Joint Extension and BOCES Partnership Gains Support

St. Lawrence-Lewis BOCES launched a new Agricultural Studies Academy (ASA) in the fall of 2016 in partnership with the Cornell Cooperative Extension of St. Lawrence County. The one-year program is open to incoming high school seniors and will offer a comprehensive introduction to a variety of agricultural sectors and related career fields.

Students earn credits toward a Regents high school diploma while also completing an introductory level agricultural curriculum and earning post-secondary credits. The Agricultural Studies Academy will focus on career and college preparation, as well as hands-on field experience in the North Country agriculture industry.

The ASA curriculum was developed with input from the local agricultural community and is focused on leadership development and service learning. All students will be required to participate in a “Supervised Agricultural Experience,” to help them develop important professional skills such as public speaking, team collaboration and communication. The ASA will build the next generation of producers and agricultural professionals. Investing in these young people today will bring new strengths and innovations to the agricultural industry long into the future.

The Academy is housed at the Extension Learning Farm in Canton, a facility owned and operated by Extension. Since Extension took ownership of the Farm in 1999, it has continued to develop the property as a resource promoting agriculture to the greater community. This Academy is in keeping with the facility’s educational history and may prove to be one of its most notable programs.

Above: 2016 Ag Studies Academy Student Body, Front Row (L-R) Kennedy Hayden-McGill, Cheyenne Fortier, Patty Gilbert (Ag Educator), Chelsea Smith, Emily Witkop, Back Row (L-R) Eric Barr (Ag Educator), Hunter Weaver, Travis Bresett, Randy Ward, James Ellard
**Agriculture Program**

Extension’s Ag Team collaborates with campus-based faculty and Extension associates to design and conduct field research and educational programs directed to 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 2016, Extension’s Ag Team reached **1,588 program participants through 135 multi-session educational events** including dairy and livestock, dairy 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.

**Extension Establishes Local Foods Advisory Committee**

The village of Canton was the recipient of a Local Foods, Local Places USDA technical assistance award in 2015. The initiative was led by a local steering committee and culminated in an extensive two-day planning workshop. The resulting report delineated four broad goals for advancement of the local food economy:

- **Goal #1** Maintain Momentum and Strengthen Communications
- **Goal #2** Develop New and Existing Farmers
- **Goal #3** Implement Marketing and Awareness Strategies
- **Goal #4** Explore Aggregation, Distribution Systems and Value-Added Capacities to Build and Connect Supply and Demand

CCE of St. Lawrence County was selected as the responsible organization to maintain momentum and improve communications. In response, the Extension Board of Directors established a Local Foods Program Advisory Committee effective January 1, 2016. Since that time, the committee has assisted with the implementation of the Extension Kitchen, Ag Studies Academy, Cuisine Trail and the proposed Local Food Initiative.

**Extension Kitchen Unveiled; Dedicated to Anita Figueras, Association Finance Manager (Retired)**

CCE of SLC completed construction of the “Extension Kitchen” at the Extension Learning Farm in July of 2016. The Kitchen provides a broad platform for Extension’s educational programs in the areas of agriculture, nutrition and youth development, and will also provide local producers with a long-awaited commercial kitchen environment for light food processing and development of value-added products. Extension is proud to provide this service to the community and excited to introduce the Kitchen to the public. The facility was built with support from the USDA Rural Business Development Grant program and NYS Workforce Development Institute. Extension worked with members of the agricultural community and governing agencies, including the NYS Department of Health and NYS Department of Ag and Markets, to ensure its viability.

**St. Lawrence County Emerald Ash Borer Task Force; Extension Programs Target Preparedness**

The Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is responsible for the destruction of 50 million ash trees and counting since it discovery in Michigan in 2002. Ash tree species are a very common street tree throughout the United States; they are an important forest species and food source for wildlife and are also considered a commercially valuable tree. The potential economic impact upon local municipalities for EAB mitigation, salvage operations and removal of dead or hazardous trees is staggering. In 2016, St. Lawrence County established the EAB Taskforce upon which Paul Hetzler, Extension Natural Resource Educator, plays an active role. In support of the Taskforce’s efforts, Extension hosted workshops on EAB biology, life cycles, detection methods, infestation symptoms, monitoring, and reporting procedures.

**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.
I am so glad I took this job. I will be changing majors and later transferring to a different university, because I now know I want to work with children. I’m going to be a teacher!” - 2016 Farm Day Camp Counselor and H.S. graduate.

Anaerobic Digesters for Small Farms: An Economically Viable Technology

While anaerobic digestion (AD) installations on large farms have increased, small farms have not taken advantage of AD technology. Through this project, Clarkson University installed a prototype digester at the Extension Learning Farm and 54 farmers participated in four anaerobic digester workshops. Pre- and post-test surveys indicated farmers had high interest in AD technology. Participants’ interest remained high after the workshop however, respondents were more likely to be interested in producing hot water heat from AD technology rather than electricity. Results also demonstrated that 63% of the attending farmers indicated an interest in reducing pathogens on their farms. In addition, 69% of the farmers indicated some or great interest in the separation of manure solids. Given current low milk and energy prices the project was extremely successful as it demonstrated a high interest in AD technologies. Responses clearly indicate that discussions about AD need to go beyond energy generation to included pathogen control and solids, as well as nutrient recovery.

Advanced Livestock Production Series
CCE of SLC partnered with the SPARX Corporation to deliver a series of advanced workshops targeting increased product quality and profitability for livestock producers. The initiative, reaching 272 participants, was part of a USDA Rural Business Enterprise Grant pursuing job creation and retention on North Country farms. The year-long educational series, led and coordinated by Betsy Hodge, Livestock Educator, included: Quality Beef and Sheep Assurance; Balancing Livestock Rations; Pasture/Hay School; Sheep Artificial Insemination; Meat Inspection and Regulations; Custom Cutting and Chef Training; Business Development for Livestock Producers; and a Local Meat Awareness Dinner.

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.

2016 Program Results
The Youth and Family Team engaged 6,507 participants:

- 285 4-H Club members
- 751 campers at 4-H Camp Overlook
- 183 day campers at the Extension Learning Farm
- 250 students in the Extended School Day Program
- 75 senior citizens in Walk with Ease Program
- 3,069 youth in school enrichment activities
- 1,303 youth in short-term special interest programs
- 57 young adults employed by 4-H Camp Overlook
- 379 families in EFNEP nutrition education
- 155 enrolled volunteer (4-H and Master Gardeners)

Left: Farm Day Camp participants find new use for wool. Enrollment exploded in 2016, nearly doubling its 2015 level.
SLC Boasts Its First National 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors

The St. Lawrence County 4-H Shooting Sports Program sent two representatives to the National 4-H Shooting Sports Training in June, 2016. Nicki Hamilton-Honey, 4-H Educator; and Sue Smith, 4-H Volunteer, were certified as State Level Instructors in Archery and Shot Gun, respectively. Along with the eight other NYS representatives, Nicki and Sue now hold certifications that will enable them to train and certify new 4-H Shooting Sports Instructors in New York State. Their dedication will strengthen both the County and State 4-H Shooting Sports Programs (which normally reaches approximately 30,000 youth annually). In 2016, local Extension staff and volunteers introduced 133 youth the world of outdoor sports.

4-H Afterschool Programs Builds Momentum

Extension balances the traditions of 4-H with the changing demands faced by today’s families. Quality afterschool enrichment activities are a priority among parents. Extension, though collaborative partnerships and competitive funding streams, has delivered afterschool programs for 20 years and reached 11 school districts. Examples include Advantage Afterschool, Safe Schools/Healthy Students and now Extended School Day, which just received funding for five more years. In 2016, the North Wind Afterschool Program was also instituted at the Extension Learning Farm. North Wind introduces youth to agriculture and the natural world, while incorporating important components of 4-H, such as citizenship and healthy lifestyles. The program is part of a broader strategy to better engage the community with the Extension Learning Farm and build the Association’s sustainability. North Wind has reached capacity with plans to expand in 2017.

TAUNY Recognizes 4-H Camp Overlook

4-H Camp Overlook, founded in 1945 by CCE of St. Lawrence and Franklin Counties, is located in nearby Mountain View, NY. The camp has served generations of campers and its program has stood the test of time. The personal growth experience afforded to its campers, young staff and visiting school groups is even more relevant today than when Burt Rogers, SLC 4-H Agent, and J. Frank Stevens, Franklin County 4-H Agent, worked together to purchase and establish the camp program. Hundreds of local youth still benefit from quality time spent at camp every year. It is with that distinction that TAUNY recognized 4-H Camp Overlook with its 2016 Very Special Place Award.

Leveraging County Funding

St. Lawrence County appropriated $378,541 to Extension in 2016. It is anticipated that CCE of SLC will generate $1,192,854 in federal & state funding, grants & contracts, and program operations (including 4-H Camp Overlook). This represents a $3.15 match for every dollar in funding provided by the County Board of Legislators. Extension projects continued growth in program generated income and anticipates creating additional leverage to its County appropriations in the future.

Examples of Funding Leveraged with County Support

- $81,919 in Smith Lever and NYS 224 funding which provides for educator staff.
- $342,098 in matching funds for the NNY Regional Ag Program.
- $300,000 in State Funds for NNY Harvest NY Program.
- $120,000 in Federal funds to deliver the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program (EFNEP).
- $105,000 in USDA RBDG and NYS Workforce Development Institute funds in support of the Extension Kitchen project.
- $53,170 in Federal funds for after-school programs in six of the county’s school districts.
- $247,506 in State funds for employee state fringe benefits.
- $628,575 in program and camp fees that enable Extension to meet its mission.

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