



Cornell University
Cooperative Extension
Cortland County

2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Of Cortland County
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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.

Director's Message

Welcome to the 2023 Annual Meeting of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cortland County.



This has been a year of change for our association, with some of those changes coming very soon.

After 20 years at CCE-Cortland, Fay Benson retired at the end of September. Fay has served our association, the regional South-Central Dairy and Field Crops team, and the state in his work. He will be sorely missed.

After 23 years, Claudia Hitt, our Horticulture Educator and Master Gardener Volunteer leader, retired, as well. Claudia has been a leader as a horticulture educator and Master Gardener Volunteer Coordinator. Her knowledge is second to none, and when requests for help come in, she does not stop until she can provide an answer. Claudia is not gone. She is now a volunteer working to help in many ways, including at the Cortland County Junior Fair and the Great New York State Fair.

It's been 32 years since Jackie Hartnett and Barb Henza joined the staff at CCE Cortland. They are the glue that keeps us all together and working toward success. If Jackie finds a gap in work that needs to get done, she quietly steps in and does it. If I mention a remote idea to Barb, by the end of the next week, she has it all set and ready to go. All of this in addition to the work that they're supposed to do. They have decided to retire on January 10, 2024, so we're on the 2-month countdown. It is a great loss for our association.

We are moving forward with a 5-year Strategic Plan that the board has almost completed.

Financial Status – 2023 looks like a break-even year financially. Changes in staff have been challenging. The Cortland County Legislature has approved a \$47,000 increase to our county appropriation. Many thanks to Beau Harbin and Susan Wilson, our legislative board members, for their support as we celebrate our first appropriation increase in 23 years. Please thank any county legislator you might know for their support of our work.

CCE Programs – Please read through this Annual Report to see all of the work that has been accomplished this year and the plans for the future. It's an impressive amount of work.

Strategic Plan 2023 – The Board of Director's 5-year Strategic Plan is nearing completion. The major work has been defined. We are at the point of crossing our final t's and dotting our final i's. The report for the plan will be coming out soon.

Many thanks to all of the people who bring success to our Association and to the people of Cortland County. Not only do we have a wonderful staff, but we also have countless volunteers to step in to help us be successful. We could not do this work without you. Thank you!

David C. Rutherford – Executive Director

4-H GROWS HERE

4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT:



Rebecca Ireland-Perry, 4-H Team Leader

4-H Youth Development

- 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**

4-H Clubs: 4-H clubs are the traditional method of youth development, with a diverse offering of projects to develop or enhance necessary life skills. There were thirteen active 4-H clubs in Cortland County, and a total 4-H enrollment of 230 youth.

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. All our youth exhibitors and 4-H exhibits made this year's fair a success. 4-H participation at the NY State Fair was up this year, and many projects were chosen which did very well in their evaluations.



2023 Cortland County Jr. Youth Fair Pictures

4-H Events - Highlights of the year...

- **4-H Exchange Program:** Two Cortland 4-H families enjoyed the opportunity to host youth from Japan this summer. The Japanese youth arrived in New York on July 24 to spend nearly a month with the Cortland 4-H families. The exchange program is available between NYS 4-H families and youth members of Labo, Japan's equivalent of the 4-H program.

- **Learning To Sew** continues to be an area of interest, with sewing workshops both in 4-H clubs, and the sewing camp over the February school break.
- **4-H Livestock Program:** We have been strengthening our 4-H Livestock and Market Animal program and have increased participation in these programs or entries at fair.
- **Annual 4-H Local Products:** October was the kickoff for our annual 4-H Local Products fundraiser. This fundraiser is an important component of our 4-H program, both in our budget and for the 4-H clubs as a fundraising opportunity for them.
- **4-H Needle Arts:** We continued the 4-H Needle Arts group, designed to explore all the various needlework areas, with a series of macrame workshops. We also held a series of cake decorating workshops in the fall and winter due to an increased interest in the cake decorating contest at fair.
- **Youth Programs** targeted Cortland County Kindergarten through 6th grade students with programs such as Ag Literacy, Ag Stravaganza, and Conservation Field Days.

JAPANESE 4-H EXCHANGE MEMBER IN CORTLAND COUNTY

A Cortland County 4-H family has enjoyed the opportunity to host youth from Japan this summer. Yuta Nakano arrived on July 24 to spend nearly a month with the Kida family in Little York.



Yuta Nakano (center) with his host family (l-r) Markus, Amy, Aaron & Oliver Kida. Gideon is standing in front.

Fifteen-year-old Yuta has been a member of Labo for 9 years and first became interested in the exchange as an opportunity to learn about a different culture and people. When asked what surprised him most during his stay, Yuta was quick to answer that American people are very kind and greet each other on the streets. In his home city of Tokyo, people don't exchange eye contact and greetings on the streets, noting how shy their culture is. He was also amazed at the ethnic diversity of the American population and the very colorful clothes we wear here. His host sibling, Oliver Kida, was most surprised to learn that in Japan "they don't wear shorts and t-shirts on warm days. They only wear them for swimming and sports." Yuta explained that daytime temperatures during the summer months are often above 90 degrees, but pants are the normal attire. Yuta also was amazed to learn that Americans take naps some days – a difference he especially appreciated while adjusting to the 13-hour time zone change.

The Kida family packed a wide variety of experiences into Yuta's time with them, including a trip to Niagara Falls. *"I can't even express the emotion of seeing it in person,"* Yuta explained. *"I had only seen it in pictures before"*. All five senses were fully engaged. It was magnificent." Another new experience he enjoyed was tubing on the Oswego River and during his last full week in New York, he joined Oliver at FFA Camp Oswegatchie in the Adirondacks. The high ropes course and using a stand-up paddle board were fun, but the best part was *"meeting all the people at camp"*. *"There is a limit to how many people you can meet during a homestay, but there were so many fun and friendly people to meet there"*. Yuta clearly would jump at the chance to attend again next summer. Yuta also took the time to share some Japanese culture and cuisine with the Kida family. He gifted each family member with their own tenugui, a special cloth with different meanings. And he certainly impressed them with yakisoba, a traditional dish he prepared using noodles, bacon, bean sprouts and spices. *"We will definitely make that again,"* exclaimed host mom Amy. Yuta declared that American food is all very good,

but his favorite has been a Turkey/Reuben sandwich.

While looking forward to reuniting with his family in Japan, he is excited to share all he has learned and making American hamburger patties for them all to enjoy. As their time together came to a close and Yuta prepared to return to Tokyo, Dairy Dreamers 4-H club member Gideon Kida definitely recommends the exchange experience for everyone. "It's been an amazing experience to have someone from halfway around the world stay with us!"

By The Kida Family

4-H Youth Development provides a unique learn-by-doing model 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. Looking forward, our focus remains on continuing a 4-H program that can meet the needs of our 4-H youth, support our 4-H leaders, and grow. 🍀

4-H CAMP OWAHTA:



**Kara Hallet, Director and
Chris DeLage, Assistant Director**

Our 2023 camp season was filled with large amounts of growth that was made possible by people who allowed themselves to be vulnerable to change. Under the supervision of a new camp director, many new traditions were introduced. This was executed successfully through an amazing staff who have the patience to explain old traditions and the openness to explore new ideas. Communication was an asset of our staff team this year who selflessly served at the camp.

We had over 400 campers this year, coming to us from all over the state, places throughout the country, and even some from other countries. Campers were able to participate in many activities that challenged their abilities and taught them new skills. Campers created a community of learners throughout the camp and their love for learning and care for others made Camp Owahta a magical place to be this summer.



The camp experienced large numbers of Counselor-in-Training (CIT) participants this year as well. These are campers who have shown an interest in continuing their experience at camp by becoming future staff member. The CIT program is an amazing opportunity for older campers to show responsibility and learn counseling strategies. At the same time, they are able to share their experiences with younger campers, explain why they are drawn to the camp, and share what their favorite memories and traditions have been.

We cannot thank our staff, community, and volunteers enough for how much joy they bring to not only campers, but the camp itself. Each person contributes to a wonderful and uplifting atmosphere, and we are so happy to have had the pleasure of meeting with so many old and new friends this past season.



Thank you to all and see you next summer!

AGRICULTURE PROGRAM:



Chelsea Jones, Agriculture Team Leader

Chelsea Jones was hired as the Agriculture Team Leader in June 2023. She joined us from the University of Florida Extension Services. Although joining us most recently from Florida, Chelsea is a Cortland County native who has worked in previous roles for CCE Cortland County and CCE Madison County. Chelsea is excited to have the opportunity to serve the Cortland County farming community she grew up in. The following is her first annual report as the CCE Cortland Agriculture Team Leader.

As the Agriculture Team Leader, I provide and oversee the overall development, implementation, and evaluation of the CCE Cortland Agriculture Program initiatives:

- General Agriculture
- Local Food Systems
- Agriculture Awareness
- 4-H Youth Development Agriculture Programming

Highlights of my work so far, and some future plans...

Advisory Committee: For guidance on developing relative agriculture programming, I work with the Agriculture Advisory Committee. This committee consists of members who have a high interest and dedication to agriculture in Cortland County. The current members are Ben Brooks, Jen Doty, Carly Dougherty, Rachel Murray Brown, and Jacob Newton. The committee will meet at least four times a year to complete its primary functions.

Collaborations: I have been busy networking with local agriculture services including Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD), Farm Bureau, Chamber of

Commerce, Farm Credit, and Seven Valleys Health Coalition. One large project I am working on with these other organizations, and others, is the post-pandemic revitalization of the Cortland County Agriculture Celebration Dinner.

Farm Visits and Tours: I have completed visits and tours at farming operations that produce a variety of products including fruits and vegetables, tree nuts, value added, and livestock. These visits help me understand farmers' needs from the CCE Cortland Ag Team. Please reach out if you would be interested in having me visit, I would love to see as many of your operations as possible!

USDA FMPP Grant: In 2022, the CCE Cortland Ag Team was awarded the USDA Farmers Market Promotion Program Grant (FMPP) FOR \$248,698.74. This FMPP Grant is a three-year project with the intention to build sustainable and resilient direct producer-to-consumer markets in the local area. I am working to create a market analysis to be completed in early 2024.

Agriculture Awareness: Agriculture Awareness is one of my personal passions and will be a large focus for the CCE Cortland Ag Team. I am working with the Cortland County Farm Bureau to plan a Sunday on the Farm event for families to attend in summer 2024. Other agriculture awareness programming plans include:

- Legislator Tours at Cortland County Junior Fair and Cortland County Farms
- SWCD Cortland County Conservation Field Days
- Ag Literacy Week
- AgStravaganza

4-H Livestock Program: As stated in the 4-H report, Cortland County's 4-H Livestock Program is growing in popularity amongst youth. This year's market animal sale total was \$17,910.25. This total includes all animals, cakes, and donated items. The 4-H Livestock Show Superintendents, Becky (4-H Team Leader), and I met on August 1st to discuss the 2023 fair's successes, and what improvements

can be made for future years. We are always looking for potential buyers, so please reach out to us if you know of someone interested. Thank you to all those who make this sale possible!

Outreach Efforts: Lastly, efforts to get vital information out to local agricultural producers and community members continue via online newsletters. I have sent out four, and they have a 43% open rate. Online newsletters will continue to be an important part of outreach for the community, as well as public events. I participated at the Marathon Ag Fair where I was able to talk to the youth and their families about opportunities available with CCE Cortland. Updating the agriculture section of the CCE Cortland website and utilizing social media are also going to be important outreach tools.

HORTICULTURE



Dee Lisa Woodruff, Horticulture Educator

HORTICULTURE PROGRAM AND MASTER GARDENER VOLUNTEERS

The focus of the program this year has been outreach. From identifying diseased tree branches, to soil testing, to helping create a pollinator garden, the county's residents seem eager to reach out for help. With shifting weather patterns and heavier rainfalls, gardening has become more of a challenge, and the horticulture office has been there to provide research-based information and resources to help mitigate these challenges.

The Master Gardener Volunteers have been working to increase their presence in the community by tabling at community events (i.e., Pumpkinfest) to meet-and-greet with county residents, planning demonstration gardens for future horticulture programming, and establishing relationships with local partners to introduce gardening programs for

underrepresented members of the community. Over the coming years, the Master Gardeners have a vision to create accessible garden-based programming and access to healthy foods, to help offset the food insecurity experienced by some county residents. This winter, the horticulture office will once again offer the 12-week Master Gardener Training to Cortland county residents. It will continue to participate in the Cornell Vegetable Trial Gardens series and for the first time participate in the state-wide Seed to Supper program. This year the CCE Cortland Horticulture Program welcomed Dee Lisa Woodruff into the role of Horticulture Educator. After 22 years of dedicated service, Claudia Hitt has happily retired. Though no longer in the educator role, Claudia is still an active Master Gardener Volunteer, and continues to contribute to the program through her work with 4- H, at the state and county fairs.

HUMAN ECOLOGY PROGRAM



Barb Henza, Subject Educator II

Financial, Consumer and Energy 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.

Family Budget Education Program The Family Budget Education program was established to provide a resource that could be used by Cortland County residents who were experiencing financial difficulties. It is offered by appointment 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 workable solutions and then developing a course of action. 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 explore programs in the community that could assist them. Past participants in the program have found the information gained from the program 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. It is not unusual to receive phone calls from past participants who are just “checking in” on something that has come up before they move forward.

Cortland Works Credit Education Program

New applicants for public assistance go through a job search skills program that also includes life skills to help them build financial security once they are employed. As New York State still allows the use of credit reports in hiring decisions it is critical that the class participants know how to read, understand, and correct any errors in a credit report. Due to media focus on credit scores, many in the class do not understand that they are not the same thing as a credit report or that credit reports are what drive credit scores. In the class we go over what makes up a credit report, how to read one, what to look for and how to dispute information that is not accurate or does not belong to it. We also discuss what is taken into consideration when calculating a credit score and that not all credit scores are the same. Handling a debt collection call, what are their rights regarding debt collection practices, how long negative information may stay on a credit report and how to rebuild credit have all been hot topics for this group. During the last year there were 26 classes held with 72 participants.

Family Economics Resource Management Program Work Team

The Financial and Consumer Educator, Barb Henza, continues to act as one of the co-chairs for Family Economics Resource Management Program Work Team (FERM-PWT). The FERM-PWT has been working with a second PWT, The Poverty and Economic Hardship PEH) for the last several years, collaborating on in-services and webinars focused on topics of interest to both

groups. In response to retirements of several county educators who have played a major role in the leadership of the FERM PWT the two groups decided to explore merging into one Program Work Team. A proposal was prepared and submitted to Cornell to create a new program work team in August and was approved. The combined work team, named Consumer and Family Economics PWT or CAFÉ will be able to continue the projects already in place with Cornell researchers as well as add an additional partnership with a team headed by David Kay to educate the public about Flood Insurance in the coming months. Barb Henza will stay on the CAFÉ PWT as a community co-chair for at least one year.

Parenting Education The CCE Cortland Parenting education program offers educational opportunities and resources designed to promote healthy families through research-based non-biased information, education and practical skills building to individuals and families.

Parents Apart The Parents Apart program is offered four times annually and is team taught by David Rutherford and Barb Henza. The program provides 6 hours of parenting education with a focus on meeting the needs of the children involved while lowering the level of conflict in the home. Participants may choose to attend either two – 3-hour sessions held in the evening on two consecutive Thursdays, or an all-day session held on a Saturday. Participants are referred to the program through the court system, DSS, the Public Defender’s office and may also self- refer to the program. Participants who complete the full 6 hours of the class are issued a certificate of completion. Upon request, CCE-Cortland Co. staff will provide documentation of completion of the classes to the courts for any participants who require one. Surveys completed at the end of the classes indicate participants are using what they have learned to make the situation better for their children. Surveys completed by participants at the completion of the program have indicated they have the program worthwhile and would recommend it to other parents in this situation. This year we were only able to hold 2 classes

due to low enrollment. In a post class survey completed by the attendees, the program continues to get high marks, with most feeling the class was very worthwhile and they would recommend it to a friend. Comments indicate that the attendees also felt the smaller group sizes were the best as many people would feel uncomfortable talking in a large group about these issues.

Agriculture -Agrivoltaics Webinar Series

This webinar was a collaborative effort of Penn State, Cornell Cooperative Extension, New York State Farm Bureau and the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau, with the Agriculture Educator at CCE Cortland taking the lead on planning the series. The focus was on exploring the dual-use of land for both solar development and agriculture and featured sessions on Preserving Agriculture in the Face of Growing Solar Development, Overview of Agrivoltaics, Planning with Agrivoltaics in Mind, with the final session an extended Q and A to allow the participants to ask more in-depth questions on the topics of the presenters. Session presenters were drawn from Penn State, Cornell University, Rutgers University, New York state Farm Bureau, the Solar Energy Industry, members of county planning and zoning boards, and members of the agriculture community. There were 250 participants registered with 192 taking part in person. The sessions were taped and the link to the video was provided to all registrants after the date of the live webinar. Confirmation of attendance was also provided to those who wished to use this program to fulfill Continuing Education Credit requirements.

NUTRITION EDUCATION IN CORTLAND COUNTY - SNAP-Ed NY

can be offered to participants of all ages. Youth, adults and seniors can benefit from the multiple lessons created from approved curricula. Using hands on teaching we offer in-person and virtual lessons on a variety of topics:

- Healthy eating on a budget
- Smart shopping for fruit and vegetables
- Basic cooking and food safety skills and
- The importance of physical activity.

In school we can offer a dynamic approach called CATCH, this is a coordinated approach to children health and gets the whole school on board with health and wellness. Lessons are 30 minutes and designed to engage each student in fun interactive lessons with games and projects directed at each grade level. Not sure how to start such a task we will help and train staff for FREE to help implement this in your school today.



Cornell Cooperative Extension

South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Program



Janice Degni, Betsy Hicks,
Mary Kate McKenzie & Donnette Griffith

SOUTH-CENTRAL NY DAIRY AND FIELD CROPS TEAM

Each year has its challenges and benefits for our dairy and crop farmers. Milk and commodity prices fluctuate with periods of highs and lows. In the face of these challenges, our South-Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Team continues to be a trusted source for timely, research-based education and support to help local dairy and crop farmers achieve their goals. This year the team delivered a wide range of virtual and in-person programs to meet the diverse educational needs of our dairy and field crop community.

Soil health was a key message at several educational events this winter.

The Annual Winter Crop Meeting keynote speakers addressed aspects of soil health. Mr. George

Foster, a long term no-till crop producer from Middlebury, Vermont shared his farm story of the changes to no-till production and the success of adoption since 2012 on their heavy clay soils on their 2200 acre dairy farm. Observed benefits included increased water infiltration and retention. Better soil aggregate stability also resulted in less soil compaction particularly during harvest. Farmer's regularly evaluate sustainable farming practices, including conservation tillage, and cover cropping. They work to find a balance between protecting the environment and production needs. The practices and recommendations offered contribute to soil health and the resiliency it offers. Jodi DeJong-Hughes, a regional educator in soils and water quality and professor at the University of Minnesota Extension reported findings from field research in tillage systems, soil compaction and soil quality sharing practical strategies for reducing field compaction and remediation.

Janice collaborated with the Tioga County Soil and Water Conservation staff to organize a Soil Health meeting. She gave an overview of soil health to kick the meeting off. Other topics included the benefits and contributions of cover crops and the benefits of reduced tillage for soil health. In addition, the 33 participants also learned lessons from the district's experience using an interrow seeder to establish cover crops in a growing crop and potential funding streams to support soil health practices. Janice developed and delivered the presentation, **Soils: The foundation of production, as a session in the CNY Farming Series** which targeted a general ag audience. Principles and practices to support soil health were included.



Difficult calvings, while not a frequent occurrence, are still a major part of a herd manager's job on dairy farms. Hands-on

experience to correct calf positioning is done in the moment when time is of the essence, and little options to practice exist. New herd managers or workers in the maternity pen may need to experience several difficult calvings before being able to identify and correct a malpresentation with skill and precision. In addition to inexperience, many maternity pen managers are now also Spanish speaking, and options to give training to these employees is further limited.

Regional dairy educators teamed up to offer the "Calving & Dystocia Workshop" in both English and Spanish across NY. In the South Central Region, we offered two workshops, one in Ithaca and one in Auburn, in both languages. Daniela Gonzalez, a Master Student at Cornell University, enhanced our workshops with teaching in the Spanish language. The workshop focused on a normal calf presentation, proper technique to pull calves, and multiple malpresentations. Attendees were able to work hands-on with the calving model to identify and correct the calf presentation, and properly assist the "calving". In addition to the hands-on portion, attendees learned about post-calving care for both the cow and the calf. Over both sites, sixteen Spanish-speaking attendees were able to practice with the model, as well as four English-speaking attendees. Attendees stated that the best part of the workshop was being able to practice multiple corrections in calf presentation with the model. Attendees will be able to take these skills back to their farms to implement right away during their next hard calving. More workshops with the model are being planned throughout our region, and we look forward to reaching more farms with the model, affectionately named "Birtha".



Birtha Model



In January and February 2023, Mary Kate taught **Farm Accounting with QuickBooks** a 5-week online course for farm business managers to improve recordkeeping and financial accounting skills. Course content included articles, pre-recorded videos, discussion forums, quizzes, and five live webinars. A total of 27 farms enrolled, including six dairy farms.

Student quotes illustrate what they liked most about the course:

- * *Working on the material at your own pace and having the ability to refer back to the material.*
- * *Online tools, online setting, time commitment, very clear and well explained.*
- * *Videos were great to show you step by step.*
- * *Great job simplifying everything to make understandable and in farming terms.*
- * *Everything was perfect length and not too overwhelming. Broken down greatly.*
- * *Great navigation through the App.*

A third milk storage grant is awarded to a farm in our region.

A small dairy in Cortland County that participates in Mary Kate's Organic Dairy Discussion Group was awarded \$37,000 under the Milk Storage and Handling Grant through the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center. The farm will use these funds to transition from an outdated and inefficient tie-stall milking system to a new TRANS Iowa Low-Cost Milking Parlor. This transition will dramatically improve the farm's labor efficiency while saving energy and boosting milk quality. The farm's history of collaborating with our team on the Dairy Farm Business Summary (DFBS) and other recordkeeping and financial management education programs strengthened their application. Mary Kate provided a letter of support, using data from the DFBS to justify the business case for a new parlor investment.

Dairy Farm Business Summary supports financial benchmarking and decision making. In Q1 of 2023, Mary Kate worked closely with 15 dairies to complete their 2022 Dairy Farm Business Summary (one is still

underway). This included helping two farms get back into the DFBS after they missed two years during COVID. By completing the DFBS, farms in our region are represented in the 2022 Progress Report published by PRO-DAIRY and used widely by dairy farmers and business consultants across the state. Each collaborating farm also receives detailed reports comparing their own 2022 performance vs prior years and vs other similar dairies. Benchmarking helps farms identify strengths and weaknesses in their operations and identify opportunities to improve their management. Farms that complete the DFBS regularly make improvements to their systems for keeping financial and production records and getting more value out of those systems.

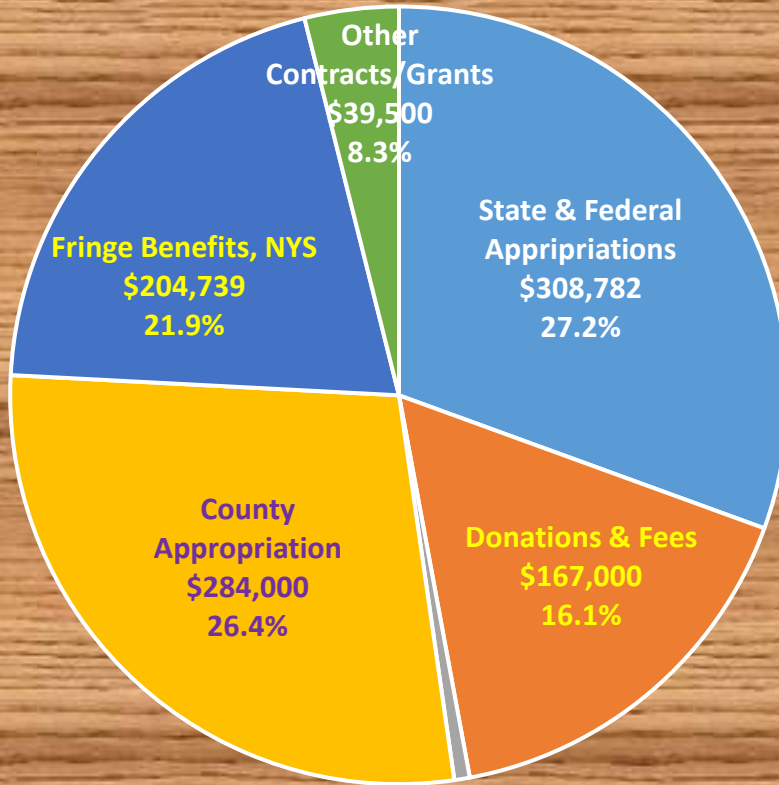
Organic dairies benefit from peer-to-peer learning as they struggle with tight margins.

In March, Mary Kate's Organic Dairy Discussion Group held its tenth meeting in 5 years. Eleven individuals from nine farms attended the meeting. Despite having a wide variety of management practices represented in the group, everyone in the group struggled with low margins and low profitability in 2022. The group discussed short-term management opportunities to respond to rising input costs and changes they might make if their existing farm business models are no longer viable. Even though the discussion was difficult at times, participants appreciated the opportunity to share their challenges with other managers facing similar realities.



2023 ANNUAL REPORT

Total Expenditures \$1,010,521



SUPPORT STAFF



Catheryn Heller
Finance



Jackie Hartnett
4-H Admin. 🍀

2023 RETIREES



A.Fay Benson
Small Dairy Extension Specialist



Claudia Hitt
Horticulture Educator

2023 CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION OF CORTLAND COUNTY



CCE – CORTLAND BOARD

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Matt Hollenbeck	Director At Large
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Leah Calzolaio	Director At Large
<i>Open position</i>	Director At Large

CCE – CORTLAND STAFF

David Rutherford	Executive Director
Chelsea Jones	Agriculture Team Leader
Rebecca Ireland-Perry	4-H Team Leader
Lisa Woodruff	Horticulture Educator
Barbara Henza	Subject Educator II
Claudia Hitt	Master Gardener Volunteer
Jackie Hartnett	4-H Admin. Assistant II
Kara Hallett &	4-H Camp Owahta Director
Chris Delage	4-H Camp Owahta
Cathy Heller	Finance Coordinator

CORTLAND COUNTY LEGISLATORS **Beau Harbin & Susan Wilson**

CORNELL STATE EXT. SPECIALIST **Renee Smith Mooneyhan**

PROGRAM COMMITTEES

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Linda Helms	Shawna Grinnell
Pat Twentyman	Gail Bundy
Shirley Marshall	Joanne Brown-Garringer

SCNY DAIRY AND FIELD CROPS

A. Fay Benson	Small Dairy Extension
Janice Degni	Specialist
	Team Leader/Area Field
	Crops
Donette Griffith	SCDFC Admin. Assistant II
Betsy Hicks	Area Dairy Management
	Specialist
Mary Kate MacKenzie	Farm Business
	Management Specialist

MASTER GARDENERS – Charlotte Altman, Claire LeRoux, Claudia Hitt, Dana Kruser, Dianne Higgins, Donna Evans Orr, Judith Strauff, Kathleen & Dale Taylor, Kathy Homestead, Kim Dupcak, Lori Megivern, Miriam Astacio, Nancy Meo Henry, Patricia Twentyman, Patrizia Sione and Sarah Chilson.

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CCE Cortland County – Facebook and Website: cortland.cce.cornell.edu*

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