

Erie County Ag News

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County

FALL 2020



IN THIS ISSUE

- Sanitizer and Face Coverings Remain Available to Farms
- Spotlight on Merle Maple
- Squash Diseases - A Poem
- Sharon Bachman Reflects on a Busy Summer at CCE
- Providence Farm Incubator Farm Update
- Spotted Lanternfly Confirmed in NY State

AG STAFF



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Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator
Sharon wears many hats including Invasive Species Management Integrated Pest Management in the areas of fruit, field crops and forestry; Agricultural Environmental Management Practice Education; Soil Testing and Nutrient Management; Pesticide Use and Safety; Diagnostics in coordination with Cornell faculty and staff; and Master Gardener Technical Support.



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Becky supports Farm to School and Farm to Institution efforts in Western NY by providing boots on the ground support to local supply chain partners, and statewide support via resource development, training, and technical assistance.



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Vegetable Specialist, Cornell Vegetable Program
Elizabeth's programming focuses on Fresh Market Vegetable production with emphasis on weed and disease management. For a list of all CVP specialists, visit <https://cvp.cce.cornell.edu/specialists.php>.



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Esther supports berry growers in Erie County and across Western NY by advising on production practices, especially site preparation and pest & disease management.



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Agriculture Educator
Kathleen assists next generation farmers in search of land, and farmers preparing for retirement, by connecting them with one another and to the tools, educational resources, and technical experts they need to achieve their goals.



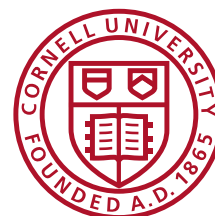
John Whitney jrw44@cornell.edu
Agriculture Educator
Drawing from his many years of diverse experience as the recently retired District Conservationist for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Erie and Wyoming Counties, John will be assisting with program development and delivery, technical support, and training related to agriculture and food system awareness,



Amy Barkley amb55@cornell.edu
Livestock and Small Farms, SWNYDLFC
Amy works on programming related to beef, sheep, goat, and poultry production; beginner farmer support; pasture and grazing management; meat quality trainings; and product marketing.

Contents

- 2 CCE Erie Response
- 3 Sanitizer and Face Coverings
- 5 Erie Grown Passport
- 6 Parasitic Worms
- 7 Spotlight on Merle Maple
- 12 Forage Exchange
- 13 Squash Disease Poem
- 15 Cornell Small Farms Courses
- 17 Confirmed Spotted Lanternfly
- 19 A Busy Summer CEE Erie
- 22 Farmland Trust Job Board
- 23 Incubator Farm Update
- 25 QR Codes and COVID-19
- 26 Safe Harvest COVID Office Hours



Follow CCE Erie on social media to receive up to date news and announcements!

Ag News design and layout by Jolie Hibit, CCE Erie Agriculture Administrative Assistant

Cover photo by Jolie Hibit

CCE Erie RESPONSE

Throughout the long days of shutdown and the relief with reopening, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County (CCE Erie) staff have been here with you!

As essential staff, CCE Agriculture educators continued to support our county farmers as the pandemic progressed, providing technical assistance and distributing needed PPE. Taste NY at the WNY Welcome Center remained open selling staples – eggs, milk, bread – to local residents and serving as the hub for NYS sanitizer distribution to Erie County farmers. With time to focus on outdoor endeavors, interest in gardening and growing food skyrocketed during the pandemic. The Master Gardener volunteers answered gardening questions and offered garden trainings during daily online ‘Garden Fence Chats’. 4-H offered virtual learning opportunities to connect youth in the community, and saw a burst of youth produced educational videos, proving the value of hands on learning. SNAP Ed and EFNEP nutrition educators honed their skills producing videos with messages about healthy eating on a budget, and physical activity. The Healthy Corner Store Initiative provided healthy food and lifestyle messages as well as Health Bucks to residents of Buffalo hit hardest by COVID-19.

The local investment in CCE Erie of county dollars is leveraged with grants and contracts for a total annual budget of \$3 million. This funding allows us to Respond to community needs even during a pandemic, with valuable and needed educational programs for Erie County residents. The 36 staff of CCE Erie are here to help our friends and neighbors during these tumultuous days. We promise to keep doing whatever we can to enrich and connect our Erie County community, and we look forward to reopening a better New York with you. Please reach out when needed.

Stay safe!

Diane Held, CCE Erie Executive Director



Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County prioritizes the health, safety and well-being of the communities we serve. Given the uncertainty surrounding COVID-19, and due to an abundance of caution CCE Erie closed all offices, and suspended all in person classes, workshops & events until further notice. Programs that can be offered remotely will be scheduled in that way and staff are working remotely. See the back page for a list of COVID-19 Resources

Sanitizer and Cloth Face Coverings Remain Available to Farms

Cooperative Extension continues to work with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets to provide sanitizer and cloth face coverings to farms across the state.

If your farm is in need of sanitizer and face coverings, please fill out the sanitizer request survey at https://cornell.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_a5z2Z5hJ6t2UZKd or contact Jolie Hibit at jah663@cornell.edu.

Pick up locations are located:

- **Taste NY Market at the Western NY Welcome Center** located at 1999 Alvin Road, Grand Island, NY 14072 (take Whitehaven Rd, exit 19 off I-190). Taste NY Market is open 9am - 6pm, 7 days a week (716-773-0970).
- **East Aurora or Hamburg.** Contact Jolie Hibit, jah663@cornell.edu to schedule pick up in either of those locations.

If you have any questions contact Jolie Hibit, jah663@cornell.edu.

Please share information about the available sanitizer supplies with other farms in Erie County. Farms in other counties can check with their local CCE office on available supply.



Survey Assessing Interest in an Online Farm Management Certificate Program (Spanish or English/Spanish)

Dr. Sophie Ano, Faculty Fellow of SUNY Cobleskill's Institute for Rural Vitality, is asking for your help regarding an ongoing research project that is focused on developing an Online Farm Management certificate program taught in Spanish or both English & Spanish. She developed a short survey to assess interest in such a program.

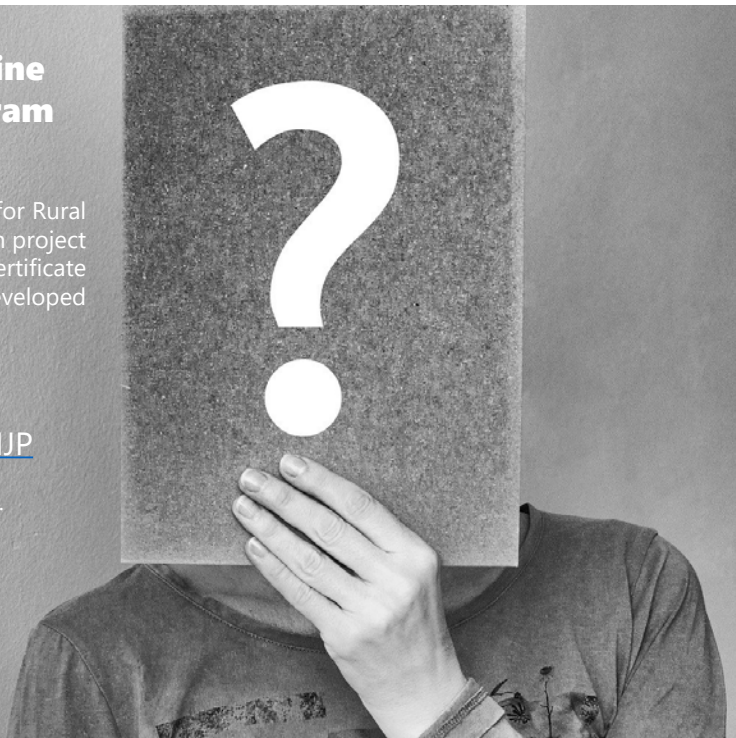
Here is the survey link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/GHDYNJP>

It should not take more than 10 minutes of your time.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Contact Dr. Sophie Ano, anost@cobleskill.edu for more information.



Master Gardeners and members of the public are invited to attend 2020 Fall Gardening Classes sponsored by the Education Committee. The classes will be presented via Zoom. More information and registration link at: <http://erie.cce.cornell.edu/events>.

Or register using QR code >>



Cornell Cooperative Extension Lake Erie Regional Grape Program



Recorded Coffee Pot Meetings

You may not be able to obtain Pesticide License Recertification points but you can gain plenty of valuable information by watching the coffee pot meetings if you missed them! We have had some special guest speakers over the last month sharing valuable information with us!

Click the link below for access to all of the recorded LERGP Coffee Pot Meetings!

<https://lergp.com/2020-virtual-coffee-pot-meeting-guest-speakers>

Erie Grown was launched in April 2020 to support the need to buy local produce and to increase direct-to-consumer sales. The **Erie Grown** Passport further incentivizes buying local by offering participants the chance to win a prize for visiting local vendors. Participants can print their own passports or participate online at <https://www2.erie.gov/eriegrown/>.



Looking to support local farmers?
Nearly 120 local growers, producers listed at your fingertips.

PASSPORT 2020

[WWW2.ERIE.GOV/ERIEGROWN/](https://www2.erie.gov/eriegrown/)

- **PASSPORTS MUST BE MARKED BETWEEN AUG 18–OCT 18**
- **ONE PASSPORT ALLOWED PER PERSON.**
- **BE KIND & MAKE A PURCHASE.**
- **PASSPORTS MUST BE RECEIVED BY OCTOBER 21, 2020.**

*Explore Erie County while supporting
farmers, growers, and producers.*



Scan me

Conditions May Be Right for Parasitic Worm Infections in Sheep and Goats

Information from Dr. Tatiana Luisa Stanton, Cornell Small Ruminant Extension Specialist



Photos from Pixabay.com

Just a reminder that as we get warm rains interspersed with the drought conditions many of our farms are experiencing this grazing season, parasitic worms may start to hatch out in our goat and sheep pastures with a vengeance. Several people have reported sudden, high worm infections in their animals. Remember that gastro-intestinal worms tend to love warm, humid conditions. Their eggs are fairly dormant when temperatures are high and weather conditions are dry but they start hatching like crazy when a rain finally arrives.

Also, this is the time of year to start watching out for deer worm infections. Typical signs are a constant itch that develops into a sore often situated in a vertical line coming down from one vertebrae OR neurological signs such as tripping when turning or slight drag to a hind leg. Our deerworm factsheet is at <https://cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.cornell.edu/dist/e/7832/files/2017/11/P.-tenuis-Producer-Factsheet-2gkq1rv.pdf>.

While Jan Liotta and I are not holding any hands on FAMACHA certification programs in New York this summer or fall, there are several other state Extension programs offering on-line based resources related to this topic. University of Rhode Island offers an online FAMACHA certification course at <https://web.uri.edu/sheepngoat/famacha/> and also Maryland has started to offer one at <https://www.sheepandgoat.com/online-famacha-certification>.

In addition, sheep and goat extension specialists in Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, and Georgia coordinated a series of weekly worm webinars from April 24 until June 9, 2020. Each webinar covered a different topic pertaining to internal parasite control in small ruminants. A webinar on BioWorma® was also held. These webinars can be viewed at <https://www.sheepandgoat.com/webinars>. (from email message to Cornell's Livestock Processing listserv August 24, 2020) ■

Spotlight on Merle Maple

John Whitney, Agriculture Educator, CCE Erie County

This article is the fifth in a series focusing on vendors who are selling their wares at the Western New York Welcome Center's Taste NY Market. Thank you to the Merle Maple management team and crew for taking the time to share the Merle Maple story along with some marketing tips and strategies.

All photos for this spotlight were taken prior to COVID-19 social distancing guidelines.



Photo John Whitney

When your motto is the “Worlds Widest Variety of Maple Products,” you’ve clearly moved beyond producing an agricultural commodity into the wild, wide open, value-added arena. Merle Maple Farm on Route 98 (Creek Road) in Attica, New York in Wyoming County has been making maple syrup and confections for more than a century. Lyle Merle and his wife, Dottie, along with their business partners, Eileen Downs and Kristina Copeland, have combined their processing expertise, imagination, innovation, foresight, energy, stewardship goals, and diverse skills to move Merle Maple far beyond syrup and sugar production while remaining faithful to their family farm values and traditions.

According to Cornell Maple Program specialist, Aaron Wightman, advances in production technology have resulted in the quadrupling of the size of the maple products industry over the last fifteen years. Aaron

reports that NY maple producers finished 820,000 gallons of syrup in the 2019 season compared with 255,000 gallons in 2004. Merle Maple’s 9000-9500 gallon annual production is around 1% of the total New York State production in gallons. Clearly, it’s what you do with the syrup that is the difference between struggling to stay in business and thriving, with a bright future. Along with the four partners, Merle Maple employs four full-time workers and additional part-time people during peak sugaring and packing periods.

The sustainably managed hillside “sugar bush” that is the resource base for operation has grown to over 19,000 taps. All the taps are on plastic pipelines which are part of a vacuum collection system with buried lines feeding into the sap house. Greg Zimpler, who manages the saphouse, monitors a color-coded computer screen to identify vacuum pressures so the woods crew knows what zones to check when the inevitable problems occur. Deer break the tubing or pull out taps. Squirrels, chipmunks, coyotes, rabbits, porcupines or other animals chew the plastic lines and taps. Branches or trees fall on lines during wind and snow storms. Greg and Lyle also keep the evaporators running during boiling season. The efficiency of the operation was recently improved significantly with the installation of a reverse osmosis (RO) unit funded in part through the USDA Natural Resource Conservation Service’s Environmental Quality Incentives Program. The RO unit removes water from the sap by squeezing it through microscopic filters at high pressure. This helps concentrate the sugar levels, reducing boiling time needed to finish the syrup by 75% or more. Considering it typically takes 40-45 gallons of sap or more to produce one gallon of syrup, those are big savings in time, energy and fuel. Combined with tube and taphole sanitation and vacuum collection, total



Photo John Whitney

sap production can be more than doubled. Modern maple operations like Merle Maple have seen huge gains in yield and efficiency.

Still, it is what is done with the product that makes the final difference in the bottom line. Some successful producers continue to focus on bulk or bottled pure syrup production. Some have moved into confections and maple crème. Merle Maple has taken the diversity path. Dottie did some quick calculations based on 2019 sales. Thirty-four percent of sales were maple syrup, either bottled or bulk. Nineteen percent of sales, using approximately 1,300 gallons of syrup, was from sugar candy. Maple crème (spread) accounted for 11% of sales, using 900 gallons of syrup. Three percent of sales came from granulated maple sugar, using another 500 gallons of syrup. The balance of sales came from what the industry is often calling “gourmet foods,” along with gift baskets and other specialty products. These include:

- Barbeque sauces –6%
- Flavored syrups (including the currently popular, bourbon)–5%

- Maple mustard –4%
- Maple hot sauce –3%
- Misc. –15% (gift baskets, maple fudge, pancake mixes, maple cotton candy, syrup sticks, maple dog treats, etc.).

Maple hard candy, coffee, tea, dog biscuits and coated nuts are the only products not produced on site. Merle Maple Farm’s web page at www.merlemaple.com includes more about the business history, product diversity, and packaging and pricing options.

Dottie and Lyle moved beyond “pure maple” products into the value-added arena twenty years ago when they took over the maple part of the operation. Diversifying has been the key to improving the income stream. Merle Maple LLC partners, Eileen Downs and Kristina Copeland explained that a portion of their production is sold directly to other maple producers and outlets in the region. Eileen said Merle Maple has secured and maintained a New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Article 20-C Food Processing

Continued on page 9 >>

Facility license, which includes required training. This has allowed Merle Maple to diversify its own production and greatly expand marketing possibilities. It also allows for processed food products to be packaged and sold to other businesses that do not have the capacity or desire to go through the licensing, training and on-going inspection steps themselves. Merle Maple recently had a large banner professionally printed to help market that part of the business. "Let Our Product be Your Product" is a marketing alternative that allows other producers and vendors to purchase unlabeled packaged goods and then apply their own labels if they chose to go that route.

Merle Maple is a year-round operation. While the sap season is restricted to late winter into early spring, cold storage of maple syrup in 30 and 40 gallon drums allows for canning and marketing of various grades of syrup throughout the year. Dottie says "we're actually busier during the fall and winter than the rest of the year –because of marketing." Eileen quickly added, "other than Maple Weekend."

Merle Maple participates in many product shows, especially in the Fall. The business also participates in County Fairs and the New York State Fair. Holiday gift packs are an increasingly popular option. Products are sold in many area farm markets and retail outlets as well as in Merle Maple's on-site "Country Store." Products are also sold through Dottie and Lyle's nephew's Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) farm and market just down the road. While the Merle Farms dairy cows and chickens are gone, Merle Maple still uses the historical logo because "that's what people know" and it reflects the farm's history. Vidler's, Premier Gourmet, Spoth Farm Market, Mayer Bros., and many other retailers carry Merle Maple products. The web page no longer lists outlets because of the frequent changes and the diversity of what various outlets choose to carry. Merle Maple does its own regional deliveries and ships to outlets farther away. UPS shipments go out nearly every business day, sometimes on pallets for high volume buyers. Packages ship to Canada and overseas, including to military bases. This requires some extra paperwork which Kristina is glad to handle to keep products moving and customers happy.

Maple Weekend, a statewide event sponsored and coordinated through the New York State Maple

Producers' Association, brings approximately 6000 visitors to the farm each year over the two weekends. This helps visitors feel a connection to the operation. They know the Merle name and quality, which also makes them more likely to try the value-added products. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 concerns, Maple Weekend (was) cancelled for the 2020 season.

Eileen said Merle Maple doesn't store syrup in bourbon barrels to produce their bourbon flavored syrup like many producers do. Instead they add bourbon to the syrup and then boil off the alcohol, testing to be sure that residual alcohol is less than 0.5%. This is monitored with a YSI Bioanalyser secured with the assistance of the Genesee Valley Regional Market. Raspberry, blueberry and strawberry concentrates are used for Merle Maple's fruit flavored syrups. These are blended hot, filtered and bottled. It doesn't hurt that Eileen has a chemistry degree and pharmaceutical experience combined with her dairy and maple background having grown up one valley to the west from the Merle Maple location. So far, Merle Maple hasn't chosen to move into the maple beverage market, which would require a liquor license. Eileen's family rents some of the open cropland on the farm to support their dairy operation.

Kristina, who grew up just "up the road" from Merle Maple Farm, has a degree in Ag. Business from SUNY Cobleskill. She started working at Merle Maple while in high school canning syrup and sugaring. Dottie grew up in Kenmore. She and Lyle have been married for 33 years. Early in their time together, Dottie worked for the CEO of Fisher Price in East Aurora, while working part-time with Lyle in the maple business. She shifted to full-time work at Merle Maple after their daughter graduated from college. Until just a year ago, Lyle's mother, Florence, now 105 lived in the Merle Maple house.

Lyle has lived his entire life on the farm. While he helped with livestock and field work, his love was always the maple part of the business. Eileen said Lyle is constantly coming up with new ideas to improve efficiency and add to product diversity. His equipment designs and modifications have led to commercial products now used by many other operations. Dottie joked that "there are times when people around here ask me to feed him a sleeping pill" to slow the steady flow of new ideas. The



Photo John Whitney

“sugar popper” which uses a stainless steel rack and a customized rolling pinto push the sugar candies out of the rubber molds has saved countless hours compared with the old method of pressing each candy out of the mold with thumbs and fingers. A new innovation is the mechanical wiper used to remove excess moisture off the coated sugar candies. They used to all be dabbed with drying cloths. Not all producers coat their sugars. Coated sugars have more visual appeal and considerably longer shelf life at peak quality. Still, each and every maple sugar candy is handled by gloved fingers at least four times from the time the candy leaves the mold through drying and packaging. Syrup and sugar analysis, testing, and shelf studies are going on all the time. That’s all part of quality control and new product evaluation.

With the exception of a few recipes, Merles follow the long tradition of comradery and sharing of technological advances, product ideas and efficiency improvements. This also extends to marketing. Dottie says, “if we went into a store and they had someone else’s maple syrup, we wouldn’t try to sell them ours... and I don’t think we’re alone in that.” The majority of maple producers try to boost the whole industry at the same time they are marketing their own products.

That’s part of the reason for participation in Maple Weekend, county and State Fairs, and many festivals in the region. While Vermont’s maple industry gets the marketing prize for promoting Vermont as “The Maple State,” New York State is not far behind with its large number of producers, total production, excellent maple tree resources and, importantly, the large market.

Lyle is the New York delegate to the International Maple Syrup Institute. He served on the State Board of the New York State Maple Producers Association and is active in the Western New York regional association as Treasurer. Dottie says it’s important to be engaged and on the forefront of new developments in the industry.

In value added products, Merle Maple is in the top five or so statewide. In total production, many operations produce more total syrup, often marketing primarily in bulk. Kristina says Merle Maple is in the top 10% or so in total production.

Merle Maple tries to come up with new products each year. Processes are all approved by the Cornell Food Venture Center in Geneva and production follows the prescribed criteria and checklists. New products are often tested by visitors during Maple weekend.

Continued on page 11 >>

>> Continued from page 10

Chocolate, white and raspberry coated sugars are new to this year's product line. The popular maple barbecue sauce led to questions about the possibility of making a maple hot sauce. Maple hot sauce is fast becoming an important component of the Merle Maple line.

Merle Maple's Facebook page and other social media activities are maintained by Dottie and Kristina. The web page is maintained by a contract webmaster. Low volume and new product labels are done in house with higher volume labels and flyers printed by other local commercial services.

Just imagine all the changes and innovations that 105 year old Florence Merle experienced in her lifetime.* What will the next popular value-added maple products be? For Merle Maple Farm that could well depend on what visitors suggest during Maple Weekend, maybe next year now, or on the questions asked at an upcoming festival, or maybe what Lyle dreams up in the middle of the night. Then, it will be up to the management team and staff to perfect and market the product as part of the "Worlds Widest Variety of Maple Products" at Merle Maple Farm. ■

** Sadly, Florence passed away on Monday, June 1, 2020 at Wyoming County Skilled Nursing Facility in Warsaw.*

If you are interested in becoming a vendor for the Taste NY Market at the Western NY Welcome Center, please visit https://s3.amazonaws.com/assets.cce.cornell.edu/attachments/38519/Vendor_Application_6.11.19_Fillable.pdf?1560282004 to fill out a Vendor Application.



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Photo John Whitney



Photo John Whitney



Photo John Whitney

New York State Forage Exchange Announced

Cornell Cooperative Extension

Within New York State several regions have experienced drought conditions reducing the quality and quantity of forages produced for dairy and livestock production. To help agricultural producers locate forage to purchase, or for producers that have forage to sell, Cornell Cooperative Extension announces the NYS Forage Exchange website, nysforageexchange.com.

The NYS Forage Exchange provides a free system to match potential sellers and buyers of forage within New York State. Sellers can easily register within the system and then post the forage they have available to sell. Potential purchasers can browse the advertisements, and then contact the seller through email for additional information or to complete purchase arrangements.

A screencast on how to use the NYS Forage Exchange can be found at <https://youtu.be/GNPjSIPLrxM>. The video is also available on the Forage Exchange website.

NYS Forage Exchange is a moderated website, so all ad submissions are reviewed for appropriateness before publication on the forage exchange website. The information provided is general and educational in nature. Employees of Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension do not endorse or recommend any specific product or seller listed on this site. ■



EXAMPLE – Alfalfa-grass ... • \$35.00

☰ For sale

1st cut oat hay, can deliver within 50 miles of Canton



EXAMPLE – Standing co... • \$800.00

☰ For sale

Standing corn, should be about 14-16 tons per acre

Josh Putman, M.Sc., CCA
Field Crops and Forage Specialist
Cornell University
Cooperative Extension

SWNY Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops
28 Parkside Drive

Ellicottville, NY 14731

jap473@cornell.edu | swnydlfc.cce.cornell.edu

716.490.5572

What Plague Doth Spot These Vine Crop Leaves?

Elizabeth Buck, Vegetable Specialist, CCE Vegetable Team

“Help Help!”

shout the vine crops
so sad in the field
So many foliar diseases
diminishing nice yield.
Scouting is smart
but how much can you do
if you look at diseases
not knowing who’s who?

So I’ve written this poem
You can hang in your home
To know which disease
you need to bring to its knees.
Using this tool you can go
and ID your dear crop.
For now you will know

Septoria

Septoria Septoria
you bring me euphoria.
I see you so much more
when temps hang near 64.
A cool night disease,
I identify you with ease.
Round tiny marks of beige-white
with a thin brown border in sight.
And best of all,
when you occur in the fall,
black specks mark your middle
making this an easily solved riddle.

Alternaria

First one spot then two spots
next three spots and four
I’ll bet you’re about
to see a lot more
Alternaria moves outward
from leaves near the crown.
Spots a quarter inch big
will soon grow and get brown.
Lighter centers can cause targets
in melon,
where this disease hits most often.
Soon the foliage goes down
and in the sun fruits will soften.
Now in watermelon,
on the other hand,
darkish lesions occur
with targets less grand.

Gummy Stem Blight

Foliar symptoms of gummy
are not very yummy.
I’d be willing to bargain
your lesions start on leaf margins.
Moving from water soaked
to tan and dark brown
Pepper-fleck centered lesions
send spores all around.
And on the stems you will see
bleeding cankers, ugly as can be
On water and plain melons it is the
worse,
In all crops it is very hard to reverse

Anthracnose

Anthracnose will change
its look with each crop
After a water soaked start
the similarities drop.
When on muskmelons
and cucumbers, too,
Medium brown pea sized lesions
or leaf distortion is in view.
Now switch to watermelon
and there you will find
dark irregular marks
covering leaves all along vine.
Most other cucurbits,
give less away
look for yellow circular spots
and fruit decay.
Fruit is the real target
of anthracnose's game
Dark or black sunken lesions
no other disease can claim.

Plectosporium

If you try to ignore plecto
your field'll get wrecked-o
This fungus likes summer squash
and zucchini
along with pumpkins, but certain
not tahini.
Small sunken tan spindles
first show up on the stem
Leaf veins and the handles
will be next to get them
Plecto doesn't skip over the fruit
small spindle to round lesions
Will make you shout "shoot!"

Scab

Odd shaped and everywhere
scab lesions really don't care.
They're on leaves and stalks
even the fruit can show pox.
More water-soaking to start?
Well, well, what a surprise.
At least it's pale green and not
yellow
As scab first grows in size.
Once they are older
the lesions turn brown
with a nice yellow halo
running around.
And then for a change
a diagnostic trait,
lesion centers drop out
leaves shot-holed – just great.

Bacteria

Bacterial diseases?
They're a real bummer.
Seriously, though, these two
Can ruin your summer.
Both will start as little water soaked
spots
And turn into shot holes from small
little dots
Both these lesions can ooze and dry
to a crust
If there's a halo further investigation
is a must.
Angular stays confined by the veins
Bacterial really is more of a pain.
The first is darker, from yellow to
brown
the second is lighter, from white to
light brown.
Beware of the fruit spots
Xanthomonas causes a lot.
Those little white dots
will get secondary rots.

Cornell Small Farms Online Course Season – Marketing Training Opportunities

John Whitney, Agriculture Educator, CCE Erie



It's one thing to successfully grow or produce crops and livestock. It's another to effectively and efficiently market what you've worked so hard to grow and produce. Among the suite of more than 20 online courses available for aspiring, new, and experienced farmers through the Cornell Small Farms Program are a number of classes designed to help improve your marketing efforts.

Plan Your Farm Hub – Erica Frenay, owner-operator of Shelterbelt Farm, will be your guide through this series of free, self-paced tutorials to help you take the first steps toward developing your farm plans. <https://smallfarmcourses.com/p/plan-your-farm-hub>

BF 102: Exploring Markets & Profits – is designed to help test the feasibility of your farming ideas and explore the potential markets and profitability of your ideas. While designed as a follow-up to BF 101: Starting at Square One, BF 101 is not a prerequisite. Go to <https://smallfarmcourses.com/p/bf-102-exploring-markets-and-profits> to read the course description or to enroll. Experienced Cooperative Extension educators, Beth Claypoole and Joan Sinclair Petzen are the course instructors.

BF 202: Writing a Business Plan – helps develop your map for a successful farm venture. Thorough business plans often include marketing sections or lay the foundation for stand-alone marketing plans. See: <https://smallfarmcourses.com/p/bf-202-writing-a-business-plan>. Rebecca Schuelke Staehr, Extension Educator and owner-operator of Cayuga Pumpkin Barn (with her husband, Ed), will lead participants through the multi-week session.

BF 205: Social Media & Online Marketing – explores real-life, practical ideas and explanations to help build a successful and strategic online presence, grow your customer base, and sell more product. Visit: <https://smallfarmcourses.com/p/bf-205-social-media-online-marketing>. Rebecca Schuelke Staehr will also lead these live sessions which will start in January of 2021.

To see the full suite of online courses available through the Cornell Small Farms Program, go to: <https://smallfarmcourses.com/> or follow this QR code. Be sure to look at the Tier pricing enrollment options, especially if the COVID-19 pandemic has negatively impacted your household income. ■



Image 2 QR Code for Cornell Small Farms Program course catalogue.

Food Preservation Educational Series

- VIA ZOOM -

Register for one or all of these FREE classes taught by Diane Whitten, CCE Nutrition Educator and Cornell Certified Master Food Preserver.

For additional information contact Diane at dwhitten@cornell.edu.

- **Friday, September 11, 11 am, Canning Salsa & Tomatoes** Learn how to can whole and diced tomatoes, plus make salsa. This class will cover the basics of canning in a boiling water bath or steam canner, including equipment needed. Link to Registration -Canning Salsa & Tomatoes
- **Friday, September 25, 11 am, Dehydrating Fruits & Vegetables:** Learn tips and techniques for getting quality dehydrated fruits & vegetables. This class will include a discussion of types of dehydrators. Link to Registration -Dehydrating Fruits & Vegetables
- **Friday, October 16, 11 am, Making Meat Jerky:** Learn how to safely make your own jerky in an oven or food dehydrator. This class will include the three methods of making a safe jerky, options for marinating, plus testing for doneness. Link to Registration -Making Meat Jerky

SEEDCORN MAGGOT WEBINAR

October 19 at 11am EST.

Zoom link: <https://iastate.zoom.us/j/885051544>



Dr. Brian Nault is a professor from Cornell University. He will present applied research of seedcorn maggot (SCM) management in vegetable crops. His program has been focused on evaluating insecticide seed treatments for managing SCM in snap bean, with less time spent on sweet corn, cucurbit crops and green peas.

New York State Announces Confirmed Finding of Spotted Lanternfly on Staten Island



Department of
Environmental
Conservation

Agriculture
and Markets

Parks, Recreation
and Historic
Preservation

State Agencies Encourage Public to Report Findings of Invasive Pest

The New York State Departments of Agriculture and Markets (AGM), Environmental Conservation (DEC), and Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) today confirmed that Spotted Lanternfly (SLF), an invasive pest from Asia, has been found on Staten Island. Several live, adult insects were discovered by OPRHP staff in Clay Pit Ponds State Park Preserve. SLF (see photo below) is a destructive pest that feeds on more than 70 plant species, including tree-of-heaven, and plants and crops that are critical to New York's agricultural economy, such as maple trees, apple trees, grapevine, and hops.

State Agriculture Commissioner Richard A. Ball said, "The Department is working closely with its partners at the Department of Environmental Conservation, the State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to mitigate the impacts of this destructive pest, which can weaken plants and have a devastating impact on agriculture. While this find on Staten Island is concerning, New York State has taken strong actions to combat the establishment of SLF since 2017. We will continue our work to survey and inspect high-risk areas and implement targeted management plans. We also urge the public to be vigilant and report any suspected sightings of SLF to help slow the spread of this invasive."

DEC Commissioner Basil Seggos said, "Since Spotted Lanternfly was first discovered in neighboring states, DEC has worked aggressively with the State Department of Agriculture and Markets, Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, USDA and other partners to educate New Yorkers and take steps to prevent this invasive species from establishing itself in New York State. This invasive pest has the potential to severely impact and stress

New York's forests, agricultural crops, and tourism industries. The first live find on Staten Island is concerning, but our goal remains to find Spotted Lanternfly early and prevent it from further entering New York State and limiting any serious threats to our natural resources."

State Parks Commissioner Erik Kulleseid said, "Spotted Lanternfly poses a troubling threat to the environment and agriculture of New York State but also to the quality of recreational opportunities and experiences we offer in our State Parks and public lands. I applaud our Parks' environmental stewardship staff for identifying this pest, so New York State can quickly begin taking steps to slow its spread. Park visitors across the state can help in identifying and reporting this destructive pest, and I urge them to familiarize themselves with its signs."

Following the finding by OPRHP, AGM, working with DEC, OPRHP, and the USDA, immediately began extensive surveys throughout the area. Crews will continue to survey areas on Staten Island, develop management plans to slow SLF's spread, and minimize the damage and impact from this invasive species. AGM urges New Yorkers to report potential sightings using the web reporting tool found here: <https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/a08d60f6522043f5bd04229e00acdd63>

SLF feedings can stress plants, making them vulnerable to disease and attacks from other insects. SLF also excretes large amounts of sticky "honeydew," which attracts sooty molds that interfere with plant photosynthesis, negatively affecting the growth and fruit yield of plants, and impacting forest health. SLF also has the potential to significantly hinder quality of life and recreational activities due to the honeydew and the swarms of insects it attracts.

First discovered in Pennsylvania in 2014, SLF has since been found in New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware,

proximity to the Pennsylvania and New Jersey infestations, New York State is at high risk for infestation.

Since 2017, AGM, DEC, and OPRHP have taken an aggressive approach to keeping SLF from establishing in New York State, conducting surveys of high-risk areas across the State; inspecting nursery stock, stone shipments, and commercial transports from quarantine areas; and launching a comprehensive education and outreach campaign to enlist the public's help in reporting SLF.

While these insects can jump and fly short distances, they spread primarily through human activity. SLF can lay their eggs on any number of surfaces, such as vehicles, stone, rusty metal, outdoor furniture, and firewood. Adult SLF can hitch rides in vehicles, on any outdoor item, or cling to clothing or hats, and be easily transported into and throughout New York.

The public is encouraged to thoroughly inspect vehicles, luggage and gear, and all outdoor items for egg masses and adult SLF before leaving areas with SLF, particularly in the counties of states in the quarantine area—Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Maryland, Delaware, West Virginia and Virginia. If SLF adults are found, residents should remove them and scrape off all egg masses.

Residents can also help by allowing surveyors access to properties where SLF may be present. Surveyors will be uniformed and will always provide identification.

Identifying SLF

Adult SLF are active from July to December. They are approximately one-inch long and half an inch wide at rest, with eye-catching wings. Adults begin laying eggs in September. Signs of an SLF infestation may include:

- Sap oozing or weeping from open wounds on tree trunks, which appear wet and give off fermented odors.
- One-inch-long egg masses that are brownish-gray, waxy and mud-like when new. Old egg masses are brown and scaly.
- Massive honeydew build-up under plants, sometimes with black sooty mold developing.

For more information on Spotted Lanternfly, visit <https://agriculture.ny.gov/spottedlanternfly>. ■



Photo courtesy of Lawrence Barringer, Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture.

A Busy Summer: Agriculture Research Projects, Internships, and More Continue Despite Needing to Adjust

Sharon Bachman, Agriculture & Natural Resources Educator, CCE Erie



Pictured: Swallow-wort biocontrol research. Photo Sharon Bachman

It hasn't been a summer of business as usual, as we all try to adjust to the challenges thrown our way by COVID-19. While several planned research projects with Cornell partners have gone on pretty much as anticipated, how we are able to work with our agriculture and horticulture businesses has changed dramatically as most of our work is conducted remotely.

Projects this summer have included research on a moth for a control of the invasive swallow-wort species, surveys of pollinator plants and insects to support research on soil mixes to promote pollinating insect habitat along roadsides, work to develop a Weed ID Tool kit for 4-H youth with a Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences intern (working with us remotely), support through our Seed to Supper efforts of the Buffalo Freedom Garden project, monitoring for spotted wing drosophila on a small fruit farm and re-opening the

Master Gardener volunteer garden hotline under the tent on the Roycroft lawn.

Swallow-wort Biocontrol Research

Black and pale swallow-wort, AKA dog strangling vine, are highly invasive plant species which negatively impact agriculture fields and natural landscapes, forming monocultures and crowding out desirable plant species. A moth, *Hypena opulenta*, whose larva feed on the leaves of swallow-wort, was approved for use as a bio-control in the US in 2017. Bachman has worked with the research team from Cornell lead by Carrie Brown-Lima of the New York Invasive Species Research Institute to set-up a monitoring cage for bio-control in a Clarence natural area. The moth pupae were put in the cage on July 22nd. Moths have successfully emerged and mated and as of August 19th, tiny ¼' caterpillars are feeding on the swallow-wort plants with-in the cage.

Monitoring of the cage will continue for several more weeks. As the caterpillars get larger, it is anticipated they will consume all the swallow-wort within the cage at which point the cage will be removed and the insects allowed to feed more broadly on the site. Ten monitoring plots have been established outside

the cage and the plan is to come back in 2021 and monitor those areas for presence of the bio-control insects. We are hoping some are able to successfully overwinter. Another aim of the project down the road is to develop protocols for bio-control establishment so that cage materials can be loaned out to ag producers and other land managers seeking to control swallow-wort. The ultimate goal is not eradication of swallow-wort but a resetting of the equilibrium where the hypena bio-control and the swallow-wort co-exist in environments and the swallow-wort populations are maintained at a level where they are not over running crop fields or natural areas. Note that the Hypena bio-control has been carefully vetted to make sure it feeds only on the target swallow-wort plants.

Pollinator Habitat

The pollinator project with Jean Bonhotal, from Cornell's Waste Management Institute, is in partnership with NYS DOT to address the concern about declining pollinator populations in North America by investigating and promoting habitat that can support pollinators. Research has shown that native wildflowers along roadsides are beneficial to pollinators, supporting many species of bees and butterflies. Our road corridors provide extensive linear habitats that if appropriately managed can provide forage for food, breeding and nesting sites, and aid in dispersal of pollinators by linking fragmented habitat. Currently in its first phase, the project is working with cooperators across the state to monitor pollinator activity and plant communities in sites representative of the different eco-regions (as identified by US EPA) across the state. As one of the cooperators, I am assisting in monitoring two sites – one in Piffard, NY and one at Beaver Meadow Audubon center in Wyoming County. (Because the project needed to take soil samples and the Cornell Nutrient Analysis



Pictured: Swallow-wort biocontrol research. Photo Sharon Bachman

Lab is not able to accept soil from the state's European Cherry Fruit Fly quarantine counties, these monitoring plots were established outside of Erie County.) I am also assisting Bonhotal in aggregating data collected across the state. Next year the project will focus on developing recommendations of appropriate soil mixes to use in each eco-region and work with suppliers, such as commercial compost operations, to manufacture soils to these specifications.

CALS Weed ID 4-H Internship - Changing Plans

The aim of our internship was to work with Cornell's Agricultural Weed ID Network (a campus based research project that Sharon is cooperating on) to develop training and outreach materials on weed identification and management for 4-H youth and families. We planned to engage 4-Hers at the fair this summer with a competition where they would learn basic weed ID and poisonous plant concepts so like so many other things this summer that original idea had to be scrapped.

So our intern, Bethany Schulteis, and I worked hard to adjust our plans and come up with other ideas to engage the youth. While we came up with some on-line ideas for

Continued on page 21 >>

>> Continued from page 20

a competition, it was a tough time to engage the youth as they were trying to market their 4-H livestock projects through on-line auction and do so many other things in a new way. Instead we will be putting the template for the competition on the CCE Erie website and allow 4-H Educators to access and use as resource.

The program did host a well-attended workshop for Erie County 4-Hers where Bethany covered the types of plants that can be poisonous to livestock and engaged the youth in considering some of the contest scenarios that highlighted some important weed management concepts. One of the scenarios discussed was:

Your family is purchasing a used piece of equipment because it will help save you a lot of work and money. It's totally worth the gas money to travel to southern Ohio to pick it up. What should your family ask the seller to do to ensure you aren't also buying hitch hiking weed seeds? How would you inspect the equipment to make sure you aren't moving a potential problem weed? What questions would you ask the grower that might help you identify anything of concern that could be transferred from his farm with the machine? Who else might you reach out to in the local area for more information about problem weeds? If you suspect the piece hasn't been thoroughly cleaned what steps would you recommend taking upon getting the piece to your farm?

Through the discussion the youth saw that thoroughly cleaning the equipment before bringing it back to the farm was important, as bringing a new weed to the farm, which may not be easy to control, could be a potential problem for many years. Our webpage for the materials currently under construction but will be available at <http://erie.cce.cornell.edu/agriculture/4h-youth-weed-id-toolkit> if you want to check it out.

4-H Youth CAN Internship

Also as the month of August winds down, I am working with a couple 4-H members from the City of Buffalo to create videos related to the Seed to Supper project, which offer peer learning on gardening on a budget. The youth are conducting 6-8 videos of gardeners and because they couldn't be taken in gardens because of social distancing, the teens are adding pictures and video footage from gardens to accompany the audio clips. The videos will be

used the undergraduate class at Cornell which covers Seed to Supper and engaging communities through gardening.

Erie Grown Launches Two Month Ag Passport Project

If your farm operation is listed on the Erie Grown website, you have probably heard that the County in cooperation with CCE Erie and Erie County Soil & Water are offering a farm Passport opportunity to encourage consumers to visit farms and purchase local agriculture projects between now and mid-October. Because of the pandemic, this is being rolled out at a modified scale, but the hope is in future years we will be able to encourage farm purchases throughout our major community seasons from maple syrup to Christmas trees. For more information, see erie.gov/eriegrownpassport. See page 5 of this issue for an Erie Grown Passport poster.

Thank you for your support. If there are ways we can assist your farm operation, please reach out. ■



Pictured: Sharon Bachman, Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator, CCE Erie. Photo by Rifat Chowdhury

Sharon Bachman, Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator, CCE Erie

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Looking to Hire Help? Looking for a Farm Job?

Check-out American Farmland Trust's Jobs Board

The Farmland for a New Generation New York team at American Farmland Trust has created a virtual jobs board to help beginning farmers find positions and established farmers find workers.



Many beginning farmers know that experience is the best teacher when it comes to understanding day-to-day farm operations and the agricultural industry. They want hands-on experience before starting their own operations. On the flip side, finding enough reliable help is a continual struggle for established farmers. Many consider it their greatest challenge. The labor shortage limits expansion plans and threatens business viability.

The Farm Jobs website (<https://nyfarmlandfinder.org/jobs>) aims to help all farmers. It's a free service. Anyone can list a farm job or search for a farm position in New York State.



Techno-Economic and Lifecycle Assessments of Biochar Production from Forest Residues

This webinar is made possible through a partnership with the U.S. Biochar Initiative, the Southern Regional Extension Forestry, and USDA Forest Service Research and Development.

Presenters/Authors: Kamalakanta Sahoo - USDA Forest Service

Session Details: Sep 24, 2020 11:00 pm US/Eastern

This webinar will be recorded and posted back to the Webinar Portal for on-demand viewing within a week. CEUs are available for on-demand webinars when applicable.

Who should participate? Foresters, Conservationist, Land Managers

Register here: <http://www.forestrywebinars.net/webinars/techno-economic-and-lifecycle-assessments-of-biochar-production-from-forest-residues?sr=wp~mkt-whenPub>



Erie County's First Farm Incubator is Going Gangbusters

Kathleen McCormick, Agriculture Educator, CCE Erie



The Somali Bantu Community Organization of WNY established their farm in 2017. The organization is a founding member of PFC.

Great things happen when you give hard-working, self-reliant people a chance to do something for themselves and their communities. A chance is exactly what the Providence Farm Collective (PFC) is giving the six new farmers it welcomed into its incubator program.

Who's Growing?

The new farmers are all Somali Bantu refugees who got to know the land they're farming by volunteering at the Somali Bantu Community Farm. The Somali Bantu Community Organization of WNY started their farm in 2017. Four other organizations followed suit this year - Buffalo Go Green, Congolese Babondo Buffalo, Liberian Association of Buffalo, and Our Lady of Hope Parish. Although each organization focuses on a different community, they are united in their belief that everyone should have access to fresh food. Visit [PFC's website](#) to learn more about the farmers and organizations.

Many members of the collective come from tropical and subtropical climates. Farming in a temperate climate

has been a big adjustment. PFC planned to offer early spring classes to help with the adjustment, but Covid-19 put the kibosh on that. PFC created videos instead. The videos help PFC farmers learn about growing conditions and soils in Western New York, crop planning, seed starting, and organic growing practices. CCE Erie and the Cornell Vegetable Team will be helping PFC expand its training program.

What's growing?

Vegetables rule at the incubator farm. All the Western New York favorites, like onions, spinach, kale, peppers and squash, can be found. So can some international comfort foods like mace, amaranth, and African maize. Fresh flowers and artisanal garlic are also being grown. Farmers have the option of selling what they grow to the collective. Selling to the collective lets new farmers focus on working out production kinks before spending energy on developing markets.



Providence Farm, East Aurora, NY. Photo by John Whitney



Pictured left to right: Dr. Christopher Kerr, Vice President; Kristin Heltman-Weiss, President; Beth Leipler, Farm Manager; Mahamud Mbwera, Farm Manager. Photo by John Whitney



Friday is market day at Providence Farm. The market is open to the public on Fridays from 2:00 -4:00 p.m. Phot by John Whitney



New farmers have a quarter-acre of plowed, fertilized and fenced land. The organizations have one-acre plots. Photo by John Whitney

PFC has an on-farm market stand that is open to the public on Fridays from 2:00 - 4:00 p.m. It is also partnering with Buffalo Go Green and the Community Action Organization to aggregate produce for resale to mobile markets that serve areas with limited access to fresh food.

Want to Visit?

PFC welcomes visitors to the farm. To arrange a visit, contact Beth Leipler at providencefarmcollective@gmail.com. ■



Pictured: Diane Held, Executive Director, CCE Erie with African maize.

QR Codes and COVID-19

John Whitney, Agriculture Educator, CCE Erie

Some of you may recall an article about Quick Response (QR) codes that appeared in the Spring 2020 CCE-Erie Ag News just before the COVID-19 pandemic changed all our lives in so many ways. In these days of social distancing and greatly reduced interpersonal contact, those QR codes that were described and discussed in the article have taken on additional significance as tools for helping shoppers practice social distancing and for businesses to incorporate in their reopening and marketing activities. Since QR codes are useful in so many ways, and even more so during this COVID-19 pandemic, go here (link) to view the original article.

It didn't take long for businesses, non-profit organizations, and government entities to recognize that QR codes could be useful in their pandemic response planning, marketing and reopening efforts. They can easily be added to signs, doors and windows, product tags or products themselves. Point your phone's camera at this code which will open a blog post that describes many different examples:



Image A – Link to QR-Code-Generator.com by Egoditor's blog about COVID-19 and QR codes.

QR codes, when properly produced and deployed are safe and secure. They are fast, connecting almost instantly to the target web page, document or social media link. They can help meet accessibility objectives, too. As long as your phone's camera can focus on the QR code square (even from an angle), there's no minimum distance requirement. QR codes can quickly switch users from print format to digital format or offer more details than are practical to print on a postcard or flyer. QR codes on traditional paper menus or price

lists can take a user straight to an electronic ordering and payment system. They can link users to product information, recipes, photos, video or audio files, directions, instructions, medical and safety guidance, translation services, payment or charitable donation opportunities, etc., - all at little or no cost.

As suggested, QR codes can also be part of your COVID-19 and general health, safety and operational planning and management. They can provide for safe, secure and confidential visitor logging and contact tracing. They can offer quick and easy access to procedures and protocols and reminders about how to remain safe during the COVID-19 pandemic and upcoming flu season. While we all hope otherwise, COVID-19 is likely be with us for a while. Those quirky little squares may well be among the many tools used to help us get through it. While embedding internet links can work, they have many limitations. Typing in cryptic web addresses is problematic. QR codes are an effective and efficient alternative. Here's another agricultural example (from California):



Image B – California Department of Food and Agriculture "COVID-19 Awareness for Agriculture" poster

I expect we will see similar public and worker information materials produced for New York farms, businesses and consumers. You may also choose to produce your own materials specific to your operation, employees, COVID-19 safety plans and customer needs. QR code technology and their myriad of applications will be with us long past the time when we no longer have to worry as much about COVID-19.



Safe Harvest 2020: COVID-19 Office Hours for Agricultural Producers and Packers



Beginning on Tuesday August 25th at 4:00 PM EST, Cornell CALS and CCE will host office hours for farmers and packers to answer any questions they might have about managing and responding during COVID-19.

Participants will be able to log in from a computer or call in from a phone to ask questions or just to listen.

A panel of experts will be available to answer questions immediately, questions that the experts cannot answer right away will be recorded, studied and answered later.

The next 6 weeks are a critical time for the farm workforce as seasonal harvest ramps up, so the office hours will repeat every Tuesday at 4:00 PM EST through the end of September. Look for log in information and phone numbers in coming news releases and check this website: www.agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu.



AGRITOURISM FACTS & FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Last Updated: September 1, 2020

Gov. Cuomo has announced the release of new state guidance for agritourism businesses including guidance for activities such as corn mazes and hayrides. The guidance can be found here: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2020/09/agritourismfaq.pdf>



Erie County Ag News

Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County

COVID-19 response: Need information?

View the following Cornell CALS and CCE Resource Pages Updated Regularly

- General Questions & Links: eden.cce.cornell.edu/
- Food Production, Processing & Safety Questions: instituteforfoodsafety.cornell.edu/coronavirus-covid-19/
- Employment & Agricultural Workforce Questions: agworkforce.cals.cornell.edu/
- Cornell Small Farms Resiliency Resources: smallfarms.cornell.edu/resources/farm-resilience/
- Financial & Mental Health Resources for Farmers: www.nyfarmnet.org/
- Spanish Language Educational Video on COVID-19: www.trabajadores.cornell.edu/

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

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