

Cornell University  
Cooperative Extension  
Cayuga County

# 2014 Annual Report

March 2015

Dear Friends of Cornell Cooperative Extension:

On behalf of the Board of Directors and Staff, it is our pleasure to share with you our 2014 Annual Report highlighting some of Cornell Cooperative Extension Cayuga County's accomplishments during the past year.

The Board of Directors, staff and volunteers take pride in the legacy and strides made to raise awareness in the areas of agriculture, strengthening families, youth development, environmental stewardship and invasive species awareness. The quality and scope of these programs are a result of the tireless efforts and talent of dedicated staff, an engaged Board of Directors, program advisory committees, numerous committed volunteers and our connection to Cornell University.

### Helping people help themselves since 1914...

Cooperative Extension has been assisting the residents of Cayuga County for over 100 years. We bring the application of Cornell University-based science and research to improve the lives and living of a broad and diverse county population, from farmers and businesses to families and schools. Children have the opportunity to learn leadership skills through 4-H, low income families and seniors learn how to feed themselves and their families healthy and nutritious foods on a budget, farmers learn the latest and best management practices to ensure the quality and quantity of their crops and residents throughout the county learn how to manage and conserve energy usage to survive tough economic times.

### Now we need your help... Become a Friend of Extension

We ask for your support so we can continue to provide and expand these beneficial programs and services in Cayuga County. Become a Friend of Extension and your donation to Cooperative Extension is money well invested. If you have not already donated, please fill out and return the enclosed envelope today!

We hope you enjoy reading the enclosed annual report about your Cooperative Extension. If you have any questions please feel free to call us at 315-255-1183 extension 256.

Sincerely,

Felicia Franceschelli  
Board President

Douglas Ververs  
Executive Director

Regarding the  
economic  
impact and  
prosperity of  
Cayuga County  
for the next  
100 years...  
Without  
Cornell  
Cooperative  
Extension  
Cayuga County  
*"there's no way  
any of this  
works."*

Patrick Hooker,  
Deputy Secretary for  
Food & Agriculture,  
Speaking at the  
100th Anniversary  
Celebration and Fundraiser  
for  
Cornell Cooperative  
Extension  
Cayuga County  
November 20, 2014

### Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities and provides equal program and employment opportunities

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 Becky Regis  
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## Meet the Staff

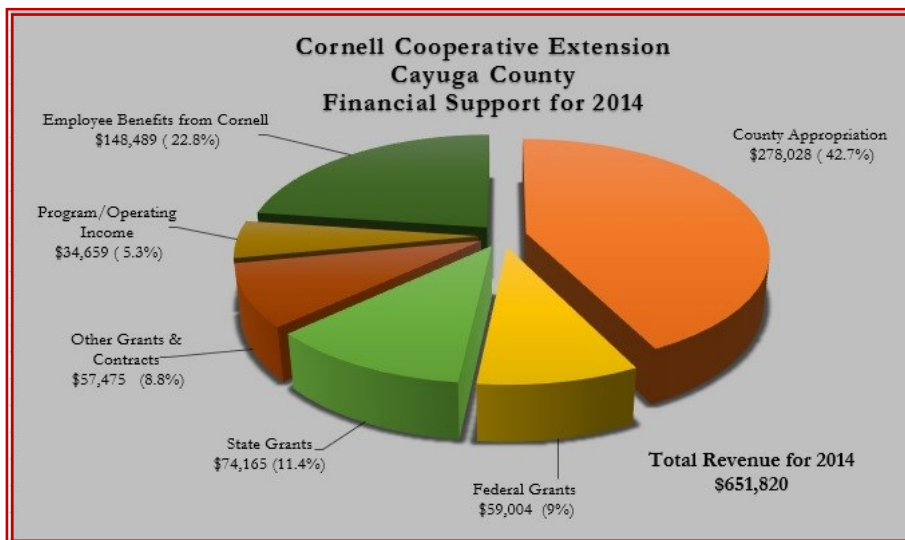
*Executive Director*  
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*Agriculture Resource Educator & Team Leader*  
**Judy Wright**  
*Agriculture Resource Educator*  
**Keith Severson**  
*Environmental Community Educator*  
**Stefan Lutter**  
*4-H Youth Development Community Educator*  
**Dorothy Slegle**  
*4-H Youth Development Community Educator*  
**Melissa Watkins**  
*Nutrition Community Educator*  
**Becky Crawford**  
*Nutrition Assistant*  
**Sue Samartan**  
*Association Bookkeeper*  
**Alecia Butts**  
*Office Manager*  
**Peggy Lillie**  
*Regional SBN Technician*  
**John Stine**  
*Maintenance*  
**Dennis Rex**  
*Publications Manager*  
**Jill Williamson**  
*Summer Program Assistant*  
**Theresa Harmon** (Nutrition, Health & Safety)  
*Summer Intern*  
**Dee Dolph** (Agriculture)

### Public Funding Partners

*County of Cayuga*  
**Honorable Michael Chapman**  
 Chairman, Cayuga County Legislature

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**Christopher B. Watkins**  
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*United States Department of Agriculture  
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**Sonny Ramaswamy**  
 Director, USDA/NIFA



**Celebrating 100 years  
of service in Cayuga County  
1914-2014**

# Nutrition, Health & Safety

## Eat Smart New York

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County (CCE Cayuga) implemented a successful media campaign to increase EBT (electronic benefit transfer commonly known as food stamps) sales at a local farmers market. CCE Cayuga nutrition educators, working on the *Eat Smart New York* (ESNY) grant, conducted food demonstrations with nutrition messages at the market throughout the season and wrote two columns a month for the local newspaper promoting the use of the local farmers market especially by lower income residents.

The market received both health checks and fresh bucks to distribute to EBT customers as incentives for purchasing fresh, local products. CCE Cayuga produced and displayed a chart that showed customers how much they could increase their spending power by taking advantage of these incentive programs. The same charts were displayed at local food pantries and soup kitchens during the program.

In June, the local farmers market opened and had health

bucks available for customers who used their EBT card. Customers received an additional \$2 for every \$5 spent. CCE Cayuga began the media campaign with posts on Facebook, on our blog site and in the local newspaper. The market saw sales almost double from the same time span the previous year. Fresh checks were added in July, giving customers an additional \$2 for every \$5 spent. Sales almost tripled from the previous year.

Overall, in 2014, the market saw a **95% increase** in EBT sales!

CCE Cayuga worked with the local health department to help spread the word about the two incentive programs available at the market. CCE Cayuga nutrition educators did many indirect nutrition lessons through the *Eat Smart New York!* grant at the market. The *Creating Healthy Places to Live Work and Play* grant provided funding for market brochures to let the public know where and when the local markets were.

In 2014, Eat Smart New York educators trained YMCA staff to teach Choose Health, a youth education series during the summer. Over 70 youth from qualifying schools participated in the program.

## Radon Testing for Cayuga County

CCE Cayuga partnered with the Cayuga County Health Department in 2014 to promote radon awareness. 137 free radon testing kits were made available at five local libraries and six village/town offices throughout the county for easy distribution to local residents. Radon mitigation workshops were also held in the fall at the CCE Cayuga Education Center to inform the public about various methods of mitigation should their homes test high for radon. A radon display was set up at many community events throughout the year, including Tomato Fest at Emerson Park. The display was designed to inform the public of the potential hazards of radon levels and the free radon testing kits to the community.



## Creating Healthy Places to Live Work and Play Grant

In 2014 Cayuga Grows held its second Seed to Table event with the theme of Healthy Local Choices. The grant also cosponsored an event in the spring with staff from Cornell Garden Based Learning, where the public had the opportunity to learn about composting, raised beds and other gardening topics. Food preservation classes were held at the CCE Cayuga Education Center and at local food pantries and garden side at Case Mansion and Melone Village.

*Save Energy, Save Dollars* workshops (provided by a grant from NYSERDA) gave 52 county residents information on reducing their energy usage and utility bills.

# Environment & Natural Resources

## Emerald Ash Borer Fight Continues

CCE Cayuga Environment and Natural Resources program was successfully awarded a subcontract from the Finger Lakes PRISM (Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management). The project entailed an ash tree inventory and education project for the Town of Montezuma, Village of Moravia, as well as some other public property in Cayuga County.

Emerald Ash Borer (EAB) is an invasive insect that has wreaked havoc in communities around the Northeast and Midwest. The insect has been found in the Town of Montezuma, so it is only a matter of time before it spreads through Cayuga County. Many trees on both public and private property are ash trees, and when they become

infested, the landscape could change considerably. Not only can it be dangerous and expensive to have a large tree fall over, but trees also provide a lot of benefits to our community, from clean air to street beautification to habitat for wildlife.

With the assistance of an intern, several maps outlining location and size of ash trees have been developed. This project also helps educate municipal leaders and residents on the potential impact of an incoming emerald ash borer invasion in their communities. Being able to both visualize and understand impacts of tree canopy loss can help communities respond in an appropriate way.

## Successful, Record-Setting Recycling Events

In partnership with Cayuga County Office of Planning and Economic Development and others the CCE Cayuga *Electronics Collection Event* in May saw over 86,000 pounds of electronic waste collected. Over 740 households participated, recycling 600 TV's and 238 computers.

October and November *Electronic Recycling Events* saw 900 cars driving through the event with thousands of pounds of electronic waste collected. Tons of televisions, computers, fluorescent bulbs, stereos, and other electronics were gathered and properly disposed of by Cayuga County residents, something to be very proud of.

The high numbers of electronics collected indicate that these events are still needed. Despite holding three electronic events per year, there seems to be an endless supply of electronic waste. The need for the events, provided free of charge to County residents this year, is furthered by New York Law banning the disposal of

electronic waste. In other words, it has to be recycled and repurposed in the proper manner.

Our Household Hazardous Waste Collection event was successful with 261 participants. The Tire Collection event (in cooperation with Cayuga County's Soil & Water Conservation District) was also successful with 203 participants. All in all, we had a very successful year keeping tens of thousands of pounds of waste out of the environment, homes and landfills.

CCE Cayuga provides educational outreach to make these events possible, using EcoTalk column in *The Citizen*, providing press releases and information to Towns. During these events educational information is distributed using flyers and references to appropriate websites to encourage more recycling and proper waste disposal throughout the County.

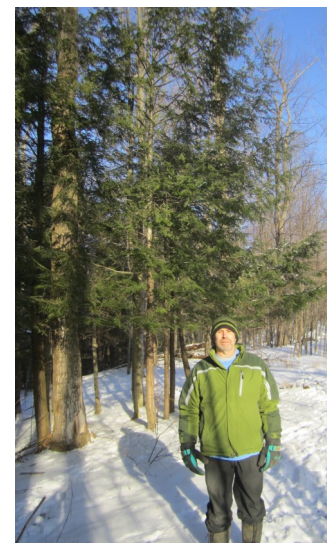
## Master Forest Owners Return

Master Forest Owners (MFO) are experienced, highly motivated volunteers who are available statewide and ready to assist neighbor forest owners with information needed to start managing their forests.

2014 saw the Master Forest Owner (MFO) program undergo a revival in Cayuga County. After several years of dormancy, two current MFOs will be joined in 2015 by two others once they have completed their training course at Arnot Forest.

One responsible Cayuga County forest owner identified and reported one of the first confirmed Hemlock Woolly Adelgid infestations in the Owasco Lake watershed. Building a network of responsible land managers helps allow early detection of invasive species, as it did in this instance. Since the vast majority of New York (and Cayuga County) forests are in the hands of private landowners, it is important that

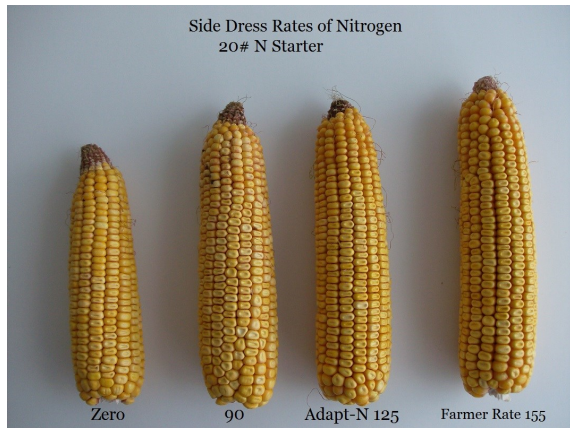
they become successful stewards for both the environment and the forest products industry. With the current list of existing and potential invasive species, as well as the problem that deer pose to growth of desirable forest species, this is more important than ever.



# Production Agriculture

## ADAPT-N Model

For the last three growing seasons, Agriculture Resource Educator, Keith Severson, has conducted replicated Nitrogen trials associated with the variability in response to corn's yield based upon the ADAPT-N model. This model accounts for input data specific to the field and weather once the corn crop is planted. Data from field trials over the past few years has been critical to determining the accuracy



of the ADAPT-N model. Weather patterns in 2014 were significantly different from previous years. The data collected in 2014 will be added to the model's database. This research has impact in maximizing corn yield while minimizing excess nitrogen reaching groundwater and its effect on the atmosphere.

This close connection between County based Cooperative Extension educators and Cornell researchers provides an opportunity for the educators to be active messengers between the University's research and the individuals, families or suppliers of resources to benefit farms. This transfer of knowledge and connectivity grows and benefits the community where it becomes robust.

*"Ag is huge, food is huge—  
it's the Upstate Economy."*

Patrick Hooker, Deputy Secretary for  
Food & Agriculture

## Charcoal Rot of Soybean Discovered

During the 2014 growing season the first confirmed case of Charcoal Rot in soybeans in New York State (or in the northeastern U.S.) was confirmed. Jaime Cummings, a Cornell Research Support Specialist, has been working with CCE Field Crop Resource Educator Keith Severson for two years to determine the effectiveness of prophylactic applications of Fungicides on Corn grain. A direct result of this collegial relationship, Keith was able to rely on her expertise and was able to identify this potentially devastating disease.

The confirmation of Charcoal Rot in Soybeans was surprising and resulted in the farmer making changes in his normal farming practices to reduce the spread of the disease and a loss of profit. This led to additional research on the confirmed and neighboring fields. The research included a broad array of observations and a detailed soil sampling procedure. While Charcoal Rot is generally associated with dry weather conditions in the south, changing weather patterns and knowing the presence of this soil borne fungus allows all soybean producers to be aware of its potential impact.

## 2014 Farm Bill Changes

In 2014 a new Farm Bill was approved by Congress. A majority of the funding in the Farm Bill is allocated to provide food assistance (Food Stamps) for those that qualify. A smaller portion was designated to introduce farmers to new tools to reduce catastrophic financial losses. Over the years, USDA has been working to reduce unexpected losses, generally associated with weather or market cycles; impacting both farmers and consumers.

The 2014 Farm Bill provides for an insurance like instrument to reduce catastrophic losses while providing incentives for farmers to learn more about the global production and marketing efforts thus allowing farms to become more risk averse on their own.

To aid Cayuga County farmers in their decision making an educational effort was provided through a partnership between Farm Service Agency and Cornell Cooperative

Extension. CCE Cayuga's educational efforts provided farmers information to determine how much risk protection they might want to select. This collaboration provided opportunities that may not have been available if not for this partnership. Initial outreach and impact for 2014 is estimated to be about 50 farmers.

Over 800 Cayuga County elementary school students were introduced to agriculture during March's **Ag Literacy Week** by 27 volunteers. Students were read Who Grew My Soup, a book that introduces children to the farmers who grow the products contained in the soup that the main character is about to eat.

## 4-H Youth Development

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### 4-H Youth Voice Choice at Summer Camp

In July 2014, 4-H Educator Melissa Watkins with Environmental Educator Stefan Lutter and two 4-H Youth teen leaders brought STEM-Environmental Science and Healthy Lifestyles to youth with special needs at the Freedom Recreation Camp in Auburn, NY. Made possible by a grant from Walmart, this program was presented to over 100 youth ranging from 5 years of age to over 21 with special needs varying from cognitive, social, emotional and physical participated in the three-part series which integrated STEM learning with exercise and healthy eating.

Educational programming had a specific focus for each day. In an outdoor park setting, youth would receive instruction through planned activities. Youth did a lot of walking, observing and discovering as they sought to identify insects and birds for the lesson of the day. They also learned about adaptations and anatomy of the creatures they studied.

Healthy eating incorporated into the STEM program included snacks that were planned and coordinated entirely

by the 4-H teen leaders. Having been provided with a list of food allergies, the 4-H teen leaders put together a menu, shopping list, packed necessary supplies and made modifications to accommodate those with special dietary needs. Recipes were utilized that participants could put together themselves. Encouragement to try something new was offered by colorful food labels for all ingredients. Participants were happy with the snack selection and enjoyed having a tasty, healthy option that they put together themselves.

Youth came back each day commenting on something that they had learned about the day before, and how it connected into their day to day lives. When asked what they had learned, the youths gave examples of lifestyle modifications that they were eager to try. They offered examples such as: asking parents to serve fruits and vegetables at home and encouraging exercise by bringing their families outdoors to explore and discover.

### Youth Tractor Safety Certification Course



With a workplace fatality rate on farms seven times greater than all other industries combined (Dept. of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics 2012) safe tractor and machinery operation skills are critical for every employee. The Hazardous Occupation in Agricultural Law requires that youth ages 14 to 16 must have at least 24 hours of tractor safety and maintenance

instruction in order to drive a tractor on a farm other than that owned by their parents.

For over 30 years, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Cayuga County has offered a Youth Tractor Safety Certification Course to any youth, not just 4-H members. CCE Cayuga had 19 youth between the ages of 14 and 16 participate and graduate from the program in 2014.

Youth who participated in the course gained a greater understanding of all aspects of agricultural safety and included other important topics such as: Pesticides & Agricultural Hazards; Implements & Livestock, Silo, Hay & Manure Hazards.

### Horse Events

Cayuga County 4-H members had two horse show opportunities to participate in, and qualify for New York State Fair exhibition. The first was held at Birchwood Stables in Auburn on Saturday, July 19 and the second was held at Rose-Lan Farms in Aurelius on Sunday, July 20. A variety of equine show divisions were offered to 4-H youth, including Huntseat, Saddleseat, Western, Driving and Gymkhana.

The Cayuga County 4-H program also worked with Snook Training Stables out of Weedsport to host a 4-H Mock Horse Show & Clinic on Saturday, May 10, 2014 for local 4-

Hers. A total of sixteen youth participated in this event. Highlights of the event included a well-known clinician from Penn Yan who worked with the 4-H youth on improving their riding skills and abilities in the areas of Huntseat Equitation, Western Equitation and Showmanship. Local volunteers assisted youth in the areas of Saddleseat and Trail divisions.

A special feature of the event included a Saddleseat demonstration performed by one of our very own 4-H members, Brooke Hammersley. Brooke provided a beautiful performance which included a costume exhibition.

## 4-H Youth Development

### Cayuga County 4-H Youth Fair & Remember the Big 6 Events

The Cayuga County 4-H Youth Fair & Remember the Big 6 events, held at the Ward O'Hara Agricultural and Country Living Museum & Dr. Joseph F. Karpinski Sr. Educational Center in Auburn, proved to be another great success in 2014! Activities held included: 4-H youth project evaluating and display, 4-H and open dairy cattle shows, 4-H dog show, 4-H rabbit and poultry shows, pony rides, horse drawn wagon rides, antique and modern tractor displays, free kids activities and more.

Over 100 Cayuga County 4-H youth exhibited animals and/or youth building projects during the 3 day event with over 4,700 community members attending a variety of activities.



**Cayuga County 4-H Youth Fair & Remember the Big 6  
Scheduled for July 23–25, 2015**

### 4-H Show Their Skills for Produced in NY and Public Presentations



Over 80 Cayuga County 4-H youth took part in two county-wide presentation experience programs. *Produced in NY Food Demonstrations* allowed 45 youth to prepare and present a recipe of their own choosing, containing at least one cup of a New York generated product to evaluate and a roving audience in the local mall. *Public Presentation* gave 36

youth the opportunity to go before at least one evaluator and an audience of peers, family and friends and present topics of specific interest to them such as animal science, dramatic interpretations of literary works, potato to power, and so much more.

Effective communication is an essential life skill for youth to become successful citizens. Presentations are an essential tool in addressing a need for people to have confidence and poise when addressing an audience, while also giving youth the opportunity to research, organize, and choose their topic. Presentations and demonstrations help 4-H youth to improve their self-confidence, knowledge, organization and their effectiveness in communicating clearly with others.

4-H Alumni from Cayuga County comment that presentations were the most useful event that they participated in as a 4-H member, citing that they utilize their presentation skills daily in the workforce and in the community.

### Board Member Recognized

Timothy Quill, Director of the Ward O'Hara Agricultural Museum and Dr. Joseph Karpinski Education Center, also serves as a member of our CCE Cayuga Board of Directors and 4-H Advisory Committee. Through his leadership, Tim has functioned as an ambassador for the 4-H program and always strives to make sure the youth of Cayuga County 4-H have a great experience. His wealth of knowledge, positive energy and community connections have led to more 4-H events and exposure. Without his generous time commitment and dedication to the 4-H program, the past five years of the 4-H Youth Fair would not have been as successful. As a token of appreciation for Tim's contributions, he was presented with the 2014 4-H Volunteer of the Year Award.



Sixty-Five Cayuga County individuals participated in New York State DEC's **Pheasant Rearing Program**. Over 5,700 pheasant chicks were raised and released onto public lands in an attempt to revitalize the ring-necked pheasant population throughout Cayuga County.



**Cornell University**  
Cooperative Extension  
Cayuga County

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**Visit our website**

<http://blogs.cornell.edu/ccecauyuga>

**Become a Friend of Extension...**

For over 100 years, Cornell Cooperative Extension Cayuga County has been providing programs and services that bring the resources of Cornell University and national Land-Grant university system to the local grass-roots level. Your tax deductible donation will help us continue to deliver the high-quality innovative programs that are vital to our local agriculture producers, families and community.

We rely on a variety of funding sources for our educational programming from County, State, and Federal sources, as well as grants and fundraising. Your support will help us to continue our mission of *Putting Research, Experience & Knowledge to work for all of Cayuga County.*

**Master Gardeners Volunteers**

For over 25 years CCE Cayuga County has provided a hotline staffed by volunteers for county residents encountering pest issues around the home during the summer months.

Over 170 consultations were provided on topics such as insect, disease and weed identification during the hotline operation from April 1st to mid-October in 2014.

A previously unseen insect pest in Cayuga County, the Swede Midge, was identified by one of our Master Gardener volunteers. The Swede Midge is an insect pest of cruciferous vegetable crops (e.g. broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbages) and well known in Europe where it is considered endemic and often causes severe crop losses.

