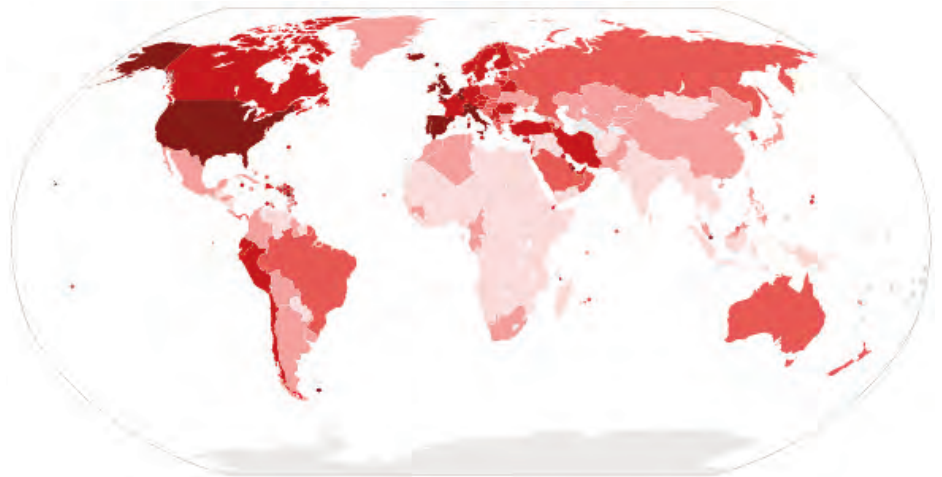


Connections

The News Magazine of Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties

MAY/JUNE 2020

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COVID-19, a global reality, an ever-changing world view

Cornell Cooperative Extension Responds to COVID-19

BY DON SMYERS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

It was the Spanish Flu in 1918, COVID-19 today, and public health and agricultural emergencies in the years between. Cornell Cooperative Extension brought and continues to bring research and evidence-based solutions to agricultural producers, marketers, and food-system intermediaries. Then, as now, Cooperative Extension has stood at the front-line of agriculture along with its research partners, America's land grant universities, such as Cornell, and state agricultural research centers, and with farmers and producers in helping mitigate agricultural challenges.

COVID-19 is beyond being a state problem or one only within the borders of the United States and, instead, has mushroomed into a global problem impacting lives everywhere, affecting food production and harvesting, food-system logistics, food safety, and food security and adequacy.

COVID-19 has had other consequences. Milk producers have been especially impacted, with market price stressors in recent months. David Balbian, Regional Dairy Specialist, and Nicole Tommell, Farm Business Specialist, both with the Central New York Dairy, Livestock,

Continues on page 2

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and Field Crop Team summed it up recently. “Schools and restaurants are closed. Some truck drivers are refusing to travel into NYC to deliver products. Workers are not showing up at processing facilities because they are ill, are watching their children, or are afraid to show up. The entire supply chain for dairy products is in disarray. Milk is perishable and cannot be stockpiled like some other agricultural products. The dairy cooperatives and milk processing plants are instructing farms to dump milk. Some haulers are instructed to pick up milk and take it to a location to dispose of it.”

Meat processors, especially large facilities in the Midwest, are facing problems too. The physical closeness of workers has become a fertile environment for the person-to-person spread of COVID-19, with many processors now closed or having curtailed activities.

Some vegetable producers in the South have been unable either to hire workers for picking crops or to procure transportation of crops to distant wholesale markets, leaving some fresh-market crops spoiling in the fields.

However, New York State’s agriculture is less dependent on commodities that require distant markets. New York farmers and growers typically are smaller, often family farms that sell through local and regional supply channels. Cornell Cooperative Extension continues to provide the resources needed by growers. In addition to consulting with growers on production or helping in their procurement of the sought-after Paycheck Protection Plan loans, many new and relevant resources are posted with content being added regularly. Email news updates are being created and distributed by Extension Associations, like ours, or by our commercial production teams funded by CCE Associations.

For instance, CCE Schoharie and Otsego Counties has supplemented its bi-monthly *Connections* publication with weekly updates, called *Connections EXTRA*. If you are not receiving *Connections EXTRA* in your email inbox, email us at schoharie-otsego@cornell.edu and request your name be added.

Also, follow these links that provide domains of current information, especially on food safety. Each link provides a plethora of information and additional resources.

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.

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New York State College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, New York State College of Human Ecology, and New York State College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, Cooperative Extension Associations, county governing bodies, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating.

General questions and links:

<https://eden.cce.cornell.edu/>

Food production, processing, and safety questions:

<https://instituteforfoodsafety.cornell.edu/coronavirus-covid-19/>

Employment and agricultural workforce questions:

<http://agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu/>

Cornell small farms resiliency resources:
<https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/resources/farm-resilience/>

Financial and mental health resources for farmers:

<https://www.nyfarmnet.org/>

2-minute Spanish language educational video on COVID-19:

<https://www.trabajadores.cornell.edu/>



**Connections
EXTRA!**

*For Agriculture & Horticulture
Producers and Marketers*

Cornell Cooperative Extension | Schoharie and Otsego Counties

Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) USDA Purchase & Distribution Program

As part of the Coronavirus Farm Assistance Program Secretary Perdue announced April 17 that the USDA is exercising authority under the Families First Coronavirus Response Act to purchase and distribute up to \$3 billion of agricultural products to those in need. USDA will partner with regional and local distributors whose workforce has been significantly impacted by the closure of many restaurants, hotels, and other food service entities, to purchase fresh produce, dairy, and meat. This program is for fresh produce, dairy products, chicken, and pork.

CNYDLFC “Checking the Back 40” Newsletter

The start of a new growing season means the start of a new round of Checking the Back 40s! In this first issue:

- Soil Temperatures and Corn Planting
- Report Seedcorn Maggot and Wireworm Damage: We Need Your Input
- Is It Seedcorn Maggot or Wireworm . . . Or Something Else?
- First Look at Herbicide Resistant Weeds: Marestalk (Horseweed)
- Burndown Herbicide Options in No-till Soybeans

Virtual ‘Office Hours’ for Commercial Vegetable Growers

Join us for Zoom meetings on Thursday nights from 7-8 p.m. with any commercial vegetable questions you may have. You can also call in at: 1-646-518-9805 meeting ID: 450 507 028. Also accepting pre-submitted photos and questions at vegofficehours@gmail.com

2020 Spring Turnout Grazer Meeting

How to Decrease Feed, Fencing, and Machinery Costs. How Do You Think About Spending Money for Your Business? Online Zoom meeting Thursday, May 7, 2020, from 6-8 p.m. For questions contact Ashley Piee, arp253@cornell.edu, 518-649-0267; Aaron Gabriel, adg12@cornell.edu, 518-380-1496.

Financial Resources, Grants, and Other Resources for Farmers

Cornell Small Farms Program’s compilation of loans, grants, and legal support to help farmers build their resilience through this pandemic.

WhatsGood Online Farmers’ Market

The WhatsGood Online Farmers’ Market is a unique model that allows for direct-to-consumer business.

So You Decided This Is the Year You're Going to Garden



BY CRISTY CARTER-TRAMMELL, MASTER GARDENER, BUTLER COUNTY, OHIO

Who can resist a garden-fresh salad? The colors, textures, and flavors of vegetables fresh from the garden add variety to any meal and stretch the food budget further. The hidden health benefits of time spent outdoors planting, tending, and harvesting your crop are an added bonus. If you are ready to start a garden of your own, here are some beginner gardening tips:

Tip 1: Location, location, location!

- The first thing to consider when planning is where to place the garden. Most vegetables, herbs, and many flowers require a minimum of **6-8 hours of direct sun** to flourish. So, find a sunny spot for maximum growth and flavor.
- A location with **good drainage** (does not pool or hold water when it rains; does not dry out too quickly) is ideal. Do not plant at the bottom of a slope, and if planting on a slope, a southern or southeastern exposure is better. Avoid planting near trees—the roots will compete with the vegetables. Look instead for a spot that supports lush green growth (even if they are sturdy weeds you will need to remove).
- The closer the garden is to the backdoor or the outside spigot, the more you will use the garden, and the **easier watering** and weeding will be!

Tip 2: More with Less.

A common mistake of beginning gardeners is trying to plant too large a garden! A small well-tended garden will produce more than a garden too large to care for. Consider, for instance, how many times you really want to eat zucchini. You only want to plant what you can eat and what you like to eat. You may want to consider container gardening or raised beds—ideal for flowers, herbs, and salads.

A good-sized family garden can be grown in a 10 x 16 ft. space. Lay out your garden so rows are 10 feet long, about 11 rows, and run them north and south if possible. This allows for maximum sun exposure and airflow between plants. This size will grow enough food for a family of four for the sea-



son, with a little bit leftover for freezing or canning or sharing with jealous neighbors.

Tip 3: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure!

Remember Ben Franklin's quote? It is certainly true with gardening—in this case, preparing and amending the soil. Neither needs to be done all at once, but improvements made each season will pay off! To best **prepare the soil** you will want to first turn and break up sod. If breaking up and turning the soil by hand with a garden spade, shake dirt free from the sod and remove sod to the compost pile for use next year. If using a roto-tiller, till in both directions to break up large clods to workable size. Remove large rocks that may impede root growth. Ten to twelve inches of loose soil is ideal. You can add organic materials such as aged manure, compost, or peat to the soil to improve the texture.

To determine if your soil needs amending, the first thing is to **"test" the soil**. You can purchase your own test kits at many farm and garden stores, or utilize the services of Cooperative Extension. The initial check is for soil pH. pH expresses soil acidity and alkalinity. Most vegetable plants need values that are slightly acidic with a pH value of 6.2-6.8. Once you receive your levels, you can determine if your soil will benefit from adding lime, wood ashes, or sulphates to adjust pH values. Many tests also indicate levels of phosphate, potassium, and nitrogen, essential nutrients utilized in plant growth. Most gardens respond well with a complete fertilizer (with values of 5-10-5 or 12-12-12) for vegetables, commonly available at your local gardening center. Follow directions on the fertilizer package for the correct application. Remember, more is not always better!

Tip 4: To grow or not to grow? That is the question.

To grow: Pay attention to the spacing guidance on seed packets and plant tabs, between plants and between rows. The spacing varies with the plant. Root crops like radishes, beets, carrots, and onions can grow close together, but tomatoes, cabbage, squash, and corn need more space.

Or not to grow: Plants set too close together compete for sunlight, water, and nutrition; are more susceptible to disease and pests; and fail to mature.

To grow: Use high-quality seeds and consider purchasing starter plants.

Or not to grow: Seed packets are less expensive than individual plants, but if seeds don't germinate, your money—and time—are wasted. Consider starter plants, particularly for peppers and tomatoes. Use seeds for lettuce and root crops.

To grow: When planting seeds and plants, soil should be damp but not waterlogged. Once you have planted to the depth recommended on the package, water lightly. Continue to water during the season to prevent the soil from completely drying out and cracking. If you are using starter plants, water each one well after planting. The best time to water established plants is in the morning or after a light rain (you want the water to reach the root). Apply the water as close to the soil as possible. Watering your plants, the correct amount—neither too much nor too little—will give them the best chance at producing a bountiful crop.

Or not to grow: Overwatering can do as much damage as not watering enough. A rule of thumb is to water (rain counts!) established plants so that soil sticks together lightly, a couple times a week.

To grow: Plant and harvest at the right time, not too early or too late. Just like people, some like it hot, and some like it cold. Some plants require warm soil to grow and are sensitive to frost, while other crops do better in cooler temperatures. Every vegetable has its own planting dates, so be sure to check the seed packet. Check the recommended planting dates at your extension office if you have questions.

Or not to grow: No need to plant the garden all at once! Plant those cool-weather vegetables (peas, cabbage, broccoli, kale, and Brussels sprouts) and root crops first, followed by warm weather vegetables (beans, peppers, and tomatoes). Some crops can be planted more than once in the season.

Tip 5: Your best 10 choices! (and a few more hints)

The following vegetables are common, productive plants for beginner home gardens and are relatively easy to grow. Many are suitable for growing in raised beds or containers, too.

1. **Tomatoes** - *Hint:* Most will need to be staked or caged as they grow—use starter plants.

2. **Zucchini or summer squash** - *Hint:* Be ready to share.

3. **Peppers** - *Hint:* Use starter plants.

4. **Cabbage, Brussels sprouts, or kale** - *Hint:* Kale can be direct seeded early in the season.

5. **Bush beans** - *Hint:* Unlike pole beans, bush beans grow compactly and do not require support.

6. **Lettuce** - *Hint:* Leaf lettuce is easier than head lettuce; plant over several weeks for a continuous crop.

7. **Beets** - *Hint:* Must be thinned, but thinnings make good greens in a salad.

8. **Carrots** - *Hint:* Choose shorter varieties if you have rocky soils.

9. **Swiss Chard** - *Hint:* Young plants and thinnings can also be added to salads.

10. **Radishes** - *Hint:* Quick growing like lettuce, plant over several weeks for a continuous crop.

Bonus Tip: Marigolds, to discourage pests, and don't overlook easy-to-grow herbs!

How does your garden grow? You will only know if you try, and the satisfaction of growing something yourself comes with even more rewards.

Area Master Gardeners Are Here for You

As one might imagine, interest in home gardening has soared while in the throes of COVID-19. The response from Extension Master Gardener programs around the state and country have been overwhelming—webinars, blogs and chat rooms have swollen with programs with information and advice for beginners through advanced gardeners. We will post and host as many as possible and as they become available. Stay tuned and look for timely programs, articles, and resources on the Master Gardener webpage at <http://cceschoharie-otsego.org/gardening>.

What to Do with Your Soil Samples



Because of current COVID-19 restrictions, CCE staff and volunteers are working from home, because the office is closed. However, the need for soil testing continues to be an important component of your soil health needs. Here are two options for soil testing:

For complete soil analyses, we ask that you work directly with the soil testing service, which will include taking the sample, completing the paperwork, and shipping to the laboratory in Ithaca. All information about the entire process is available at the Agro One website at <https://dairyone.com/services/agronomy-services/soil-analysis/>.

CCE staff can still provide you with a simple pH test. Each sample should represent only one area—for example, a lawn, vegetable garden, or perennial garden. Avoid brass or galvanized tools or containers that can contaminate samples. Using only tools that are clean and free of rust, take at least 8-10 core samples from each area you want tested:

- **Sample annual vegetable and flower beds** to the depth that you plan to incorporate lime or fertilizer, usually about 4-6 inches.
- **Sample shrubbery and perennial beds** to a depth of 4-6 inches, taking care to avoid zones where lime or fertilizer has been applied recently.



- **Sample lawns** to a depth of 4 inches at the root zone.

Collect core samples from each area in a clean plastic bucket, mix well, then spread the soil to dry on waxed paper or other clean non-porous surface. Place no more than a cup of dry soil mix (from each area) in a plastic zipped baggie, and mark with your name, date, and telephone number. Place the bagged soil at the front entrance to either office in Cobleskill or Cooperstown. We will process as soon as possible and call you with the results.

If you need further assistance, contact us at schoharie@cornell.edu or otsego@cornell.edu.

Happy gardening!

Plant Sale Challenges Faced



Every year, Master Gardeners in both our counties look forward to preparing and hosting their annual plant sales, usually within a week of each other at our offices in Cobleskill and Cooperstown, rain or shine, warm or cold. The proceeds are the sole source of funding for their programs. But a very different chill this year arrived unexpectedly and is likely to be with us through spring, the timing around which includes the plant sales . . . and, yes, the plants keep growing. As per COVID-19 and current protocols, the Master Gardeners had to make some difficult decisions, each based on their unique circumstances.

Therefore, the Schoharie Master Gardeners will not host a public sale this year but hope to revive



it in the spring of 2021. Although Otsego Master Gardeners faced a different challenge, there will be no public sale there, either. But you can't keep good gardeners down, as the dream of a plant sale in spring 2021 continues.

PROGRAM EVENTS

Due to New York State's response to the COVID-19 pandemic, our programming has become more fluid and is being brought to you online. **Go to our website cceschoharie-otsego.org to see the most up-to-date listings offered.**

Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties – May Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, May 14, 6:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m.

Meetings are open to the public. If interested in attending, please check with the office at 518-234-4303 to confirm the day and location of the meeting.

Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties – June Board of Directors Meeting

Thursday, June 11, 6:30 p.m.–9:00 p.m.

Meetings are open to the public. If interested in attending, please contact the office at 518-234-4303 to confirm the day and location of the meeting.

SAVE THESE DATES

At the time of this publication, these events had not been canceled, any changes will be noted on our website; be sure to check prior to the events.

Otsego County Fair 2020

Tuesday, August 4 - Sunday, August 9

The Otsego County Fair has grown substantially since its inception. The first exhibition, held from October 2-4 in 1877,

had, by all accounts, strong attendance, but over the years has grown to an average attendance of over 30,000.
48 Lake St., Morris

Cobleskill Sunshine Fair 2020

Tuesday, August 11 - Sunday, August 16

The 144th edition of the Sunshine Fair—It's "Miles of Smiles" at the largest community event in Schoharie County.
113 Sunshine Drive, Cobleskill

Family Farm Day 2020

Saturday, August 29

Look forward to experiencing working farms in Schoharie, Otsego, and Delaware Counties at our Eighth Annual Family Farm Day on August 29, 2020.

Master Gardener Volunteer Training 2020

September 21 - November 16, 2020

Want to become a Master Gardener Volunteer? Plan to attend the Fall 2020 training to be held on Mondays, 9 a.m.-3 p.m., for nine consecutive weeks, starting September 21. Cost is \$150 per person. Applications are being accepted through August 21. The schedule of classes and locations will be posted soon. For more information, contact David Cox, Agriculture-Horticulture Program Leader, 518-234-4303, ext. 119, or visit our website at <http://cceschoharie-otsego.org/gardening/master-gardener-volunteer-training>.

Visit our website, cceschoharie-otsego.org, to see additional events not listed.

EXTRA! EXTRA! Read All About Connections EXTRA!

Looking for timely updates? In light of numerous postings due to the COVID-19 protocols, CCE has developed the *Connections EXTRA for Agricultural and Horticultural Producers and Marketers*, an abridged online edition that will list the titles of events, programs, webinars, articles, etc., along with respective links for further reading. Posting twice per week during the pandemic, *Connections EXTRA* will continue weekly post-pandemic to provide quick access to items of interest and benefit to our readers without flooding your mailboxes with individual emails. It's a work in progress needing separate postings on occasion to accommodate quick turnover that is the norm during the pandemic. To be included in this online opportunity, contact schoharie@cornell.edu or call 518-234-4303 ext. 111 and leave a message.



My 4-H Story



Here I am on our family farm with one of my 4-H project show calves. She was part of the Earn-an-Animal program.

Paying It Forward

I am Jason Stone, Board President of the Board of Directors for Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties, and this is my 4-H Story.

In all honesty when I joined 4-H at age eight. I had no thought about paying it forward. I didn't have a vision of how 4-H would follow me throughout my life. Raised on a 100-cow Holstein dairy operation run as a partnership between my grandfather and my father in Allegany County in Western New York, I was just a farm kid excited to learn about showing my first calf. My mom, a former 4-Her herself, knew the value of the program. In fact, over the years that I was in 4-H, my parents volunteered countless hours providing transportation to practices and attending events.

My 4-H leader was another dairy farmer in our town, Fillmore, New York, who, over time, hosted a 4-H dairy club that was thirty members strong—providing a unique time for all of us. I remember being a little tyke when I started my 4-H experience showing cows. It was the first place I experienced how 4-H allows for paying it forward. The older 4-H members were so generous teaching the younger members how to care for, prepare, and show the animals, even teaching safety, so I didn't get stomped on when getting ready for shows.

From showing cows it was a natural progression to get into dairy judging. At age ten I joined our Junior Dairy Judging Team. I was a part of a four-

son mixed team, two girls and two boys, all from different families, each bringing different strengths to the table. The first year we were awful, I mean really bad, but someone had to finish last. We stuck to it though. Weekend practices at farms in the area with my parents often providing transportation allowed us to develop our skills. The dedicated work allowed an amazing camaraderie to develop, and by the time we advanced to the Senior Team, we ultimately went to the New York State Fair winning top honors.

Everything in 4-H wasn't about cows. I also participated in 4-H dog obedience with my black lab, Abby. Then there was Public Presentations. I remember my reaction: Do I have to? Now being older, I have a different perspective; I thank 4-H for the opportunity to do public speaking. Early exposure and



I am in the center with my dog Abby along with my two younger brothers, Justin and Joshua on either side. We had just performed our dog-obedience drill team routine at the state fair.

experience with public speaking has been very beneficial with my work and volunteer activities.

I was in 4-H from eight to eighteen, aging out of the program when I went to college. My 4-H experience continued on a different path when I attended SUNY Cobleskill. I had the opportunity to coach and work with 4-Hers teaching them about Dairy Judging. After college my wife, also a former 4-Her, settled in the Cooperstown area. Our connection with 4-H continued as we became 4-H leaders for our children and their friends. They, too, have explored varied interests in project areas encompassing dog obedience, dairy, goats, and equine. The best part of being a leader has been watching them grow—just getting better at what they do—seeing them flourish doing projects with their animals. It's the hands-on aspect of 4-H that truly allows them to learn and then share what they learned with others, paying it forward, more engaged than I often see students in the school where I work.

Becoming Board President has given me yet another way to pay it forward. It feels like I am really giving back to the family that gave so much to me. So my message to all 4-H members and alumni is to continue paying it forward, because it truly does come back tenfold.

Share Your 4-H Story

"4-H taught me to not give up when things get too hard."

These words from a 4-Her reflect the deep impact that the 4-H program has had and continues to have on individuals who participate. For every experience, there is a story...

In that spirit, we invite you as a 4-H alumna to share your story, your childhood memories of experiences, people, and activities that became your 4-H life. We want to share your story by featuring it in an upcoming issue of *Connections*. We are calling the series, My 4-H Story. For more information, please contact Jan Ryder, Associate Editor, at 518-234-4303, ext. 112. Leave a message or email her at jrc28@cornell.edu.

4-H Afterschool Program Update

Susan Salisbury, 4-H Afterschool Program Coordinator, has been in contact and is staying in touch with our partner schools as they plan new protocols in order to keep the children and staff healthy during the COVID-19 pandemic. Once the schools announce their plans for reopening post shelter-in-place, Cornell Cooperative Extensions 4-H Afterschool programs are committed to reopening right along with local schools. Susan has also been keeping in touch with program families and students through our one-call system and emails.

"As Coordinator, I feel our programs offer more than afterschool childcare. There is a partnership between the parents, the program, and the coordinator. Key is the communication staff provides parents with at pick-up time, letting them know about the child's day and activities participated in. Our homework assistance takes the pressure off family time in the evening. As the coordinator, I am also available as a resource if parents have questions and concerns. I am looking forward to welcoming both new and returning students and families when our programs start up again. I have been using this shelter-in-place time to develop staff trainings and prepare new and exciting program materials, all

based on the 4-H premise to 'learn by doing.' I believe our strong program will come back even stronger," said Susan.

When plans to reopen schools and programs occur, we want you to be ready, as well, with registration packets

filled out and returned for your student(s) already in place for the 2020-2021 school year. Registrations are available online for the Cobleskill-Richmondville 4-H Afterschool Program and the Schoharie 4-H Afterschool Program at cceschoharie-otsego.org/ASPforms; when completed, return them to Susan Salisbury, 4-H Afterschool Program Coordinator at sms248@cornell.edu.



4-H Afterschool Program youth engaged in program with Teresa Adell, Educator



Happenings with Schoharie and Otsego Counties 4-H



Why 4-H Public Presentations?

Public speaking is one of the most important life skills 4-H members can learn. For most individuals, the thought of preparing and delivering a speech is terrifying. However, 4-H Youth Members throughout NYS, as well as the country, have an advantage in public speaking. 4-H members develop and practice their speaking and communication skills through this 4-H program.

4-H Public Presentations teaches youth how to effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas. Youth that learn how to express their thoughts clearly to those they interact with on the job, in school, or at home. They will become a more valued employee, a better student, and a more understood family member. 4-H alumni often credit 4-H Public Presentations as an advantage in both their college and careers.

Schoharie County 4-H Happenings



Sewing clinic

4-H Sewing Clinic

In February Schoharie County 4-H members attended the 4-H Sewing Clinic held at the CCE Extension Center. Participants learned the parts of a sewing machine, how to put together a sewing kit, basic sewing skills and tools, and how to use a pattern. Attendees made hot dish holders and pillowcases, learning about creating French seams.

Schoharie County Public Presentations 2020

On February 29 the Schoharie County 4-H Program held its 4-H Public Presentations. More than



forty 4-H youths gave presentations from Amazing Corn Muffins to a presentation on the Horse's Hoof. Youths shared their knowledge on various topics to evaluators, who helped them achieve better public speaking skills. Thank you, Dr. Ben Weikert, his AGED 411 class students, and the many community volunteers for their assistance.



Schoharie County Sr. and Jr. Dairy Bowl Team. Back row: Gus Mason, Luke Edsall, Front row: Levi Blood, Mason Yacobucci, Daisy Mason, Case Yacobucci, Peyton Johns, Jacob Edsall

Schoharie County 4-H Dairy Bowl 2020

On March 7 the Schoharie County 4-H Dairy Bowl Team traveled to Troy, New York, to compete in the Capital Region Dairy Quiz Bowl. Both the Senior and Junior teams placed third. Levi Blood placed 6th individually and is an alternate for the State Junior Team. Gus Mason placed 5th individually and is also an alternate for the Senior team. As alternates, they are eligible for participating in the State Dairy Quiz Bowl. A great showing by the 4-H youth reflected their dedication and hours of practice for this event.



Schoharie County Legislative Interns learn about Schoharie County Emergency Services Department.

March Legislative Interns 2020

On March 11 the Schoharie County 4-H Legislative Interns visited the Schoharie County Emergency Services Department and the 911 Call Center and were given a tour and overview of what the department does by Michael Hartzel, Director, and Colleen Flynn, EM Coordinator.

The Office of Emergency Services is responsible for coordinating the activities of all county agencies to protect the citizens, businesses, and visitors of the 16 towns and six villages of the county, as well as the infrastructure and environment from natural and man-made disasters and emergencies.

This is just one of the many experiences the interns have had, where they learn about local government along with citizenship and the legislative process. Participation in the 4-H Legislative Intern Program can help students develop many life skills and has inspired students to pursue academic or career opportunities in public service.

Currently...

Since the shelter-in-place order went in effect in New York State, traditional 4-H programming and events have been suspended with future events like county and state fair being unknown at this time. Meeting the challenges presented, Schoharie County 4-H Educator Teresa Adell has now provided club members with projects they can do independently, and some 4-H clubs have used Zoom so they can meet as a 4-H club.

Otsego County 4-H Happenings

Otsego County Public Presentations 2020

Otsego County 4-H Program hosted two Saturdays, February 29, in Morris and March 7, in Milford for 4-H members to make their presentations. The two-day combined event saw 36 4-H members from

eight Otsego County 4-H clubs give public presentation. It was supported by 36 volunteers. Thanks to all who participated and helped, with special thanks to the events chairpersons, Bridgette Shepardson, Morris, and Beth Bartlett, Milford. Here are some of the 4-H youth presenters in action.



Continues on page 12



Currently...

4-H Pen Pals!

What do 4-H Members do when they can't meet in person? They meet as 4-H Pen Pals! To beat the "at-home Covid blues," 4-H Educator April Leonard from Tioga County invited 4-H members in the South Central 4-H District join in a 4-H Pen Pal program. Counties in the South Central District are Broome, Delaware, Chenango, Chemung, Cortland, Otsego, Schulyer, Tioga, and Tompkins.



4-H members will be paired with someone in their age group who is in a different 4-H Club/County. One 4-H member will be told who his or her pen pal is and will write the pen pal a message. The recipient pen pal will find out who their pen pal is once they get the first message! Then, they can write back. The offer was made to share any ideas of what to write about with the pen pal, for example, telling about your 4-H project animal or about a 4-H fair exhibit project.



Participants can choose to use the old-fashioned way and mail a letter, or they can use email. The first day the program was offered, two Otsego County 4-H members, Summer Mayne, with the Otsdawa Bobcats 4-H Club, and Lilly Cleaveland, with the Sunset Riders 4-H Club, signed up. Later, they were joined by 11 additional Otsego County 4-H Club members from Otsego Fire Crackers 4-H Club, Forces of Morris 4-H Club, and Country Clovers 4-H club: Angel Mravlja, Trevor Decker, Taylor Decker, Lucas Galesky, Annaleen LaTour, Montana LaTour, Johnathan LaTour, Colin Erkson, Vanessa Erkson, Gavin Underwood, and Henry Underwood. We are looking forward to hearing about their new 4-H friends! At the time this article was written, there were 21 counties and 110 4-H youth participating in the 4-H Pen Pal Program.



The 4-H Program, 4-H Leadership, and 4-H Youth continue to grow, learning by doing.

PRETZEL-CRUSTED CHICKEN

Serves 4

A “twist” on baked chicken breast . . .

Source: Texas A & M Agrilife Extension’s Dinner Tonight recipe collection



Nutrition Facts	
4 servings per container	
Serving size	(160g)
Amount per serving	
Calories	330
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 11g	14%
Saturated Fat 2g	10%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 85mg	28%
Sodium 180mg	8%
Total Carbohydrate 27g	10%
Dietary Fiber 0g	0%
Total Sugars 2g	
Includes 0g Added Sugars	0%
Protein 29g	
Vitamin D 0mcg	0%
Calcium 20mg	2%
Iron 2mg	10%
Potassium 425mg	10%

*The % Daily Value tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Ingredients

- 4 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 2 tablespoons honey mustard
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 4.5 ounces crushed, unsalted pretzels (about 3 1.5-ounce snack-pack bags)
- Vegetable oil spray

Directions

1. Crush pretzels on a clean surface (or in a zip-lock plastic bag) using a rolling pin.
2. Put pretzel crumbs in a medium bowl; set aside.
3. Slice chicken breasts into wide strips, about half an inch thick.
4. In a small bowl thoroughly mix honey mustard with olive oil.
5. Spread honey mustard mixture on both sides of each chicken strip using a pastry brush or spatula.
6. Dip each chicken strip into the reserved crushed pretzels, coating both sides.
7. Place pretzel coated strips in a 9" x 13" baking dish prepared with vegetable oil spray.
8. Bake, uncovered, at 350 degrees for 40-45 minutes or until a meat thermometer inserted in chicken reads 165°F.

Notes:

- You can make your own honey mustard by whisking together ½ cup mustard, ¼ cup honey, and ¼ cup vinegar. You can use additional honey mustard as a dipping sauce for chicken strips.
- If you use salted pretzels in place of unsalted pretzels, you increase the sodium content of this dish by approximately 1643 mg., equivalent to almost ¾ teaspoon of salt.



Know the facts . . .

- Extra virgin olive oil is unrefined, which means that it is made by cold-pressing olives to extract the oil. No heat is used in this process, so the resulting oil retains a lot its olive-y flavors. Regular olive oil (sometimes marked “pure olive oil”) is a combination of extra virgin olive oil and refined olive oil, which has a more neutral flavor and a higher smoke point. They can be used interchangeably, but you’ll get more flavor with EVOO. On the other hand, you can heat pure olive oil to higher temperatures without burning it, making it a better choice for cooking.
- The USDA recommends freezing chicken breasts no longer than nine months for optimal quality and flavor. So always record the “frozen on” date on your packaging with a marker and some masking tape.
- Pretzels are a popular snack food worldwide. They come in two varieties: hard and soft. To get their brown and shiny appearance, they are treated with a solution that causes a unique chemical reaction to occur while baking. When making pretzels at home, this solution is made with 8 cups of water and ¾ cup of baking soda, followed with an egg wash. Pretzels mostly consist of carbs, as their main ingredient is wheat flour. They also contain small amounts of fiber and B vitamins.
- For our companion recipe, **Potato Salad with Boiled Dressing**, go to cceschoharie-otsego.org/connections. Find the recipe link in the left menu. This recipe doesn’t use mayonnaise.
- If you are interested in more nutritional information, helpful tips, or classes, you can also contact Michelle Leveski, EFNEP Nutrition Program Educator by calling 518-234-4303, ext. 115. Please leave a message, or email her at mm139@cornell.edu, or join us on Facebook: EFNEP CCE Schoharie and Otsego Counties.



When you see their mouthparts close up you understand how ticks are able to hang on so tight. Photo by Susan Ellis, Bugwood.org

Avoid Getting “Ticked”

BY JAN RYDER

In recent years the health risks New Yorkers face from a steadily growing population of the black-legged ticks, more commonly referred to as the deer tick has increased. This year is no different; the climate changes that have contributed to the influx of this pest will continue. Warmer winters and earlier springs are apt to become the norms. Whenever temperatures rise above 40°F, ticks are active, sequestering on vegetation waiting for the next blood meal that comes along. Mice, deer, pets, and humans all seem to appeal to their tastes. Ticks are really only doing what they have always done—eating to live.

It's us that have to remember to change how we operate in the great outdoors whether at work or play. Ticks have moved in and multiplied, making not just wooded areas, but backyards a place you might get “ticked.”

In fact, that is just what happened to me in March on a balmy 50-degree day when I went out for a couple of hours to clean out my rhubarb bed in the middle of my yard. Later that night while relaxing in my chair thinking about the accomplishments of

my day, I remembered that anytime you work outside, it's now recommended you do a tick check when coming inside.

No, I thought, not in March, not in my yard—well maybe if I was at my daughter's house—she gets lots of deer in her yard, and she said she had already found some ticks on her dogs. Good thing I didn't listen to my self-denial. One tick-check later resulted in finding not one, but two black-legged “deer” ticks latched on to my back. Removal in under 24 hours greatly minimized, if not eliminated, my risk of getting Lyme disease, but I was still at risk for Powassan virus which can be transmitted in just minutes of exposure to tick saliva. Am I going to give up working in my yard or enjoying the great outdoors? No, but I am going to do things that lessen my chance of a tick choosing me for a meal, and I will definitely be doing tick checks routinely upon coming inside, before I relax in my chair for the night.

Since ticks are very small arthropods that walk on even smaller ‘feet,’ they are adapted to be secretive and avoid detection by their host. Since you



The item in the picture with these black-legged ticks is a straight pin not a nail. Photo by Jim Occi, Bug Pics, Bugwood.org

can't count on feeling them crawling on you, know how to protect yourself from tick exposure. Here is what is recommended we all do to protect against the ticks that have moved into the neighborhood.

Daily Tick Check! Despite your best efforts, you will not avoid ticks 100% of the time. Perform daily tick checks, even if you haven't been outdoors in a day or so. Get to know the spots and bumps on your skin so you can recognize new ones. New ones that just happen to have legs.

Dress the part. If you'll be in tick habitat (meaning you step off the pavement), take precautions by wearing light-colored, long pants tucked into your socks and a light-colored shirt tucked into pants. These steps make it easier to see ticks crawling on you and more difficult for ticks to get to your skin.

Use repellents on you and pesticides on your clothes. Repellent vs. Pesticide. There are two

classes of products that you might see on the shelf. Products that contain DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, and IR3535 are repellants. These products interfere with the host-finding abilities of insects that bite, making you hard to find. On the other hand, products that contain permethrin are pesticides that kill these organisms on contact. Permethrin is used to treat clothing, hats, shoes, and gear (backpacks, tents, etc.), and should never be applied to the skin for safety reasons.

Recognize and avoid tick habitat. Tick species differ in where they prefer to hang out, but it is possible to come into contact with a tick anytime you leave the pavement.

Steer clear of hitchhikers. Ticks don't survive long in most homes because of low humidity, but still—you're safest if you put your clothes in a clothes dryer and run on high heat for 20 minutes. The tumbling action of the dryer and the high heat kill ticks and similar critters.

Protect your pets. Just like people, pets can encounter ticks and acquire tick-borne disease. They can also bring ticks inside with them, potentially exposing you to ticks. So, if your pet goes outdoors, it should have some protection against ticks.

Check for ticks. It bears repeating—conduct a tick check at least once a day.

For more information on ticks, like safe removal and identification, go to Cornell's Integrated Pest Management program at <https://nysipm.cornell.edu/about/defining-ipm/ipm-communities>, and check out What's Bugging You.

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Printed copies are normally available at the Extension offices in Cobleskill, Cooperstown, and Oneonta, but during the pandemic, you may call CCE at 518-234-4303, ext. 111, and leave a message including your address for a copy to be mailed to you.



Family Farm Day 2019 – Highland Hollow

Family Farm Day 2020 Still in the Plans

Unexpectedly, COVID-19 put many of the best-laid plans in disarray. However, at the time of this publication, Family Farm Day 2020 (FFD) is scheduled for August 29. We have time on our side to delay our planning realistically until early June, at which point we will have more timely information



to reassess what might be feasible nearly three months hence. Meanwhile, from the farm registrations received thus far, we see continued enthusiasm for FFD.

“Event options will be explored when the planning group convenes in early June to make a decision,” said David Cox, Agriculture

Program Leader. “If you are a participating farmer reading this message, I encourage you to register as soon as possible, using the guidelines outlined originally in the FFD packet.”

“Needless to say, we need farms first for any type of event to take place. Look for another update toward the end of May that will, in essence, take the pulse of the participating farms and be reported in *Connections Extra*. Feel free to contact me anytime with questions or suggestions. Call my cell at 607-437-9794 or email me at dgc23@cornell.edu,” said David.

All information from the original packet and updates can be obtained from the FFD webpage at <http://cceschoharie-otsego.org/agriculture/family-farm-day>.

Stay tuned and be well!



Marie Lange (center in tent) greets visitors and describes various lavender products at Slate Hill Farm in 2019.



Melissa Hatalsky (center left) in 2019 at Hoofbeats Holistic describes its unique approach to teaching children how to handle and care for horses while having fun, building confidence, and learning about themselves.



Using the Online Farmers' Market-WhatsGood will bring the farmers' market produce right to your local community.

Online Farmers' Market—WhatsGood

CCE Schoharie Otsego Counties is launching an online farmers' market to help connect farmers and customers during the COVID-19 crisis and beyond. We have teamed up with area businesses to create this very unique online option, which is open and available to every food producer in the area and provides numerous pick-up locations for the customers to choose from.

Customers can go to the **WhatsGood** website at **sourcewhatsgood.com** to purchase from local food producers and pick up their orders at one of six drop sites across Otsego and Schoharie Counties.

Deliveries will begin the first week of May. Orders are due Monday for Wednesday pick-up and Tuesday for Thursday pick-up.

HOW IT WORKS

The farmers and food producers create a profile on the WhatsGood website telling customers about their farm. The producer creates a list of the products they have available to sell through this portal and selects one, or more, of the drop-sites hosted by the businesses partnering with the WhatsGood online market.

Customers select which drop-site they want to utilize from the WhatsGood website, then shop from specific farmers, or browse by products they are looking for. When they find what they want, they purchase it through the website. The transactions are directly between the customer and the producer.

The six drop-sites are organized along two corridors.

Wednesday deliveries along I-88 Corridor: Customer online order cut-off time is 11:00 p.m. Mondays.

Schoharie Valley Farms

5605 State Route 30, Schoharie, NY 12157
Farmer Drop-off: Wednesdays, 9 a.m.-noon
Customer Pick-up: Wednesdays, noon-5 p.m.

Tagua Nut Café

509 West Main Street, Cobleskill, NY 12043
Farmer Drop-off: Wednesdays, 9 a.m.-noon
Customer Pick-up: Wednesdays, noon-5 p.m.

Cooperstown Cheese Company

107 Oxbow Road and Route 28, Milford, NY 13807
Farmer Drop-off: Wednesdays, 9 a.m.-noon
Customer Pick-up: Wednesdays, noon-5 p.m.

The Green Earth Health Market

4 Market Street, Oneonta, NY 13829
Farmer Drop-off: Wednesdays, 8 a.m.-noon
Customer Pick-up: Wednesdays, noon-5 p.m.

Thursday deliveries along Route 20 corridor: Customer online order cut-off time is 11:00 p.m. Tuesdays.

Black Cat Café

195 Main Street, Sharon Springs, NY 13459
Farmer Drop-off: Thursdays, 9 a.m.-noon
Customer Pick-up: Thursdays, noon-5 p.m.

Richfield Community Food Co-op

140 West Main Street, Richfield Springs, NY 13439
Farmer Drop-off: Thursdays, 10 a.m.-noon
Customer Pick-up: Thursdays, noon-5 p.m.

Folks interested in shopping through this online farmers' market should sign up at <https://sourcewhatsgood.com/>. Farmers interested in selling should contact Jim Barber at jrb248@cornell.edu or call 607-547-2536 x227.

I sincerely hope everyone will take advantage of this opportunity to shop, sell, and support our local economy!



Nine Ways You Can Help During Invasive Species Week 2020 and Beyond

1. Learn about invasive species, especially those found in your region. Cornell Cooperative Extension Schoharie and Otsego Counties and the **National Invasive Species Information Center** are both trusted resources.

2. Clean hiking boots, waders, boats and trailers, off-road vehicles, and other gear to stop invasive species from hitching a ride to a new location. Learn more at **PlayCleanGo.org**.

3. Avoid dumping aquariums or live bait into waterways. Learn more at **Habitattitude.org**.

4. Don't move firewood—instead, buy it where you'll burn it, or gather on site when permitted. Learn more at **DontMoveFirewood.org**.

5. Use forage, hay, mulch, and soil that are certified as “weed free.”

6. Plant only non-invasive plants in your garden, and remove any known invaders.

7. Report new or expanded invasive species outbreaks to authorities.

8. Volunteer to help remove invasive species from public lands and natural areas.

9. Ask your political representatives at the state, local, and national levels to support invasive species control efforts.

To learn more...

#Spottedlanternfly feeds on a wide range of fruit, ornamental, and woody trees. If allowed to this pest could seriously impact the country's grape, orchard, and logging industries. Find out what you can do to stop this **#invasivespecies #NISAW** at <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/resources/pests-diseases/hungry-pests/slf/spotted-lanternfly>.

The annual U.S. cost from **#invasivespecies** is \$120 billion, with a minimum of 100 million acres being affected (i.e., the size of California). Learn more about how you can advocate for their management this **#NISAW** at <https://extension.umn.edu/courses-and-events/empoweru-advocating-invasive-species-management>.





Life's Solutions—When Someone Eats the Last Slice

Finding ways to feed our families and ourselves can often add to the challenges and struggles we are facing today. We can't run to the store as often as we like, and when we get there, many of the basic items we have depended on before are limited or no longer available.

One household staple that can be in short supply is bread. You're resourceful, so you decide to make it yourself only to find yeast—a key ingredient—is also unavailable.

Time for a “life solution,” that little bit of knowledge that can make a difference. You can substitute double-acting baking powder for the yeast in your bread recipes with a one-to-one ratio (one packet of yeast contains 2¼ teaspoons). Baking powder reacts immediately when exposed to liquid and heat, so it does not require rising time called for in traditional bread recipes. Because of this, bread made with baking powder will be denser than bread made with yeast, but just as yummy.

Using this “life solution” here is a recipe that enables you to make bread dough with only two ingredients. This dough can be used for bread, pizza, calzones, breadsticks, and more.

Bread Recipe

1½ cups self-rising flour
1 cup plain Greek yogurt

Directions:

Preheat oven to 375°F.

To make dough by hand: Place self-rising flour in a large bowl. Add yogurt and stir with a fork until dough can be handled. Knead the dough on a lightly floured surface until smooth, about 8 minutes. Add a few tablespoons water if the dough seems dry or a few tablespoons flour if sticky.

To make dough in stand mixer: Place self-rising flour in a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Add yogurt and mix at low speed until a smooth dough forms, 3 to 4 minutes. Add a few tablespoons water if the dough seems dry or a few tablespoons flour if sticky.

Place dough on lightly floured surface and shape; then place the shaped loaf on a greased cookie sheet or in an oiled cast iron pan. If desired, you can brush an egg wash on dough before baking. Bake at 375°F for 20-25 minutes or until golden brown.

If you don't have self-rising flour or it was also in short supply, you can make it yourself:

1 cup flour
1½ teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt

Whisk all ingredients together.

If you would like to make enough to store:

4 cups flour
2 tablespoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt

Whisk all ingredients together and store in an airtight container.

For more recipes and information visit: <http://www.eatingwell.com/recipe/265514/two-ingredient-dough>

Sometimes just a little bit of information makes all the difference when faced with challenges. We will be sharing more “life solutions” articles in the coming weeks to help families and individuals meet this need.

If you are interested in more helpful tips, nutritional information, or classes, you can also contact Michelle Leveski, Nutrition Program Educator by calling 518-234-4303 ext. 115 (please leave a message), or emailing her at mml39@cornell.edu.



The Farm-to-School Program creates teachable moments that translate to a better understanding of where food comes from and healthier eating behaviors.

CCE Awarded Farm-to-School Grant for Local Foods—Healthy Schools Program Program Seeks New Farm-to-School Coordinator!

BY DAVID COX, AGRICULTURE-HORTICULTURE PROGRAM LEADER

Needless to say, I was thrilled to learn that CCE had been selected by the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets to receive a \$100K grant for our new Farm-to-School Program, Local Foods – Healthy Schools. Of the \$1.5 million total announced by the Governor’s office, 16 projects were selected among numerous applications to increase the use of New York farm products in schools and boost the agricultural economy. With announcements made in mid-February, the grant period will run between January 1, 2020, and December 31, 2021.

The state’s objective was very clear: “To increase the volume and variety of NYS farm products procured by schools and districts for inclusion in school meal programs.” Doing so would provide new markets for New York’s farmers, improve student health, and educate young people about agriculture. The funding received will be used to hire a Farm-to-School Coordinator, train food service staff, provide nutrition education in classrooms and cafeterias, purchase equipment to support food preparation, and support the purchase of local farm products for school lunches.

Our proposal was supported by a unique collaboration among CCE, the Capital Region BOCES, and five component school districts specific to our area; Duanesburg, Schoharie, Middleburgh, Cobleskill-Richmondville, and Sharon Springs. Superintendents and food service directors were very enthusiastic about a program that will help them achieve the 30% New York State Initiative and be in a stronger economic position to maintain a higher level of NYS farm product procurement with a Farm-to-School infrastructure. The expansion of the current NY Thursdays Program, for example, a school meal initiative that uses local, farm-fresh foods on Thursdays throughout the school year, is an early component of our program.

Program delivery will be guided by a soon-to-be hired Farm-to-School Coordinator by CCE, located here at the Extension Center in Cobleskill, under my supervision and our Executive Director, Don Smyers. Farm-to-School educators statewide have access to numerous resources that address the needs of the cafeteria staff, students, and parents, as well programs designed for farm producers for

production, technical, business, marketing, and food safety applications that will increase the number of farms eligible to become institutional vendors.

Indeed, COVID-19 protocols have challenged our progress. Communications have been slow, and the schools are closed. However, we are nearing a contract with Ag & Markets and will launch our search for a Farm-to-School Coordinator. Meanwhile, I am working with state Farm-to-School leaders to organize a special two-day training for area school district teams, currently scheduled for August 3 and 4 at the Capital Region BOCES in Albany. With the curriculum still in development, the plan is to provide a 'soup-to-nuts' training about Farm-to-School

programming on the first day, followed by a comprehensive workshop on attaining the 30% Initiative on day two. More information about this opportunity will be forthcoming.

To be sure, our application was a team effort. My thanks again go to two people in particular, Aletha Sprague, MV-PHIP (Mohawk Valley Population Health Improvement Program) Supervisor, at Bassett Research Institute in Cooperstown, and Maureen Blanchard, Project Director, Creating Healthy Schools and Communities Program at SUNY Cobleskill, and who serves also on the CCE Board of Directors. Their initiatives and professional experiences helped us prepare a funded application.



Patti Zellmer Retires, Concluding a 4-H Career Serving Youth



Patti Zellmer, Otsego County 4-H program educator, finishes her career as a 4-H Educator on April 30, having grown the Otsego County 4-H program over her nine years with the Association. With the help of many volunteers, she

developed several successful initiatives. They include an annual January 4-H leader appreciation dinner hosted in Oneonta, the formation of the 4-H Robotics Team, where youth and parents earned many accolades for their successes, and strengthening the 4-H youth involvement at the Otsego County Fair, where youth demonstrate the culmination of their annual 4-H projects and activities.

Please join the staff and volunteers in celebrating her service to youth. With the COVID-19 pandemic restricting how we can celebrate together, we're confident that Patti would welcome hearing from the many individuals whose lives were touched by her and the 4-H program. Please send your cards to the Cooperstown office, and we'll forward them to her.

While her career of over 25 years as a 4-H educator in three counties comes to an end, another career has opened. Patti is an Ordained Elder in the Free Methodist Church. She will return to her calling as a minister and will serve as a full-time Associate Pastor at New Life Oneonta Free Methodist Church.

Thank you, Patti, for making the best better, as the 4-H motto says. We'll miss you.



Master Gardener Training – Class of 2018

CCE Seeks New Master Gardener Volunteers!

Interested in becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer? Cornell Cooperative Extensions of Chenango, Delaware, Herkimer, and Schoharie and Otsego Counties are accepting applications from area residents looking to participate in this popular statewide and national public-service program. The Master Gardener Program is open to anyone with a genuine interest in flora and food gardening and a willingness to share their knowledge, experience, and enthusiasm with constituents in his/her local communities.

Training for new volunteers will begin Monday, September 21, and will continue for nine consecutive Mondays through November 16, except Columbus Day (Monday), when classes will be held Tuesday, October 13. Educators are preparing classes for three scenarios, either in-person, online, or a combination of both. In-person classes will rotate among three locations in Cooperstown, Cobleskill, and Hamden. If online, participants will need computer access with audio and visual (camera) components for interactive presentations and discussions. The cost of the program training is \$150 per person. Applications are accepted through Friday, August 21, followed by personal interviews either in person or online.

The CCE Master Gardener Volunteer Program is a public service program that provides hands-on

training for volunteers to serve their communities through comprehensive horticulture, garden-based learning, invasive species, and other pest-management issues. Volunteers participate in a series of science-based educational sessions taught by well-known educators and industry professionals that include multiple aspects of horticulture and related topics. In return for this training, volunteers work with CCE educators to provide outreach education and information programs to respective county constituents. Many volunteers address home-gardening questions, while others participate in community gardening projects, educational workshops, and annual plant sales.

For details about the 2020 Master Gardener Volunteer Training or to receive an application, contact your county CCE association office: CCE Chenango County, 607-334-5841 ext. 20, Ashley Russell, anr72@cornell.edu; CCE Delaware County, 607-865-6531, Carla Hegeman Crim, ceh27@cornell.edu; CCE Herkimer County, 315-866-7920, Garet D. Livermore, gdl56@cornell.edu; CCE Schoharie and Otsego Counties, 518-234-4303 ext. 111, David Cox, dgc23@cornell.edu. Or, visit <http://cceschoharie-otsego.org/gardening/master-gardener-volunteer-training> for a position description and application.



Photo by The American Farmland Trust

CCE Collaborates with Partners to Link Farmers and Landowners

“Success for the next generation of farmers and ranchers depends on whether they can secure suitable land to start and expand their businesses,” says American Farmland Trust. Access to farmland is the number-one barrier for new and beginning farmers in New York and around the country. The American Farmland Trust, in partnership with New York State and other agricultural service providers, established a network of Regional Navigators as part of its Farmland for a New Generation New York program.

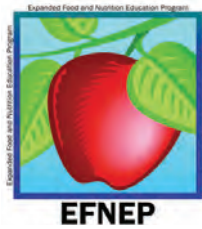
Following a brief Land Access Trainer curriculum, Regional Navigators, or partner organizations, offer specialized expertise to assist beginning farmers in finding land, as well as aiding senior farmers and non-farming landowners in making their land available for farming and transferring their farmland.

CCE Schoharie and Otsego Counties is collaborating with two county CCE associations—Oneida and Herkimer, to cover four of the six counties that comprise the Mohawk Valley Regional Economic Development Council; and with CADE (Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship) who will focus on the Delaware River Watershed that includes a small portion of southern Schoharie County. The Regional Navigator collaboration provides a unique opportunity to greatly improve our collective capacity to address farmland access and

farm transfer through well-designed education and outreach programming and public awareness. Supportive also are county governments that recently have revised respective agriculture and farmland protection plans that reflect the goals of the Regional Navigation program as a high priority.

The program is just getting underway. Working from home and meeting online due to COVID-19 protocols, Regional Navigators in respective counties are connecting with county planners, real property services, GIS specialists, and realtors to assemble lists of landowners and farmland owners to contact about the opportunity of providing access to farmland to new and beginning farmers. Likewise, Regional Navigators are connecting with new and beginning farmers about the program and the potential to access farmland both through its findings, as well as the Farmlink program at American Farmland Trust (<https://farmlandinfo.org/find-farmland/>). The original work plan included a number of ‘Meet & Greet’ activities around the region, which may still take place as the need for social distancing is eased. In the interim, the Regional Navigation team is prepared to reach their audiences through electronic and print mailings. CCE will post updates on the website as progress continues.

CCE in Action!



Here is how you can support CCE outreach:

Making a donation is as simple as going to cceschoharie-otsego.org and clicking this button:



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