



**2017 Director’s Message**

Cornell Cooperative Extension continues to play a vital role in the Cortland County community. As you will read in our annual report, we are busy supporting farmers and families in a multitude of ways, and I am very proud of the work done by our staff, volunteers, and participants. Cortland County is a remarkable place to live, and as a new resident of the county (since August), I have been impressed with the time and effort that so many people devote to helping others.

In the coming year, we will be involved in collaborative efforts that we hope will begin the process of finding a new home and supporting the development of an indoor farmers’ market and commercial kitchen. Though we are in the early stages of the conversation, we are working on securing space in the currently defunct Homer Avenue Shopping Center together with the YWCA, the Cortland Historical Society, and Seven Valleys Health Coalition. The process is early, but we are excited about the future! In another possible collaboration, I spent a morning with Glenn Reisweber, the Executive Director of Lime Hollow, and though our conversation similar to “throwing spaghetti on the wall to see what sticks” (his wonderful analogy), we will be continuing our conversation about how we can together create outdoor education opportunities for all children in Cortland County.

2018 is a year of growth for us! Keep tuned! - David Rutherford, Executive Director.

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**Our Mission:**  
*Cornell Cooperative Extension puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability and social well-being.*

*We bring local experience and research based solutions together, helping New York State Families and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world.*



**“Building Strong & 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.*

# 4-H GROWS HERE



4-H'ers competing at the Jr. Iron Chef Contest at the County Fair!

## **4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:**

Rebecca Ireland-Perry, 4-H Team Leader

- Generosity ▪ Community Service
- Leadership ▪ Hands-on ▪ Belonging
- Life Skills ▪ Communication
- Citizenship ▪ Mastery
- Science, Technology, Engineering & Math
- Public Speaking ▪ Agriculture
- Healthy Lifestyles ▪ Career Exploration
- Independence

The primary goal of 4-H is to develop citizenship, leadership and life skills in youth through experiential learning opportunities and a positive youth development approach.

Today's 4-H program has three primary initiatives:

- Citizenship
- Science, technology, engineering, & math
- Healthy living

In the 2016-2017 program year, our 4-H Youth Development Program engaged over 2000 youth throughout Cortland County in informal educational opportunities and hands-on learning through these services:

**4-H Clubs:** There are currently fourteen active 4-H clubs in Cortland County, and a total 4-H enrollment of 305 youth. 4-H clubs are the traditional method of youth development, with a diverse offering of projects to develop or enhance necessary life skills.



**School enrichment programs:** Youth programs targeted 1160 Cortland County Kindergarten through 6<sup>th</sup> grade students. Programs such as **Ag Literacy, AgStravaganza, McMahon farm tour, incubation and embryology class projects, and Conservation Field Days** provide exposure to agricultural education.

**Cortland County Jr. Fair:** A strong component of the 4-H Youth Development program, the 4-H Fair serves as the culmination of a year's worth of 4-H club activities. 4-H members showcase their projects, animals, and the valuable leadership skills they have developed during the past year. Participating in the fair provides great opportunities for teaching youth responsibility and decision-making skills, as well as providing an educational experience for the general public. 170 youth exhibitors having approximately 900 total exhibits made this year's fair a success. Over 150 exhibits went on to the NY State Fair for further evaluation.

4-H Youth Development provides a unique learn-by-doing model that teaches our youth essential and transferrable skills that they'll use throughout their lives, such as communicating, problem solving, decision making, coping, and responding to the needs of others. In addition to mastering a variety of important life skills, 4-H members connect with caring adults in their community and make friendships that last a lifetime.



4-H Teen Council making blankets as a community service for "Project Linus" donation.

## **4-H CAMP OWAHTA:**

**Maria Gimma, Director**



2017 marked the 65<sup>th</sup> summer for 4-H Camp Owahta, with its successful integration of tradition and innovation under the direction of Maria Gimma. It was a summer filled with fun, outdoor activities, leadership development, and the creation of long-lasting friendships for campers and counselors alike.

May and June, open houses were held to meet and greet our new director as well as the staff. Visitors were able to explore the camp grounds, participate in games and other fun activities and enjoy a great cook out luncheon.

This year, our 6 weeks of camp saw 96 day campers, along with 276 residential campers.

**New this year “Gaga Pit”!** Gaga is a dodgeball game played within the confines of a wooden octagon. The game starts with each participant’s hand on the wall. The ball is then thrown in the air and everyone yells “Ga! Ga!” as the ball takes its first two bounces in the ring. After that it’s game on! Players hit the ball with one hand targeting their opponents from the knee down. This is the first year we have had Gaga here at Camp Owahta and it’s already a favorite; played every day at free time!

This is our 3<sup>rd</sup> year for farm to garden planting and cooking from the vegetable garden. In addition to physical improvements, work is underway to develop programs and connect within the community, yet keep the traditional experience of camp that so many love as well as extend the reach of camp into the spring and fall months.

Super Hero week was well-loved this year, along with Olympics week, which is traditionally the most popular week of camp. This is our 2<sup>nd</sup> year with Tent Camp, a great intensive program where campers sleep in a tent outdoors each night and have their own special campfire each evening. The campers had the opportunity to cook meals over a campfire and learn outdoor living skills.

In addition to our traditional themes, nature activities, swimming, boating, and trips, 4-H Camp Owahta is a place for children to be children – to play, relax, and develop relationships with counselors and adults in the community.



*Farm to Garden at 4-H Camp Owahta*

**4-H Camp Owahta hosted SWCD Conservation Field Days and Environthon** - which exposed camp to over 300 camp aged children. We also hosted a number of weekend groups and the Hamm radio club’s annual international emergency preparedness awareness meeting.

Join us for Camp! Information can be found on our website at [www.4-Hcamp.org](http://www.4-Hcamp.org) and on our Facebook page!



## **HORTICULTURE:**

**Claudia Hitt, Horticulture Program Educator**



The Horticulture office has focused on customer services, youth and adult education, Master Gardener Volunteer supervision, and community outreach.

**Helping the consumer-** identifying pests from insects to plant diseases to weeds has been an ongoing service provided to homeowners and gardeners across the county through the Horticulture office and the MG.V.

**Adult education classes-** focused on Horticulture and Composting have taken place throughout community organizations. This year 692 kids were taught in classes that lasted from 20 minutes to one hour, 171 adults engaged in fun hands on activities, and 104 community calls were answered.

**Seed to Supper-** Two classes for adults were held this year. Seed to Supper is aimed at helping beginner gardeners learn how to have success. 29 adults from Homer and Cortland participated and learned that healthy soil means healthy food.

**Learning The Three Sisters -** Exploring an Iroquois Garden, and growing vegetable plants was one focus of the Heritage Garden this year. The Heritage Garden is the 4-H garden located at the fairgrounds. One of the special exhibits for county fair this year was food made from one or more of the Three Sisters plants. There were some tasty pumpkin pies and cornbread, along with some great posters.



In today's 'plugged in' world, it is important for youth to make the connection with nature. *"What better way than through a garden".*

## **SOUTHERN-TIER SNAP-ED EAT SMART NEW YORK - CORTLAND COUNTY**

Betty Clark, Environmental Nutritionist  
Neisa M. Pantalia, Nutritionist I

The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Eat Smart NY has been expanding its reach in Cortland County. The Nutritionist have been reaching out to senior centers, job placement programs, community centers, pantries and coordinating with Catholic Charities. To help better serve the needs of SNAP participants and their limited budget, Grocery Store tours are available to enhance knowledge of Healthy Eating on A Budget. This hands-on tour was led through the store while looking at labels, unit prices,

identifying whole grains and comparing fresh, frozen and canned produce.

Education is done in many different settings, some with food demos and others with hands on food preparation with participants. Recipes are USDA approved, simple, healthy and delicious. Foods may include house staples or items that may be obtained at their local pantry. Education includes learning the concepts of MyPlate, including more fruits and vegetables, decreasing consumption of sugary beverages, reading food labels and much more!

As we begin a new program year on October 1, the Southern-Tier SNAP-Ed team will be seeking out key partners at eligible schools throughout Cortland County. The team looks forward to providing both evidence-based and quality programming for youth and the entire school community.

### **AGRICULTURE:**

Heather Birdsall, Sr. Team Leader

CCE of Cortland Agriculture Program continues to wear several hats. The Agriculture program educates the non-farming community about agriculture, educates the non-dairy livestock community about production, management and marketing of their livestock and also provides diverse programs for the multitude of land based enterprises that abounds in Cortland County. To better serve the needs of farmers and rural land-owners in Cortland, CCE is a partner in the South Central NY Area Ag Team (SCNY Ag Team) which serves Cortland, Chemung, Tompkins, Tioga and Schuyler counties. Extension Agriculture Educators provided unbiased, researched based information on sustainable production, management and marketing practices in livestock, vegetable, fruits, agribusiness and agro-forestry through workshops, office and farm consultations, webinars and special events. Because of this unique relationship with the SCNY Area Ag Team, Cortland County residents have the ability to acquire the most up to date educational information that pertains to their land based enterprise.

**Non-Dairy Livestock Education:** In 2017, workshops geared towards Body Condition Scoring, marketing, hay production, meat quality, health and feeder calf grading to just to name a few, were provided for over 600 non-dairy livestock producers throughout New York.

A highlight of the year was participating in the Cornell Small Farms program, Livestock Summit. Cortland County hosted one of the eight sites throughout New York State where livestock producers could come and

express their opinions of livestock industry, education and business. Information gathered from an online survey and from all sites are being compiled and deciphered into a needs assessment that will be used to guide livestock education for producers in future years.

**Educational Agriculture Awareness-** Do you know where your food comes from?? Here at CCE Cortland, we provide a host of educational events that encourage a better understanding of agriculture by the general community. Over 2000 youth and adults in 2017 have been connected with this important agriculture information. Some of these programs include a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade Ag Literacy program, 4<sup>th</sup> grade Ag-Stravaganza, 5<sup>th</sup> grade Dairy Field Trip, and the 4-H Camp Owahta Farm to Garden program.



**Educational Programs for Diverse Land-Based Enterprises** - Even though dairy in Cortland County is ranked as the #1 industry, there are a multitude of land based agriculture enterprises in our county. In 2017, the Agriculture program offered several new programs outside the area of livestock and dairy. The Cortland Food Project was a series of 3 events geared towards Farmer Market Vendors and Direct Marketers. The first event was a Marketing workshop, the second and third focused more on discussion groups of our area farmers and hearing their needs in the community. A new area of interest for local land owners was a very well attended Growing Hazel Nut and Chestnut workshop. Agriculture and all of our farmers play a significant role in Cortland County economy. CCE was very pleased to once again co-host the Cortland County Agriculture Celebration Dinner and new this year, the Farmer Appreciation Luncheon.

## **HUMAN ECOLOGY PROGRAM**

Barb Henza, Subject Educator

### **Financial and Consumer Education Program**

The Financial and Consumer Education program of Cornell Cooperative Extension Cortland County works to strengthen the financial well-being and stability of families and individuals through programs that build

the knowledge and decision making skills of participants.

**Independent Living Skills** - Independent Living Skills (ILS), is a program for youth ages 14 to 20 years old. Funded by a contract with DSS, the program provides a series of classes that teach the youth life skills necessary for them to start their adult lives once they leave foster care. Topics covered in the classes include employment readiness (resumes, interview skills, dress, completing required forms to start a job and reading a paycheck stub), exploring possible careers, financial management/basic budgeting, what are credit reports and why they matter, identity theft awareness, choosing a place to live, tenants' rights, connecting with community resources, healthy relationships, conflict resolution, dealing with emotions in a positive manner, nutrition and team building exercises. The youth also learn about nutrition through the preparation of a healthy meal at the beginning of each class. There were 9 youth in the 2016-2017 class.

**Family Budget Education Program** - The Family Budget Education program is provided in a one-on-one setting for individuals and families who are experiencing financial difficulties. The program's focus is to assist the participants in finding possible solutions and then developing a course of action to begin to resolve the situation. Participants in the program learn how to work with creditors, read a credit report, establish a budget that meets their needs, prioritize their financial obligations and programs available to them in the community. This program worked with 14 participants in the past year. Past participants in the program find the information provided to be practical and useful in helping them gain control over their personal financial situation and in building confidence in their ability to manage their finances in the future.

**Credit and Job Seekers** - Credit and Job Seekers is provided weekly as a component of a workforce readiness program held at the Cortland Works Career Center. As employers may check an applicant's credit report and use the information in the report in hiring decisions it is important for those in the job market to know what is in their report. The workshop teaches program participants how to obtain their report free of charge, what information is found in a credit report and where it comes from, what to look for in the report, how long negative information can remain in the report, who typically provides information to a credit bureau, the steps to take to dispute inaccurate information and have it removed from the report and the responsibilities of an employer if the report results in the individual not being offered a job. Participants in the workshops frequently take the opportunity to ask questions about

other financial related issues such as how credit scores are calculated, when can wages be garnished, what actions a debt collector can take, how to re-establish or build a positive credit history and what is the difference between a credit union and a bank. Over 150 individuals have taken part in the class this year.

**National Endowment for Financial Education High School Financial Planning Program** - CCE Cortland works with the New York State Credit Union Association to train teachers around the state to implement the free High School Financial Planning Program in their classrooms. The program materials are provided by the National Endowment for Financial Education. It has been used with the ILS class and is also used in the Dryden School District.

**Energy Workshops for EmPower NY**  
EmPower NY is a statewide program funded by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority. The program funds workshops for consumers to teach energy conservation, easy no cost and low cost tips and to promote awareness of programs available to income eligible electric customers to assist with the cost of energy upgrades to their homes. Each workshop participant receives 3 compact fluorescent lightbulbs to use in their homes.

This year NYSEDA contracted directly with the county to provide energy workshops during the heating season. CCE Cortland was asked to provide 10 workshops in three counties under this contract. Workshops were provided in senior centers in Cortland, Madison and Broome counties. There were a total of 155 attendees at the workshops: 71 in Cortland, 52 in Madison and 32 in Broome. Workshops were held in Willet, Homer, Scott, McGraw, Whitney Point, Endwell, Georgetown, DeRuyter, Earlville and Chittenango.

**Parenting Education** - Parenting education is once more part of the CCE Cortland County Human Ecology Program area. Staff were trained to present the Parents Apart program and the Parenting a Second Time Around (PASTA) program in 2017.

**Parents Apart** - Three Parents Apart classes have been held in 2017 with one more to be offered in November. The classes consist of either two – 3 hour sessions held in the evening on two consecutive Thursdays or an all-day Saturday session to accommodate parents who cannot make a week night class. Participants have been referred to the program through the court system, DSS and the Public Defender's office. At the end of the class, each participant receives a certificate and for those who are court ordered to attend, CCE staff provides documentation of their

completion to the courts. Parents Apart had 11 parents attend to date, with positive feedback from them as to how they are using what they have learned to make things better for their children.

**Parenting a Second Time Around (PASTA)**  
CCE Cortland staff will be bringing this class to Cortland County in 2018. Interest has been expressed in the program by the Area Agency on Aging as they are seeing an increase in the number of grandparents parenting grandchildren due to addiction. CCE-Cortland staff will be looking for funding sources for this program as well.

**SOUTH CENTRAL DAIRY & FIELD CROPS**  
(Broome, Chemung, Cortland, Onondaga, Tioga & Tompkins)



**Predicting Timing of First Cutting** – for the third year in a row, the Team focused every Tuesday in the month of May on measuring alfalfa heights as a predictor of quality for the first cutting haylage. Fields in all six counties within the team's region were measured.

First Cutting is important as it is the highest yielding of the summer's 3-5 hay harvests. On average 1/2 to 2/3 of the total yield is represented in first cutting. Harvesting high quality forage is one of the most important things a dairy farmer can do to keep their feed costs under control. Feed costs can approach 60% of expenses on dairy farms.





## Farm Safety & OSHA Workshop

Betsy Hicks, Area Dairy Specialist

Many medium to large farms fall in the category of farms that are subject to surprise OSHA inspections, known as the Local Emphasis Program (LEP) in NY. Managers on these farms have several aspects to stay on top of to remain OSHA compliant, including minimizing hazards on farm, keeping up-to-date records, and annual training of employees on hazards they may encounter during their daily operations. In knowing that operations change daily, new employees come to farms every year, and certain aspects of the LEP change periodically, many farm managers know that they need to get up to speed on being compliant with OSHA LEP standards but aren't sure about where to turn to for help and resources.

In response to this need, the team organized a Farm Safety and OSHA Workshop held at Volles Farm in late August. About twenty-two farm managers, employees and agribusiness participated in the workshop, where they heard from an array of speakers focused on safety and OSHA compliance.

**Peer-to-Peer Learning** – Betsy held a variety of discussion group formats this winter from the SCNY Dairy Manager's Discussion Group, to the newly formed CNY Peer Group of Dairy Girl Network to Small Group Learning in Tioga County. Discussion groups in the SCNY Region bring together producers to discuss commonalities and encourage Peer-to-peer learning while providing professional experience to facilitate discussion.

**Public Outreach** – The team was involved in many public outreach activities again. The yearly staples of Cortland's AgStravaganza with 4<sup>th</sup> graders and McMahon's EZ Acres 5<sup>th</sup> grade Dairy Farm tour were big hits. The team educated the students throughout planned stations at Onondaga's Ag Awareness Day with 4<sup>th</sup> graders and Chemung County's Old McDonald's Farm.

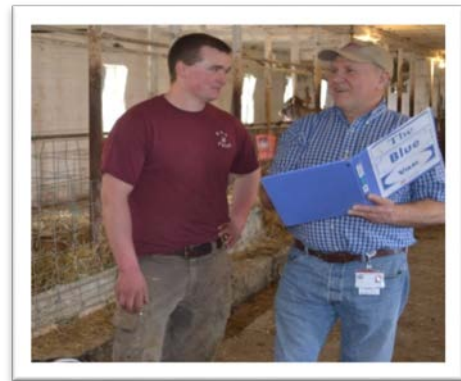


**On the Road with the Soil Health Trailer-** the education to understand the components of healthy soil.

July 6	Cortland County Jr. Fair, Cortland
Aug. 5	Celebrating Common Ground, Ithaca
Aug. 8-10	Empire Farm Days, Seneca Falls
Aug. 12	TC Open Farm Days—Scheffler, Groton
Aug. 15	UV Sustainable Farming, Charlotte, VT
Aug. 16	Caring Dairy Farmer Training, Holland, VT
Aug. 17	Caring Dairy Farmer Training, Franklin, VT
Aug 23	Glynwood Soil Health, New Paltz
Aug 29	Pasture Walk @ Red House Ranch, Van Etten
Aug 31	Pasture Walk with Organic Valley, Marathon
Sept 12 & 13	Environmental Awareness Days, Acra
Sept 27	Grass Fed Exchange, Sharon Springs
Sept 28	NODPA Conference, Truxton
Oct 17	Great Lakes Restoration Conf., Holland

## Benchmarking Toward a Farm of Their Own

by: Kara Dunn



Participating in New York's Organic Dairy Farm Business Summary (ODFBS) has set Ryan Murray and fiancé Annie Grant on the road to owning their own farm. The couple will marry this year and is looking for land to buy.

Murray, 25, started with 150 acres of rented hay and pastureland and facilities near Truxton in Central NY's Cortland County. His 30-cow, certified organic milking herd in 2013 has grown to 60 cows with calves today.

“When I heard Fay Benson (Cornell University Cooperative Extension Small Dairy Extension Educator) describe the organic edition of the Dairy Farm Business Summary that sounded like a good thing for my seasonal, lower-cost, lower-production business model,” Murray notes.

“As a sole operator without employees, I was keeping good basic records, but I did not have a lot of time for analysis,” he adds.

The Cornell Dairy Farm Business Summary uses data from farms of similar size and practices to create benchmarks against which operators measure their individual farm’s performance.

“The organic edition of the DFBS factors in specific values for intensive grazing, organic feed costs for purchased feed, cost savings based on pasture value, and other organic-specific practices,” Benson points out.

Murray transferred his numbers on cows, milk production, costs, and receipts from Excel into the ODFBS program.

“I immediately began to see opportunities to cut costs and increase production,” Murray says. “It reaffirmed where to put my limited resources, both time and money, first to get the best return on investment.”

The DFBS analysis shows the relationships among the diverse factors influencing how well a farm meets its goals. Success is analyzed across balance and cash flow, debt-to-asset ratio, and per-cow milking, per-acre cropping, and labor efficiency data.

Benson connected Murray with Certified Crop Advisor Tom Kilcer to evaluate his cropping plan.



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