Cornell Cooperative Extension
Schoharie and Otsego Counties

Connections

The News of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie and Otsego Counties

SPRING 2018

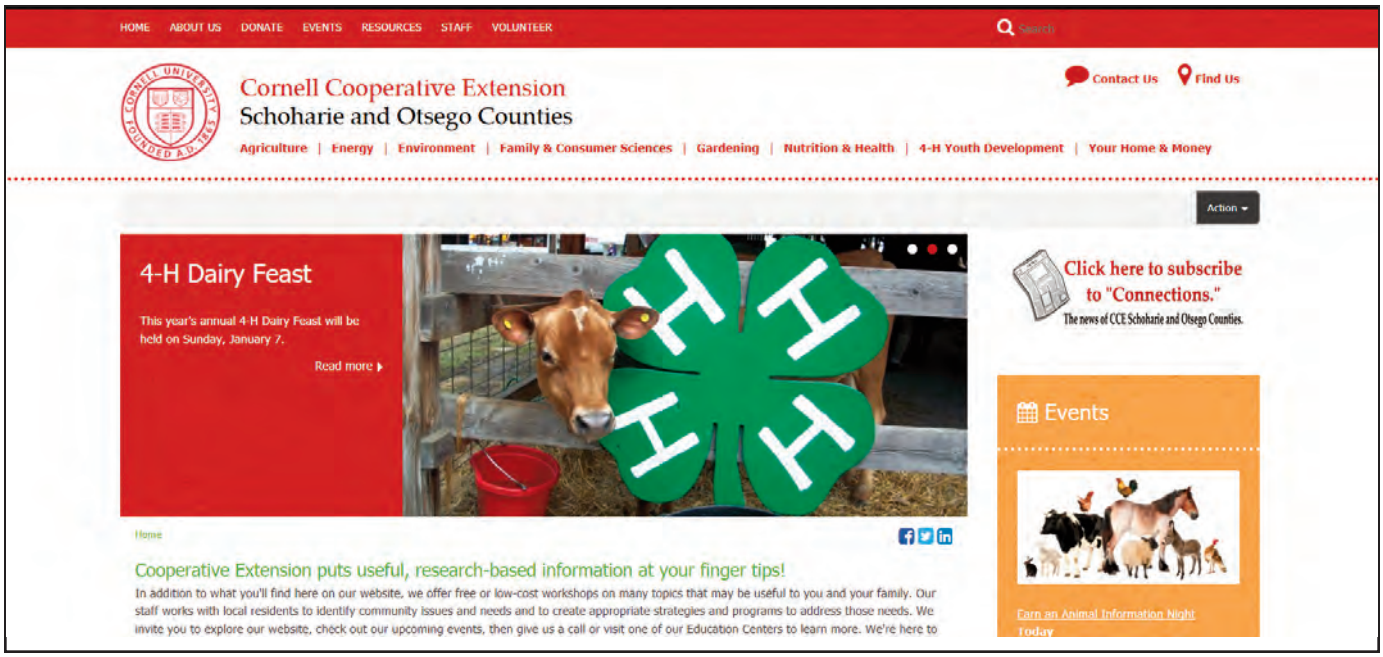
A Letter from the Executive Director

BY **DON SMYERS**, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

I am excited to reestablish the CCE Schoharie and Otsego Counties newsletter for residents of our two counties. Our former newsletter, "The Scoop," had been discontinued, but with this issue we renew our tradition of providing evidence-based information and resources in our core areas of agriculture and horticulture, 4-H youth development, family and consumer sciences, and economic development, while providing program and organizational updates in all areas of our work.

Beginning with this first issue, we will distribute the newsletter electronically and provide print copies for distribution by educators at events and local venues. The cost of mailing newsletters is substantial, and while we recognize that high-speed internet is not available everywhere in our service area, we want to share this newsletter as broadly as possible, to consumers, volunteers, agricultural producers, and residents valuing our important services and work. Please complete



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the online subscription form by visiting our website, www.schoharie-otsego.org and follow the link. The subscription is free and will ensure that you receive upcoming issues.

Our brand is Cornell Cooperative Extension, and through our mission, since 1914 in Otsego County and 1916 in Schoharie County, we continue in our century-long tradition of providing know-how and resources that improve the lives of New Yorkers by engaging directly with families and youth at their homes, on their farms, and in their communities. Cornell University and other Land-Grant Universities throughout all fifty states and the American territories, our New York Agricultural and Cornell Experiment Stations, the United States Department of Agriculture, and all county Extension offices are the team members that collectively deliver value to you.

Please visit and bookmark our county webpage, www.cceschoharie-otsego.org, to renew your online connection with CCE. Program announcements, staff and board directories, and information resources are provided for your use.

Your suggestions for the newsletter are always welcome. Contact us at schoharie@cornell.edu, otsego@cornell.edu, or me personally at drs269@cornell.edu.

Sincerely,

Don Smyers
Association Executive Director

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Our Mission

Cornell Cooperative Extension puts knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability, and social well-being. We bring local experience and research-based solutions together, helping New York State families and communities thrive in our rapidly changing world.

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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.

What's for Dinner?

CCE's Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) will offer a free Parent and Child Hands-On Cooking series focused on cooking healthy meals and exercising as a family. This six-lesson series is offered at the Extension Center in Cobleskill, NY, in partnership with the Bassett Research Institute's 5210 Initiative, who will provide $30 gift certificates toward athletic footwear to families completing all six nutrition lessons.

Attend the program and find the answers to the following questions and more! Is half your plate fruits and vegetables? How can I afford to eat healthy?

EFNEP focuses on hands-on learning, but Nutrition Educator Michelle Leveski says, "The hands-on aspect of our EFNEP program lessons are part of it, but just as important is teaching parents and children together. It gives them a chance to share skills, learn from each other, and encourages them to cook and eat family meals at home."

The class is offered on Wednesdays, April 4, 11, 18, 25, and May 2, and 9, from 4:30 to 5:30 p.m. If your family is interested in attending the series or to learn more, please call 518-234-4310 to register. Class size is limited.

Pasta with Spinach, Tomatoes, and White Beans

A quick satisfying skillet meal

Source: Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie and Otsego Counties

Serves 6

Ingredients

- 8 ounces whole wheat spaghetti or pasta
- 2 (14½ -ounce) cans Italian-style diced tomatoes
- 1 (19-ounce) can cannelloni beans, drained and rinsed
- 10 ounces fresh spinach, washed
- ½ cup crumbled feta cheese (optional)

Directions

1. Cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water until al dente, or to desired doneness.
2. Combine tomatoes and beans in a large non-stick skillet. Bring to a boil over medium heat. Reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes.
3. Add spinach to the sauce; cook for 2 minutes or until spinach wilts, stirring constantly.
4. Serve sauce over pasta and sprinkle with feta cheese.

NOTES: *Regular spaghetti or pasta may be used in place of whole wheat spaghetti or pasta. Frozen spinach may be used in place of fresh. Ground beef may be substituted for cannelloni beans. Brown ground beef in nonstick skillet, drain, and add with tomatoes in step 2 omitting the beans.*

Nutrition Facts

Serving Size 1 cup
Servings Per Container 6

Amount Per Serving

Calories 290	Calories from Fat 20
	% Daily Value*
Total Fat 2g	3%
Saturated Fat 1g	5%
Trans Fat 0g	
Cholesterol 6mg	2%
Sodium 790mg	33%
Total Carbohydrate 53g	18%
Dietary Fiber 11g	44%
Sugars 10g	
Protein 16g	

Vitamin A 110% • Vitamin C 60%
Calcium 20% • Iron 25%

*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs:

	Calories:	2,000	2,500
Total Fat	Less than	65g	80g
Saturated Fat	Less than	20g	25g
Cholesterol	Less than	300mg	300mg
Sodium	Less than	2,400mg	2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate		300g	375g
Dietary Fiber		25g	30g

Calories per gram:
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4

About our recipes . . .

About our recipes…. Our recipes meet the standards developed for the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) by the Division of Nutritional Sciences at Cornell University. These research-based guidelines are as follows:

- The ingredients are affordable and readily available.
- The recipe has 35% or fewer calories from fat, unless it is a meat recipe in which case it has a limit of 50% of calories from fat
- The recipe has minimal added sugars.
- All recipes are tested by Cooperative Extension EFNEP staff.

If you would like to participate in the EFNEP program, and learn to make delicious, healthy meals on a limited income, please contact us or join us on Facebook: **EFNEP CCE Schoharie & Otsego Counties**.

For a companion recipe go to our website: **cceschoharie-otsego.org** and locate the recipe for Dressed Up Fruit Salad. Hints: you will find recipes under Nutrition & Health, look for Recipes from Cornell's FNEC program, and specifically Sisters in Health (left lower sidebar).

Master Gardeners' Corner

Think Gardening

Midwinter, when the ground is frozen and the wind chills are dropping, is prime time for the eager gardener to start planning for the spring. Long before the ground thaws and the first tomato plant can go in the ground, much can be accomplished in the comfort of one's own home. As with many hobbies, preparation is key.

Home gardening can be as simple as a pot of marigolds or as extensive as a vegetable garden that will feed a family. Gardens come in all shapes and sizes. If you've never grown anything, begin with small and simple. Starting your own plants from seed can be a very economical way to explore what for many becomes a lifelong journey.

How to begin? First, think about what you want in the end. Just a pop of color for your front porch? Or maybe a nice patch of lettuce so you can enjoy a fresh salad? You can spend hours researching varieties from seed catalogs or on-line sources, or you can simply pick up a few seed packets locally. **Gardening secret #1-** New gardeners can look for something you and your family can enjoy and have fun with, and for the experienced gardener, here is a chance to grow that unique heritage or heirloom variety you cannot get locally.

The pictures on the front of the seed packet get your attention, but read the back of the seed packet, too. It will tell you how tall the plant will grow, how deep to plant the seed, how long it takes to germinate, how far to space the plants when they are ready to go in the ground, whether the plant needs full sun or shade, when to plant outside, and much more. **Gardening secret #2-** Study your seed catalogs; many can qualify as reference manuals.

Gather the tools of the trade. You will need small containers (approximately 3" high) to start your seeds. Purchased plastic trays and peat pots are an option. So are used items like yogurt cups or cut-off milk containers (punch a few small holes in the bottom so water can drain out). If reusing containers, wash them with soap and water to be sure nothing will contaminate your sprouts.

Use a growing mixture – there are many brands available, but look for ones that are a blend of peat moss, vermiculite and/or perlite. **Garden secret #3-** Do not use garden soil; use growing mixture instead to minimize weed seeds and soil borne diseases.

Seeds – If young children will be helping, try large seeds that are easy for little fingers to grip. Some suggestions are green beans or sunflowers. Do you like to cut flowers to bring inside your home? Zinnias are easy to grow and come in all sizes and colors.

Once you have planted your seeds, give them a gentle watering. They will need warmth and light to grow. Seed-warming mats, which heat the soil from the bottom, are something an experienced seed-starter may want to purchase. This can also be achieved by putting the seed trays on the top of the refrigerator. Lightly cover with plastic wrap to keep the moisture in. **Garden secret #4-** Tent the plastic wrap and remove as soon as plants begin to emerge. Check daily to see if they need to be watered. After the seeds have sprouted, move them to a sunny windowsill. Again, check daily to be sure the soil doesn't dry out. Grow lights are another option to give your new sprouts extra "sunshine." **Garden secret #5-** Use moving air from a small fan (but not directly on seedlings) to keep seedlings healthy and free from damping-off disease. It is an environmental control and avoids the use of fungicide.

Before your babies can be planted in the ground, they will need to gradually get use to outside conditions. This is called "hardening off" and is done by taking the plants outside on nice, warm sunny days and then bringing them inside at night. Watch the weather, and shelter the plants from heat and cold extremes as well as too much wind or heavy rains.

Gardening can be a good time for families to "grow together" or a quiet time for one to enjoy the peace and quiet of nature. There's nothing better than that first bite of tomato fresh off your own vine. Starting out with a few packets of seeds and a little attention can turn into a lifetime of enjoyment. And, every year is a new year. If your garden didn't work out as expected this year, plan again next winter and start over.

There is also a wealth of information at www.gardening.cornell.edu, where you can explore flower and vegetable growing guides and information on designing a flower garden using color and texture for the home gardener, along with other topics on Cornell's Garden-Based Learning website.

Become a Master Gardener Volunteer

The Schoharie and Otsego Master Gardener (MG) Program trains individuals in the science and art of gardening. These individuals have a passion for horticulture and gardening along with a genuine willingness to share their knowledge with the general public. They are not expected to have professional gardening or landscaping experience. The program prepares volunteers to be peer educators who build relationships with community audiences in extending Cooperative Extension's expertise in areas of consumer horticulture, gardens, lawns, and landscapes, with an emphasis on food security and environmental stewardship.

Are you interested in becoming a Master Gardener Volunteer? Coming in fall 2018, the regionally conducted Master Gardener Training program will be offered in the Cooperstown area. CCE Educators and area specialists from six counties will provide gardening enthusiasts an opportunity to become MG Volunteers through a series of one-day workshops over ten consecutive weeks. The program begins in early September and runs through November. More information can be found at www.cceschoharie-otsego.org, or by calling 518.234.4303 in Cobleskill or 607.547.2536 in Cooperstown to learn more.

Swap the Seed

The National Seed Swap Day is designated as the last Saturday in January. The original mission was to conserve and promote crop diversity in local communities. Neighbors gather to exchange seeds and chat about their plans for the upcoming season.

The Schoharie County Master Gardeners invite you to join them at Seed Swap. The Middleburgh Library will host the local Seed Swap on Saturday, January 27, 2018, from 9:30 to 11:00 a.m. Admission is free and you do not have to donate any seeds to participate.

Program Events

Farm to School Workshop: Creating an Easier Path to Farm Fresh Food
Thursday, January 4, 2018
Online registration deadline is January 2, 2018,
8:30 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.
Wheeler Hall, SUNY Cobleskill, Cobleskill

Schoharie Master Gardener Volunteers National Seed Swap Event
Saturday, January 27, 2018, 9:30 a.m. – 11:00 p.m.
Middleburgh Public Library, 323 Main Street, Middleburgh

Schoharie Master Gardener Volunteers Gardening for Pollinators
February 24, 10 a.m.
CCE Extension Center

EFNEP- Parent & Child Hands-on Cooking Lesson Series
Wednesdays, April 4, 11, 18, 25, and May 2, and 9;
at 4:30 – 5:30 p.m.
Call the Cobleskill Office at 518.234.4303 to register.
Class size is limited.
Extension Center, 173 South Grand Street, Cobleskill, NY

Central New York Beef Producers Spring Tele-Auction
April 2018, Date-TBA

Family Farm Day 2018
Information to come

Master Gardener Volunteer Biennial Training
Fall 2018, September - November
One-day workshop for ten consecutive weeks
Call 518.234.4303 in Cobleskill or 607.547.2536
in Cooperstown to be put on a notification list.

Newsletter Subscriptions

To continue receiving Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schoharie and Otsego Counties' e-newsletter, CONNECTIONS, please visit our website, www.schoharie-otsego.org and follow the link to register your subscription. It's free, and registering will ensure that you will receive upcoming bi-monthly issues. Print copies are also available at both Extension offices.

Skilled Speakers

Glossophobia, the fear of public speaking, is a common anxiety found worldwide. Many of us have experienced it at one time or another in school, the workplace, or in our personal lives. However, public speaking is a vital skill at any age; it is how we communicate knowledge, skills, and passions with others.

Our program tag-line reminds parents, leaders, and youth that "4-H Takes You Places." One place is Public Presentations, where youth learn and practice the art of effective communication with friendly, supportive audiences. 4-H Public Presentations is a program for 4-H'ers to accomplish the crafting of a five to fifteen minute presentation along with the skills to present it before an audience. Learning the research process along with the steps to organize the information into an interesting, creative presentation becomes essential for success. Youth can choose from five different Public Presentation categories: demonstration, illustrated talk, speech, recitation, or dramatic interpretation. Then they plan, prepare, practice, and present.

Whether demonstrating the flipping of a pancake or reciting The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere, youth ages five to nineteen have the opportunity to share something they've learned from a 4-H project or from a special interest, while receiving helpful feedback from evaluators.

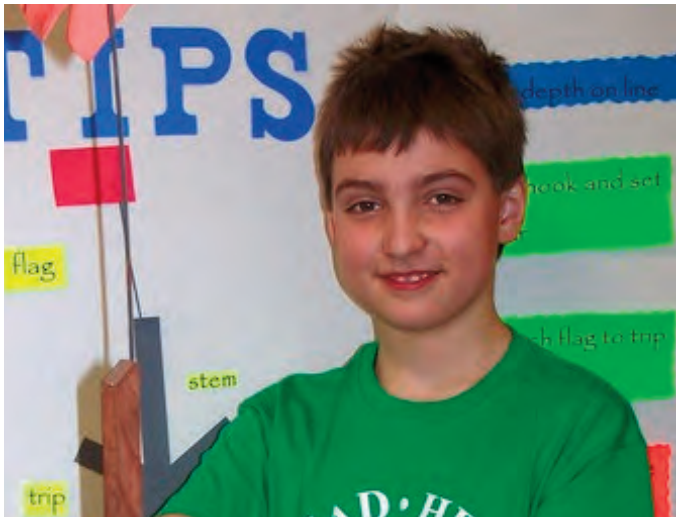
Some youth are chosen from the county-level Public Presentations to advance to the district level where they may become eligible to participate in the state event. Participating 4-H youth win through the experience of speaking in front of others, acquiring skills that can take them places over a lifetime.

In fact 4-H alumni often credit Public Presentations with giving them an edge above peers in college and professional careers. When 4-H Educator Teresa Adell was asked why she strongly encouraged all 4-H'ers to participate in Public Presentations, she said, "Speaking in front of people can seem terrifying. You need that life skill, not only for school and work, but also just to communicate effectively with others."

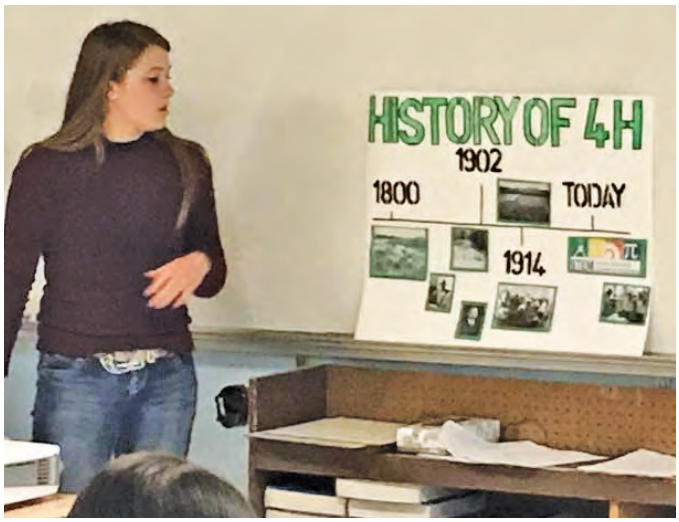
In Schoharie County, 4-H Educator Teresa Adell will offer a Public Presentations Workshop for 4-H members and leaders from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. on January 20, at the Extension Center in Cobleskill. The workshop registration deadline is January 12, 2018. The Public Presentations contest will be held on February 10, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at SUNY Cobleskill. The registration deadline is February 3.

While in Otsego County, 4-H Educator Patti Zellmer will offer a Public Presentations Workshop for youth, leaders, and parents on January 6, at the Education Center in Cooperstown; the registration deadline is December 29, 2017. A Public Presentations contest will be held on February 17, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. at Morris Central School and on March 3, from 9 a.m. to 12 p.m. in Milford. The registration deadline is February 10.

For more information, visit the CCE website, www.cceschoharie-otsego.org.



Otsego County 4-H member Abe at county-level Public Presentation–2017



Schoharie County 4-H member Marilyn at district-level Public Presentation–2017

Behind the Scenes: Beyond Public Presentations

Communication Arts group: Caterpillar, Mad Hatter, Young Alice, Cheshire Cat, and The March Hare

In Otsego County the Hartwick 4-H Actors' Guild is providing a unique venue for 4-H members to experience Communication Arts and build creatively on the foundation of 4-H Public Presentations. Youth, ages five to nineteen, learn how to express themselves in and out of character. A few weeks of theater can transform a shy introverted youth to a main stage actor! Most youth will not become professional actors, but 4-H youth will be recognized as better communicators with valuable life skills.

The Guild under the direction of 4-H Volunteer Leader Thomas Murphy has been entertaining audiences for three years. The group, now in its fourth year, is over 22 4-H members strong. In conversations with youth, a volunteer, and educator here are their words expressing their experiences and passion for the Actors' Guild.

Havey said, "I've been with the 4-H Actors' Guild since it started, this will be my fourth play with the group, although this was not my first acting experience. I like the 4-H Guild because I've known everyone since I was little, and I like acting because I enjoy getting into character, learning how different characters think. This year I was chosen as student director which are big shoes to fill for a group as big as ours."

Sarah said, "I think it is fun to show people what acting really is, and it is fun to express feelings through acting. I had major stage fright when we first started, but this year I have the lead role in our play, 'The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe.'"

Lena said, "It is fun to be there with the fellowship from friends I know and new people I meet. My favorite part of practice is snack."

Quene said, "Acting is something people do for fun, but I want to get into it for life. If you don't get the part you want, you learn to like the part you get."

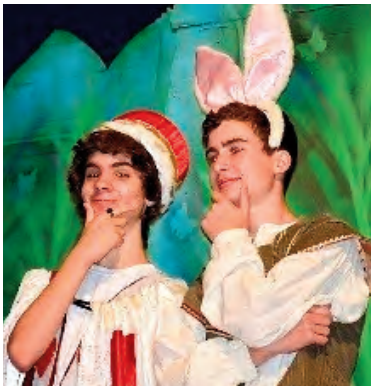
Elizabeth said, "It's fun, I like being with my friends, and it's good to learn not to be scared talking to people. Our first play was "It's a Wonderful Life," so I've done a lot of memorizing.

Michael said, "I've really enjoyed being a part of this group; it's a lot of fun. I'd done some theater before, behind the scenes, and had a walk-on part in one of my sister's plays. My first role with the Guild was George Bailey in "It's a Wonderful Life." It was my first speaking role, and I really enjoyed it. The experience I've had with the 4-H Actors' Guild is better, because I know everybody and there is a closer bond."

A volunteer with the Guild, Stacey, said, "I absolutely love the 4-H leader Mr. Murphy. He is able to draw things out of the 4-H'ers they didn't know they could do."

4-H Educator Patti Zellmer tied it altogether, "It's been so exciting to see youth development happen right before my very eyes."

In 2017 the Hartwick 4-H Actors' Guild's production of "Alice in Wonderland" was youth directed, and their 2018 production of "The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe" will be as well! Join them at the Hartwick Community Center, Hartwick, NY, on April 6, 7, 13, and 14, at 7 p.m. for an enjoyable performance.



The King and White Rabbit

Pooled Feeder Calf Sales Continue

Central New York Beef Producers held their fourth tele-auction on October 13, 2017, at which were offered 109 calves, 62 steers, and 47 heifers. In a declining market, the steers did quite well bringing an average price $1.35 per pound. The high group brought $1.60. The heifers did not do as well, but brought $1.13 on average. The calves were grouped by muscle score, frame, breeding, and sex. Details about past sales and video of the calves can still be seen at Dr. Mike Baker's website: http://blogs.cornell.edu/beefcattle/. Click on "Events/Programs"/"NY Feeder Calf Marketing Program."

The group is now working on its spring 2018 sale. The variety of calves accepted is expanding. Attraction to buyers is directly related to the variety and numbers of calves offered. We are pleased to see the return of both repeat sellers and buyers as our numbers and quality continues to grow. For vaccination and other health requirements feel free to contact Bill Gibson, CCE Agricultural Educator and Sale Coordinator, at wrg56@cornell.edu, or call 518-588-6032.