Fair.
Getting the most feed value out of home grown corn silage can help dairy farms get improved performance from their herd while also lowering their dependence on purchased feed. Harvesting corn silage at the right stage of maturity is extremely important so Dave Balbian put on a series of clinics on five farms in August just prior to harvest with twenty-nine people attending.

Spring Forage Quality
For the past 15 years the Central New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops team has monitored the quality of first cutting hay in local fields to give producers a better idea of when they should begin harvest. Alfalfa height is a good indicator of alfalfa and grass quality.

Improving the Corn Silage Hybrid Selection Process on Dairy Farms
Twenty-one dairy farms are participating in a NY Farm Viability Institute (NYFVI) sponsored project that uses green corn silage forage quality analysis to compare the performance of hybrids on a farm. The summarized results were presented to participants at meetings so they could see how their corn silage quality compared to those of others and to the Corn Silage Hybrid Trials conducted by PRO-DAIRY.

Twilight Beef Producer Meetings
Livestock Specialist Ashley McFarland conducted two twilight beef producer meetings during the summer. A pasture walk was held in conjunction with Dr. Mike Baker at the farm of Paul and Winnie Nelson in Schoharie, NY. Forty-five producers came to learn about the opportunities for grass fed stocker cattle in our area. A second twilight meeting was held at Endless Trails Farm in Madison County. Besides taking a look at their cattle and pastures, participants got to look at their handling facility and Ashley discussed different options for chutes and answered questions on specific systems.
August 2019
Thirteen 4-H members from Herkimer and Oneida Counties participated in the 5th Annual Mohawk Valley 4-H Livestock Show and Sale in September at the Herkimer County Fairgrounds. Participants exhibited their beef cattle, hogs and lamb at the one day, no-fit show designed to give the 4-H members one last “fun” show of the season. Shows began with a showmanship division for each species.

At the conclusion of the shows, five beef steers, seven market hogs, two lambs and three lots of meat chickens were sold at the auction. Revenues totaled over $21,000 with $4,200 of that being from second time sales which will be used to support this annual event. 4-H members will use their revenues in various ways including purchasing new market animals for next year’s auction, college tuition, and donations to various charities.
2018 marked the nineteenth year of a unique partnership between Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Herkimer County, NY FarmNet, and Herkimer County Mental Health. The purpose of the collaboration has been to provide improved support and assistance to the Herkimer County farm community affected by the stresses of operating a farm business and farm life.

“How to Assist Your Farm Customers During Challenging Times” was the topic of an Agribusiness Breakfast Roundtable held in Richfield Springs in March. NY FarmNet consultants provided resources for agribusiness professionals as they work with farm families. Feed, seed, and equipment dealers, veterinarians, and bank representatives were in attendance.

Funds from this project also helped support the printing of the “2018 Herkimer County Local Foods Map”. Five thousand copies were distributed at 80 organizations and businesses in Herkimer County. See “Local Foods” page in June for more details.

In September, NY FarmNet had a booth at the Central NY Farm Progress Show where over 6,000 people attended the two-day event, showcasing a variety of farm services and programs (nearly 100 exhibitors this year). Staff from Herkimer County Mental Health, Dispute Resolution Center at Herkimer County Catholic Charities and the NYS Agricultural Mediation office assisted with the booth reaching over 100 farm families.

NY FarmNet is available at 1-800-547-FARM (3276). A 24-hour, 7 day a week answering service is available and is free and confidential. Website is www.nyfarmnet.org
In 2018, the CCE Herkimer County 4-H Program reached over 2,000 youth throughout the county. These youth were served through the traditional 4-H Club program, day camps, special interest, independent study and school enrichment programs such as: Farm/Home Safety Day Camp (for 5th grade students), Conservation Field Day (for 6th grade students), the Government Intern Program (for high school seniors), and Ag Literacy Day (2nd grade students). The 4-H program is able to operate with the help of over 350 dedicated volunteers.

Over 50 youth from across the state participated in the Agri-Business Career Conference. This is a two-day conference held in Cobleskill sponsored by 4-H, New York Farm Bureau Foundation for Agricultural Education and SUNY Cobleskill. In Herkimer County, the Central New York Farm Progress Show helps offset the cost by donating money for Herkimer County youth to attend.

$1,502.73 was raised at Tractor Supply through their 4-H Paper Clover Fundraiser. Herkimer County 4-H used those funds to provide leadership opportunities and scholarships towards 4-H ABC Trip, Teen Winter Weekend, STARR, NYS 4-H STEM Camp and Career Explorations.
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From all of us to all of you,

Happy Holidays
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December 2019
Mission Statement

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.