The Local Food Initiative, supported by a USDA Rural Business Development Grant, provided new and established food entrepreneurs with a broad selection of program opportunities to build upon their existing knowledge. The Initiative was kicked off with a two day seminar entitled *Skills, Scale and Sustainability*, a program developed by agricultural consultant Shane LaBrake with the goal of assisting farmers in assessing their skills and assets in order to plan for future resilience and peace of mind. The day-long training *Stovetop to Storefront* was attended by 14 budding food entrepreneurs and taught by Amanda Hewitt, Product Developer at Nelson Farms in Cazenovia, NY. Amanda covered the essentials of food business planning including: food safety, licenses, recipe approval, labeling, marketing and production records. The panel *Catering & Prepared Foods: Tips for Success* featured entrepreneurs from St. Lawrence and Essex Counties which included a farmer, a caterer, a food truck, a prepared meals vendor and the manager of a food hub and shared-use kitchen. Berry farmers attended *Save the Berries: Managing Spotted Wing Drosophila*, a program in response to a destructive fruit fly that was first detected in the North Country in 2014. The attendees learned new methods for managing the pest from three instructors. The four-part *Value Added Meat Series* included classroom and hands-on production experience. A popular program about cultivating mushrooms was held on three dates, with a full house each time. The Local Food Initiative reached 147 program participants and provided ongoing technical assistance with 21 farmers and food entrepreneurs considering value-added production.
Agriculture Program

Extension’s Ag Team collaborates with campus-based faculty and Extension associates to design and conduct field research and educational programs on a wide array of topics related to crop and animal production. CCE of SLC works towards improving Ag production efficiency, food quality, and safety which results in positive changes in production practices and improved economic returns for farmers. In 2018, Extension’s Ag Team reached 1949 program participants through 122 multi-session educational events including dairy and livestock, dairy & meat processing, biofuels, horticulture, farm business management, natural resources and rural economic vitality. Many more are served during farm visits, at the Extension Office and through the media.

Cornell Summer Intern Gains Experience; Brings Value to Extension and Farmers

Like many Cornell interns before her, Amanda Bond, an agronomy major from the College of Ag and Life Sciences, made the journey north to join the Extension team as a summer research assistant. Cornell’s summer internship program is designed to develop students’ skills and appreciation for off-campus research and Extension outreach. Amanda was mentored by Kitty O’Neil, Regional Crop and Soils Specialist, and assisted with systematic and geospatial assessment of field crops pests and diseases in Northern NY. She was trained to accurately identify and assess severity of several important corn, soybean and forage pests and diseases and constantly traveled the region to monitor crop conditions, pests and disease progression. Her observations were incorporated in maps of disease and pest progression. Critical observations were communicated immediately with farms and later with NYS Integrated Pest Management programs. Amanda’s dedication and positive energy bought great value to the Association and the region.

Natural Resource and Horticulture Program

Debilitating tick-borne illnesses are on the rise, a particular threat to farmers, gardeners and outdoors enthusiasts. In 2018, Extension presented this topic directly to more than 200 people, including school nurses, Master Teachers, the AARP local chapter, garden clubs, and at various public venues from Hammond to Massena. Given the fast pace of new findings about Lyme and associated diseases, it is critical to keep bringing updated information to the public. Having founded the St. Lawrence County Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) Task Force in 2013, Extension continues to take the lead in monitoring for EAB the across St. Lawrence County this year, and also in providing educational materials, classes and other resources to residents and community leaders. Preliminary results from this summer’s monitoring traps indicate a sharp rise in EAB numbers, mainly along the Seaway, compared to those in 2017. 2018 was the second year Extension provided educational materials, as well as plants donated by Never Tire Farm, and seeds from the Hart Seed Company, to more than 30 migrant farm families. At the invitation of the North Country Migrant Education Program, Extension participated in NCMEP’s Annual Picnic in Canton this June, reaching approximately 70 people in total.

2018 Farm-to-School Program

St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES and Extension collaborated on a new Farm-to-School Program supported by funds from NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. This two-year program extends through 2019 with the primary goal of increasing spending by public schools on agricultural products grown in New York State, by providing the produce in a form more readily accessible to the school kitchens. Extension provided the technical assistance to develop a scope of work and request for proposals from third party, private sector partners to provide processing services. Big Spoon Kitchen, in Potsdam, was awarded the contract to minimally process NYS grown produce in Extension’s Harvest Kitchen. These minimally processed vegetables are purchased by public schools in the BOCES system. The $79,615 in funding included improvements to kitchen assets by installing a walk-in cooler for finished products awaiting delivery. It also covers the cost of compensating the third-party processor, purchasing supplies and costs for Big Spoon to rent the shared-use Harvest Kitchen throughout the duration of the grant period.

Mission: Extension provides unbiased, educational outreach to the North Country through research, education and demonstration in Food and Agricultural Systems, Life Skills, Community Enhancement, Rural Stewardship, and Youth Development.
Consumer Education with Harvest Kitchen Preservation Series
What do you get when you combine high-quality seasonal ingredients, knowledgeable instructors and a modern teaching kitchen? The Harvest Kitchen Preservation Series! The Harvest Kitchen Preservation Series focuses on seasonal recipes, produced in a flavorful and safe way. Each workshop features products from a different local farm with the remaining ingredients donated by Nature's Storehouse. Every class includes background information for safely preserving the food as well as a hands-on portion in the kitchen. Instructors shared recipes, tips for taking home and ways to use the finished products. Workshops included Crispy Pickles, Demystifying the Pressure Canner, Fun with Fermentation, Hot Sauces and Homemade Condiments, Strawberry Bonanza, and All About Tomatoes: Sauces and More. The workshop series reached 82 program participants. The courses were taught by the Local Food Program Leader and Master Food Preserver volunteers.

Feeding Your Future; An Exploration of Agricultural Careers
Extension joined forces with BOCES to showcase exciting agricultural career opportunities to area 7th and 8th grade students. The collaboration created a program entitled Feeding Your Future, a one day pilot program hosted at ADON Farms of Parishville on June 6, 2018. The event boasted a wide range of exhibiting agricultural businesses and professionals, including BOCES Ag Teachers, Extension, Farm Credit East, Cargill Nutrition, DFA, NY State Ag & Markets and ADON Farms. The event drew in 120 students from five school districts. Each student visited six stations (animal care, veterinarian, crop management, technology, milk quality assurance and nutrition) and had a tour of the dairy farm in which numerous areas of management (calf care, cow comfort, nutrient management, hoof trimming, herd health, etc.) were discussed. At each station and along the tour, presenters discussed their chosen career path, the level of education required to perform their job, and how to get involved as a student. Future events will be considered for 2019.

Micro-Grants Awarded to Farmers and Food Entrepreneurs
In early 2018, Extension secured funding from the NYS Workforce Development Institute to administer $2,500 micro-grants for new or existing entrepreneurs operating at the Harvest Kitchen. Applications could include such costs as permitting, food safety training, product development, kitchen rental, equipment and business development. Five entrepreneurs were awarded grants along with free corresponding business development and technical assistance in value-added production from the Small Business Development Center and Extension, respectively. Extension continues, tirelessly, to deploy the Harvest Kitchen as a community asset.

4-H Youth and Family
Extension engages youth and family programming with three distinct mission mandates including citizenship, healthy lifestyles and STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math). 4-H delivers a variety of program opportunities that reach youth in many different settings including home, school, afterschool, summer camp and the Extension Learning Farm. 4-H programs use the experiential education model and are delivered by trained volunteers and youth development staff. 4-H activities address at least one of the mission mandates but often intertwine all three.

2018 Program Results
The Youth and Family Team engaged 8,581 participants:
- 249 4-H Club members
- 833 campers at 4-H Camp Overlook
- 249 day campers at the Extension Learning Farm
- 649 students in the Extended School Day Program
- 62 senior citizens in Walk with Ease & Tai Chi Programs
- 1,982 youth in school enrichment activities
- 2,021 youth & adults in short-term special interest programs
- 51 young adults employed by 4-H Camp Overlook
- 2,243 participants in ESNYug & EFNEP nutrition education
- 242 enrolled volunteers (4-H, MGV and MFPV’s)

“The knowledge I gained at the Extension Learning Farm has been invaluable to my career and I would recommend this to anyone wanting to learn more about animals, community, or research.” - Former SUNY Canton Work Study Student
4-H Camp Overlook Welcomes Cultural Exchange in 2018
It has become increasingly difficult to recruit well qualified and culturally diverse college-age adults to work at 4-H Camp Overlook. After careful consideration, Camp Overlook partnered with Camp America, an international staffing agency and full-service cultural exchange summer camp resource to hire three international staff: David Gordon and Ruby Pease of England and Rory Jarden of Ireland. Like our homegrown counselors, Camp found the international staff to be truly dedicated to the campers, a trait amplified by their additional training, screening, and values instilled by Camp America. They brought new enthusiasm to Camp and engaged in a cultural exchange and conversation that broadened many of the campers’ knowledge and understanding as global citizens.

Myth Busters Project Creates Opportunities for Youth to Explore Agriculture
Extension partnered with Clarkson University to develop an Agricultural Myth Busters Program using the Extension Learning Farm as a platform to engage youth in debunking farm myths using the scientific method. The concept evolved at an opportune time for Extension, as it had completed significant capital investments to ready the Extension Farm as a destination for agricultural-based learning. The $30,000 in funds provided by Clarkson allowed Extension staff to secure necessary program equipment and advance well researched lesson plans targeting the development of critical thinking skills. Areas of agriculture included in the project were maple production, animal science, dairy production, biosecurity, agricultural careers, food systems, sustainable energy, natural resources and general STEM. While lessons remain in development at program end, over 900 youth from 11 school districts have participated in Myth Buster activities to date. The project will have lasting impacts for years to come.

Leveraging County Funding
St. Lawrence County appropriated $387,217 to Extension in 2018. It is anticipated that CCE of SLC will generate $1,399,645 in federal & state funding, grants & contracts, and program operations (including 4-H Camp Overlook). This represents a $3.61 match for every dollar in funding provided by the County Board of Legislators. Extension continues to devote significant energy toward developing new partnerships, enterprises and revenue streams to build financial resilience and sustainability. Examples of this year’s efforts included the Ag and Markets funded Farm-to-School Program in partnership with SLL BOCES, State funds in support of a Farm-to-Table Direct Marketing Program, and the Clarkson University supported Myth Busters Project. Innovative partnership like these enable CCE to better serve the people of St. Lawrence County.

Examples of Funding Leveraged with County Support
- $85,519 in Smith Lever and NYS 224 funding for educator staff.
- $342,098 in matching funds for the NNY Regional Ag Program.
- $300,000 in State Funds for NNY Harvest NY Program.
- $126,544 in Federal and State funds to deliver the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP) and Eat Smart NY!
- $71,760 in USDA RBDG in support of the Local Food Initiative.
- $53,170 in Federal funds for after-school programs in six school districts.
- $362,142 in State funds for employee state fringe benefits.
- $615,140 in program and camp fees that enable Extension to meet its mission.

Eat Smart NY! Returns to St. Lawrence County; Strengthens and Expands Local Partnerships
Eat Smart NY! has a long history of serving the residents of St. Lawrence County. As a key Extension program, it provides important outreach to SNAP-eligible families, helping them make healthy and sound decisions with their limited food dollars. In recent years, local impacts have been hindered as the State restructured the program and staff levels fluctuated. In 2018, CCE of Oneida, regional lead, subcontracted to CCE of SLC to employ two Nutrition Educators ensuring important community partnerships are established and residents benefit from the program. Educators were only in place for the last four months of the program year, but results are evident with over 1,860 youth and 250 adults served in 248 nutrition classes and tabling events. Educators fostered new partnerships for better access to target populations. Examples include DSS, Office for the Aging, GardenShare, Health Initiative, Transitional Living, United Helpers, public libraries, schools, afterschool programs, summer camps, and food pantries.

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