



# Cornell Cooperative Extension Cayuga County

**2024**  
Annual Report

**Cover Credits:** Photos by Rebecka Jones, Lauren Rutten and Jack Fox of Fox's Drone Services, and CCE-Cayuga staff, taken at our 4-H Youth Fair held August 1-3, 2024 at Union Spring Fire Department and made possible by the generous support of many community supporters. Please join us in thanking the individuals and businesses listed here!

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# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

*Our Mission: To strengthen youth, adults, families and communities through learning partnerships that put knowledge to work.*



## Environmental Issues

Reports on programs in recycling/solid waste, water quality issues, solar leasing of ag land, and home maple syrup making.



## Fruit & Vegetable Rx

Our FVRx program offers nutrition classes, and free vegetables and fruits to participants who receive SNAP or are SNAP eligible.



## Workforce Training

For a 3rd year, we partnered with CCE Ontario to hire, train and manage teen staff for the Milk Bar at the Great NY State Fair.

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# 2024 CCE CAYUGA TEAM

Helping You Put Knowledge to Work!

## 2024 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Jessica Soule, *President*  
Katie LaFave, *Secretary*

Tricia Kerr, *Vice-President*  
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Dee Dee Schenck  
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## OUR STAFF

### Administrative Staff

Dan Welch, *Executive Director*  
Keisha Dutton, *Operations Coordinator*

Jean Marie Zilnik, *Finance Specialist*  
Sandy Repp, *Communications Coordinator*

### Educators

Frank Clarke, *Agriculture Educator*  
Ron Kuck, *Agriculture Educator*  
Sara Wagner, *4-H Program Lead*

Erin Humphrey, *Dairy-in-the-Classroom Educator*  
Becky McCormick, *SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator*  
Ryan Staychock, *Environment/Natural Resources Educator*

### Taste NY Market

Heather Ward, *Taste NY Market Manager*  
Colby Bastian, *Taste NY Clerk*

Jordan Thomas, *Taste NY Clerk*  
Morgan Jones, *Taste NY Clerk & Social Media*

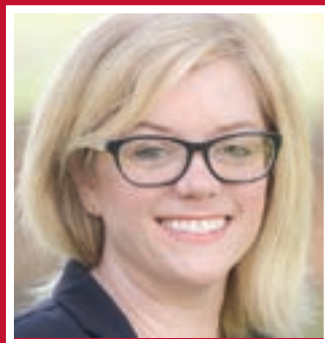
### SCNY Regional Dairy & Field Crops Team

Janis Degni, *Team Leader, Field Crop Specialist*  
Betsy Hicks, *Dairy Specialist*

To contact individual CCE Cayuga staff members, please visit: <https://ccecayuga.org/staff>.

For Regional Team members, visit: <https://scnydfc.cce.cornell.edu/>.

# Cornell Cooperative Extension CAYUGA COUNTY 2024



## WELCOME MESSAGE

Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) of Cayuga County actively engaged the community in 2024 through various educational programs and workshops. Across 4-H Youth Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Nutrition areas of focus, CCE Cayuga staff worked hard to develop programming aligned with emerging interests and needs from stakeholders throughout Cayuga County. This report highlights some of our new programs along with those we offer annually.

CCE Cayuga held its second annual 4-H Market Livestock Auction during the 4-H Youth Fair in August. Over 30 youth participated by raising a market animal, attending educational sessions, and preparing their animals for show and sale. Youth raised over \$100,000 at the auction and can use their earnings to re-invest in their animal projects/enterprises or to save for future educational and career goals. In addition to a successful auction, the 4-H Youth Fair continues to grow. In 2024, 227 animals were exhibited, and youth demonstrated their learning through exhibits in sewing, art, photography, and horticulture.

Partnerships are key to CCE Cayuga's work, and two programs this past year underscore that well. In November, CCE Cayuga, in collaboration with the Cayuga County Farm Bureau, hosted "Solar & Ag in Cayuga County: What You Need to Know" at Cayuga Community College. This workshop aimed to inform farmers and landowners about solar development on agricultural lands, covering topics such as leasing land to solar companies and understanding utility-scale solar development in New York State. Also, in November, CCE Cayuga collaborated with Partners for Healthy Watersheds to hold a community forum on water quality and harmful algal blooms. This event provided an overview of the work being done by farmers, agricultural groups and soil and water experts to implement best management practices for water quality. It also covered the latest science and research regarding harmful algal blooms.

CCE Cayuga remains committed to providing opportunities for our community to learn from research-based knowledge and practice that supports local agriculture, youth and families, and sustainable community development. We invite you to visit us online at [ccecayuga.org/volunteer](https://ccecayuga.org/volunteer) to learn more about our work and how you can get involved.

*With deep appreciation,*

Tricia Kerr  
Board President 2025

Daniel Welch  
Executive Director



# 4-H Youth Programs: *To Make the Best Better!*

## *What is Cayuga County 4-H?*

During the last 4-H year (10/1/23 to 9/30/24) 70 youth were enrolled as 4-H members. 4-H Youth programs provide fun, experiential learning opportunities to help young people aged 5-18 develop leadership, citizenship, responsibility and life skills. We offer a range of program opportunities including clubs, workshops, community service, short and long-term learning projects, and the Annual Cayuga County Youth Fair.

Our programs are offered under 4 pillars:

- Agriculture & Food Systems
- STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics)
- Healthy Living
- Civic Engagement



*Junior and Senior Public Presentations participants*

## *A Selection of 2024 Programs:*

- Achievement Celebration
- 4-H Clubs
- Beef, Swine, Lamb & Goat Showmanship
- Cloverbud Programs (ages 5 to 7)
- Dairy Showmanship Clinic
- Day-Old Pheasant Chick Workshop, Scipio Center
- 4-H Giant Pumpkin Contest
- Horse Bowl & Hippology
- Horse Communications
- 4-H-in-the-Classroom, Moravia 4th graders
- Jelly Making & Canning Workshop
- Livestock Skill-a-Thon Workshop
- 4-H Market Poultry Show
- Native Plants in Emerson Park with OWLA
- Paint-a-Brick Book Workshop
- Produced In New York
- Public Presentations
- Rabbit & Cavy Clinic
- Robotics & Mars Lander Programs at libraries
- Solar Eclipse at libraries & Sterling Nature Center
- Scrapbooking & Recordkeeping Workshop
- World Bee Day event at Seward Elementary
- World Soil Day Soil Painting Class
- Youth Quality Care of Animals (YOCA) training
- Youth Tractor Safety Certification Class
- 4-H Youth Fair & 2nd Annual Market Livestock Auction



## *Solar Eclipse Programs*

The total solar eclipse occurred on April 8th and 4-H presented at two large gatherings to answer questions about the cosmic event and to invite youth and families to make a craft and learn about 4-H. Sara Wagner, 4-H Program Lead, visited libraries in Fair Haven, Hazard, Port Byron and Powers to present safe pin-hole solar viewer and handed out safe eclipse glasses to an estimated 40 youth. On the day of the eclipse, Sara and Executive Director Dan Welch were at Sterling Nature Center where they presented models of the solar eclipse and guided approximately 1800 youth in making safe pin-hole solar viewers.☀

## DAIRY IN THE CLASSROOM: TASTY, EDUCATIONAL LESSONS FOR YOUTH

More than 1,000 local youth aged 6-to-14 had an opportunity to taste (and even make!) different dairy products last summer when CCE Cayuga's Dairy in the Classroom Educator Erin Humphrey was invited bring her program to two summer youth programs in Auburn. Erin chose hands-on 'Edible Science' activities for youth at the Auburn Summer Recreation Program who enjoyed making their own dairy products, including butter, whipped cream and ice cream. Youngsters at the Booker T. Washington Community Center Summer Day Camp learned how to make delicious fresh cheese in under an hour. All the participants were excited about the activities and enjoyed tasting the results of their work.

"With fewer families being involved in farming today, it is important that young people have a meaningful way to learn where their food comes from and how it is produced," says Humphrey. "Dairy in the Classroom covers those topics in a fun and educational way," she suggests. CCE Cayuga's Dairy in the Classroom includes lessons and activities appropriate for elementary school age students with the goal of helping them to recognize the importance of farming and the dairy industry in their everyday lives. They may identify and taste different dairy products, learn the process of how milk moves from the farm to the table, and perhaps even explore careers in the agriculture and dairy industries. The program is offered free-of-charge to schools and youth programs with funding from the Dairy Promotion Advisory Committee. For more information, please contact Erin Humphrey at [emw56@cornell.edu](mailto:emw56@cornell.edu) or (315) 255-1183 ext. 105. ☀

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*Smiling girls enjoy tasting butter they just made at a DITC Program*

## *2nd Annual 4-H Market Livestock Auction is a Huge Success!*



The 2024 Cayuga County 4-H Market Livestock Auction was a huge success thanks to 4-H volunteers and parents, CCE staff, and the Cayuga County agricultural community. First offered in 2023, the Market Livestock Auction this year welcomed FFA students as participants, and allowed youth to raise more species of animals. The year-long 4-H Market Livestock Project enables youth to commit to in-depth learning about raising, finishing and marketing their animals, while they gain important life skills in financial management, and record-keeping as they track expenses, income and profit/loss for their project. Youth were energized by opportunities to learn about raising new species and many raised sheep or pigs for the first time. Thirty-four youth sold 51 lots of market animals, up from 15 lots the prior year and grossed more than \$100,000, with money raised being returned to the youth to support their ongoing projects, savings for college, etc. The 4-H Market Livestock Auction was

held at the Cayuga County 4-H Youth Fair, August 1-3, 2024 at the Union Springs Fire Department, and the local community turned out in force to support the work of our 4-Hers. It was a great experience for all and everyone learned a lot about the program. We hope to have even more participation next year. ☀



# Agriculture: A Focus on Education, Research & Sustainability

## About Cayuga County Agriculture

The CCE Cayuga Agriculture Program works to anticipate and address the needs and interests of commercial farmers, municipalities, and rural residents of Cayuga County. Members of our Ag staff consult individually on specific farming issues and soil and watershed health; conduct local research; and partner with CCE work teams, Cornell researchers, and other agricultural organizations to connect our farmers with current research, experimental trials, and with continuing education on topics to support their economic success.

We also encourage the next generation of local farmers, through Ag staff involvement in 4-H programs in dairy, livestock and field crops for youth, the 4-H Youth Fair and Market Livestock Auction and youth tractor safety classes.



Isabella Montross shows her cow at the 4-H Dairy Show

## Selected Programs Offered in 2024

- CCE Shop Meeting “*Biological Control of Corn Rootworm*” with Mike Hunter, CCE North Country Regional Ag Team; and Tony Testa, Persistent BioControl, at Kyle Farm in Cato
- CCE Shop Meeting “*Conducting Your Own On-Farm Research*” with Frank Clarke, CCE Cayuga; Mike Hunter, CCE North Country Regional Ag Team; and Janis Degni, SCNY Ag Team, at Raymond Donald Farm in Moravia
- “*Hands-on Animal Care Dairy Training*” in Spanish & English with Dr. Rob Lynch, Cornell PRO-DAIRY & SCNY Dairy Specialists, Green Hill Dairy in Scipio Center
- “*Corn Dry Down, Pre-Corn Silage Harvest Workshop*” with Ron Kuck, CCE Cayuga, and SCNY Dairy & Field Crops Team members at the E. Merlin Wenger Dairy Farm in Port Byron
- CCE Shop Meeting “*How to Read and Use a Manure and Soil Sample Analysis for Nutrient Management Decisions*” with Frank Clarke, CCE Cayuga, and Hayley Brown, Watershed Conservation Specialist, Cayuga SWCD at Kevin Sensenig Dairy in Cato
- “*Manure Storage Cover and Flare Farm Tour*”, with Cornell CALS PRO-DAIRY and Cornell Cooperative Extension, at Fessenden Dairy in King Ferry

## Research Projects

- CCE Cayuga again partnered with SCNY Dairy & Field Crops Team to monitor and provide weekly reports on alfalfa heights to help predict quality and %NDF. Recommendations were added this year for beef and livestock farms.
- Early in 2024, Frank Clarke completed and submitted his final report to New York Soil Health Initiative on the grant funded “*Drainage Tile Pilot Research Project*”. He since has recruited 2 farms to participate in continuing this research. A Cornell CALS undergraduate student, Lily Blyn, assisted Frank with this project.
- Our staff worked with NYS IPM at Cornell to provide weekly updates on findings from 6 traps placed in Cayuga County through their Field Corn Pheromone Trapping Network Project CCE Cayuga Ag Educators Ron Kuck and Frank Clarke set, monitored, and reported the data for the traps.
- We also shared new or updated agricultural research findings, conducted or written by our ag staff and others, in the Ag Alert. These included a 2-part series on multispecies grazing titled “*Can we Graze Sheep and Cattle Together?*”, “*Understanding the Long-Term Impacts of Heat Stress*” and “*Pricing Corn Silage and High Moisture Shell Corn 2024*” by Ron Kuck; “*The Science Behind a Soil Analysis and Factors that can Affect Soil Fertility*” and “*Time to Start Scouting for Potato Leafhopper*” by Frank Clarke, as well as relevant adapted articles from PRO-DAIRY and other publications.





Jillian Rejman, Cate Burroughs, Talia Pallokat, Emma Bailey (2024)

## 4-H Youth Tractor Safety Certification

According to the National Safety Council, agriculture is the most hazardous industry in the nation. In 2024, 16 teens from Cayuga and Onondaga Counties successfully completed the 8-week (24 hour) safety certification class, passing the required Skills, Written, and Driving Tests.

This training in tractor safety and maintenance is required by Hazardous Occupation in Agricultural Law for youth aged 14-16 in order to drive a tractor on a farm other than that owned by their parents. The success of this safety program is due to volunteers and farmers, including NYCAMH, Dean & Cindy Whitten; Greg Rejman; Cayuga Onondaga BOCES (Cale Jirinec/HERO Program, Jordan Anderson, Ty Gardner, Connor Glanville & Bryce Jirinec); the Cayuga County Sheriff's office, Brian Schenck, Sheriff. ☀

## SCNY Dairy & Field Crops Team

Cayuga County leads New York State agriculture as its top dairy producing county, and our staff is proud to contribute to this success. In 2023, CCE Cayuga joined Cornell's SCNY Dairy & Field Crops Regional Agriculture Extension team to bring enhanced support, education and applied research to our local producers in addition to that provided by our local Ag staff members.

The SCNY Regional Dairy & Field Crops website at <https://scnydfc.cce.cornell.edu/> provides research-based information, events, workshops, a newsletter, and other resources. Janice Degni, Team Leader and Field Crops Specialist, and Betsy Hicks, Dairy Specialist, are based at CCE Cortland and may be reached at (607) 391-2660. ☀



Photo by Jason Koski, Cornell University



## 4-H Giant Pumpkin Growing Contest

In 2024, Agriculture Educator Frank Clarke and 4-H Lead Sara Wagner organized a new, annual pumpkin growing contest for local youth. 4-H members and non-member youths received seeds of Big Moose variety pumpkins and instructions on how to grow them in June and brought the resulting pumpkins to be weighed at the Ward O'Hara Agricultural Museum in October. Three youths entered the contest and Zachary Oswald was named the winner, growing a pumpkin that weighed 162 lbs. A second contest is planned for 2025. ☀

## North American Manure Expo (N.A.M.E.)

In 2024, N.A.M.E. was held in the Northeast for the first time, hosted in Auburn by Patterson Farms, PRO-DAIRY, and University of Vermont Extension. While Expo demonstrations, tours, and safety school were coordinated by the organizers, local CCE Ag Educator Frank Clarke served as lead for the onsite education planning subcommittee that identified expert presenters whose research was relevant to agriculture's role in conservation in the Finger Lakes. CCE Cayuga colleagues Ron Kuck and Ryan Staychock volunteered at the event, with Ryan hosting one of the four educational tents. 4-H staff picked up the returnables to be redeemed. ☀



## Respecting The Environment and Protecting Our Watershed

### About CCE Cayuga's Environment Program

In December 2022, CCE associations in Cayuga, Schuyler and Seneca Counties leveraged their resources to create a shared Environment & Natural Resources Educator position that could provide consistent, research-based community education across our region. Ryan Staychock holds this unique position for the 3 counties, and works to educate the public on environmental topics through workshops and events, outreach tabling, informational flyers, our website, and social media.

In this role, Ryan offers Cayuga County residents programs on a wide range of topics including composting, solid waste and recycling; forest resources such as maple syruping; stormwater/watershed management; on-site/residential wastewater treatment; invasive species, and air quality. Another aspect of his work is engaging and partnering with agencies, municipalities, schools and other community groups to present community events that advance practices to help our environment and protect our watershed. He also collaborates on related programs within each of the 3 CCE county offices, and participates in local public events such as the NY State Tick Blitz, Earth Day/Arbor Day celebrations, and most recently 2024 Solar Eclipse events.☀



### Reducing Waste through Composting

Through a Tri-County Compost Bin Sale, Cayuga County residents could preorder the popular Earth Machine backyard compost bins in May at a significant discount over retail prices, for pickup in June at the Cayuga Soil & Water Conservation District offices. More than 60 people participated in this sales event across Cayuga, Schuyler and Seneca Counties. Thanks to a grant from NUCOR Steel Auburn Inc, Cayuga County residents receives an additional \$20 off the already discounted price of the bins, bringing their final cost down to \$39.95.☀

### Selected 2024 Environment Programs

- 4-H Pheasant Chick Rearing Workshop
- Cayuga County Outdoor Education Field Days,
- Electronics Recycling Event
- How to Make Maple Syrup with Cornell Maple Program
- Household Hazardous Waste Collection Event
- Managing Your Forest Workshop (Hybrid)
- Maple Syrup Workshops (Cayuga & Schuyler Counties)
- Native Plants in Emerson Park
- Solar & Ag in Cayuga County: What You Need to Know
- Tire Round Up Recycling Event
- Tri-County Compost Bin Sale
- What Does an Active Year of HABs Mean for Water Quality?

### Backyard Maple Workshop with the Cornell Maple Program for Homeowners



Seventeen people attended an October 16th workshop designed for backyard-beginners (or as a refresher for amateur maple producers) led by Aaron R. Wightman, Senior Extension Associate, New York State Maple Specialist, and Co-Director of the Cornell Maple Program.

Cost for the workshop was \$13/person and topics included how to identify maple trees, a review of the process to make maple syrup including tapping trees, collecting sap, and processing sap into syrup. Participants also learned about additional educational resources offered through the Cornell Maple Program (more information at <https://blogs.cornell.edu/cornellmaple/>) and had time for questions and discussion.

The same workshop was offered again on October 23 in Schuyler County. For more information, contact Ryan Staychock, Environment/ Natural Resources Educator Cayuga, Schuyler & Seneca CCE at [rms462@cornell.edu](mailto:rms462@cornell.edu) or (315) 539-9251 Ext. 110. ☀



## SOLAR LEASING WORKSHOP FOR FARMERS & LANDOWNERS

Solar developments on agricultural land are becoming more common in the Finger Lakes, and farmers and other landowners need information they can trust about the legal issues surrounding leasing land to solar companies. On November 13th, CCE Cayuga and Cayuga County Farm Bureau partnered to offer a workshop in Auburn on this topic that was attended by thirty-six farmers and landowners.

A panel of experts shared information: David Kay, Senior Associate at Cornell CALS, discussed “*Utility Scale Solar Development in NYS*”; Linda Garrett, NY Regional Director of American Farmland Trust, spoke on “*Solar as an AG Viability Tool*”; Matt Sousa, Senior Planner with MRB Group, talked about “*Solar Energy System Application Reviews and Process*”; and Simon Honig, Esq. from Colligan Law, LLP presented on “*What Farmers Need To Know About Solar Leases*”. The \$15.00 workshop fee included lunch. A second workshop with the same presenters and topics was held on January 25, 2025 in Schuyler County.☀



### *Presentation on Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) at Cayuga Community College*



2024 was an active year for Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) in waterways across the Finger Lakes. HABs occur when colonies of algae grow out of control and produce toxic or harmful effects on people, fish, shellfish, marine mammals and birds. The CCE Cayuga Environment & Natural Resources program collaborated with other local agencies to offer a free workshop, “*What Does an Active Year of HABs Mean for Our Water Quality?*” on November 12th in Auburn. Speakers were Dr. Kim Schulz, Assoc. Professor at SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry (ESF) and Tony Prestigiacomio, Supervisor of the Finger Lakes Watershed Hub in the NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation. Auburn panelists included: Doug Kierst, Cayuga County SWCD; Greg Rejman, Sunnyside Farm; and Dan Welch, CCE Cayuga. A second workshop was held in Ovid at a later date.☀

### *Support for Recycling of Tires & Electronics; Disposal of Hazardous Waste*

CCE Cayuga staff partnered with local municipal agencies to support several events to reduce the volume of our waste stream and keep dangerous chemicals out of the watershed. In June, the **Tire Roundup Recycling Event** collected a large number of tires over a 3-hour period. In October, our staff members greeted 250 local residents and helped them register at the **Household Hazardous Waste Recycling Event** which enables people to properly dispose of old chemicals and outdated hazardous products at no charge. And in November, our staff welcomed 600 vehicles at the **Cayuga Electronics Recycling Event**. Events were organized by the Cayuga Dept. of Planning & Economic Development with support from Cayuga County SWCD, Cayuga Solid Waste Management, CCE Cayuga, and NUCOR Auburn. Proper disposal of all of these items helps protect human health, our community and the environment. Thanks to everyone who participated! ☀





# Meeting Local Needs: *in Nutrition, Health and Wellness*

## About Our Food & Nutrition Program

CCE associations in Cayuga and Seneca Counties partner to offer half-time nutrition education in both counties through the work of their shared employee, SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator, Becky McCormick.

Through the CCE Cayuga Food & Nutrition program, Becky provides skill-based nutrition education classes and events in local communities on topics offered through the SNAP Education program including: healthy eating on a budget, smart shopping for vegetables and fruits, healthy meal planning, basic cooking and food safety skills, weight control and physical activity.

SNAP-Ed Offerings in Cayuga County include:

- Group SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education for adults & youth
- Fruit & Vegetable Prescription Program (FVRx)
- Farmers Market Nutrition Coupons and nutrition education for WIC participants

CCE Cayuga's Food & Nutrition Program has established strong partnerships with local food banks, farmers' markets, community organizations, schools, and health organizations -- be sure to look for Becky delivering programs at these sites in Cayuga County! ☀



An FVRx class at Cayuga Community Action Program (CAP) Head Start

## What is the Fruit & Vegetable Prescription Program and How Does It Work?

The FVRx program provides free nutrition education and access to fresh vegetables and fruits to people who receive SNAP benefits or are SNAP-eligible. People with conditions such as diabetes, pre-diabetes, heart disease, obesity, high blood pressure, or who are at risk of developing these conditions are referred to the FVRx program by a healthcare provider.

Eligible participants enroll in a series of 6 free nutrition classes and receive a \$15 voucher at each class (for a total of \$90 in vouchers over a class series) for vegetables and fruits at local farmers' markets, farm markets, and other local vendors. The program empowers participants to make behavioral changes that support healthy living and alleviate pain and healthcare costs. Participants receive fresh food, attend cooking classes (virtual or in-person) focused on eating a variety of seasonal produce, and communicate with staff about staying motivated and making healthy recipes. This model has been adopted across New York State by other SNAP-Ed programs. To date, the FVRx program partners with 7 healthcare system, 40+ health clinics, and 60+ food retailers in our Northern Finger Lakes SNAP Region.

The impact of these efforts is widespread, with close to 1,000 patients enrolled and over \$99,000 in produce vouchers, having a 78% redemption rate. 47% of program participants reported being at risk or with food insecurity. After attending the class series, participants report the following: 72% eat more vegetables since attending workshops, 61% eat more fruits, 20% are more active, and 67% have increased nutrition security.

To learn more about the FVRx program at CCE Cayuga, contact Becky McCormick, SNAP-Ed Nutrition Educator, at (315) 255-1183 Ext. 106 or [rsc34@cornell.edu](mailto:rsc34@cornell.edu). ☀



## HOW SNAP-ED WORKS IN OUR COMMUNITY

SNAP-Ed offerings in Cayuga County include: Group SNAP-Ed Nutrition Education classes, the Fruit & Vegetable Prescription (FVRx) Program, and distribution of Farmers' Market Nutrition Coupons to WIC participants. The following are some of the outcomes and impacts of these programs in 2024.

### 1) Nutrition Education for School Aged Youth

In early 2024, we worked with 343 students in 4th, 5th, and 6th grades at Herman Avenue Elementary, using the 6-week "Choose Health-Fun, Food and Fitness" (CHFFF) curriculum. We later used the "Growing Healthy Kids" gardening nutrition curriculum there with 38 second graders, incorporating the school's garden in our lessons.

### 2) Fruit & Vegetable Prescription Program

In 2024, we offered the Fruit & Vegetable Prescription Program (FVRx) at six different locations in Cayuga County: the Vineyard Food Pantry, Calvary Food Pantry, the Cayuga Community Action (CAP), Choices for Change, the Port Byron Library, and at Stryker Homes. In total, 91 people attended the six-week series focused on feeling better by adding more fruits and vegetables to their diets. At every session they attended, participants received a \$15 voucher to use at farmers markets, farm stores, and grocery stores to buy vegetables and fruits, for a total economic impact of over \$8,000.

### 3) Farmers Market Nutrition Program

CCE Cayuga partners with the Cayuga County Health Department WIC program to distribute Farmers Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) coupons at the Auburn Farmers Market, and provides nutrition education to them while at the market. Since we began partnering with WIC, redemption rates for the FMNP coupons have increased to be one of the highest rates in New York State!

### 4) Summer Nutrition Education for Youth

Our SNAP-Ed program used the "Growing Healthy Kids" gardening nutrition curriculum with 91 youth at Booker T. Washington Community Center Summer Day Camp in their newly renovated garden. ☀



*Herman Avenue Elementary students learn about nutrition in their garden*



## What is SNAP-Ed?

SNAP stands for Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, a federally funded program of the U.S.D.A. that offers free, community-based education focused on healthy eating and active living.

Program educators provide hands-on education sessions that include cooking demonstrations, physical activities, and community discussions, all designed to meet people where they are with the resources they have. The program serves all age groups and is offered in various community spaces, schools and online, aiming to make healthy choices accessible and easy for everyone.

SNAP-Ed goals include: eat more fruits and vegetables; drink less sugar-sweetened beverages; exercise more and balance calories eaten as part of a healthy lifestyle.

Are you eligible for SNAP? Find out if you can receive SNAP benefits and apply online at [MyBenefits.NY.gov](https://MyBenefits.NY.gov). ☀



## TASTE NY AUBURN STORE SUPPORTS LOCAL AGRICULTURE

In 2024, the Taste NY Market celebrated its sixth anniversary at the NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center (ERHC) & Auburn Welcome Center at 25 South Street in Auburn, NY. Staffed and managed by Cornell Cooperative Extension Cayuga

their products while enhancing the economic and cultural vitality of Downtown Auburn.

Other visitors include out-of-state bus tours, and area residents who attend special events, such as Harriet Tubman Day, City of Auburn Founders Day, an annual Pride event, and the Auburn Holiday Parade, making the Taste NY market a vibrant hub for local products that fosters economic development and community engagement while showcasing the best of New York State agriculture for its visitors.

Taste NY Market also has introduced gift baskets comprised of products from the store, selling 46 during the holiday season and a total of 100 this year. Themes include holiday seasonal baskets, an Italian Basket, Breakfast Basket or a Batter Bowl with a whisk, pancake mix and maple syrup, and more. The creative staff at Taste NY Market also take orders for special custom baskets made with products from their stock. Gift baskets range in price from \$25 to \$60, and can be picked up at the store or shipped for an additional fee.

Prospective vendors who are interested in selling local products in the market are encouraged to contact Heather Ward, Manager, Taste NY Market at the NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center, at [hab27@cornell.edu](mailto:hab27@cornell.edu) or 607-229-3650 for more information.☀



*Visitors in the Taste NY Auburn Market in the NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center*

County, the market is funded by a contract with NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, and is one of 70 Taste NY Markets created to promote and showcase the wide variety of products made in New York State.

Located in a popular regional attraction, the Taste NY Market offers a highly visible sales platform for area producers, attracting 14,648 visitors in 2024. The Market is staffed by a manager, two full-time clerks, and two part-time seasonal workers who support sales of hyper-local products sourced from Cayuga County farms and surrounding counties. Inventory now features more than 600 products from over 125 local and regional vendors including Smokey Hollow Maple Products (Jordan), Haines Apiary (Auburn), Hillcrest Dairy (Moravia), New Hope Mills (Auburn), Picciano Family Foods (Auburn), Montour Falls Tea Company (Montour Falls), 3 Brothers Winery (Geneva), and Avital's Apiaries (Newfield).

Some current vendors first began selling at farmers' markets, and the ability to place their products in a Taste NY Market gave them exposure and helped them expand their businesses to sell in other local outlets, and to open their own store fronts or online stores.

Peak sales at the Market occur during summer months and near the holidays of Memorial Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas. The popular Auburn Downtown Outdoor Markets, held on Saturdays from late June through August, draw consumers from across Cayuga County and give local growers and producers and opportunity to reach the public directly with



*Gift baskets filled with local products have become a new sales opportunity at the Taste NY Auburn Market.*



# YOUTH GAIN JOB SKILLS AT STATE FAIR MILK BAR

Forty Central New York teens gained marketable work experience and a greater understanding of the role of agriculture in our state’s economy while staffing the popular Milk Bar at the Great New York State Fair, held in Syracuse from August 21 – September 2, 2024. Recruited primarily from Cayuga and Onondaga Counties, the teens – who ranged in age from 14-to-19, sold and served over 285,000 cups of cold refreshing milk to fairgoers as part of a workforce training program staffed and managed for a 3rd consecutive year by CCE Cayuga, with support from the NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets.

For a majority of the teens, this was their first job experience. Their supervisors at the Milk Bar -- Heather Ward of CCE Cayuga and Jacob Maslyn of CCE Ontario -- provided a pre-Fair training that included basic application steps, team building and customer service skills, and general workplace expectations. Three days of field trips to dairy farms, sheep dairies, and to Geneva Agri-tech exposed them to many different career pathways and opportunities that involve milk processing, farming, and food research. Of the 40 teens, 15 had returned for a second year in more senior leadership positions such as cashier, food handling and stocking, or as trainers. By the Fair’s end, many of the teens expressed interest in returning for a 2nd or 3rd year in 2025. CCE Cayuga again will staff and manage the Milk Bar for the 2025 New York State Fair. To learn about job openings for teens, visit: <https://ccecayuga.org/milkbar>. ☀



*Governor Kathy Hochul takes a selfie with members of the 2024 Milk Bar staff while visiting the Great New York State Fair Dairy Building.*

# HELPING WOMEN AND MINORITY OWNED BUSINESSES THRIVE

The Auburn Taste NY Market in the NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center hosted a free information session in March 2024 to share information on New York State’s Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (MWBE) certification program.

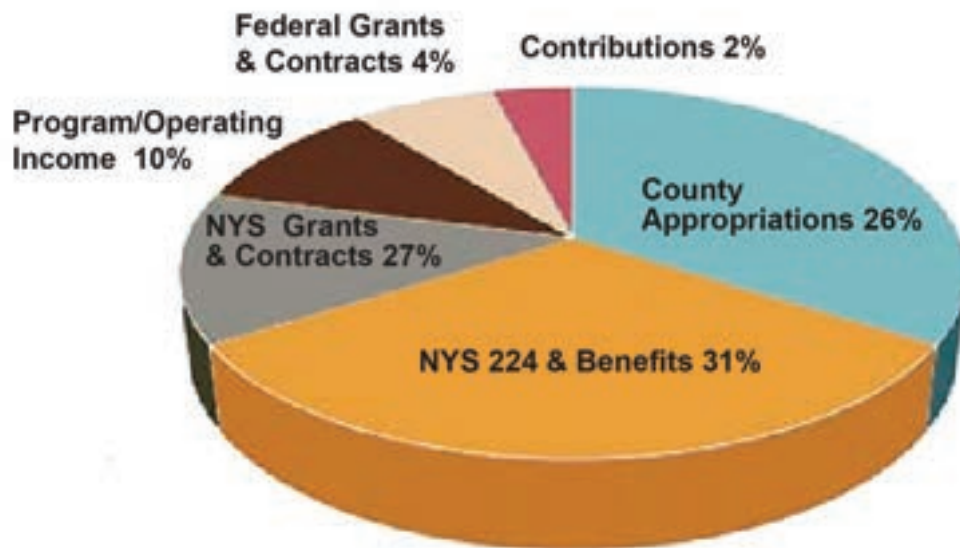
In addition to learning how they could do business with this and other Taste NY Markets across the state, 25 existing or aspiring small business owners from our region heard from a panel of experts on topics including ways Cornell’s Food Venture Center in Geneva can help food businesses develop and introduce new products, the process for obtaining MWBE certification, how it can benefit a small business; and heard a success story from a currently certified MWBE vendor. The event was presented as a collaboration between Cornell Cooperative Extension, CCE Cayuga County and its Taste NY Market, Cornell Cooperative Extension’s Harvest NY program, and the Cornell Food Venture Center.

For more information about the Taste NY Market, contact Heather Ward, Manager, Taste NY Market at the NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center, at [hab27@cornell.edu](mailto:hab27@cornell.edu) or 607-229-3650.



*Photo at left: a meeting in the NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center.*

## 2024 FINANCIAL SUPPORT & FUNDING SOURCES



CCE Cayuga Financial Support 2024  
**\$1,343,906**

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# LET'S STAY IN TOUCH!



@ccecayuga

Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Cayuga County  
248 Grant Avenue  
Auburn, New York 13021  
(315) 255-1183  
website: <https://ccecayuga.org/>



@CCECayuga

@4-HCayugaCounty

@Taste NY at the NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center



[cayuga@cornell.edu](mailto:cayuga@cornell.edu)

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## *Thanks for your support!*

CCE Cayuga has served our local community for more than 100 years and we plan to be here for another century! Our programs demonstrate our commitment to offering high quality and innovative programs that deliver value to our county's agricultural producers, our families, communities, agriculture, families, youth and community development.

We rely on a variety of funding sources from County, State, and Federal sources, as well as grants and fundraising. Private support from the community is especially meaningful, and helps us to continue our mission of Putting Research,

Experience & Knowledge to work for all Cayuga County residents! Your cash or in-kind gifts are tax-deductible as allowed by law, and we will send you a letter to use for tax purposes.

To donate now, scan the QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/CCECayugaDonate> to give with a credit card via our PayPal account. You also may make a tax-deductible donation by sending a check made payable to CCE Cayuga County and mail it to: CCE-Cayuga, 248 Grant Avenue, Auburn, New York 13021 For more information, please call 315-255-1183 ext.2871, or email Executive Director Dan Welch at [dlw56@cornell.edu](mailto:dlw56@cornell.edu). ☀





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**Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Cayuga County  
248 Grant Avenue, Auburn, NY 13021**

**CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED**



**Photo: Tom Eversley CC0**