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Monroe County 4-H Program Visits Local Second Graders for Ag Literacy Week

For one week each year, in celebration of New York agriculture, volunteers throughout the state read a book with an agricultural theme to second-graders. The book is then donated to the school or classroom library for Agricultural Literacy Week. Students and teachers benefit from hands-on lessons and receive follow up activities, all related to agriculture.

This year, the selected book, *On the Farm, At the Market*, was read to over 750 second graders in Monroe County. Administered by New York Agriculture in the Classroom, and delivered through Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County's 4-H program, Ag Literacy Week, sponsored in part by the Monroe County Farm Bureau, was a huge success.

Volunteers, including local dignitaries, visited schools throughout the county, reading in rural districts like Wheatland-Chili and Brockport, suburban districts like Webster and Greece, and to students in the Rochester City School District. After reading the book, students were invited to participate in an agriculture-based, farm-to-market activity.

For this activity, a few students were designated "farmers" and the remaining students were put into groups. Each group was given a \$20 budget with which to shop at the farmers' market. These second-graders used simple addition and subtraction to "purchase" food, while staying within the \$20 budget.

The Ag Literacy Week programming provided a "foot-in-the-door" for more Ag in the Classroom (AIRC) curricula to be shared in schools around the community. In April, May and June, 4-H offered one activity per month as an add-on to keep the conversation about agriculture going. 4-H staff presented information on water cycles, seed germination and creating smoothies from farmed produce.

Established in 1985, New York Agriculture in the Classroom (NYAIRC) is a partnership of Cornell University, the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, the NYS Education Department, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and the New York Farm Bureau. NYAIRC aims to increase agricultural literacy while supporting opportunities for hands-on teaching and learning, meeting state standards, enhancing student achievement, and connecting with community. (quoted from NYAIRC)

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

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.

In Monroe County, educators wishing to provide additional AITC programming may contact Susan Coyle, 4-H Program Leader at Cornell Cooperative Extension of Monroe County, by emailing to smc226@cornell.edu or calling (585) 753-2550. Programs are customizable depending on age group and setting (school, recreation center, library, etc.)

This program is proudly supported by New York State Senator Rich Funke and Monroe County Executive Cheryl Dinolfo.



State Senators Rob Ortt (left) and Joe Robach (above) read to local second grade classes during Ag Literacy Week.



Students from Neil Armstrong School (above left) and Paul Road School (above right) in Gates-Chili School District participate in a farm-to-market activity.