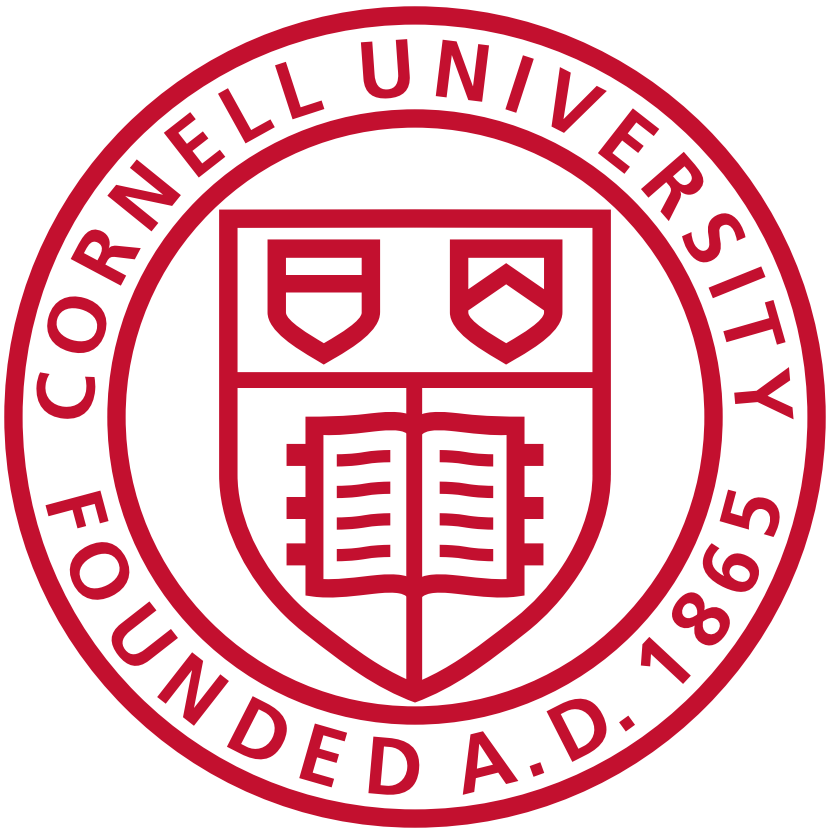
Cornell Cooperative Extension
Monroe County

2018 Annual Report


CORNELL UNIVERSITY
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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County has experienced increased GROWTH in 2018. We have expanded program outreach as well as our participation in research projects, and added new educational opportunities for our community. We are appreciative of the continued support of our local and state government partners. Their increased financial support has enabled us to establish new programs and reach new audiences.

An example of this is added funding to build capacity within our 4-H Agriculture in the Classroom program (AITC). Schools throughout Monroe County can now access AITC educational resources, enrichment opportunities, as well as train the trainer workshops to enhance student learning. CCE-Monroe staff have been diligent to seek grant funding and their hard work has paid off. We are currently reaching new audiences through an Agritourism grant, have built capacity to develop urban 4-H clubs, and are doing important research in the area of invasive species within our horticulture program. Our community partners have also provided increased support through sponsorship of our Annual Cornell Chicken BBQ, fundraisers, and program outreach. We have also seen an increase in requests from our local media – providing opportunities to educate Monroe County residents in a wide array of seasonal issues. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County is once again becoming a trusted source of unbiased research-based education in our community.

We trust you will be inspired by the GROWTH within each of our program areas. This annual report highlights our outreach efforts but is by no means comprehensive. We invite you to stop by our office or visit us online at Monroe.cce.cornell.edu to find a class or workshop that interests you. We're here to support our Monroe County community, putting experience and research-based knowledge to work for you.

Andrea M Lista, Executive Director

MISSION:

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County provides research-based information and educational programming to ensure the vitality of agriculture, strengthen families, promote health and well-being, responsibly improve home and community landscapes, and enhance our natural environment.

Serving Monroe County since 1913

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities.

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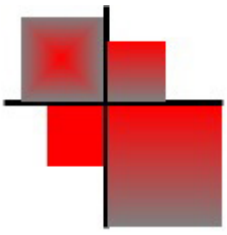

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County believes in shared leadership through locally elected Board of Directors and active program development committees. Our dedicated staff and volunteers work with Cornell faculty, agriculture, nutrition, and 4-H youth development teams to put research to work to grow, strengthen and sustain a healthy, vibrant and economically strong Monroe County.

STAFF & CORNELL TEAMS

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Andrea Lista

Administration
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Michele Schepisi-Ritchie

Agriculture
Jarmila Haseler

4-H Youth Development
Susan Coyle
Tara Defendorf-Kuba
Theresa Lippa, AmeriCorps Vista
Odeth Morales
Michele Schepisi-Ritchie

Horticulture
Elizabeth Berkeley
Luanne Crosby
Walt Nelson

Cornell Vegetable Program
Robert Hadad

Integrated Pest Management
Lynn Braband
Brian Eshenaur

Nutrition – Finger Lakes Eat Smart NY
Allison Hyman
Jessica Kouzan
Maggie McHugh
Iluminada Vilca
Michelle Weiler

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Harold Coller – Finance
Donna James – Finance
Jenn Matthews – IT
Kim Robb - Finance
Christi Smith – IT

We could not accomplish our mission without the dedication of over 200 volunteers. Thank you to each and every one of you who have given your time, talent, and treasure to educate and support Monroe County residents. Your contribution can not be adequately measured. Cornell Cooperative Extension continues to grow because of you!

Volunteers contributed over **12,374 HOURS** of their time

the equivalent of

=

6 Full Time Employees

AGRITOURISM

MONROE COUNTY TO BECOME AGRITOURISM HUB

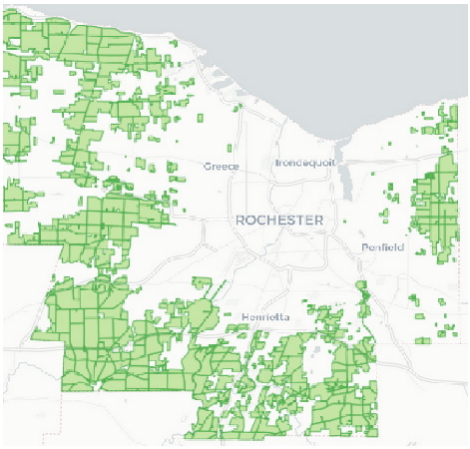
Travel and tourism is a substantial, growing component of the New York State economy. Passenger counts at NYS airports, hotel room demand, and travel spending have all significantly increased. Direct traveler spending of $64.8 billion supported 8.3% of all NYS employment, generating $8.2 billion in state and local taxes and saving each household in the state an average of $1,133 in tax burden.

As one of the 11 New York's economic regions, the Finger Lakes region is the third most visited. Its $3 billion tourism industry sustains more than 50,000 jobs and Monroe County accounts for over 1/3 of it, making it the number one county for tourism in this region.

However, despite being the most visited and populous county in the region, everyday interaction between farmers and the non-farming community is limited. This main reason being the majority of the population is based in the county's central urban area, whereas farms are located mostly on its rural fringes (picture below).

In order to bring these two communities together, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County has developed a training program and is leading the initiative to aid farmers interested in starting an agritourism business.

FARM DISTRIBUTION IN MONROE COUNTY



Funded by a Monroe County contract and the Genesee Valley Regional Market Authority, this year-long training course focuses on increasing awareness of local agriculture and educating folks about food growing, all while providing additional income to farmers through agritourism.

With assistance from our partners Visit Rochester and the Small Business Administration Center of Niagara County, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County developed a training curriculum, teaching farmers how to successfully develop and execute agritourism, including a field trip to a local agritourism proven farm.

Ten enrolled farmers, assisted by the consultants, began developing their own plans. The first stage of the training, a series of three workshops covering an agritourism overview, as well as social media marketing, encouraged entrepreneurial ideas and creativity as the first steps to success.

The second and current stage, involves finalizing and executing an event of choice with assistance from the CCE-Monroe Agricultural educator. Selected activities include a pumpkin patch, cut flower U-Pick operation, sunflower spectacular, wine tasting, public tours, cider press demonstrations, and on-farm dinners with farmer's commentary displaying lots of imagination and proving that agritourism opportunities are unlimited.

Barn at Broccolo Farm to be repurposed for an educational event venue. Photo: Jarmila Haseler

During the final stage, utilizing event evaluation through customer surveys and an end-of-the-year workshop, the participating farmers will assess their progress. Alongside evaluating success and challenges, the workshop will include presentations from other industry experts to encourage the farmers to utilize their newly gained skills to further grow and build on what they have started during their pilot year.

Grace Durgin, Durgin Family Farm, at her cut flower U-pick operation. Photo: Jarmila Haseler

REGIONAL AGRICULTURE TEAMS

CORNELL VEGETABLE PROGRAM

Robert Hadad, Judson Reid, Christy Hoepting, Julie Kikkert.

The Cornell Vegetable Program is one of the premier regional agricultural Cornell Cooperative Extension programs in New York, serving a large multi-county region in the western and central parts of the state. The team's Vegetable Specialists work together with Cornell faculty and Extension Educators statewide to address the issues that impact the industry. The Cornell Vegetable Program provides educational programs and information to growers, processors and agri-business professionals, arming them with the knowledge to profitably produce and market safe and healthful vegetable crops, contributing to the viability of farms and the economic wellbeing of New York State. Specifically, our program focuses on food safety, variety evaluation, market development, pest management, and cultural practices.

Our newest team member, Elizabeth Buck (far left)

EXPANDING EXPERTISE IN FARM FOOD SAFETY

Washing cucumbers at a western New York farm. Photo: R. J. Anderson, Cornell

Robert Hadad attended the first full class in NY to be trained under the new Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) initiative called On Farm Readiness Review (OFRR). The goal of this new program is summed up by the phrase, “Educate Before You Regulate”. Together with the New York Department of Ag & Markets inspection division, efforts will be made to visit produce farms that choose to participate, over the next 3-5 years providing one on one educational assistance. The team of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) and Ag & Markets specially trained individuals will help guide growers into compliance with the FSMA produce regulations before actual compliance inspections occur. The soft approach hopes to ease growers over the apprehension and frustration of yet another set of regulations they have to deal with. The OFRR trainers intend to work closely with growers to make the farm visits a conversation about food safety, pointing out best practices, and to answer questions as action items of the regulations are followed. The two-day training Robert attended gave him greater insight into the regulations to enable him to “speak the language” of the regulation but not sound regulatory. The training was both in the classroom and on-farm; scenarios were role-played in the classroom and trainees looked for how the farmers were practicing food safety on the farms visited. Robert will be joining with one or two Ag & Markets personnel and one or two CCE educators (also trained) to visit farms in our region. This program will have significant impact for growers. It will certainly help them move forward with implementing farm food safety practices. This will help make food safer for consumers and protect our food industry.

REGIONAL AGRICULTURE TEAMS

PARTNERSHIP WITH RIT GROWS REMOTE SENSING APPLICATIONS FOR VEGETABLE INDUSTRY

Large acreage vegetable fields lend themselves readily to remote sensing technologies. CVP processing vegetable specialist Julie Kikkert and Cornell University Vegetable Pathologist, Sarah Pethybridge have continued a three-year partnership with scientists from the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT) Center for Imaging Sciences. Initial investigations, funded by a grant from the USDA CARE Program have focused on management of white mold disease in snap beans, one of the most difficult diseases to manage. The project focuses on risk modeling and detection of crop flowering. When favorable environmental conditions exist, spores of the fungus infect bean flowers and the infection later spreads to the pods making them unmarketable. So far, the project has narrowed down the useful spectral wavelengths, which will make the technology more affordable to the industry. Additionally, the technology has been highly accurate at detecting flowering in snap beans, critical knowledge for the timing of fungicide sprays. In 2018, the group has expanded their work to table beets, where imaging of crop emergence and growth is being correlated with beet root quality and yield. This project was initially funded by Love Beets USA. The group was also recently funded by a large NSF grant to RIT (subcontract to Cornell) and will provide student training, as well as focus on disease risk modeling, harvest scheduling, and yield modeling. The project is also supported by advisory team members from Seneca Foods, Farm Fresh First, Love Beets, Agrinetix, Harris Corporation, and Headwall Photonics.

CVP Vegetable Specialist Julie Kikkert with RIT team at Cornell AgriTech research farm in advance of a flight over a 2018 snap bean research plot. Photo: R.J. Anderson, Cornell.

NEW FACES NEW SKILLS !

(Back Row) Mike Stanyard, Jodi Putman, Ali Nafchi, Margaret Quaassdorff, John Hanchar

(Front Row) Nancy Glazier, Libby Eiholzer, Linda Risewick, Joan Petzen

NWNY DAIRY, LIVESTOCK & FIELD CROPS

The NWNY Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team is one of the outstanding regional agricultural Cornell Cooperative Extension programs in New York, serving a 10-county region in the western part of the state. The team's specialists work together with Cornell faculty and extension educators statewide to provide service to the farms large and small whether dairy, livestock, hay, corn, wheat or soybean focused. The team is part of the Cornell College of Agriculture & Life Sciences' Pro-Dairy program outreach. Educational programs and individual assistance cover a wide area of best management practices and as well as dairy farm business. For dairy farms, a bilingual dairy specialist provides producers with employee training and human resource facilitation in Spanish. Educational and support venues range from individual farm management team meetings and troubleshooting to multi-day classroom and hands-on training, as well as from ongoing farmer group discussion meetings to thematic day long symposia.

It is always hard when experienced team members call it a career and retire. The NWNY Team lost two very valuable members this summer. Cathy Wallace, our team administrative assistant, and Jerry Bertoldo, our senior dairy specialist, decided to move on to the next stages of their lives after illustrious careers serving the farmers and agribusinesses of NWNY. We all wish them well!

We have been fortunate to fill these two positions with excellent professionals in their field. Linda Risewick is our new team administrative assistant and Margaret Quaassdorff is our new dairy specialist. Both are based in the Genesee CCE office in Batavia. Linda brings with her an excellent background of working within the agricultural community. She has worked for Farm Credit, Upstate Farms, and for the past 11 years, as the office manager for Carolina Eastern-Crocker in Stafford. Margaret has her dairy training from the University of Vermont and the University of Wisconsin – Madison. After graduate school, Margaret used her dairy nutrition skills as a consultant for Vita Plus in Wisconsin. Most recently, Margaret was the herd manager of the 300-cow robot/parlor teaching dairy at the Northeast Iowa Dairy Foundation. Please join us in welcoming the new members of the NWNY Team!

REGIONAL AGRICULTURE TEAMS

SOIL HEALTH: A MEANS FOR ACHIEVING ON-FARM ECONOMIC, ENVIRONMENTAL & RESOURCE OBJECTIVES

Various advisory and program committees that direct the work of the NWNY Program reinforce what team members hear from other producers about the increasingly important topic of soil health -- understanding agronomic, economic, environmental and other resource considerations underlying decisions regarding soil health practices are key to realizing optimal soil health practice adoptions levels.

Team members developed and implemented multi-subject matter, multi-target audience research and extension efforts to increase farmers' and other stakeholders' (i.e. land owners, advisors and others) understanding of soil health topics.

At the request of USDA/NRCS regional economists, the NWNY Team developed and delivered a one-hour webinar for NRCS conservation planners titled, "Cost Effectiveness in Conservation Programs: Re-turn on Investment for Conservation Practices and Systems", February, 2018. At the request of the USDA/NRCS, NE Soil Health Specialist, the NWNY team developed and delivered a similar session for a NYS Soil Health Planners Certification Course, May 2018.

American Farmland trust contracted with the NWNY Team as part of a Great Lakes Protection Fund Pilot Project in the Genesee Watershed to increase the adoption of conservation practices and enhance soil health. Extension organized learning circles that engaged women non-operating landowners in learning opportunities about soil health and conservation practices. In addition, the NWNY Team worked to implement a Soil Health TAG Team, and participated with the WNY Soil Health Alliance Board. A team member is also a participating in American Farmland Trust's first NY State Soil Health Specialist Training Program.

The live NRCS webinar event had 313 participants, 131 viewers of the archived webinar to date, and about 40 participants from the NYS Soil Health Planners course who learned to estimate expected changes in profit associated with conservation practices and systems. Analysis provides valuable information when helping farm business owners with decisions. Estimates from the NYS certification course suggest that about 25 certified planners will apply what they learned while working with over 300 NYS farmers, helping them achieve objectives via soil health practice planning and implementation.

Learning circle participants represent underserved landowners that are hungry to learn about farming practices and how they enhance productive value of their land while protecting the environment. Building soil health is part and parcel to achieving these goals. Through reflective appraisal exit evaluations women have indicated an increase in knowledge of greater than 20% from participation in learning circles.

The first Soil Health TAG team consisted of 20 participants, which included growers with advanced knowledge and experience in the adoption of soil health management practices. The group was able to sufficiently talk about their experiences and provide knowledgeable advice to those in the group looking for more direction on specific types of management practices.

A DEMONSTRATION OF PRECISION AGRICULTURE

NWNY specialists are currently working on a proposal for the Development and Demonstration of an Inexpensive Method for Side-Dress Nitrogen Application to Enhance Water Quality, Soil Health, and Farm Profits While Reducing Nutrient Inputs and Weed Populations. Nitrogen is a very critical input for agricultural production especially for corn. Because considerable variation occurs within and across production fields in soil texture, soil type, and other major factors, uniform fertilizer management strategies must be considered. However public concern over water quality and environmental impact requires prudence in application methods. Additionally, uniform application of a fertilizer over the entire field can be both costly and environmentally unsound.

Cornell researchers and the NWNY team are proposing a project to overcome the aforementioned issues. The overarching goal of this utilization and demonstration project is to assist row crop (such as corn, soybean, and sweetcorn) and vegetable growers to adopt the available innovative conservation technology (Y-Drop application) in an inexpensive way. This project will assist farmers in adopting sensor-based, variable-rate application methods (affordable and retrofit-able to existing farmer's applicators), to enhance soil properties, environmental quality, and farm profits while reducing nitrogen use, fuel consumption, and herbicide-resistant weed pressure. Sensor-based, variable-rate fertilizer application has a potential to reduce fertilizer application rates by half. By matching nitrogen applications based on the needs of crops, emission of reactive nitrogen to the environment can be reduced.

This project consists of two separate technologies: Sensor-based, Variable-rate Nitrogen Application (SVNA) System and Y-Drop platform, both to increase the nitrogen use efficiency. The target beneficiaries for this project are row crop and vegetable growers in New York State (Western New York), though the result of this proposed precision agriculture project can easily be used by other related sectors across NYS. The proposed demonstration project will be conducted in growers' fields in New York, including the following Counties: Allegany, Erie, Genesee, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Orleans, Seneca, Wayne, Wyoming, and Yates.

REGIONAL AGRICULTURE TEAMS

LAKE ONTARIO FRUIT TEAM

Craig Kahlke, Tess Grasswitz, Mario Miranda-Sazo, Mark Wiltberger, Liz Tee

The Lake Ontario Fruit Team partners with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wayne, Orleans, Niagara, Monroe, and Oswego Counties, Cornell University Cooperative Extension and faculty to provide educational programs for the commercial fruit industry, using research-based information to help the tree fruit and berry industries in New York compete in the world market and provide safe, high-quality produce for consumers. Program objectives include: maintaining competitiveness and profitability of NY fruit farms in a global market; evaluating new technology for potential increases in efficiency through applied research; assisting in the adoption and implementation of appropriate technologies; reducing financial, legal, labor, environmental, and health risks; and improving production and delivery of high quality fruit to consumers.

For the first time since 2016, we entered the field season with a full team! Mario, Mark, Tess, Liz, and Craig had a full slate of funded projects and routine monitoring this season. The team has been busy, with the planning of four summer events, the most in many years! The first meeting was the Plant Growth Regulator (PGR) Tour on June 29, the first of its kind in our region. Mario organized the program that featured the excellent work of Dr. Poliana Francescatto, who gave lectures and showed her research plots at the NYSAES in Geneva. Dr. Duane Greene, a world-renowned plant physiologist from MA, was also in attendance. Following the tour, Dr. Francescatto was honored at a luncheon and presented with a plaque for her excellent research and commitment to the NY tree fruit industry. Planning also took place for the annual LOF Summer Tour the LOF NextGen Young Fruit Farmer Study Tour 2018), and the Western NY Hard Cider Tour.

There was a change of venue this winter, as the Empire Producers Expo moved to the SRC Arena & Events Center on the campus of Onondaga Community College in Syracuse. Despite the unfamiliar scenery, overall reviews from attendees indicated the venue was beyond adequate and the majority indicated it should be used again in 2019. Attendance at the Tree Fruit and other LOF-chaired sessions was strong. The largest session had over 125 attendees. The LOF Winter Fruit Schools in Lockport and Newark were successful as well. Over 250 attendees were counted over both days. The team invited out-of-state and out-of-region speakers for both meetings. Again, evaluations were positive in support of new faces delivering new information. High attendance and feedback at these events also indicates that the programming at the state-wide Expo and regional schools are different enough to continue to attract growers and industry.

Fruit Tree Session at Empire Producers Expo. Photo: LOF Team

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

4-H GROWS HERE

Over the past year, the Monroe County 4-H Youth Development Program has continued to grow and offer more opportunities to youth in our county. To support youth toward making a positive impact on their communities and build life-skills they must have safe spaces to explore and grow. 4-H provides this by building community.

4-H Club Programs are an example of youth activities offered in safe environments to explore and grow while being mentored by caring adults. Over the past few years, we are proud to say, we have seen our 4-H Community Club Program grow from a handful of clubs to 17 very active and engaged community clubs throughout the county. These 4-H clubs foster an environment that support the 4-H essential youth development elements of belonging, independence, mastery, and generosity. 4-H club members can be found actively working on group projects and engaging in activities that give back to others through community service, all the while developing and showcasing the life skills they have gained that allow them to shine and grow to their potential.

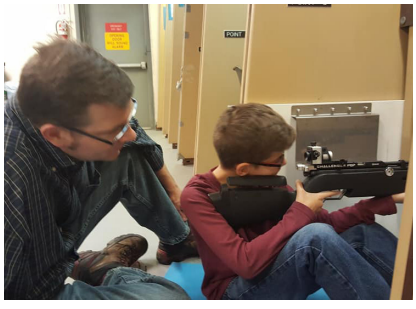
In order to further enhance our 4-H community club growth, our 4-H program applied this past year and was accepted to host an AmeriCorps VISTA. This opportunity allows our 4-H program to host a VISTA for the next three years of service. Our first year VISTA will be diligently working to promote 4-H and to recruit and train volunteers to grow 4-H community club opportunities within the City of Rochester. We look forward to our VISTA helping to accelerate the growth of our 4-H community club program while reaching and engaging new audiences.

Displaying awards at the 4-H Gymkhana event. Photo: Shawna List

Monroe County 4-H has also recently added a 4-H Shooting Sports program. As with all 4-H programs, positive youth development is the objective of the 4-H Shooting Sports program, which helps build life skills such as self-esteem, decision making, communication, responsibility, and self-confidence. Our program recruited and trained three 4-H volunteers to lead this new club. These volunteers took an active role in finding a location to offer the program and identify funding to purchase the equipment needed to run the program. With much 4-H staff planning and approval from our CCE-Monroe Board of Directors, our first 4-H Shooting Sports air rifle class has begun and we have a waiting list that is growing by the week. We will be offering future courses in 2019. Monroe County 4-H Shooting Sports programming exemplifies just one way 4-H has grown this past year.

4-H Club annual petting zoo at Mary Cariola Children's Center. Photo: Michele Schepisi-Ritchie

In addition to 4-H community club programs, 4-H provides educational opportunities through community collaborations and partnerships with the goal of introducing career exploration and workforce development programs. Over the past summer, 4-H was pleased to partner with Monroe Community College's Upward Bound program. Upward Bound is a federally funded program that provides academic counseling and other services for Rochester City School District high school students to help them graduate from high school and succeed in college. The program recognized a need for high school students to further examine career exploration and workforce preparedness. 4-H fulfilled that need by teaching a career exploration course over the summer. Students who participated in the 4-H career exploration class gave rave reviews and expressed gratefulness for the knowledge they had gained to prepare them for their future.



Colton practicing his aim at our new 4-H Shooting Sports Club. Photo: Kristen Bold

It is an exciting time to be involved in the Monroe County 4-H program as the program continues to grow, develop, and meet the needs of youth throughout our county. Our staff are dedicated professionals who work hard to ensure programs are innovative, inclusive, and experiential. Increased community interest and engagement is evidence to this hard work.

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

AGRICULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM SEES GROWTH

Did you know that a calf weighs about eighty pounds at birth… that pigs do not sweat… or that pumpkin flowers are edible? Students and educators are finding the answers to these questions while building agricultural literacy through hands-on experiences through Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County's 4-H Youth Development Agriculture in the Classroom (AITC) Program. CCE-Monroe is pleased to have Susan Coyle join our 4-H program team as an educator in the AITC Program.

Wild edibles. Photo: Susan Coyle

Susan Coyle, AITC 4-H Educator.

Established in 1985, New York Agriculture in the Classroom (NYAITC) is a partnership among Cornell University, the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, the New York State Education Department, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the New York Farm Bureau. The mission is to foster awareness, understanding, and appreciation of food and fiber production, while helping educators, students, and their communities learn about and engage with agriculture and food systems. Career explorations are another facet of AITC, as students explore of the many faces of agriculture utilizing connections to the research and resources of Cornell University. The job outlook is bright for the agricultural field and there are many different types of careers to meet different areas of interest and educational level.

Susan brings a wide variety of experiences to CCE-Monroe, including twelve years as an educator within the Cornell Cooperative Extension system. She has a vast knowledge of education in youth nutrition, animal science, garden-based learning, and natural resources. Susan has camp and field days experience as well as countless hours in school, afterschool, and club settings. She has many connections in Monroe County and looks forward to making many more as she begins to develop the AITC Program here. Susan is excited to bring the AITC message to Rochester City Schools and across Monroe County. She looks forward to providing hands-on activities in schools as well as connecting youth to 4-H through participation in 4-H Clubs in their schools and communities.

INTRODUCING ODETH MORALES

Odeth Morales is a new team member of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County joining us as a 4-H educator. Odeth is a current graduate from Wells College where she studied in the field of Psychology. She says, "I have always been passionate about understanding how people and the world work together and applying that knowledge to develop tools and implement structures that support the well-being of others. My passion has always focused on the well-being of youth inside and outside the classroom."

Growing up and working in urban areas, Odeth has always known the importance of being a part of a strong community and the role education has in maintaining those strong communal structures. She is a firm believer that the access of resources can significantly impact the success of our youth. Odeth has always been involved in community work and made sure that she was immersed in leadership roles that promoted positive leadership development.

While at Wells College, Odeth was the founder and president of the Latinx grass roots activism club/organization "Querencia" whose focus is on cultural preservation, education, and community organizing. Throughout her academic career she worked collaboratively with other groups that focused on empowering the voices and bodies of marginalized groups. Throughout her career she has worked with inner city youth at the Fresh Air Fund teaching life and social emotional learning skills. About her work with youth, Odeth stated, "The work of grassroots activism that focuses on whole identities of our youth is what I saw missing from classrooms settings. The absence of representation and advocacy in school settings I found separated a lot of youth from their academics. I am excited to be a part of Monroe County's CCE 4-H team because the Cooperative Extension focuses and highlights everything large institutions should be providing the community which is education, resources, and opportunities."

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Odeth has also worked on movements that teach youth empowerment, anti-bullying, and diversity in the classroom. While being an educator for the Fresh Air Fund she also served as a liaison to the youth, ensuring that the Fresh Air Fund youth had the resources and support needed to maintain a positive well-being. Additionally, she has worked as a teacher assistant at a private non-traditional school that consist of rural and suburban youth ages K-8th with a focus on working one-to-one with youth with different abilities. Odeth remarked, "I am glad to be a part of an organization that understands how important building youth both internally and externally is to their success inside and outside the classroom. 4-H provides the tools, support, and encouragement that youth need in order to be successful without tearing away from important educational core values." We are excited to have Odeth join our team!

AMERICORPS VISTA: VOLUNTEERS IN SERVICE TO AMERICA

In August, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County welcomed Theresa Lippa, an AmeriCorps VISTA member, to the 4-H team. AmeriCorps VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) is a national service program whose members bring passion and perseverance where the need is greatest by supporting organizations that help eradicate poverty.

Theresa recently graduated from Roberts Wesleyan College with a Business Administration degree, and wanted to join a program that allowed her to serve as a catalyst for change, while living and working alongside community members to advance local solutions, and meet our nation's most pressing challenges.

Theresa is working to expand essential life-skill building opportunities to underserved youth in Rochester through 4-H experiences and 4-H club development. Her overall goal is to open 8 to 10 new 4-H clubs in the city of Rochester within the next year. By developing improved systems, Theresa expects to increase the number of 4-H clubs and therefore enhance educational opportunities for urban youth. Theresa will work to meet this goal by networking in the Rochester community, recruiting volunteers, and locating sites to host 4-H clubs.

4-H SUMMER STEM PROGRAM

The 4-H Summer STEM program has been excelling the past two years with the help of our summer Urban Fellow – and it is expected to keep on growing!

Rochester Urban Fellows is a ten week summer program for local undergraduates facilitated by the University of Rochester's Center for Community Leadership. Each year an Urban Fellow serves with CCE-MC for the summer to create, expand, and support 4-H programs. The goal of their work is to combat the significant Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math (STEM) learning loss that occurs over the summer in underserved youth populations in the City of Rochester.

This past summer, our most recent Urban Fellow, Casey Sheils, facilitated programming for six consecutive weeks in five different locations, including Friendship Children's Center, Cameron Community Ministries Youth Program, Phillis Wheatley Community Library, Frederick Douglass Recreation Center, and LaGrange Recreation Center. One engaging learning activity involved using the Pedal Power Bike, where the youth could ride the bike to make a smoothie. Another activity involved making a glow in the dark lava lamp out of glue, mason jars, and glitter. Other fun learning activities that 4-H's Summer STEM Program have incorporated include making marshmallow shooters, elephant tooth paste (a chemical reaction making slime!), egg drops, oil spill cleanup, and stomp rockets.

Our goal is to not only teach the material, but to help children realize their own potential, interests, and capabilities as a STEM student – learning that anyone can be a scientist, regardless of their background, race, orientation, gender, and ability!

Urban Fellow, Casey Sheils leads Summer STEM activity. Photo: Staff

HORTICULTURE

COMMERCIAL HORTICULTURE

The Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County Horticulture Program and its Diagnostic Lab supports landscape horticulture and sports turf by aiding the success of these firms with research based information.

Asian Worm study. Photo: Karen Klingenberger

One of the highlights in 2018 was the successful research grant with the NYS Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program in an effort to quantify how invasive Asian worms degrade compost and hardwood mulch as well as their impact to turf quality. This greenhouse study is in cooperation with Kyle Wickings, Cornell University soil ecologist and Summer Scholar Ella Maddi, an undergraduate at Maine's Colby College. Asian worms were collected from Cornell's Botanical Garden as well as land in Webster, NY for the tests. The worms were introduced to containers containing coarse sand and clay soil covered with either sod from Batavia Turf, compost, composted hardwood mulch, or just left bare. The overarching goal was evaluating how the worms interacted with the turf, compost, and mulch. Two destructive harvests show the worms quickly move to the turf grass after mining the mulch or compost. Surprising, there was not a statistical difference in turf quality between containers with and without worms. However, overall turf quality was lacking in all containers due to the growing environment.

A second short term project within the Commercial Horticulture program involved nutritional consultation with an area garden mum grower with 3000 plants where micro-nutrient deficiencies were observed. After fertilizer assessment and fertilizer injector calibration, the grower is considering modifying their nutritional program in 2019 to embrace one developed by Cornell researchers using both liquid and a controlled release fertilizer. Encouraging these research-based cultural practice changes can improve crop quality, leading to improved sales.

The Diagnostic Lab continues supporting landscape firms and consumers with impartial sample diagnosis. Weather events often relate to future disease and insect incidences, including rapid winter temperature fluctuations such as those in February 2018. Abiotic stress initiated many of the maladies received. Numerous perennial canker diseases including botryosphaeria and phytophthora are a latent result of 2017 weather. Third party diagnostic assessment offered by the CCE-Monroe Diagnostic Lab can avoid unnecessary pesticide application entering the environment.

CONSUMER HORTICULTURE – A FOCUS ON GROWING PLANTS AND PROGRAM

Market in the Park with Pat Maurer and Joseph Dean. Photo: Staff

This past May CCE-Monroe Master Gardeners Volunteers ventured into new ground and created another outreach opportunity to serve our community. The closing of The Rochester Civic Garden Center (RCGC) meant the end of their annual plant market, a favorite community event for local gardeners. With the blessing of RCGC, CCE-Monroe's Master Gardener Volunteers set out to keep this fun garden tradition alive. Hence, the annual Memorial weekend plant sale at Highland Park's Warner Castle was rebranded as Market in the Park.

With a vision to use this event as a teaching opportunity and a way to introduce new plants to the neighborhood, Master Gardener Volunteers identified and secured excellent vendors with quality products, spent hours doing "back of the house" chores and ensured a strong team of volunteers for the Ask a Master Gardener booth. The volunteers gave on-the-spot coaching to community gardeners in plant selection and garden design.

Even with a compressed time frame the event came to successful fruition. Visitors to the new Market in the Park were thrilled. It was a financial success for vendors and the Master Gardener Program.

We will surely miss the RCGC and the service they provided our community. We are thankful to have the opportunity to carry on this spring tradition. The Master Gardener Volunteer efforts gained the respect of many vendors, the admiration of a neighborhood, and a chance to provide a community of gardeners with plants that will beautify the landscapes of our communities. The spring of 2018 was not only a season for growing plants but also growing CCE-Monroe's horticulture program and consumer outreach.

HORTICULTURE

HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?

Bob Pacer. Photo: Staff

The spirit of competition can be a real motivator and add excitement to our daily routine. This summer a Master Gardener Volunteer (MGV) wanted to freshen up the gardens around the CCE-Monroe office building. She proposed a contest amongst the MGVs and with just a few words of encouragement she was off and running. The idea set out a ripple effect and within days we were seeing incredible garden makeovers. Five established but sad gardens on the property have started transforming into fun spaces, all with different themes and personalities. With a chance to introduce the neighborhood to some newer plant materials and ways to embellish, our MGV contest participants have really gone all out. Come and visit us to see a Deer Resistant Garden, an ABC Garden, a Shady Character Garden, A Plant-imal Garden, as well as, the Warm Welcome and Pond Garden. The contest ends next June at our annual MGV Garage Sale, and as all gardeners know…anything can happen in 8 months.

Laura and Carl Harder. Photo: Staff

GROWTH FOR GATHERING OF GARDENERS

The 2018 Gathering of Gardeners Symposium was an absolute success. This amazing event was over a year in the making with every single committee member involved. Our Monroe County Master Gardener Volunteers worked very hard to make sure that they created a day of learning and encouragement to all gardeners. Committee members chose the theme and speakers, handled registration, publicity, vendor recruitment, book sales, and venue selection. The team of people behind it was very proud of the educational event they created. Ticket sales were up this year, and attendees reported that the topics and speakers were innovative, smart, and engaging.

This was the first year for Gathering of Gardeners to be held in the spring, so we were a little anxious, especially for the onsite vendors that showcase premium plants, trees, shrubs, and garden related items. The weather was a little off, but in true New York State gardening spirit, it made little difference – our participants still enjoyed shopping for the new and unusual plants and embellishment that our vendors provided. Our Master Gardeners Volunteers are well under way to planning next year's symposium, so save the date April 27, 2019.

MASTER FOOD PRESERVATION CLASSES HAVE RETURNED TO CCE-MONROE!

The fruit of our labor. Photo: Staff

Whether you're preserving your own harvest or you've purchased locally grown fruits or vegetables, canning, freezing and drying can be effective ways to serve foods that taste harvest-fresh at a later date. To ensure that the products you serve are safe, it is important to follow tested guidelines for safely preserving foods by these methods. CCE-Monroe is again offering both information and hands-on, small group training in a variety of home food preservation topics. Our Master Food Preserver Volunteer is available to answer your food preservation questions, set up a lecture, or present a hands on training. Call our office for more information.

Strawberry Season Pop Up Jam Session. Photo: Staff

IPM/FLESNY

NYS INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT

The New York State Integrated Pest Management Program develops sustainable ways to manage pests and helps people to use methods that minimize environmental, health, and economic risks. CCE-Monroe is pleased to work closely with two of the NYSIPM team: Lynn Braband and Brian Eshenaur.

Lynn has major responsibilities in assisting New York State schools and municipalities in the implementation of IPM. Activities have included organizing school IPM implementation workshops throughout the state, surveying schools on the status of their pest management programs, and conducting IPM demonstration projects at schools. Recent projects have included addressing nuisance geese on athletic fields, efficacy testing of yellowjacket container traps, and wildlife damage management outreach such as the revision of the publication Beasts Begone.

Brian works with producers of greenhouse and nursery crops as well as Christmas tree growers. He conducts applied research and delivers educational programs in these areas, with the goal of improving pest management and the adoption of IPM techniques.

FINGER LAKES EAT SMART NEW YORK (FLESNY)

Finger Lakes Eat Smart New York (FLENSY) is part of a statewide initiative covering the counties of Cayuga, Chemung, Livingston, Monroe, Ontario, Schuyler, Seneca, Steuben, Tompkins, Wayne and Yates. The team is made up of 21 educators with experience in nutrition, public health, health education and gardening. Individuals who qualify for and/or receive benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) may participate in our free events. Three of these educators are based in the CCE-Monroe office.

FLESNY supports families eligible for SNAP to eat more fruits and vegetables, drink fewer sweetened beverages and practice healthy lifestyles. The team accomplishes this through free workshops, food demonstrations, cooking classes, grocery store tours and community events. They also support families and other community partners to build and sustain edible gardens, access to local fruits and vegetables, and school wellness. Nutrition educators works closely with collaborators to reach and engage SNAP participants with quality programming.

GROW GREEN COMMUNITY GARDEN

Grow Green Community Garden.
Photo: Michelle Weiler

Grow Green Community Garden is in the South West neighborhood near Joseph Wilson Foundation Academy school. Nutritionist Michelle Weiler met with Rawson Ducket, a resident featured on a local news clip seeking help and assistance with the garden. The two discussed how low-income neighborhood residents and school families (located directly across the street) need help with healthy food choices, how to prepare fresh fruits and vegetables, and healthy snacks the kids could make on their own. The decision was made to collaborate with the summer sessions at the school, a 6-week program. Each week students visited the garden followed by a nutrition lesson using Dig In! and CATCH lessons. The students also had access to a kitchen and do some food prep using fruits and vegetable from the garden. This small group has been so much fun to work with! They loved seeing where their food comes from and were very inquisitive about the plants.

FLESNY

CATCH NUTRITION IN SCHOOLS

Photo: CCSI Staff

Nutritionist Iluminada Vilca has been working with School #8 and School #17 using the CATCH curriculum. During a kiwi food tasting with approximately 200 children at both schools, the children shared if they "liked it", "not sure" or if it was a "no thank you" taste. It was a surprise to notice that almost all the children liked the taste of the kiwi fruit. This information was shared with the wellness committee, which was added to the children's snack and meal options. In addition to the ongoing CATCH classes at school #17, FLESNY is participating in the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) monthly meetings. During these meetings, they provide food demonstrations of featured FLESNY recipes. The recipe for April was Collards and Cranberries, which parents were eager to try and liked very much. Some shared they will try using them at home.

In addition, four new classrooms at School #17 wanted to incorporate CATCH in the classroom curriculum. Two classes were in Spanish and two classes were in English. On the last day of class, 4th grade children from Mr. McCree class created a healthy message for their school friends. They also received certificates after taking 11 classes from the CATCH curriculum. Mrs. Mathew's kindergarten class also "graduated" from the CATCH curriculum.

At the end of the school year, Iluminada received the Agent of Change award from School # 17 and Coordinated Care Services, Inc. for FLESNY programming and her dedication to the school. Congratulations, Iluminada!

Photo: Iluminada Vilca

FRESH HERBS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Photo: Common Ground Health

"It really has been a good year for gardening."

Michelle Weiler steps up in front of the class. She is a nutritionist and educator for the Finger Lakes Eat Smart NY Program. About 20 people are gathered in the simple, bare community room at Pinnacle Apartments in Rochester. The complex provides assisted, affordable living to hundreds of people of different ages and with a wide range of backgrounds, including special needs or a history of addiction. Around half the people who live here are elderly; all are low income. An interpreter is quietly echoing in Spanish everything Weiler says for a group gathered around one table. "It's been a great year for eggplants, peppers, garlic, root vegetables," she continues, getting everyone's attention with casual conversation before starting into the actual lesson. "You know, every season the garden grows, you have some good things and you have some things that aren't so successful."

Out behind Pinnacle's concrete tower, hidden away from the traffic and noise of South Clinton Avenue, is a large community garden. This productive green space has been here since before PathStone took ownership of the building in 2013. It was started by residents who were interested in growing their own food, with the support of management. Today it's still maintained by the people who live at Pinnacle, with support from the Eat Smart NY Program. The program's garden team does the literal groundwork of tilling the soil, providing the seeds and starter plants, and coordinating the harvest. The produce is then made available to the residents of Pinnacle. This year the patchwork of plots is filled with tomatoes, peppers, squash, beans, radishes, lettuce and herbs."I love cooking with fresh herbs," Weiler shares with her class, pulling several leafy bunches out of a bag. One by one, she passes them around for participants to smell and discuss.

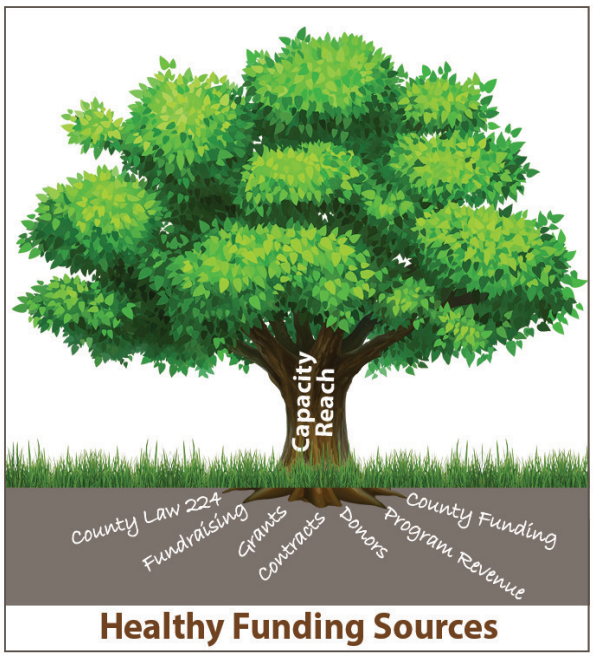
Individuals and families can use their SNAP benefits to buy plants which produce food for the household to eat. But even more than that: people can use their benefits to buy seeds. This opens up the possibility for individuals and families to grow precisely the fresh foods and herbs that Michelle is teaching about. Michelle isn't sure how many of the people she works with will actually use their SNAP benefits to purchase seeds and plants for growing their own fresh foods. However, she does know that having fresh herbs right at your fingertips makes it much easier to replace salt with a healthy alternative. Plus, there are the less tangible benefits. "I have seen participants watch their own gardens grow," she says. "It gives them an activity to tend to on a daily basis as well as seeing the rewards of healthier eating."

Excerpts from article by Matt Kelly, www.CommonGroundHealth.org

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

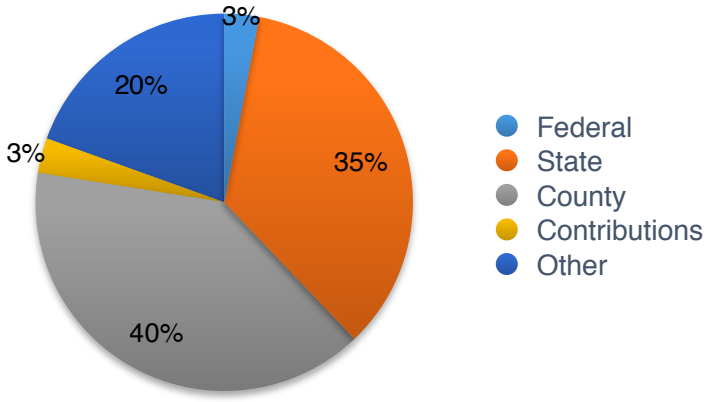
Healthy funding provides the root system in which CCE-Monroe grows. The stronger our funding, the more capacity we have to reach audiences throughout Monroe County. As our roots become strong, our reach becomes wider.

Thank you for your continued support of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County's programs and initiatives.



Healthy Funding Sources

2018 REVENUE SOURCES $769, 676 TOTAL



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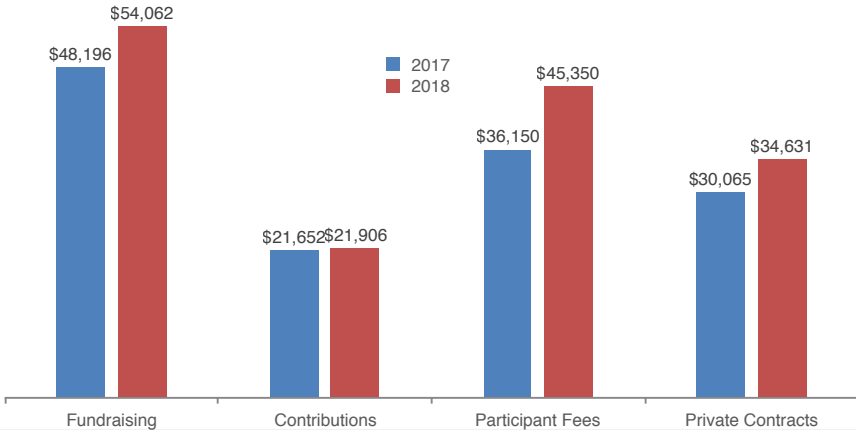
REVENUE INCREASES



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