



2020 ANNUAL REPORT

Cornell Cooperative Extension Delaware County



*Growing
Healthy Families,
Confident Youth,
Successful Farms
& Stronger
Communities*



Letter from the President

Greetings to the CCE Community,

Even in the midst of the COVID pandemic, 2020 has been a year of many program accomplishments for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County! Our CCE staff continue to be essential and have worked throughout this challenging pandemic environment to deliver high quality, research-based educational responses to the critical needs and issues facing the residents of Delaware County as shared in this annual report.

Serving as President of the Board affords me a front row seat to observe the way this organization works. I have watched this group of dedicated people transition priorities to meet unpredicted demands. The leaders adjusted working conditions to meet the changing requirements for safety. Then, they stepped forward as a model of leadership for our changing world.

I have a few observations I would like to share with you. The teams have employed a tensile approach that enabled them to reach out and fulfill their commitments throughout this county and beyond. Difficult choices were made on evidence based science and not on emotions. Clear conduits carried information flowing from the administration at Cornell University to the director, then on to the team leaders who shared this science based knowledge throughout the local organization and into the homes of it's members and partners. This community of caring, dedicated, individuals stood firm, then stepped up, to lead by example. The words of the CCE mission statement became actions. This nimble, sharing model will sustain this community as we move forward. We will continue to polish these skills as we tackle the hard conversations and achieve our full potential to create a welcoming, nurturing, environment for all who choose to join with us. Our appreciation and thanks to the Board of Supervisors for their continued financial support which is important for the daily operation of Cornell Cooperative Extension. Special recognition and thanks to our many volunteers and partners for their guidance and educational support this year and for a rich history of volunteer involvement in our organization.

I am humbled yet thankful to be a very small part of a very large vibrant Cornell Cooperative Extension success story of programs and service to people throughout the county this year.

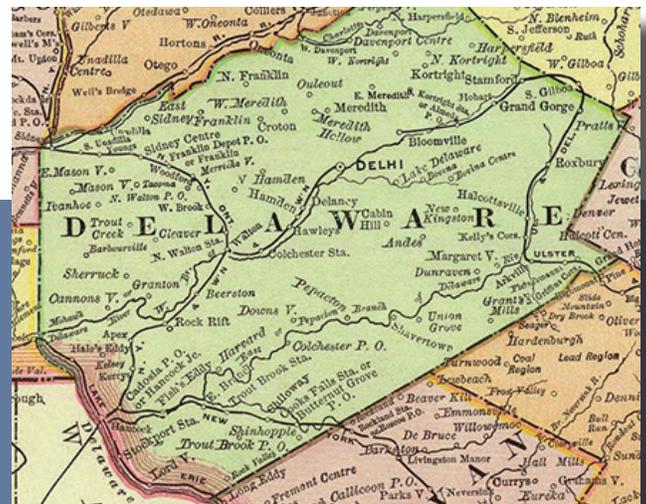
Sincerely,



Donna Dickson-Noonan,
Board President

MISSION OF CCE DELAWARE COUNTY

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County 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.



Main cover photo credit - Ben Patton, Franklin

"Families loved cooking together and loved that their kids could take the lead on the project and build confidence in the kitchen."

- CROP Program Director



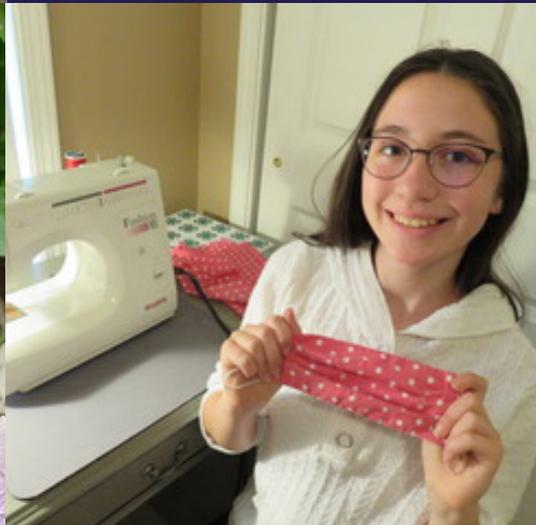
"I will be better prepared to provide appropriate shelter for my chicken flock."

- Poultry Production Workshop Participant



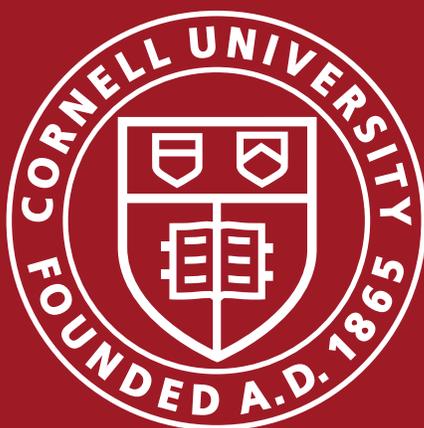
"Thank you for doing all the Zoom outreaches. I've gardened for a long time yet I learned something new from every one of your Zoom sessions."

- Horticulture at Home Series Participant



"She is stuck in the house a lot and needs some mental, creative stimulation. Camp in a Box is a great idea. THANKS to whoever came up with this one!"

- Parent of Camp in a Box Participant



"My grandson is so excited to watch this! Thanks for sharing!"

"A PERFECT way for the humans in "lockdown" currently to be entertained!"

- Viewers of 4-H Virtual Embryology Series



2020 STAFF

Executive Director: Jeanne M. Darling
**Office Manager/Ag and Alliance
Administrative Assistant:** Karen Graves
Association Bookkeepers: Linda Mott and
Heather Cunningham
Desktop Publisher & Asst. Bookkeeper:
Kathy Shelton

4-H

4-H Team Leader: John Hannum
4-H Resource Educator: Emily Roach
4-H Administrative Assistant: Pam Conklin
4-H Camp Administrative Assistant:
Cathy Scofield
4-H Camp Director: Corrine Tompkins

Agriculture

Ag Senior Extension Resource Educator:
Mariane Kiraly
Horticulture/Natural Resource Educator:
Carla Crim
WAP Sr Team Leader/Nutrient Management:
Dale Dewing
PFM and Nutrient Mgmt Team Leader:
Paul Cerosaletti
WAP/PFM Community Educators:
April Wright-Lucas,
James Romack
Nutrient Management Community Educator:
Benjamin Hepler
WAP Dairy/Livestock Sr Resource Educator:
Richard Toebe
WAP Administrative Assistant: Kim Holden

Human Ecology

SNAP Ed Nutrition Educator: Maegan
Freeman
EFNEP Nutrition Educators:
Cheryl Ceresna, Amy VanAlstyne
HE Administrative Assistant: Valerie Dudley



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Center

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Scott, Unadilla; Kathleen Cuomo, Walton; Paul
Crognale, Unadilla; Chrissy Evans, Walton

PROGRAM COMMITTEES

Agriculture Program Committee:

Chairperson: Fred Kuhn, Grand Gorge; Vice Chair-
person: Jason Mondore, DeLancey; Dick
Latourette, Sidney Center; Brad Taggart, Sidney
Center; Carolyn Scobie, DeLancey; Paul Crognale,
Unadilla; Vanessa Merrill, Walton; Janet Beken
Smith, Stamford (Advisor); Dr. Chris Camann,
Unadilla (Advisor)

Human Ecology Program Committee:

Chairperson: Donna Dickson-Noonan, Bovina
Center; Vice Chairperson: Paul DeAndrea, Franklin;
Secretary: Karen Ogborn, Hobart; Joan Hale, Sid-
ney; Kathi Herzog, Hancock; Paula Brown,
Downsville; Carol Ann Michalski, Walton

4-H Youth Development Program Committee:

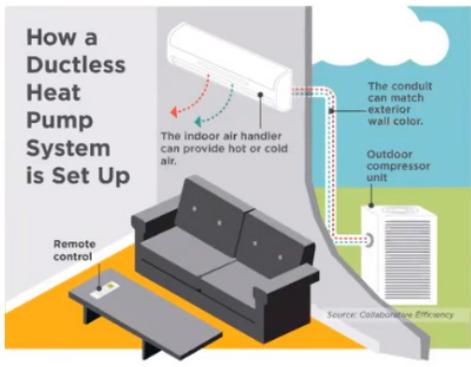
Chairperson: Donna Machala, Franklin; Vice Chair-
person: Jill Coleman, Delhi; Secretary: Megan
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Christine Evans, Walton; Amanda Madugno,
Deposit; Stacy Palmatier, Hobart; George Machala,
Franklin (Teen Advisor); Jessica Coleman, Delhi
(Teen Advisor)



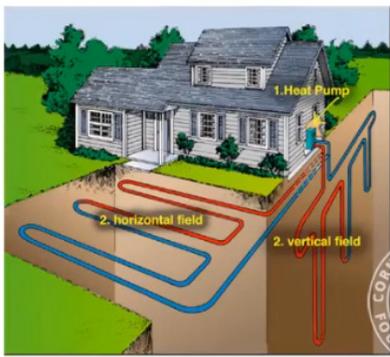
What's a Heat Pump?



Air Source (or ductless or minisplit)



Ground Source (or geothermal)



CCE DELAWARE Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County: Human Ecology was live. July 21 at 11:55 AM

Energy Chat - Reduce Your Energy Load
Energy Navigator Bob Romick talks about how to reduce your heating bill, including getting a free ho...
See More

Like Comment Share

10 Comments 124 Views

Comments

Eileen Hanrahan 10:28
The SBC charge on your utility bill subsidizes this program so you have a right to a free home energy assessment
Like · Reply · 3w

Eileen Hanrahan 12:12
There are incentives available to help pay for heat pumps. Val can help you access those incentives.
Like · Reply · 3w

View 8 more comments

ENERGIZING CONSUMERS AND YOUTH TO SAVE \$ AND ENERGY

Energy Programs - The Smart Energy Choices program helps residents with free and low cost energy efficiency and renewable energy solutions including weatherizing homes and businesses, installing efficient heat pumps, wood and wood pellet stoves or boilers and going solar. Program energy outreach has included program presentations to seniors, agency partners, veterans and consumers through virtual Energy Chats. Sixteen contractors are involved in completing more than 61 energy audits and improvements. Energy Chat Series features local contractors sharing energy efficiency and renewable energy options that can reduce utility bills and increase home comfort. Energy Chats stream live on Facebook every three weeks.

Energy Warriors - is a year-round weekly Extension program providing renewable education/clean energy certification in Weatherization and OSHA, in partnership with NYSWDA NYS Weatherization Directors Association at the Youth Leadership Academy in South Kortright. Several youth have participated in Renewable/Clean Energy, building science principle lessons, clean energy careers, and interactive activities in solar energy and robotics in 2020.

Catskills Youth Summit Virtual Events for 2020 - Youth and teachers planned a Teacher Institute for May 1st and a Climate Summit at SUNY Oneonta for October 2nd. Both of these exciting day events will be postponed until 2021 because of the COVID pandemic. The Youth Summit Advisory Committee has met all year to plan these events and a series of four virtual Youth Summit events that will be held October 1, 15, 29 and November 12th with youth involvement in selecting and presenting workshops, climate action planning, the summit finale and youth competition in goose chase activities. Schools and youth preregistered to attend an online climate change 101 webinar and a climate action planning workshop for teachers in September. Funding support for these events was provided by a national NOAA grant through the Wild Center.



RAVE REVIEWS FOR HEALTHY MEALS

EFNEP lessons have been delivered to over 100 families and 11 youth groups in Delaware County this year. Workforce training programs have been completed in Delaware County as well as follow up outreach to individuals from agency referrals. EFNEP educators continue to enroll day-care providers for training credits and teach gardening lessons to families and youth at two childcare centers and community garden sites. Seed To Supper virtual classes were held with 30 families to learn gardening skills at three community garden sites. EFNEP and SNAP Ed educators offer nutrition, food safety and food preparation classes to parents and their children through CROP (Creating Rural Opportunities Partnership) and school based programs at 10 schools with virtual lessons being offered to families during the pandemic. Healthy Meal Kits were delivered along with 6 nutrition lessons, food and COVID food safety resources to 500 families in June as a special COVID food security project developed by Jeanne Darling, Cheryl Starcher-Ceresna, Amy VanAlstyne, and Maegan Freeman. According to Carolyn Cooper, the Director of CROP, "Our staff had nothing but rave reviews for the meal kits. Everyone loved them and was grateful to receive them. Families loved the meals and posted photos to their CROP Facebook pages.

SNAP-Ed educators delivered nutrition education lessons to senior groups, after school CATCH Me Cooking programs, at Department of Social Services, as part of workforce training, and at community agency sites. SNAP Ed offers evidence based CATCH (Coordinated Approach Towards Child Health) lessons to youth in and after school at 10 schools, and virtual nutrition education lessons to families. The Smarter School Lunch program was presented to cafeteria and school wellness staff at Stamford Central School in March with goals set for the school year.

See the video here: <https://youtu.be/E0gEulGwCZs>

We delved into planning the 2020 farmer market season at our first virtual market meetings in March and June. We had presentations on the Fruit and Vegetable Rx program, SNAP and the Farmer Market Nutrition Program which are featured at the Walton Farmers Market this year. Farmers were encouraged to sign up to participate in these programs and to set goals to offer a safe weekly market on Fridays for three months. This year the market has more than doubled in size; the Fruit and Vegetable Rx program and the Farmer Market Nutrition Coupon program have increased sales of produce at the farmers' markets and access to local foods during the pandemic.

Educators Jeanne Darling and Maegan Freeman have also used Cornell Farmer Market Nutrition lessons, online training and resources as they delivered nutrition education at the market without food samples this year; SNAP Ed newsletters and recipes featuring a vegetable or fruit of the week were enthusiastically received by customers each week. The Walton Farmers' Market featured texting messages to promote availability of vegetables and local produce each week at the market. Food preservation on line classes were promoted at the market and also available on Cornell Cooperative Extension's website with consultations and questions answered by phone or e-mail.

WALTON MARKET BLOSSOMS





Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) in Delaware County is lead agency for the Delaware County Rural Healthcare Alliance, one of more than 30 rural health networks funded by a grant from the New York State Department of Health. Alliance program partners include local hospitals, Delaware County Public Health, EMS, Delaware County Mental Health, Office for the Aging, The Alcohol and Drug Abuse Council, The Alzheimers Association, Girls On the Run, SUNY Delhi, CCE nutrition educators and other local health partners.

RURAL HEALTH A PRIORITY DURING COVID-19

ACEs -Adverse Childhood Experiences – The ACEs Championship group completed their training June 29th with the resources and training to implement trauma informed policies and procedures in their work settings including health care, schools, childcare and agencies. Twenty-nine people from 15 work sites including 7 schools, 5 agencies, 2 healthcare providers and 1 daycare center completed online course readings and monthly virtual consults during the spring from March to June. The ACEs Task Force was able to offer resources to schools transitioning to the fall school environment and provided online virtual training on resilience as well as a survey of training needs to help families, teachers, agency and healthcare staff provide trauma informed support to children during the COVID pandemic.

Human Papilloma Virus (HPV) - School HPV advisory meetings have been held this year involving Bassett's School Based Health Centers with work plans developed to engage youth and parents through community events at Sidney Central School and school events/classroom instruction at South Kortright Central School to increase and track HPV immunizations at each school.

Sources of Strength - Youth peer leader and adult advisors are trained and engaged in five schools to reduce and prevent suicides with virtual training being offered to students and advisors in each school by the University of Rochester.

Above the Influence (ATI) – Above the Influence is a substance-use prevention program led by peer middle school youth leaders with Delaware Academy being the first school in Delaware County to be trained to implement this program.

Age Friendly Communities – This program initiative supports age friendly programs and safe walking/biking trails to increase physical activity among county residents. A trail at the Arkville Recreation Center was completed this spring along with participation in an Age Friendly Community training and planning for the community of Walton. Office for the Aging provided face to face and virtual Tai Chi classes this year with a focus on reducing stress and using Tai Chi in rehabilitation.

Health Workforce/Careers/Healthy Living – The Health Workforce/Careers committee is working to implement a SCRUBS program for youth at Delaware Academy featuring health professions; SCRUBS classes were successfully started in the spring and moved to virtual instruction in March through the end of the year. Telehealth programs for college students, workforce training in hospitals, and health career training for adults and BOCES youth have been promoted and shared with health workforce partners and schools this year. Girls On The Run has offered virtual lessons, motivational statements, movement challenges, and critical thinking skills to encourage students to be healthy in 10 Delaware County Schools.

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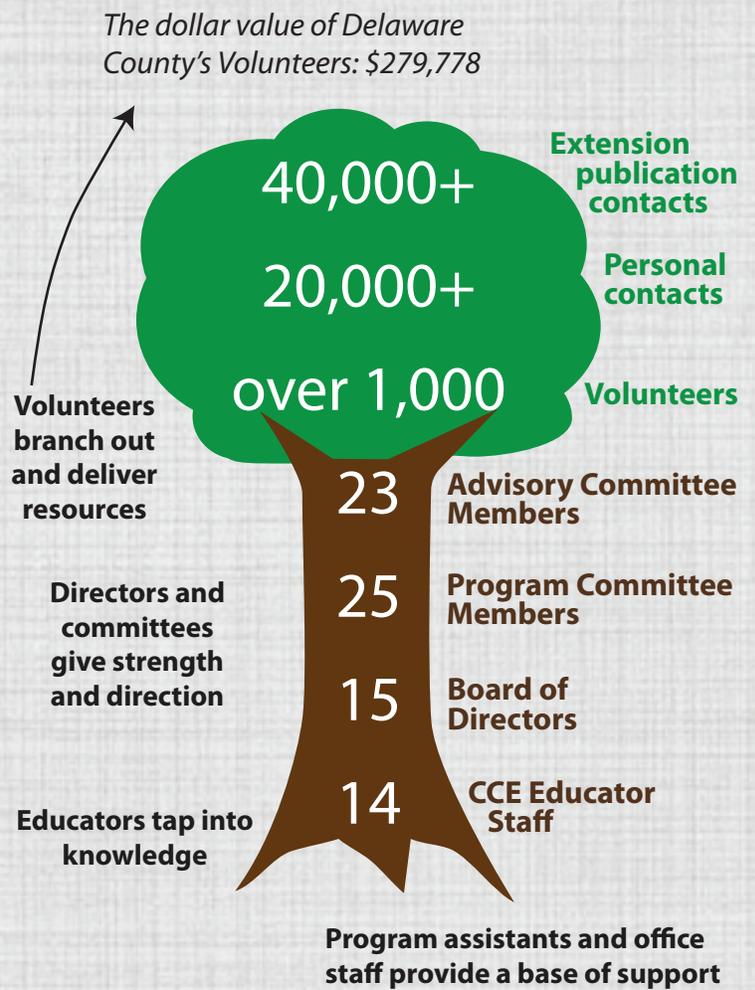
Human Ecology Programs

Delaware Rural Healthcare Alliance: Healthcare Leadership Workforce Trainings; Fitness Trails; Complete Streets; Building More Active Communities; Senior Tai Chi program; Girls on the Run; Breastfeeding Support Network; Sources of Strength Youth Suicide Prevention Program; Recovery Coach; Local and Regional Healthcare Planning, Mental Health Video Production; Above the Influence; ACEs Task Force; Age Friendly Communities; Long-Term Care Support.

SNAP Ed: Eat Healthy Be Active; Eat Smart Live Strong/Senior Nutrition; Cooking Matters; CATCH After School Programs; Farmers' Market Nutrition Education Program; Smarter Lunchroom Program; CATCH Me Cooking; Farmer Market Meetings; Agency Training; Healthy Meal Kit Program; Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program; and Virtual Nutrition Education Programs.

Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program: Breastfeeding Your Baby; Eat Smart Be Active; Sisters in Health; Cooking Up Fun; Teen Cuisine; Great Garden Detective Programs; Choose Health/School Gardening; Food Preservation; Garden-to-Table; Childcare Certification Training; Sidney Community Garden.

Environment and Energy: Catskill Youth Climate Summit Events; Clean Energy Community Program; CEEP - Consumer Energy Engagement Program- SMART Energy Choices; Indoor Air Quality and Water Quality; Climate Change 101: Climate Action Planning for Teachers; Energy Warriors; Energy Chats.



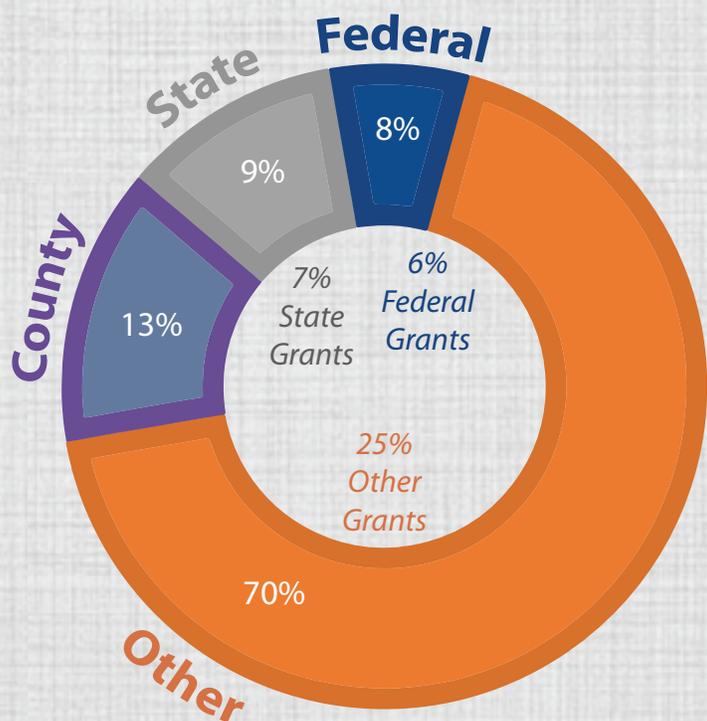
4-H Youth Devel

Activities: Community Service; Glow Party/ Re-enrollment Event; National 4-H Week/Club Displays; Earth Day Photo Contest; Leaders' Day; Teen Trips/Awards; Teen Council; Teen Recognition Night; County Public Presentations; Online District Public Presentation Event; Aging Out 4-Hers Recognition; Fundraising - Golf Tournament.

Animals: Hippology; Horse Quiz Bowl; Dairy Quiz Bowl; Online District Hippology, Horse Quiz Bowl, and Dairy Quiz Bowl Events; Fall Horse Clinic; Livestock Auction Registration & Tagging; 'Online Only' Livestock Auction & Auction Profiles (bi-os-photos-videos); Meat Chicken Project; Pheasants.

Delaware County 2020 Programming

Estimate of Financial Support Received



Agriculture Programs

Horticulture and Natural Resources: Master Gardener Volunteer Program; Holiday Wreath Workshop; Maple School; French Bio-intensive Gardening; Edible Landscaping; Simply Succulents; Hypertufa Pot Casting; Create a Pollinator Paradise; Birdsong Farm Community Garden; Don't Get Ticked NY; Soils and Mulches; Pruning for Production; Composting Ins and Outs; Invasive Species Detection & Response; Fast Track to Slow Flowers Catskill Regional Agriculture Conference.

Business Management and Profitability: Limiting Risk in AgriTourism; Farm Business Planning; Farm Business Summaries; Farmers' Tax School; Organic Dairy Profit Group; Annual Dairy Tour; Family Farm Day; Dairy Margin Program Outreach; Ag Plastic Recycling Program; Clean Sweep; Dairy Benchmarks; Catskill Regional Agriculture Conference.

Crop and Animal Production: Understanding Your Heifer's Growth & Performance; Beef Quality Assurance Training; Sheep & Goat International Night; Necropsy Workshop; Field Demo Days; Wool Demonstrations; Stocker School; Corn Dry Down Days; Beef Production Schools; Catskill Regional Agriculture Conference; Crop Production School; Quality Management Assistance; Beef Producers Meeting; Sheep & Goat Producer Discussion Group; Scissor Cut Sampling; Avipel Demonstrations; Forage Variety Demonstration; Catskill Regional Agriculture Conference.

Environmental: Soil Health Pasture Walk; Precision Feed Management; Nutrient Management Credit Workshop; Pasture Renovation; Catskill Regional Agriculture Conference.

Outreach: Taste of the Catskills Displays; Ag Literacy Week Readings; Catskill Regional Agriculture Conference.

Development Programs

STEM & Life Skills: Embryology; Science, Technology, Engineering & Mathematics (STEM) Programming; Online Crystals STEM Mini Course; Online Microorganisms STEM Mini Course; NYS Mask Task Project.

4-H Camp Shankitunk Camp in a Box Programming: Science, Nature, Classic, Cloverbud and interactive programming sessions via Zoom.





4-H EMBRYOLOGY REACHES 1000s

A fundamental principle of 4-H is to learn by doing. This means that for some people, the act of getting your hands involved with your brain helps them to learn and retain the information. Normally in 4-H we hold in person classes that involve our youth in the process we are trying to teach. The shutdown has forced all of us to rethink how we do things. The next best way to learn for some people is a demonstration of the subject matter so the participants can actually see the skills being demonstrated. This is what 4-H Resource Educator Emily Roach is doing with her highly successful video series.

Since March 24, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County's 4-H Resource Educator Emily Roach has been providing intensive educational videos on chicken, Ancona Duck, and guinea fowl embryology through the 'Official Friends of Delaware County 4-H' Facebook page. With the onset of COVID19 and the fact that many children, adults, and families were now to stay home, Emily thought it would be a great idea to bring embryology to all of those who might be interested in learning more about various breeds/species of birds. Emily had planned to hold an embryology program at one of the local schools in April and invited the families of the children who would have been in her embryology program to watch virtually.

Emily has shared numerous fun facts, humor, and drew viewers in by sharing her experiences, both good and bad, with hatching and raising these birds. To date, Emily has hatched 63 birds and she is currently starting her final *egg*stravaganza of the summer by incubating 28 Mallard Duck eggs, 14 Barred Rock and Mixed Breed Chicken Eggs, and 40 Coturnix Quail eggs. She has reached over 180,088 views on Facebook as of August 14 and will likely top 200,000 views by the end of her *egg*stravaganza. Local friends and coworkers have made this endeavor possible by donating eggs and in turn many of the hatchlings have been donated to 4-Hers as project birds.





4-H AUCTION GOES VIRTUAL

Due to COVID-19 restrictions and the governor's closing of all county fairs, Delaware County 4-Hers participating in the 4-H livestock auction project were unable to have the normal venue to sell their market animals. The 4-Hers have been raising and working with some of these animals for over a year, and in order to provide the youth a way to complete their projects and offer them for sale, Delaware County 4-H along with Lambrecht Auction provided 4-Hers an opportunity to sell their auction animals in an 'Online Only' 4-H Livestock Auction.

Two local meat processors, Eklund Processing Inc. and Steiner Packing Company Inc. guaranteed meat processing space for auction animals that were sold through the 'online only' auction. This was a huge benefit for our buyers as all processing companies are booked full through March 2021. This guaranteed spot at a processor was essential and much appreciated. For over two months Delaware County 4-H staff and Lambrecht Auction worked tirelessly to create guidelines, the platform, and provide marketing for this new opportunity. 4-Hers were encouraged to market their animals and contact potential buyers to explain this year's new format. Thirty-two 4-Hers sold 9 steers, 8 meat goats, 12 market lambs, and 18 pigs. Overall, prices were comparable to the traditional 'live' auction of years past and we want to congratulate our 4-Hers for all of their hard work, dedication, and patience during this unprecedented time. While this year's auction was far from 'normal,' we are proud of all those involved that embraced change in order to provide Delaware County 4-Hers an opportunity to sell their market animals in a new virtual format, learn new marketing skills, and to add some 'normalcy' in their lives.

With the onslaught of COVID-19 and New York State requiring masks when people are in public and cannot maintain 6 feet distance from one another, the NYS 4-H Program designed the 4-H Mask Task Challenge. Delaware County 4-Hers, leaders, and parents stepped up to the challenge and have made over 500 masks and over 50 ear savers. Masks and savers have been donated to Bassett Healthcare employees, community members, Walton EMS, Delaware County staff, and O'Connor Hospital as well as other various organizations.

The Dennis family created a video showing the mask making process which has been shared through multiple social media venues. Check out the video on the CCE website: www.ccedelaware.org.

The 4-H Mask Task Challenge will be an ongoing project throughout the coming months. Just another way 4-Hers, parents and leaders use their 'HANDS for LARGER SERVICE for their CLUB, their COMMUNITY, and their WORLD!'

4-H MASK TASK CHALLENGE



Camp is more than a place; it's a state of mind, and an experience that many youth look forward to all year. Despite a closed facility during the Covid-19 pandemic, 4-H Camp Shankitunk was ready, willing, and able to adapt this summer with an innovative Camp in the Box program and the help of several partner organizations.

More than 360 boxes were filled with camp programming, culture, positivity and mailed directly to youth. While more than 80% of boxes stayed local; youth in neighboring counties, states and some as far as Nebraska were able to participate in camp safely from their homes. Boxes were designed for a single youth to enjoy for 10+ hours in a variety of themes including classic, crafts, science/STEM, Nature, and Cloverbud (for ages 5-8). Each camp box contained a unique set of activities including but not limited to materials needed to carry out 5 hands-on activities, reflection prompts, photography challenges, family fun ideas, camp store swag items, smores supplies, and a few surprises from camp staff! Boxes were offered at a reduced price and multiple scholarship opportunities were available. In addition to Camp in the Box, families could also tune in for free interactive Zoom game sessions. The feedback we received from families and partners was overwhelmingly positive. They reported their youth having fun, being engaged, and generally enjoying something other than electronics at home. Highlights from the boxes included making a dreamcatcher, tie-dyeing a camp t-shirt, making friendship bracelets, exploring non-Newtonian fluids through oobleck, tying a no-sew fleece pillow, making slime, going on a micro hike, pressing flowers, clay art/drawing, learning origami, and much more!

A few local families were even surprised with a delivery parade from masked camp staff for an added smile. We are grateful that we were able to provide this programming opportunity for families and would like to thank our partners; without whom, none of this would have been possible! Thank You to the Community Foundation for South Central NY, Stewarts Shops and the Dake Family, a fund of the Community Foundation for the Greater Capital Region. Delaware County Youth Bureau, Tractor Supply & the Paper Clover Campaign, and of course the Paycheck Protection Program which allowed us to bring on a skeleton crew this summer.

REIMAGINING SUMMER 2020 WITH CAMP IN A BOX





SAFETY AND EDUCATION DELIVERED

Like so many businesses, schools, and families around the world, the team at CCE Delaware County had to quickly react and adapt to changes brought about by COVID-19. On March 4th, we gathered for a monthly staff meeting. In addition to our typical agenda, the topic of a possible pandemic was discussed. Lots of seemingly far-fetched scenarios were brought up including an office shut-down, working remotely, and the wearing of masks. Less than 2 weeks later, this became our reality. In the meantime, the farmers we serve were facing supply chain problems, both in terms of acquiring needed inputs and getting products to market. Stopping was not an option for any of us, and we found strength in technology and community networks.

Early spring is typically a busy time for educational endeavors, and we were able to safely and efficiently deliver scheduled programming via Zoom. The Winter Crop School was hosted online on March 27. In spite of this being new technology for many, the workshop ran smoothly and participants were able to enjoy the presentations and earn needed certification credits. Planned Watershed Farmer Education initiatives were also quite successful and well-attended in virtual form (see pages 14 and 15). Livestock educator Rich Toebe and horticulture educator Carla Crim delivered numerous workshops on timely topics within their subject areas. These online offerings attracted farmers and homeowners alike. In addition, area farmers joined CCE educators and USDA staff for weekly online chats. Each session began with brief updates from Mariane Kiraly and Rich Toebe on market conditions, and Brian Sheridan with FSA program updates. The remaining time was devoted to comments and questions from participants. This was a great forum to share ideas and resources with one another.

As part of a statewide collaboration with New York State Ag & Markets, our team picked up and distributed more than 250 gallons of the state's golden hand sanitizer, plus more than 670 two-ounce bottles and nearly 3,500 face coverings. Contact-free distribution events were held at easily accessible sites throughout the county, including Stamford Farmers' Cooperative and McDowell and Walker in Delhi. Staff also made deliveries to individual farms. In total, over 600 agricultural business owners/employees were impacted by these distributions. **13**



PRECISION FEED MANAGEMENT

The COVID pandemic and resultant NY-Pause could have threatened the continued function of the PFM program, given the high degree of on-farm data collection and interaction with farmers that the program relies upon. The increased telecommuting and reduced field travel might have been expected to reduce engagement with PFM farmer clientele. However, just the opposite proved true. Farmers turned to the PFM planning staff with greater urgency seeking help problem solving in areas such as feed inventory management, milk production management, udder health, Precision Feed Management benchmarking; as well as with a host of cropping issues such as crop rotation and fertility programming, herbicide selection, sprayer calibrations, and planting timing decisions. Despite COVID-19 precautions, farmers continued to seek the expertise of PFM staff via phone, email, text, and even video conference, and staff was able to make socially-distanced farm visits when necessary. The net result: despite the NY-Pause restrictions, average monthly farmer-contact volume per PFM planner increased 54% in the post COVID-19 months compared to the pre-COVID-19 months, providing solid evidence that PFM staff were a valued resource to farmers during the pandemic crisis time and when commodity and milk markets were highly volatile and uncertain.

Sign-ups were still going on when Cornell Cooperative Extension “paused” in mid-March. However, the speakers were already prepared and the farmers wanted to learn how farm succession could be accomplished on their farms!

Educator Mariane Kiraly decided that an online class could work if she could provide everything that was needed. The agritourism class in 2019 was held via Zoom and in-person so the technology was not new to CCE but it could be new to farmers and presenters.

In a week’s time, FarmNet, lawyers and educators were all prepared to present their sections via Zoom and the farmers required little assistance after a test run. All 34 were able to take advantage of the Farm Succession seminars that took place in late March and early April.

The notebooks were sent to the participants ahead of time. Farmers were able to ask questions of the presenters and receive their contact information. The farmers could work on their succession plans in the comfort and safety of their own homes. Participants learned the nuts and bolts of a farm succession plan and had the tools to move forward.

Extension must adapt to changing times and be nimble to ensure a continuing supply of safe and abundant food.

SUPPORTING FARM SUCCESSION





THE FAST TRACK TO SLOW FLOWERS

Nationwide, there has been a big shift in floral trends. Brides, romantics, and home-decorators are opting for farm-fresh sunflowers, dahlias, and zinnias over imported roses and carnations. As with the local foods movement, buyers want their flowers in-season, organic, and sustainably produced. In response, thousands of small flower farms have popped up in rural and urban areas in all climate zones. Many of the farmers also do design work, which can range from simple market bouquets to elaborate weddings.

Despite our rocks, hills, and short growing season, cut flowers can be grown very successfully in Delaware County and would be a great add-on to an existing farm or agro-tourism operation. They could also be a good enterprise for a new farmer looking to grow a high-value, niche crop without having to invest much in terms of land or equipment. The three part series was taught by Betsy Busche, owner of Spongetta's Garden in West Winfield, NY. She grows her flowers on multiple properties totaling just under an acre. She sells her bouquets through multiple outlets including a CSA, farmer's market, retail stores, and directly from her home studio. She also offers arrangements and bulk flower buckets for events such as weddings and parties. Betsy is a Delaware County native, and credits the 4-H program for her lifelong love of plants, sewing, and cooking.

Workshop participants received a selection of starter plants, seeds, and bulbs. Planting schedules and other printed resources were provided as well. The first class was taught live in the Hamden office, but some participants opted to join by Zoom. The remaining sessions were taught entirely by Zoom. Betsy, Carla, and 15 of the participants continue to interact regularly in a Facebook group. At least six of the participants are growing flowers for income, and are in their first or second season and benefiting greatly from the support. Many of the varieties discussed in the classes were grown at Birdsong Farm Community Garden, giving class participants and volunteers the opportunity to have hands-on experience growing and arranging these beautiful blooms.

A class participant shared "There are no other classes anywhere (in our area) about growing cut flowers. The information was bountiful and prepared well. I use all my class documents as resources constantly. I learned about flowers I never even knew existed and I'm growing them now for the first time. I'm the only household income right now so as you can imagine I am most appreciative of all the marketing information that was shared."



Cornell Cooperative Extension Delaware County

*Growing Healthy Families, Confident Youth,
Successful Farms and Stronger Communities*

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