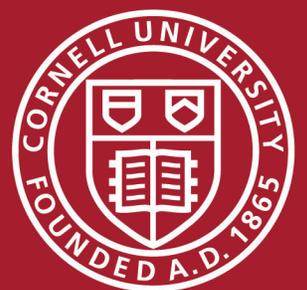


# 2023 ANNUAL REPORT

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



Cornell Cooperative Extension  
Delaware County



# Greetings from the Board President

Greetings and Welcome to everyone.

2023 has been a busy year as we move past the Covid Pandemic. Staff has returned to working in the office and our programming has returned largely to in-person as well. It has been great to see so many smiling faces at CCE events and meetings this year.

I was honored to be elected as CCE Board President in March. 25 years ago, when I asked Kathy Sherwood what was involved in being a 4-H club leader, I had no idea I would be chosen for this role. 4-H will always be near and dear to my heart. I have watched my three children grow and thrive as 4-H members and now I am watching my nieces, nephews and the next generation of club members do the same thing. It is exciting to see the success of these young people. The 4-H program has been active this year with a very successful camp season, a long list of activities throughout the year and of course a large 4-H presence at the Delaware County Fair. Our 4-H team continues to develop new and innovative programming. I can't wait to see what they have in store this coming year.

As the wife of a 4th generation dairy farmer and mother of two 5th generation dairy farmers, I also understand the important role agriculture plays in our county. I recognize the support our farms, large and small, receive from CCE Delaware. One of the highlights this year is that CCE Delaware was able to collaborate with the Delaware County Board of Supervisors and issue a second round of Farm AARP grants totaling \$500,000 to farmers who were negatively impacted by the Covid pandemic. The grants have helped farmers make much needed improvements and will support the future of agriculture in our county.

Human Ecology welcomed Ashley Silano-Moore as the new team lead. Ashley has a rich background that will help support and guide the HE department. I have enjoyed meeting the HE team this year and I am impressed by their commitment to improving the lives of our fellow Delaware County Residents. From food insecurity, food safety, energy efficiency and more this team works to support all of our residents in ways that can improve their lives.

I am deeply honored to be able to give back to this organization and the people of Delaware County by serving as the President of the Board of Directors. I look forward to working this coming year with our Executive Director, Dr. Mandeep Virk-Baker to continue to bring outstanding programs and new opportunities to our county.

Thank you all for attending and for your continued support of CCE Delaware and our mission.

Sincerely,



Betty Scott  
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.**



# 2023 STAFF

**Executive Director:** Dr. Mandeep Virk-Baker

**Office Coordinator:** Stacey Young

## 4-H

**4-H Team Leader:** Emily Roach

**4-H Resource Educator & 4-H Camp**

**Administrator:** Corrine Tompkins

**4-H Administrative Assistant:** Justine Bishop

**4-H Subject Educator:** Kaitlyn Conklin

**4-H Camp Director:** Jon Conklin

## Agriculture

**Horticulture/Natural Resource Educator:**

Carla Crim

**Nutrient Management Community Educator:**

Benjamin Helper

**Sr Team Leader/WAP Nutrient Management:**

Dale Dewing

**Team Leader/WAP Precision Feed**

**Management:** Paul Cerosaletti

**WAP Precision Feed Management Community Educators:**

April Wright-Lucas, James Romack

**WAP Dairy/Livestock Sr Resource Educator:**

Richard Toebe

**WAP Administrative Assistant:** Kim Holden

## Human Ecology

**Human Ecology Team Leader:** Ashley Silano-Moore

**EFNEP Nutrition Educators:**

Cheryl Starcher Ceresna, Amy VanAlstyne

**SNAP Nutrition Educator:**

Maegan Freeman

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**President :** Betty Scott, Masonville

**Vice President:** Donna Dickson-Noonan, Bovina

**Treasurer:** Gary Orton, Franklin

**Supervisor Representative:** Wayland Gladstone, Andes

**Cornell Representative:** Danielle Hautaniemi

**Members:** Donna Dickson-Noonan, Bovina, Betty Scott, Masonville; Andrea Balcom, Andes; Donna Jones, Walton; Carol Ann Michalski, Walton; Carolyn Scobie, DeLancey; Gary Orton, Franklin; Libby LePinnet Kelly, Delhi; Wayland Gladstone, Andes; Erin Johnson, Unadilla; Brad Taggart, Sidney Center; Mary Lou Oliver, DeLancey.

## PROGRAM COMMITTEES

**Agriculture Program Committee:**

Chairperson: Kirk Fletcher, Walton; Vice

Chairperson: Vanessa Merrill-Wickham, Walton;

Secretary: Carolyn Scobie, DeLancey; Brad

Taggart, Sidney Center; Joyce Gray, New

Kingston; Dennis Deysenroth, Bloomville,

Advisors: Jackie Oliver, Delhi; Janet Beken Smith, Stamford

**Human Ecology Program Committee:**

Chairperson: Donna Dickson-Noonan, Bovina

Center; Vice Chairperson: Paul DeAndrea,

Franklin; Secretary: Karen Ogborn, Hobart;

Eileen Kline, Delhi; Gail White, East Meredith;

Carol Ann Michalski, Walton; Joan Hale, Sidney

**4-H Youth Development Program Committee:**

Chairperson: Amanda Madugno, Deposit; Vice

Chairperson: Lisa Nichols, Walton; Secretary:

Rachael Collins, Delhi; Morgan George, Sidney

Center; Libby LePinnet Kelly, Delhi; Stacy

Palmatier, Hobart; Jessica Coleman (Teen

Advisor), Delhi; Lindy Taggart (Advisor), Walton

**4-H Camp Committee**

Polly DellaCrosse, Delhi; Carol LaTourette, Sidney

Center; Lindy Taggart, Walton; Doug Whittaker,

East Meredith; Joe Whittaker, Delhi; Cathy

Scofield, Walton



## A Message from the Executive Director

Dear Members, Stakeholders, Volunteers, and Friends of the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Delaware County:

We are pleased to share our 2023 annual report highlighting our core program areas, success stories, and the impact of our research-based programming we provide to our Delaware County residents.

Through our local programming, we are committed to continue to have a positive impact in Delaware County by growing healthy families, confident youth, successful farms, and stronger communities. I am happy to share that we had a very successful year for our programming, 4-H camp, county, and state fairs. My sincere thanks to our staff for their dedication and hard work in making this year a huge success.

We had a few staffing changes, we wished happy retirement to Karen Graves and Valerie Dudley earlier this year. We extend our gratitude and thank them both for their years of service to our association. We are thrilled to welcome two new staff members: Ashley Silano-Moore as our Human Ecology Team Leader, and Stacey Young as our Office Coordinator.

I am sincerely thankful to our board members, committee members, and our numerous volunteers for their dedication and hard work in furthering our mission. This is an important year for our association, as it marked the completion of six years of phenomenal board service for our outgoing board member, Donna Dickson-Noonan. On behalf of CCE Delaware, I extend my deepest appreciation and recognize Donna for many years of visionary guidance, exceptional leadership, and unconditional commitment serving as the President and Vice President of CCE Delaware Board of Directors. I would also like to extend my highest gratitude to Karen Ogborn (HE issue committee), Donna Dickson-Noonan (HE Issue Committee), Amanda Madugno, and Morgan George (4-H Youth Development) for their respective committee service. At our annual organizational meeting earlier this year, we welcomed Betty Scott as our new President for the CCE Board of Directors. It is an honor to work with Betty as she brings wealth of local Ag experience, years of volunteer service to our 4-H program, and public health background as a clinic manager at Bassett Healthcare.

On behalf of the CCE Delaware, I would like to recognize and thank our county Board of Supervisors for their continued support. I am looking forward to continuing to build and strengthen our collaborations and working relationships with our stakeholders, partners, and volunteers.



Dr. Mandeep Virk-Baker, PhD, MPH, RD, FAND

Executive Director  
Cornell Cooperative Extension,  
Delaware County



Email: [mv463@cornell.edu](mailto:mv463@cornell.edu)

# CCE Staff 2023



**Back Row (L to R):** Mandeep Virk-Baker, April Wright-Lucas, Jon Conklin, Kim Holden, Ben Hepler, Stacey Young, Rich Toebe, Justine Bishop, Jim Romack, Ashley Silano-Moore, Cheryl Starcher Ceresna, Paul Cersaletti, Emily Roach, Kaitlyn Conklin, Dale Dewing. **Front Row (L to R):** Corrine Tompkins, Carla Hegeman Crim, Maegan Freeman, Amy VanAlstyne

# HUMAN ECOLOGY PROGRAM



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## Delaware County Human Ecology

### Mission:

Provide practical education and information to Delaware County residents about Nutrition, Food Safety, Home Food Preservation, Parenting Education, Financial Management, Housing and Water Quality, and Energy

**Programs Include:** Delaware Rural Healthcare Alliance - Healthcare Workforce; Senior Tai Chi program; Girls on the Run; Sources of Strength Youth Suicide Prevention Program; Peer Recovery Coach; ACEs Task Force; Age Friendly Communities Senior Walking Trails; Long-Term Care Support; EXCITE Vaccination Education for Adults

SNAP-Ed - Eat Healthy, Be Active; Eat Smart Live Strong/Senior Nutrition; Cooking Matters; CATCH After School Programs; Lunchroom Program; CATCH Me Cooking; Farmer Market Meetings; Agency Training; Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program; Virtual Nutrition Education Programs

Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program- Breastfeeding Your Baby; Eat Smart Be Active; Sisters in Health; Cooking Up Fun; Choose Health/School Gardening; Food Preservation; Garden-to-Table; Childcare Certification Training

Environment and Energy - Clean Energy Community Program; Smart Energy Choices, Regional Clean Energy Hub of the Southern Tier, Smart Energy Choices, Tiny Home Powerhouse



## NUTRITION , HEALTHY FOOD & HEALTHY HABITS

**Food Preservation at the Delaware County Fair** - EFNEP and SNAP-Ed educators attended a 3-day Master Food Preserver Training at Broome CCE in January 2023 and are working towards full certification. Food preservation was the theme for the 2023 Delaware County Fair. Daily demonstrations were offered covering canning foods such as tomatoes, jams and jellies, pickles, sauerkraut, freezing vegetables, and drying herbs and focused on water bath and pressure canning, freezing, drying, and fermentation.

The **Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)** is a federally funded nutrition education program for limited-resource youth and families. Nutrition Educators teach adults and youth about nutrition, exercise, food resource management, and food safety through hands-on and virtual workshops. 102 families and 13 youth groups were reached in 2022-2023. EFNEP educators continue to work with daycare providers to earn training credits.

Through a collaboration with **CROP (Creating Rural Opportunities Partnership)**, EFNEP and SNAP-Ed educators offered in person and virtual food preparation, nutrition, food safety classes at 11 schools. Two series of 6-8 sessions were presented at each school. One focused on students and encouraged healthy snacks and the importance of physical activity. The second series engaged the family to cook and eat healthy meals together.



# IMPROVING THE HEALTH OF RURAL RESIDENTS

**The Delaware County Rural Healthcare Alliance brings together a consortium of healthcare programs and providers, including ADAC, the University of Rochester, Delaware Opportunities, Girl's on the Run of Central New York, O'Connor Hospital, and the Office for the Aging, to collectively support and educate the residents of Delaware County. The mission of the alliance is to prioritize the holistic well-being of rural communities, tackling issues ranging from physical and mental wellness to addressing behavioral and substance abuse challenges, facilitating long-term care planning, and managing chronic diseases across all age groups, from school-aged children to senior citizens.**

- **Girls on the Run** continued to make a positive impact in schools throughout the county in 2023. The program culminated in a successful 5K run, marking the end of the year. A total of 356 girls participated in this empowering program, and they were joined by 200 community runners and approximately 600 enthusiastic spectators who came out to cheer them on. The event also featured the presence of community food trucks, adding to the festive atmosphere. Furthermore, the program was fortunate to have dedicated volunteers who pledged their commitment to support it again next year.
- The **Matter of Balance** program, facilitated by the Delaware County Office for the Aging, continued to address the critical issue of fall prevention among older adults in the community. This Tai Chi class not only enhances physical strength and stability but also incorporates mindfulness and nutrition instruction to promote overall well-being. The program is designed to help aging individuals feel more confident and steadier on their feet while equipping them with skills to protect themselves in the event of a fall.
- Bassett Healthcare's **School-Based Health Clinics** have been diligently working on their HPV Immunization Program in 2023. This initiative is focused on promoting the benefits of HPV immunization for children aged 9 to 14. Significant progress has been made this year, with improvements seen in several schools regarding the number of children who have received HPV vaccinations. Notably, an important enhancement has been made to Bassett's electronic medical records system, which now includes an alert to remind healthcare providers when a patient is due for their HPV vaccination at the age of nine.
- The **Sources of Strength** program, in partnership with the University of Rochester, is actively working in five Delaware County schools to address suicide prevention. This program empowers both peers and trusted adults with the tools to respond effectively when students confide in them about concerning feelings. Yearly training sessions and webinars are provided to individuals involved in the program, ensuring that they are equipped to handle these sensitive situations with care and empathy. Additionally, peer leaders within the schools organize various campaigns to promote the program, creating a supportive and nurturing environment for students facing emotional challenges.
- The **EXCITE Phase 3** grant, funded by the FDA and CDC through cooperative extensions, is dedicated to addressing health disparities in rural communities. Its primary goal is to inform adults about vaccinations, with a focus on COVID-19 and Influenza vaccinations, while also encompassing the complete vaccination schedule recommended by the CDC. CCE Delaware is actively engaged in this initiative by participating in community events across the county, where they disseminate informative materials. An example of their outreach was the Delaware County Fair, where attendees could access vaccination education resources at the EXCITE table within the CCE Human Ecology building. An additional event at the Elks' Lodge in Sidney was organized by Delaware County Veterans Services, offering an excellent opportunity to continue spreading vaccination education to the residents of Delaware County.

# SMART ENERGY AND CLIMATE CHOICES



**NYSERDA's EmPower & Assisted Home Performance Weatherization Education Programs** educated residents about energy efficiency grants, solar energy opportunities and renewable heat options. Approximately 750 people learned about NYSERDA programs through engagement with Smart Energy Choices outreach, including workshops on lighting, insulation comparisons, air sealing and weatherization.

**A Tiny Powerhouse visits the Delaware County Fair!** - The "Powerhouse" uses a Tiny Home structure with educational elements inside to help educate residents on ways to reduce their energy use, and transition to renewable forms of energy. Wall mounted energy monitors display daily energy produced. They showed how the demand for increased energy is needed when using appliances such as hair dryers, fans, or chargers. The Powerhouse outreach provides residents with greater energy literacy, an appreciation for the role of energy efficiency, and a sense of how renewable forms of heating and powering their homes can lead to greater comfort, energy, and savings.



# 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM



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**Delaware County 4-H Mission:** Provide youth with educational programs, experiences and resources designed to enable them to develop knowledge, skills, abilities, attitudes and behaviors to become competent, caring adults

**Programs Include:** Youth Development - Community Service; National 4-H Week/ Club Displays; Leaders' Day; Teen Trips/Awards; Teen Recognition Night; STARR Program, Career Explorations - Cornell; Career Explorations - Vermont; ABC Trip; County Public Presentations; District Public Presentations; International Day; Achievement & Record Books; Enrollment Extravaganza; Teen Council; Delaware County Fair; Fundraising - Duck Race.

Animals: County - Hippology, Horse Quiz Bowl, and Dairy Quiz Bowl; Dairy Discovery; District Hippology, Horse Quiz Bowl, and Dairy Quiz Bowl Events; Cooperstown Junior Livestock Show; Dog Obedience; Carcass Evaluation; Dairy Challenge; Reading Canine Body Language; Large Animal Inservice; Understanding Market Condition; Intro to Rabbit Care; Rabbit & Chicken Showmanship Clinics; Ruminant Nutrition; Livestock Auction Registration & Tagging; Delaware County Fair, 4-H Livestock Auction; Pocket Pets; Meat Chicken Project; Livestock Showmanship Clinic; Horse Qualifying Show.

STEM & Life Skills - Embryology; NYS 4-H STEM Camp; Crocheting; Birdhouse Gourds, 4-H Vegetable & Flower Growing Contest; Felting Class; Blue Ribbon Horticulture; "Stitch This" - Aprons; Veggie Art; HCOS - Pelts, Skulls, Habitat, Tracks + Scat, Safe Shots, Archery + crossover; Chainmail; Woodworking; Art in the Garden; Shooting Sports

4-H Camp Shankitunk - 4-H Camp Shankitunk: Overnight Camp, Day Camp; Spring Volunteer Day; Senior Picnic, 4-C Camp for Adults.



## 4-H SHOOTING SPORTS ON TARGET

4-H Shooting sports is a national curriculum that was founded by Texas State 4-H Director, Tom Davidson in 1980 and has grown through the years into a network of 20,000+ authorized adult 4-H volunteer instructors that conduct dynamic hands-on learning experiences that 500,000 youth engage in annually across the country. 4-H Shooting sports is a comprehensive non-formal education, recreation, and competitive program focused on Positive Youth Development and utilizes the safe and responsible use of firearms to address youth social issues related to STEM, healthy living, and civic engagement.

This year, Delaware County 4-H educators and local volunteer instructors were excited to plan for and begin expanding opportunities for local youth in the 4-H Shooting Sports program. Although some great opportunities existed in the past, in recent years, participation in 4-H Shooting Sports was limited to taking Archery class when attending 4-H Camp Shankitunk during the summer.

An interest meeting was held in March 2023 where youth and their families could come and learn about the variety of disciplines included in the curriculum: Hunting Conservation and Outdoor Skills (HCOS), Archery, Rifle/Air Rifle, Pistol/Air Pistol, Shotgun, and Muzzle Loader. Many families turned out in person or via Zoom to learn about age/participation requirements, teen ambassador opportunities, competition programs, and more before trialing a new Hoverball® Archery Target set generously funded, in part, by The NRA Foundation which will allow for programming through the winter months when camp is closed or during inclement weather.

Local community partners were also supportive of this expansion initiative and generously provided funding to purchase supplies to assemble a Wildlife Habitat Education Program (WHEP) kit. These kits contain tactile educational materials such as skulls, pelts, compasses, and more that can be used in a multitude of HCOS and WHEP activities. Two such kits were available to borrow state-wide, but transportation arrangements were a barrier that can now be avoided by having a kit locally. To date, seven local 4-H volunteers and/or camp staff have been trained to implement programming in this discipline and a number of classes have been offered with more scheduled for the coming year.



## RETURN OF NO-COVID CAMP

The sound of laughter and meal-time bells filled the air at 4-H Camp Shankitunk this summer in Delhi. More than 700 youth attended the day or overnight camping programs this year as we transitioned back to a more traditional experience, after adapting to implement Covid-19 precautions and procedures the past few years. As with any change, there were silver linings that will be kept moving forward, most notably the drive-through check-in process. Thanks to the diligence of check-in helpers and the absence of required testing we were able to accommodate some additional parking spaces for first time families who wanted to walk their youth to the cabin, meet their counselor, and assist them in getting settled. An interaction that has been sorely missed by youth and staff alike since 2019. We were excited to announce the return of popular programs like photography and outdoor cookery which had been on pause due to ventilation and food service recommendations during the pandemic. Day Campers rejoiced at the re-introduction of the Progression Day Camp program where they had the opportunity to participate alongside overnight campers in a wider variety of classes, lunch, and even had the opportunity to rest after lunch in a rustic cabin. Parents also had many new experiences with the new Ultra-Camp registration platform which included real-time class selection, payment arrangements, and more. We are gearing up to launch for next season on January 1, 2024 so stay tuned!

Did you know that A. B. Graham started a youth program in Clark County, Ohio, in 1902, which is considered the birth of 4-H in the United States? It's hard to believe that 121 years later there are families who have never heard of 4-H or still believe that you need to own a farm animal to join 4-H. Unfortunately, that's still the case and Delaware County 4-H does not want to be the best kept secret! Over the last couple of years, the Delaware County 4-H team has been working hard on diversifying our recruiting materials and efforts to spread the word that 4-H has opportunities for all youth and is looking for caring adult volunteers to run 4-H clubs and/or lead programs in their skill-set area for our enrolled 4-H youth.

One of our 4-H mantras is "Learn by Doing," so in recent years, we've added an event for the public to join us at 4-H Camp Shankitunk in Delhi to experience hands-on what 4-H has to offer! Youth and families can participate in 4-H shooting sports, crafts, team building activities, baking and horticulture competitions, art projects, and more! Enrollment numbers following this Columbus Day event for the coming year are three times what they were last year and don't show any signs of slowing down before the January 31st 2024 deadline!

## RECRUITING SUCCESS



Delaware County 4-H hosted a series of Fiber Arts exploration classes including basic crochet, felting, machine sewn aprons, that culminated in the re-introduction of the 4-H Fashion and Textile Showcase at the Delaware County Fair on Friday, August 18th 2023!

4-H Alum, Lizette Bishop, provided a 3-part program on basic crochet where youth learned the vocabulary and basic stitching techniques needed to do a flower and simple scarf.

4-Her, Mary Mascioli and 4-H volunteer, Chris Mitchell of Eagle Hollow farm teamed up to offer an introduction to needle felting class where attendees used barbed needles to interlock dyed fibers of locally sourced alpaca wool together to create snowmen. Youth had fun learning this technique and learned the importance of flipping your creation over frequently so you don't felt it onto your working pad accidentally. Mary had a felting project selected for state fair in 2022 and was recognized with a champion rosette for her felted penguin, "Paul". Leadership opportunities are something we look for and value in the 4-H program, so when asked about teaching this skill to other youth, Mary never hesitated.

The Delaware County 4-H Office has six NEW sewing machines that club leaders can use for club sewing projects. In an effort to help spread the word and meet an expressed need for sewing lessons, a Stitch This Series was scheduled earlier this spring. Youth ages 5-15 came out to select fabric, take measurements, cut patterns, and sew together a pocketed apron they could use for all their baking projects at home (after displaying them at the fair of course)!

Parents, friends, relatives, and the public gathered together at the Delaware County fair for the first annual fashion and textile showcase. This event was the perfect opportunity for youth to present their hard work in textile projects and provided an opportunity for youth interested in fashion and styling to present a recycled or purchased look in front of an audience as part of the showcase. The showcase also allowed the Delaware County 4-H team the perfect opportunity to highlight a very special award given in memory of Elinor Kellet for the top sewn item exhibited by a 4-H member in the 4-H youth building this year. This year, Mary Hogan, Elinor's daughter, presented the award to Calli Ruff who was selected for the beautiful quilt she made.

Our 4-H youth are a talented group and have worked very hard this year, especially in fiber arts and textiles! More than a dozen 4-H projects that were sewn, felted, or quilted by Delaware County youth were selected at the county fair to go on and represent the talents, skills and craftsmanship of our local 4-H youth at the state level in Syracuse at the Great NYS Fair. Congratulations 4-Hers on your hard work and thank you to the volunteers and families who support our 4-H youth in the work they do!

## FIBER ARTISTS FLOURISH IN 4-H



# AGRICULTURE PROGRAM



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**Programs Include:** Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) Training, ADGA Conference - Forage Evaluation for Milk Production: Matching your Forages and Concentrates for Optimal Yields, Milk Quality, Understanding that PPD, Pasture Walk – Bale Grazing, Corn Scouting Field Day- Nel-Jean Farm, Catskill Regional Ag Conference, Pesticide Applicator Training, Sheep and Goat Producers Winter Meeting, Winter Beef Meeting, Manure Applicators Roundtable, Profitable Meat Marketing Workshop, Pesticide Applicators Certification Testing, Pasture Management Workshop Spring 2023, Fundamentals of Ventilation in Barns for Small Ruminants and Other Livestock, Winter Crop School, 4-H Ruminant Market Animal Nutrition Course, Just How Many Heifers Should I Be Keeping?, Spring Beef Cow/Calf Meeting, Sheep and Goat Hoof Care Health Workshop, Sheep & Goat Parasites and FAMACHA Training, New York State Commercial Sheep and Goat Discussion Group , Understanding Your Market Animal's Condition, Delaware County Fair Animal Evaluation Activities, Corn Dry Down Days

Horticulture - Birdsong Farm Community Garden, Seed to Supper, Earth Day Extravaganza, Homegrown National Park, Master Gardener Volunteer Program, Family Farm Day, Risk Management in Cut Flower Production, Cut Flower Growers' Intensive, Winter Sowing, Wreath Making, Ag Literacy Week

## Delaware County Agriculture Program Mission:

To be a leader in the delivery of educational programs, for a profitably sound and environmentally sensitive agricultural and natural resource community whose crucial contributions to the local economy are fully recognized by the public.

# WATERSHED FARMER EDUCATION

Farmers in our region are in the midst of a time of rapid change and restructuring. Dairy markets continue to be in a time of uncertainty and many farms feel at risk. Livestock markets and farming opportunities are increasing, but many farmers are still gaining experience with effective production practices and understanding markets. The Watershed Farmer Education Program, funded through our contract with the Watershed Agricultural Council, supports both water quality protection and farm viability by providing educational programs that enhance farmers' abilities to manage their operations more profitably and in a way that nurtures their natural resources. Since October 2022, 25 educational programs were offered with over 600 farmer attendees. CCE staff also do one-on-one on-farm education assisting with farm specific projects, completing over 120 visits on 51 farms.

Our efforts focus on the hands-on training and practical tools for profitable production. We held both classroom workshops and on-farm tours for various audiences, addressing new technology, new crops, and new markets, for both new and established farmers. CCE staff also team up with Watershed Agricultural Council staff to monitor crop maturity in May to predict the optimum first cutting hay harvest timing, and in September for corn silage harvest. Timely reports allow farmers to adapt to challenging weather conditions, pest infestations, and harvest excellent forages.





## PFM: FORAGE QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

Joe Eisele, farmer participant in the Watershed Ag Program Beef Precision Feed Management, identified among his top goals “Ensuring good animal health of this brood cow herd”. Aware of this goal, while sampling his baleage inventory PFM planner Paul Cerosaletti noticed that the baleage odor did not seem ideal. Suspecting an undesirable fermentation acid profile that might compromise animal health, he had the forage laboratory run a fermentation profile analysis. The results confirmed what he suspected; baleage with too high butyric acid levels, which poses a health risk especially to cattle that have just given birth.

The cause of the high butyric acid levels? Baleage harvested too wet.

In sharing this information with Joe, they resolved to correct this situation by assisting Joe in determining proper harvest moisture timing. In the first day of hay harvest Paul spent the day at the farm repeatedly testing forage moisture as it lay in the windrow in order to inform Joe of the proper time to bale it. The process gave Joe a “feel” for proper harvest moisture level.

The result? Success! The new crop baleage was 67% drier, was within proper baleage moisture guidelines, and butyric acid levels dropped 88% to within acceptable levels!

Birdsong Farm is a hub of learning and social engagement at the border of Delhi and Hamden. With generous funding from property owner Richard Lamson and guidance from CCE horticulture educator Carla Crim and Master Gardener Volunteers, two large demonstration gardens showcase sustainable growing practices and new varieties. Teams of volunteers, primarily 65+, come together for weekly work sessions from April through October. Tasks like seed starting, planting, watering, weeding, and harvesting promote mobility, well-being, and positive social engagement. The abundance of nutritious food is shared amongst the growers as well as other seniors in the community. Throughout the season, volunteers coordinated produce donations to Delaware County Office for the Aging (OFA) and Delhi Senior Community, as well as individuals in Delhi, Hamden, and Walton.

To celebrate the beauty and bounty of the season, OFA hosted a Sunflower Harvest at Birdsong in early September. Participants enjoyed dancing, delicious treats, and of course an abundance of flowers. Garden volunteers made over 100 corsages and boutonnieres using blooms from the garden. They also brightened the barn with arrangements and displays featuring thousands of sunflowers.

## GOLDEN GARDENERS GROW FOR GOOD





## CUTTING RISK IN FLOWER PRODUCTION

Nationwide, there has been a big shift in floral trends. Brides, romantics, and home-decorators alike are opting for farm-fresh sunflowers, dahlias, and zinnias over imported roses and carnations. As with the local foods movement, conscious buyers want their flowers in-season, organic, and sustainably produced. In response, thousands of small flower farms have popped up around the country. Flower farming is unique in that most growers are female, and many come into the business without prior agricultural experience. Our project, which was funded by Northeast Extension Risk Management Education Center, provided new and existing flower farmers with the tools and support needed to manage the production and marketing risk involved in growing cutting varieties. Our educational efforts were geared towards growers in colder climates (USDA zones 5a through 3a), but drew participants from around the country. We offered a total of 12 virtual weekly workshops focused on marketing risk and production risk to over 300 participants. Over the winter, we facilitated a cut-flower track at the Catskill Regional Agriculture Conference for over 40 attendees. At the peak of summer, we hosted an in-person summer intensive with tours and hands-on activities for 34 attendees. In addition, we provided farm visits and consultations to 13 local producers.

Topics included:

- Integrated Pest Management
- Crop Planning
- Weddings and Events
- Farmers' Markets and CSAs
- Establishing Cooperative
- Wholesale Purchasing
- Agritourism
- Season Extension
- Post-Harvest Handling





## PESTICIDE SAFETY TRAINING

Over the last several years we have seen a growing number of farms return to the practice of applying pesticides for themselves, rather than using a custom application service. Proper training is crucial to help reduce risks to applicators, consumers, and the environment. In the spring, we offered a two-part Pesticide Applicator Training and Testing series at the Hamden office. This course provided valuable instruction and a convenient local testing site for farmers wishing to obtain or renew a Certified Pesticide Applicator License.

Sarah Wheelen and Monica Wells from the DEC Pesticide Division addressed the group about NY State laws and requirements for pesticide applications. Paul Cerosaletti and Dale Dewing presented information from the Core Manual for Certified Applicators covering safe handling, mixing, application, storage, equipment calibration and particular emphasis on using pesticide labels.

Recertification credits were offered to currently certified applicators, providing an important reminder of best practices when applying pesticides. As a follow-up to the training we cooperated with NYS DEC to offer a local Pesticide Certification Testing site for farmers to complete the exam to become NYS Certified Pesticide Applicators.

Raising heifers is a major cost on dairy farms. Being able to predict how many heifer calves you produce annually in combination with knowing how many heifers you actually need to keep are critical management concepts to keep your heifer replacement program efficient. Several measurable herd metrics go into determining these numbers, including: age to first calving, herd cull rates, calving interval, calf sex ratio, calf mortality rate, and heifer non-completion rate.

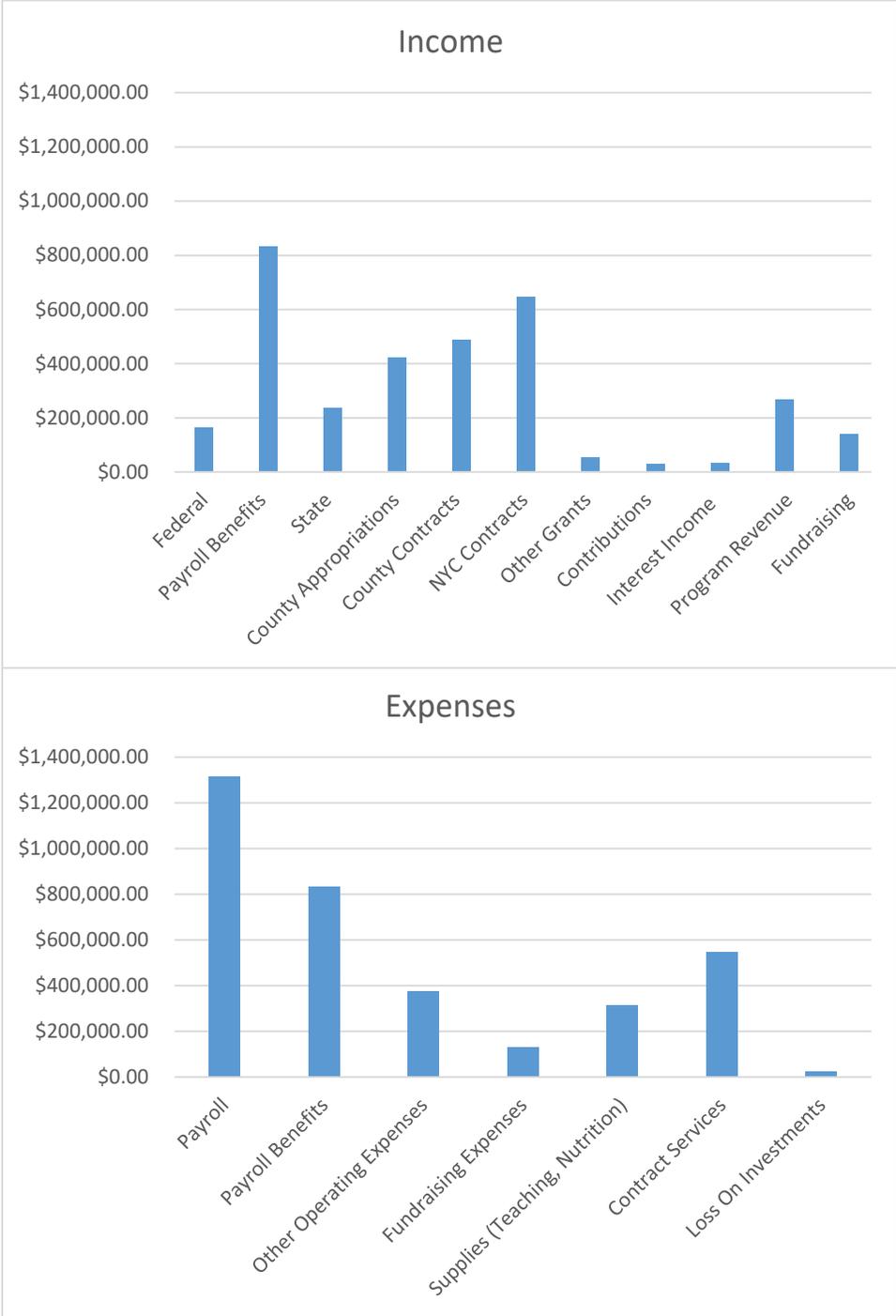
In March, CCE Ag Educators offered a workshop entitled “How Many Heifers Should I be Keeping?” Organizer Rich Toebe summarized some past heifer growth data, pointed out some opportunities made evident by the data, and introduced the Dairy Herd Metrics tool. Paul Cerosaletti provided the economics associated with having a ‘right sized’ heifer inventory on the farm. Jim Romack explained the characteristics and importance of a sound breeding program. April Wright Lucas covered information on calf raising, using records as a decision-making tool, protocols, and factors affecting noncompletion rate. Following the presentations, each farm worked with one of the precision feed planners to use the herd metrics tool to understand their current heifer inventory metrics and explore possible changes they could make to their heifer inventory management.

## COUNTING COWS



# 2022 Financial Summary

Total Revenue - \$3,313,498.24  
 Total Expenses - \$3,535,922.01  
 Designated/Fund Balance - \$222,423.77



"Thank you very much for sponsoring my kids' camp, you have no idea how much it helped our family. We will be forever grateful and we thank you from the bottoms of our hearts!"

Parent of Campership Recipients



"My daughter didn't want to add the beans, but they ended up being her favorite part!"

SNAP  
Cooking Class Participant



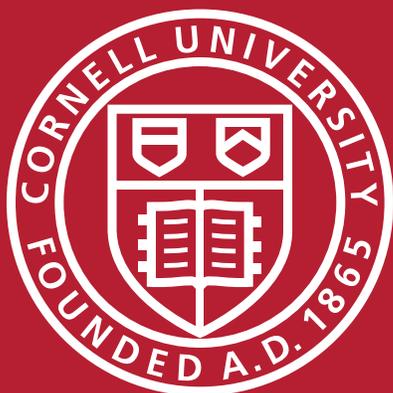
"I just want to thank you and whoever else might help you with all the activities, the incredible organizational skills and community engagement you guys have done for 4-H. It is nice to know how many opportunities there are for everyone! Kudos to you guys!"

4-H Volunteer



Cornell's online risk management class helped me organize my ideas about production and marketing. With this course, I was able to create more targeted model for my new farming business.

Delaware County  
Cut Flower Producer



"Subclinical mastitis has always been a little confusing to me. This helped so much - super knowledgeable presenter & informative!"

Catskill Regional  
Agriculture Conference  
Attendee

