2018 Annual Report

“The Cornell Cooperative Extension system enables people to improve their lives and communities through partnerships that put experience and research knowledge to work”
Volunteer leadership is a vital force of Cornell Cooperative Extension Washington County. The loyalty and hard work of volunteers greatly expands available programming. Members of the Board of Directors are elected by the enrollees and are responsible for determining our local mission, setting program direction, ensuring adequate resources, and enhancing Cornell Cooperative Extension’s public standing.

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Abby Henderson, Elizabeth Higgins, Elisabeth Hodgdon, Amy Ivy
Laura McDermott, Jim Meyers, Tresa Rusinek
Crystal Stewart, Maire Ullrich
CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION IS:

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

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.

An education system which extends Cornell University’s land grant programs to citizens across New York State.

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

Extensive. High value educational programs are offered in every county and the 5 boroughs of New York City.

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

A partnership between the federal, state and county governments, Cornell University, and the citizens of New York State.
Cornell Cooperative Extension’s 4-H Youth Development program develops citizenship, leadership, and life skills in youth through hands on learning. The essential elements of 4-H are the opportunities to experience independence, belonging, generosity, and mastery.

The 4-H youth development program is unique among youth-serving organizations because it combines the strength of a community based youth organization with the knowledge gleaned from university research to provide positive youth development opportunities.

4-H Youth Development Programs in Washington County are delivered using the traditional 4-H Club Model, special interest programs such as 4-h Shooting Sports, Tractor Safety, Camp Sew For You, and a variety of afterschool enrichment programs.

Over 400 youth are enrolled in almost 50 4-H Clubs supported by over 150 adult volunteers. An additional 500 youth were reached through special interest programs.
Agriculture & Food Systems: 4-H agriculture programs teach youth how to be engaged food citizens with a greater understanding of the plants and animals that contribute to feeding their communities and the world.

Science, Technology, Engineering & Math (STEM): 4-H science programs provide 4-H youth the opportunity to learn about Science, Technology, Engineering & Math through fun, hands-on activities and projects.

Healthy Living: 4-H healthy living programs help 4-H youth learn how to lead lives that balance physical, mental, and emotional health.

Citizenship & Civic Engagement: 4-H citizenship programs empower young people to be well-informed citizens who are actively engaged in their communities and the world.
National Safe Tractor & Machinery Operation Program & ATV Safety Workshop

Educates youth about:

• Risks of farm related activities
• How to act safely in different farm work settings
• Identifying & correcting farm hazards to prevent injuries and illnesses
• How to obtain safety information about equipment that they may be operating

Youth 14 and 15 years old are required to have a Tractor & Machinery Operation Certificate when employed on farms & other agribusinesses that require operating equipment.

Youth receive a NSTMOP certificate once they pass the written & tractor operation tests.

4-H Shooting Sports

Ready—Aim—Succeed

4-H Shooting Sports is open to all youth ages 12-18 who are interested in firearm safety and environmental conservation. The program features demonstrations, hands-on activities, and range time over 6—8 week period. Disciplines include Air Rifle/Pistol, Archery, Rifle, Shotgun, Muzzleloader plus Hunter Education & Bowhunter Certifications.
Ag and Food Systems Education
Engaging youth & communities in their ag and food systems

INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND INSIGHTS
Into the County’s ag and food systems

A MORE SKILLED AND BETTER PREPARED WORKFORCE
for jobs on area farms and in local ag enterprises

EDUCATED CONSUMERS
Able to make well-informed food choices

SCHOOL-BASED AGRICULTURE EDUCATION
Goal: Educate students on agriculture and strengthen their connection to the agriculture present in their community.
• All students would experience hands-on activities designed to cultivate their knowledge and interest in agriculture to be future informed consumers.
• Agriculture is integrated into local school curriculum and meets Common Core standards.
• Youth learn how the food they eat and the fibers they wear get from farm to table/closet.

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING
Goal: Through hands-on opportunities youth and adults learn about working farms and food businesses
• Offer or partner with existing programs to coordinate internships in agriculture, food systems and nutrition education for students.
• Working with Master Gardeners and other initiatives, youth learn how to grow and prepare their own food.
• Youth learn for themselves, and teach others, about the relationship between food, health, their community, and the environment.

JOBS AND THE ECONOMY - WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS
Goal: Help youth and adult learners develop the skills and knowledge they need to build sustainable local food systems.
• Youth and adults work together to grow vegetables for donation to local food pantries and for sale throughout the county in partnership with food community leaders. Workshops and discussions about nutrition, sustainable agriculture, food systems, leadership, diversity and service are also an integral part of the program.
• By exposing students to a diverse array of nutritious and flavorful foods, and by bringing awareness to growing their own food and farming’s environmental benefits, students will be encouraged to make healthy choices for their bodies and for their communities.

12
Seasonal lessons were created to be delivered to grades K-2

Nearly 4,000
Youth received Ag & Food System Education Programming in school

3
Schools gardens planted and maintained
The Capital Area Agricultural and Horticultural Program (CAAHP) provides agricultural and horticultural education through workshops, newsletters and consultations, utilizing traditional and electronic means to:

- Improve business profitability and performance
- Assist producers in attaining goals for a better quality of life in their business and work environment
- Guide and support environmental stewardship
- Support growers in developing markets for their agricultural products
- Provide leadership for fostering relationships between the agriculture industry and the general public

The CAAHP educator team works with a wide variety of agriculture and horticulture producers across a six-county region, reaching a diverse clientele, from those who aspire to start farming as a profession to established, multi-generational farm businesses.

Extension educators received a grant to promote crop insurance to farmers and growers in the region. Educators gave 13 presentations to 489 participants on concepts of crop insurance and the importance of using crop insurance as a risk management tool.

CCE educators also conducted a meeting for farmers to provide updates on income taxes. One participant had this to say about the workshop: “Actually, I was thinking on my way home it was the best $20 I’ve ever spent! I learned more than I thought I would. I think all the questions were really helpful; it might seem like it only applies to your situation, but usually, it can be useful for someone else too.”

Additionally, Hudson River Tractor collaborated with Cornell Cooperative Extension to conduct an Adult Tractor Operation Workshop. Over 40 participants were given the opportunity to receive “hands-on” training in the operation of farm machinery. The consensus of participants was that the workshop was quite helpful in understanding the safe operation and maintenance of farm equipment.

The Second Annual Cut Flower Conference was attended by more than 60 cut flower growers and people interested in diversifying their operations by adding cut flowers to their crops. The conference was held at the Carey Institute for Global Good and attracted growers from the Capital Region and beyond.

Topics included adding cut flowers as a crop to a family farm, high tunnel nutrient management, dahlia production, weed management on small farms, an update on CAAHP’s lavender and mint SARE project, and a farmer-to-farmer panel discussion.

### Agriulture Entrepreneur & Market Development

- **53** Attended the Bedding Plant Conference
- **85** Producers attended the Managing Dairy Manure Systems Workshop
- **30** Producers participated in a Managing Pasture & Forage Quality Workshop
- **1,033** Growers subscribed to the CAAHP Quarterly Newsletter
- **1,741** Growers received the weekly CAAHP E-Newsletter
- **107** Farmers attended the Winter Green-Up 2018
Farm Business Management

Assisting farmers to better understand their business and make decisions to improve profitability and long-term viability is a key part of our education program, both in groups and one-on-one. “Ag Issues Facing Assessors” was a class designed to provide information about farmers and their land-based businesses. The two-day class provided 12 continuing education credits as well as insight into how farms operate. Rated highly by the attendees, one participant stated, “This was really helpful. Best class I’ve been to.”

Field Crops/Agronomy

CAAHP presented a workshop, “Hay is for Horses, But What Kind?” in conjunction with the Albany County Farm Bureau. Horse owners and farmers were educated about hay that is appropriate feed for horses with Cushings Disorder, Insulin Resistance, and Hyperkalemic Periodic Paralysis. These metabolic disorders are a challenge for horse owners and an opportunity for hay growers to tailor specialized products for a growing market.

CAAHP held its first annual “Spring Turnout Grazier Meeting” to discuss “Managing Pasture and Forage Quality to Meet the Nutritional Needs of Meat and Fiber Livestock.” Farmers learned how to match the varying nutritional needs of livestock with the variety of forage they produce on their farms. As the livestock industry grows, CAAHP’s educational programs are helping farmers refine their skills and knowledge to be successful.

Livestock

Livestock production is a vibrant component of New York’s agriculture industry with high potential for growth. Although most livestock in New York is raised on small farms, this industry contributes $893 million in sales to the rural New York economy as well as an extensive and diverse range of products to local markets.

Members of the CAAHP team hosted one of eight New York Small Farms Summits held around the state. The summits brought together 160 farmers and industry participants along with 450 New York livestock farmers that were surveyed electronically. These summits resulted in the development of a plan to secure the future of the New York State livestock industry.

Beef quality assurance (BQA) is a nation-wide certification program which was developed to help ensure a safe, wholesome and quality beef product for consumers. A BQA meeting was held in Albany County where 30 beef producers received Level 1 and level 2 certification.
Modernizing Communication—This year ENYCHP has taken several steps to make our information easily accessible to growers. Our recorded webinars and podcasts (soon to be released) allow growers to learn at a time and place that is convenient to them. 16 videos are also now available to growers on our YouTube station and team social media accounts.

In addition we piloted a text messaging system that notifies growers in an instant of the most important alerts in our region. This season 8 pest alerts or business management reminders were sent from our specialists.

In February 2018, ENYCHP hosted the first Eastern NY Fruit and Vegetable Conference in Albany NY. This two day event averaged 300 attendees per day and offered programming on Tree Fruit, Vegetable, and Berry production, as well as Business Management topics. 93% of people surveyed said that they would attend again, and 99% said the conference was well worth the trip!

In its second year, ENYCHP is expanding the conference to three days to include a general session, more in-depth programming, as well as grape production. This year’s conference will return to the Desmond Conference Center on February 19th—21st, 2019.

ENYCHP Research continues in 2018. With 23 grant funded projects across all commodities, our specialists continue to work on the concerns that are most important to our region’s growers. Research results and insights were presented during 250 hours of programming and trainings with 3750 growers in attendance.

Our applied research is conducted on local private farms, as well as collaborating organizations such as the Hudson Valley Farm Hub, Cornell Willsboro Research Farm, and the Cornell Hudson Valley Lab.
## 2018 Grower Concerns

### ENYCHP Team Response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Labor Issues</strong></th>
<th>Liz Higgins, ENYCHP Business Management Specialist, hosted in person Ag Labor Management classes throughout our region and created 9 recorded webinars. Her soon to be released podcast series on</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Tree Fruit Production</strong></td>
<td>Tree fruit production is a huge part of the Eastern NY economy keeping Dan Donahue and Mike Basedow busy with an impressive series of educational meetings and ongoing research projects on topics that include Bitter Pit, Precision Management and Tree Decline.</td>
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<td><strong>Reduced Tillage and Cover Crops</strong></td>
<td>700 acres of Asian Kabocha squash is being grown in the lower Hudson Valley and sustainable soil management practices especially for muck soils are needed. Ethan Grundberg and Chuck Bornt are looking for solutions.</td>
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<td><strong>BioControls</strong></td>
<td>Crystal Stewart has been comparing the efficacy of biological fungicides at a number of farms in the region. Another type of biocontrol uses native nematodes that help control all kinds of difficult to manage soil insect pests. Teresa Rusinek &amp; Chuck Bornt are using them to control wireworms in sweet and Irish potatoes.</td>
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<td><strong>Innovations in Farming Systems</strong></td>
<td>Farmers are using high tunnels, low tunnels, hail netting, insect exclusion systems etc. to help reduce the variability of unpredictable weather, open up markets and provide employment consistency for good help. Amy Ivy has helped growers understand crop nutritional requirements, pruning and cultivar selection in these systems and Laura McDermott has worked with tunnels and exclusion netting systems to improve berry quality.</td>
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<td><strong>New &amp; Emerging Pests</strong></td>
<td>Spotted Lanternfly, Allium Leafminer, Spotted Wing Drosophila, Brown Marmorated Stinkbug, Swede Midge, Leek Moth, Black Stem Borer.....each year the list of new and emerging pests grows. ENYCHP specialists remain on the front lines, monitoring for pests and providing information on ID and management.</td>
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<td><strong>Integrating Information Technology</strong></td>
<td>Jim Meyers has been leading the charge in utilizing data and integrating it into usable formats for grape growers in the region. His first project has focused on weather data, but the possibility of using drones to gather information to help growers diagnose specific problems and take immediate action is part of the plan.</td>
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<td><strong>Food Safety</strong></td>
<td>The Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) has put Food Safety concerns in the spotlight. This year the team hosted two meetings addressing Listeria in apple pack houses and several Farmer Food Safety Trainings.</td>
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