

Erie County Ag News

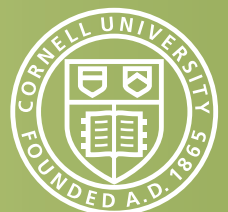
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County

SPRING/SUMMER 2019



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- GAP Assistance for NYS Producers
- Farm to School Updates
- Preventing Oak Wilt
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Contents



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Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator

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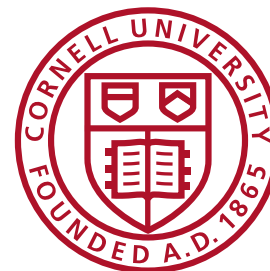
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Agriculture Administrative Assistant

Jolie designs the Erie County Ag News, creates graphics and support materials for CCE Erie, updates web site content, and shares updates from and about CCE Erie on Facebook & Instagram.

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



UPCOMING AGRICULTURAL EVENTS

Presentation on Genetically Modified Crops

Saturday, May 18 :: 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

This is a chance for people interested in food and agriculture to come together, understand, and explore the opportunities and issues of using genetically modified crops in our food system both locally and around the world.

More information and to register: <http://wyoming.cce.cornell.edu/events/2019/05/18/presentation-on-genetically-modified-crops>

PRO-DAIRY Wednesday Webinars (in Spanish):

How to Work as a Team

May 29 :: 12:30-1:00pm /

29 de mayo del 2019 @ 12:30-1:00pm

Learn why teamwork is so important on the farm, and some tips to become a more effective team member. / *Aprender por qué el trabajo en equipo es tan importante en el rancho, y unos consejos para hacerse un miembro del equipo más eficaz.*

Presenter / *Presentadora*: Libby Eiholzer, Bilingual Dairy Specialist; NWN Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team Cornell Cooperative Extension.

View the webinar here / *Mire el seminario*: <https://prodairy.cals.cornell.edu/webinars/spanish-webinars/>

Eastern U.S. Hemp Conference and Expo

June 3 - 4, 2019

Albany, NY

Hemp research seminars are scheduled at the Eastern US Hemp Conference and Expo.

For more info please see <https://www.ushempexpos.com/about-eastern>.

Women in Agriculture Summer Discussion Groups (WAVES):

Details on page 17

This group is open to anyone professionally farming, including employees, and FFA/4-H youth age 16 & up who plan a career in horticulture. Details on page 17 of this issue.

More information and to register: erie.cce.cornell.edu or contact jah663@cornell.edu or (716) 652-5400x176

Farm Foods Safety Trainings with GAPs:

Thursday, June 6 :: 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM

Thursday, June 13 :: 9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

This course is intended to improve your understanding of GAPs to guide assessment of risks and implementation of practices to reduce risks on fresh produce farms. -Taking this course will not result in your farm being "GAPs Certified". GAPs certification is done by a third party (e.g. USDA, Primus, Global GAP) and involves the successful completion of an on-farm audit.

More information and to register: <http://allegany.cce.cornell.edu/events/2019/05/30/farm-food-safety-training-with-gaps>

2019 NY State Maple Tour

July 12 - 14

Grange Building, Erie County Fairgrounds

Hosted by Western New York Maple Producers Association of NYSMPA, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Wyoming County and the Cornell Maple Program.

Food and Tour Package (tour transportation in air-conditioned charter busses):

- **Full Tour Package** - \$190 per person – includes: Friday Evening Social, Tradeshow, Lunch on Saturday & Sunday, Saturday night Banquet
- **Single Day** - Saturday or Sunday \$95 per person. One Day Tour Transportation, one Lunch, Tradeshow (does not include Saturday night Banquet)
- **Banquet only** – \$40 (included in the Full Tour Package)
- **Tradeshow Only** - \$25 (included in the Full Tour Package)

To obtain a registration form contact Debra Welch at 585-786-2251 ext.125 or djw275@cornell.edu or Lisa at 585-786-2251 ext.123 or lma96@cornell.edu. No registrations will be accepted over the telephone.

Management and Mythology

Timothy X. Terry, Harvest NY

How many of you remember the Classical Mythology unit in your high school English class? Do you remember a character named Pygmalion? How about Galatea? For those of you still scratching your heads here's a quick recap: Disinterested in the immoral women of Cyprus in that day, Pygmalion carved his ideal woman out of ivory. The statue was so beautiful and realistic that he fell in love with his "ivory girl" (apologies to Procter & Gamble). One day he laid an offering at the altar of Aphrodite (goddess of love). Upon returning home he kissed the statue and the lips felt warm. He kissed her again and the statue came to life – Aphrodite had granted him his secret wish. She was later named Galatea.

So what's this have to do with management? There are two complementary phenomena in human resource management called the Pygmalion and Galatea Effects. This might make more sense as: The Power of Manager's Expectations and The Power of Self-expectations, respectively. Simply put, how you regard people and how they see themselves can make a huge difference in the success or failure of the employee AND your business.

These effects were first identified while measuring the impact of expectations on elementary students. "If a teacher believes a child is slow, the child will come to believe that, too, and will indeed learn slowly. The lucky child who strikes a teacher as bright also picks up on that expectation and will rise to fulfill it." ¹

Turns out this is just as true in the adult workplace as the elementary classroom. If a manager manages his/her crew as capable and competent they will consistently outperform a similarly talented group whose manager has a less positive regard for their staff.

Manager = Pygmalion

This phenomenon has been widely researched and documented. This Power of Manager's Expectation can be summarized as follows:

... "What managers expect of subordinates and the way

Simply put, how you regard people and how they see themselves can make a huge difference in the success or failure of the employee AND your business.

they treat them largely determines their performance and career progress.

- ... A unique characteristic of superior managers is the ability to create high performance expectations that subordinates fulfill.
- ... Less effective managers fail to develop similar expectations, and as a consequence, the productivity of their subordinates suffers.
- ... Subordinates, more often than not, appear to do what they believe they are expected to do." ¹

Livingston uses a real-life case study to prove these effects. In the early 1960's a large insurance firm reorganized its sales staff reporting to one of its district offices into high, average, and low producers, each group led by a high, average, and low performing manager, respectively.

"Shortly after this selection had been made, the people in the agency began referring to this select group as a 'super-staff' because of their high esprit de corps in operating so well as a unit. Their production efforts over the first 12 weeks far surpassed our most optimistic expectations . . . proving that groups of people of sound ability can be motivated beyond their apparently normal productive capacities when the problems created by the poor producers are eliminated from the operation." ¹ (#Pareto Principle or 80/20 rule)

The average group, however, proved to be a bit of a surprise. While they did not achieve the volume of business of

the high group, their annual growth outpaced the high group. It was later determined that this was a result of the manager refusing to be classed as merely “average” and communicating the same values to her sales staff. (See bullet points 1, 2, & 4)

Moreover, it has been shown that a new employee’s first manager has the greatest influence – not only their tenure with the company but their career as a whole. In a large telecommunications firm, for example, new employees were tracked for the first year and then for the four following years. Those who worked under a good managers who helped them develop the necessary job skills performed better, had more opportunities for advancement and professional growth, and longer tenures with the company. Conversely, those newbies under managers unwilling to develop their job skills had poorer self-images, negative attitudes toward their jobs, and a higher attrition rate as they frequently left for “greener pastures” with more opportunities. I have seen this played out many times where an employee leaves a farm only to flourish at a neighboring farm or even a different enterprise within the same farm.

Granted, there may be many other factors that contribute to an employee’s success or failure, including the farm’s culture, their level of education, family life, and employee relationships. “However, positive supervision is one of the

key factors that will keep good employees on the job.”²

Employee = Galatea

Likewise, “Even more powerful than the Pygmalion effect, the Galatea effect is a compelling factor in employee performance. The manager who can assist employees to believe in themselves and in their efficacy has harnessed powerful performance improvement tool.”²

In practice you might recognize this as Self-fulfilling Prophecy. In other words, an individual’s opinion of their abilities and odds of success will determine their level of performance – if they believe they can do it, they most likely will. As Zig Ziglar once said, “Your attitude, not your aptitude, will determine your altitude”. ■

IN THE NEXT ISSUE OF AG NEWS I’ll give you some ideas for cultivating that Galatea effect.

¹J. Sterling Livingston, “Pygmalion in Management”, Harvard Business Review (January 2003), <https://hbr.org/2003/01/pygmalion-in-management>

²Susan M. Heathfield, “The 2 Most important Management Secrets: Pygmalion and Galatea Effects”, The Balance Careers (July 2018), <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/pygmalion-and-galatea-effects-1918677>



U.S. Department of Agriculture's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is Launching a New "Pests and Diseases" Webpage

The new page lists all pest and disease programs managed by APHIS as part of its mission to protect American agriculture and natural resources. On the new page, users can search by type (plant, animal), keyword (avian, fruit fly, cotton), or by the specific pest or disease (coconut rhinoceros beetle, brucellosis). You can also scroll through the page, which lists the pests and diseases alphabetically and includes a corresponding image.

APHIS created the webpage to make it easier for its customers to find critical information on pests and diseases of concern. With this tool, members of the public will have the information they need to report pests and diseases and together we can protect America's agriculture and natural resources.

To visit the page, go to www.aphis.usda.gov/pests-and-diseases or click the Pests and Diseases link under the Resources tab on the APHIS homepage.



Soil pH Clinic

erie.cce.cornell.edu

\$2 per sample / \$5 three samples

MAY 18, 2019

Alden Farmer Market
8:30am - 1:00pm

MAY 18, 2019

Colden Community Farmer Market
8:30am - 1:00pm

MAY 18, 2019

Clarence Town Park
8:30am - 1:00pm

MAY 24, 2019

Master Gardener Plant Sale
First Presbyterian Church
8:00am - 4:00pm

MAY 25, 2019

Master Gardener Plant Sale
First Presbyterian Church
8:00am - 3:00pm

JUNE 1 2019

Village of Williamsville
Island Park Location
9:00am - 12:00pm

For instructions on how to
obtain a soil sample visit
erie.cce.cornell.edu/gardening



Beef Cattle Management

Michael J. Baker, PAS, PhD, Beef Cattle Extension Specialist

Check out the **NEW** Beef Management website:
<http://blogs.cornell.edu/beefcattle/>

Producer Resources

Market Information

Events & Programs

Educational Materials



Check out
erie.cce.
cornell.edu/
jobs

Would you bet the farm on red?



Natural disaster can strike at any time!

Don't leave your farm's financial future to chance...

If you suffer a loss this year, would you be able to plant next year? Crop insurance can help protect you and your family from losses caused by bad weather and volatile prices.

Be sure you don't miss the following sales deadlines!

March 15: Barley (spring), Beans (dry, green), Cabbage, Corn, Forage Seeding (spring), Grain Sorghum, Green Peas, Oats (spring), Potatoes, Soybeans, Sweet Corn, Tomatoes (processing), Whole Farm Revenue (early fiscal filer)	Sep. 30: Barley (winter), Forage Prod., Wheat (winter)
May 1: Nursery (field, container)	Nov. 15: Apiculture, Pasture Rangeland Forage (PRF)
July 31: Forage Seeding (fall)	Nov. 20: Apples, Grapes, Peaches, Tart Cherries, Whole Farm Revenue (late fiscal filer)
	Monthly: Dairy, Swine (Livestock Gross Margin)
	Daily: Milk (Dairy Revenue Protection)

To locate an RMA agent visit: <http://cli.re/gzPVWY>

To learn how you can apply crop insurance to your risk management strategy and about crop insurance products available to New York farmers visit:

<https://agriskmanagement.cornell.edu>

Cornell CALS
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences



Schools across New York State are implementing NY Thursdays as part of their Farm to School programs. On NY Thursdays schools feature locally sourced lunch menus and often incorporate taste tests or other educational opportunities focused on food systems, agriculture, or nutrition. Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County presented the idea of participating in NY Thursdays to Erie County schools in January as a way to showcase work being done in districts to serve more local foods, and a mechanism to mock cooperative purchasing in order to meet case minimums for NY beef hot dogs and hamburgers. Several districts participated in NY Thursdays in March and April, and more plan to participate during the 2019-2020 school year as the Erie County F2S program grows. The following are usage estimates from the March and April NY Thursdays, which 7 school districts participated in. This doesn't reflect total usage of NY products during those months.

- NY beef: 3,230 lbs.
- NY cabbage: 193 lbs.
- NY potatoes: 2,000 lbs.
- NY beans (black, pinto, kidney): 375 lbs.
- NY grape juice: 11,242 4oz-cups
- NY grape juice slushes: 8,460 4oz slushes

- Becky O'Connor, Farm to School Coordinator



The lunch tray is from Hamburg Middle School on 3.21.19 and they served a NY beef hot dog, NY roasted potato wedges, NY apples, NY coleslaw, and NY grape juice.

Enhancing Wildlife Habitat: Projects and Practices You Can Add to Your Woodlot Activities

Laura Bailey, Yates CCE Natural Resources Educator and Northwest Regional Director of the Master Forest Owner (MFO) Program



There are four basic habitat requirements for any species of wildlife: food, water, cover (or shelter), and usable space. Each species has its own individual requirements, but no matter how large or small your woods, there are projects and practices that you can incorporate into your woodlot activities to improve wildlife habitat.

Becoming familiar with the wildlife habitat features that already exist in your woodlot can begin by observing the behaviors of wildlife in your woodlot and the habitats they frequent. It's also helpful to map the different geological and hydrological features that exist on your property. Do you have rock outcroppings? What about streams, ponds, wetlands, or vernal pools? Inventory the tree species, shrubs, and groundcovers that produce nuts, berries or other food sources. You should also note the presence of standing dead or dying trees (snags) and fallen decomposing logs and large branches, or coarse woody debris (CWD). Once you've become familiar with

the features of your woodlot and have decided which species of wildlife you want to attract, you can begin to incorporate specific projects and practices into your woodlot activities that will provide wildlife with the food, water, cover, and space needed.

Food Tree and shrub species that produce mast, or seeds and fruits, are valuable sources of food for several different wildlife species. Hard mast, such as acorns, hickory nuts and beechnuts provide food for squirrels, chipmunks, turkeys, bears, and others. Soft mast produced by herbs and shrubs (e.g., raspberries and elderberries) may attract birds and bears, as well as butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds collecting pollen and feeding on nectar. Creating openings in your woodlot can increase shade-intolerant ("sun") tree species that provide hard mast at a younger age, and herbs and shrubs. If light and soil conditions are suitable in clearings, you can



plant native trees and shrubs valuable to the wildlife you want to attract. Cutting less desirable trees competing with food-producing trees, can promote their growth and health. Retaining some snags (where they don't present a safety hazard), will appeal to woodpeckers and other animals that feed on insects and fungi attracted to decaying wood.

Water

Animals have various ways of meeting their water needs, so the absence of open water in your woods does not mean that it won't be able to support wildlife. Some animals are able to get the water they need from food, others drink dew or raindrops, many utilize seeps and vernal (springtime) pools, or visit water sources on nearby properties. However, when creating or improving wildlife habitat, providing sources of water is important to incorporate when possible and if required by the wildlife species you want to attract.

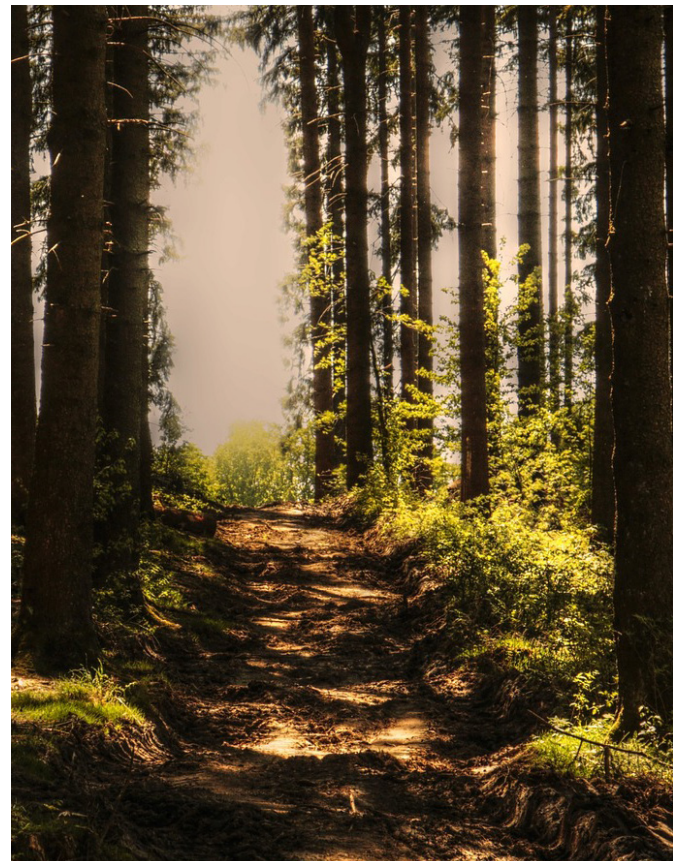
Cover

Wildlife use cover for protection from severe weather, escaping predators, raising their young, and a place to rest. Cover might be found in a brush pile, a hollow log, or a hole in a tree or the ground. Leaving some snags will provide habitat for cavity dwelling animals and several insects. Eventually, snags will fall and become part of the CWD, also referred to as coarse woody habitat (CWH) in your woodlot, which is useful to various wildlife species such as grouse who use them as drumming sites and opossums, rabbits, and skunks as denning sites. These decomposing logs also provide the moist, cool habitat needed by many reptiles and amphibians. When pruning or harvesting trees, leaving piles of brush and branches provides cover and den areas. Edge habitat, corridors, and wind breaks are also important cover features to consider.

Space

Some species of wildlife need large acreage, but space for attracting many wildlife species extends upwards beyond the amount of acreage your woodlot covers. Trees, shrubs, and vines provide vertical access and space for animals that climb and fly. Vertical structure can be increased through management practices such as thinning, which increases light, promoting understory growth.

Educational resources and technical services are available to assist you with projects and practices to increase wildlife habitat in your woodlot. Contact Laura Bailey, Northwest Regional Director of the Master Forest Owner (MFO) Program, at (315) 536-5123 or lb698@cornell.edu to schedule a free visit from a MFO volunteer. ■



Creating NYS Adapted Tomatoes with Resistance to Multiple Fungal and Bacterial Diseases

Martha A. Mutschler, Plant Breeding and Genetics Section, SIPS, Cornell University

Margaret McGrath, Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology Section, SIPS, Cornell University

One of the myriad challenges for tomato production in NYS is control of common fungal, oomycete, and bacterial diseases. Control of these diseases by routine application of fungicides contributes to the cost of production. Loss of marketable crop or crop quality can reduce sales and sales price. So reliable disease control, at minimal cost, is important for economic sustainability of tomato production.

The Cornell tomato breeding/genetics program has taken a multiple disease approach to reducing the need for fungicide sprays. Because there are several foliar diseases impacting tomato production, having a hybrid with resistance to one disease will reduce the need for fungicides with targeted activity for it, but not the need to apply broad-spectrum protectant fungicides and targeted fungicides for other diseases. Since late blight, early blight, and Septoria leaf spot are the most important fungal and oomycete diseases in NYS, we needed to breed for resistance to ALL THREE of these diseases to create lines and hybrids that could be grown conventionally with substantially reduced levels of fungicides, and also used in organic production with much less use of copper sprays.

The Cornell program is not a seed company; it does not create and market hybrids. When improved lines with useful new traits, in NYS adapted backgrounds, are developed, they are released to interested seed companies, which use them either as parents to create new hybrids or as breeding lines to create new lines that also possess the new traits, and can be used as parent of hybrids.

Using the lines that have been released since 2010, a number of hybrids with combined resistances to the three main diseases are now being sold by several seed companies. In this article, we list the hybrids currently being sold, and also summarize new traits being added to lines in development, that should result in new hybrids in the not too distant future.

Current Fresh Market Hybrids with Multiple Disease Resistance:

All of the hybrids developed to date using Cornell resistant lines, which are listed below, possess combined resistances to late blight and Septoria leaf spot, plus a strong tolerance to early blight that provides good protection of infection on stems and peduncles (the stems on fruit, which protects against internal infection of fruit) and lesser control of blighting of foliage. The hybrids also possess resistance to Verticillium and Fusarium wilts that is standard in modern tomato hybrids. The hybrids differ considerably in other traits, such as maturity and fruit size, which are unrelated to disease resistance.

Iron Lady (High Mowing Organic Seed) is the first of the resistant hybrids commercialized. This slicer type tomato hybrid was developed in cooperation with the tomato breeding program at NCSU, with Randy Gardner. See: <https://www.highmowingseeds.com/organic-non-gmo-iron-lady-f1-tomato-a.html>

Stellar (Pan American Seeds). This slicer, which was the second hybrid released, is different from Iron Lady in fruit size and maturity, and has improved flavor. See: https://www.panamseed.com/plant_info.aspx?phid=062000001010320

Brandy Wise (Fruition Seed Company) is the result of crossing the popular Heirloom Brandywine with a Cornell line. Eating quality is much like Brandywine, but the fruit have greatly reduced cracking and catface. While not commercialized until 2018, this hybrid was a hit for flavor in repeated trials before 2018, and it has become a favorite tomato for the Cornell Freeville research farm crew/staff members. See: <http://www.fruitionseeds.com/Organic-Brandywise-Tomato-p/t42.htm>

Summer Sweetheart (Fruition Seed Company, A relatively new NYS seed company) is a Campari type tomato that has superior flavor. It has an indeterminate vine, is earlier in maturity than the larger fruited hybrids, and is very productive. See <http://www.fruitionseeds.com/Organic-Summer-Sweetheart-Tomato-p/t43.htm>

Best use of these disease resistant hybrids: The early blight tolerance in these hybrids provides good protection on stems and peduncles; however, this tolerance provides only moderate control of blighting of foliage, so further control by applying fungicides could be needed. The Septoria leaf spot resistance is also strong in its suppression of lesion expansion, and fungal reproduction, but it does NOT prevent the initial lesion formation by this pathogen. Due to the mechanism underlying this resistance, the highest degree of disease control is obtained when the plants are separated from typical Septoria susceptible tomatoes. In our experiments, this separation can be a little as 15 to 20 feet upwind of the susceptible tomatoes. The late blight resistance is extremely strong.

Plum Perfect (High Mowing Organic Seed) is the most recent of the resistant hybrids to be commercialized with seed first available in 2019. The diseases for which it has resistance differs somewhat from the other hybrids: Verticillium, Fusarium (I1, I2 and I3 genes), late blight, root knot nematodes (Mi) bacterial speck (Pto), TSWV (Sw-5), as well as some early blight tolerance. This hybrid is extremely productive, with a heavy crop of large firm jointless fruit. Fruit have very good flavor and color, and can be used fresh chopped or cooked. It was developed in cooperation with the tomato breeding program at NCSU, with Randy Gardner. See: <https://www.highmowingseeds.com/organic-non-gmo-plum-perfect-f1-paste-tomato-a.html>.

Coming Attractions: Even as these hybrids were being commercialized, the Cornell program continued improving lines by adding additional resistances. We have transferred resistances to bacterial spot and to bacterial speck into our best late blight, early blight, and Septoria leaf spot resistance lines. Development of the resulting new lines was either completed in 2018 or will be completed by end of 2019. Bacterial diseases are notoriously difficult to manage with pesticides because the main one used, copper, is inherently not highly effective (contrasting with modern fungicides) and bacteria have proven adept at developing resistance, plus bacteria multiple rapidly. Consequently, having hybrids with bacterial disease resistance will not only enable growers to reduce their need to apply copper but will also



improve their ability to manage these important diseases. As we transferred the bacterial disease resistance, we unexpectedly discovered an additional resistance for early blight that is particularly effective at suppressing symptoms on leaves. Transfer of this additional early blight resistance into the best Cornell lines will be completed in 2019. As all of the new lines are completed, they are released to seed companies for creation of hybrids with combined bacterial/fungal disease resistance, and/or with substantially better early blight control. Time to release of new hybrids depends on the seed companies involved. ■

NOTE: The work at Cornell was supported, in part, by grants funded by NYSCG program and by NYFVI, as well as a grant from USDA/NIFA. Lines are being evaluated on Long Island by M. T. McGrath in the Hudson Valley by T. Rusinek. Growers will have an opportunity to see and taste fruit from the new hybrids and experimental lines during a late summer Twilight meeting at LIHREC.



GAP Assistance Available for NYS Producers

Specialty Crops Program – Cornell University

USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA) and Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) have partnered in an effort to increase market access and reduce the risks fruit and vegetable producers face by helping them pay for buyer-required food safety certifications. Under the program, USDA will cover the costs of voluntary USDA Harmonized GAP and Harmonized GAP Plus+ audits. These audits verify that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled and stored in the safest manner possible to minimize risks of food safety hazards.

RMA-AMS Harmonized GAP Assistance Q&A

What is RMA-AMS Harmonized GAP Assistance?

RMA-AMS Harmonized GAP Assistance is a joint effort by USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) and USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to increase market access for fruit and vegetable producers by helping them pay for buyer-required food safety certifications. Under the program, USDA will cover the costs of voluntary USDA Harmonized GAP and Harmonized GAP Plus+ audits. These audits verify that fruits and vegetables are produced, packed, handled and stored in the safest manner possible to minimize risks of food safety hazards. A food safety audit mitigates financial risk by diversifying

the types of markets that are open to the farm.

What producers are eligible to receive assistance through this program?

Under the Federal Crop Insurance Act, Congress authorized Agricultural Management Assistance funds to provide financial assistance for conservation and financial risk mitigation to producers in the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming.

This opportunity is limited to produce growers. It cannot be used by owners of storage/transportation facilities, cross dock facilities, wholesale distribution centers, or commercial packing/repacking operations. However, producer-owned ventures such as producer cooperatives and food hubs, where the producers are the owners of the entity, are exceptions and will be eligible to receive this assistance.

How do producers qualify?

This funding opportunity is designed to provide assistance to producers who plan to use a Harmonized GAP audit as part of their marketing plan to diversify marketing options and reduce their financial risk. If

you are seeking a Harmonized GAP or Harmonized GAP Plus+ audit as part of your marketing or market access plan, then this program is for you! AMS will not require a written marketing plan but will ask whether this audit is part of your marketing plan.

How will producers receive the funds?

AMS will provide credits to producers in these states on their USDA Harmonized GAP and USDA Harmonized GAP Plus+ audit starting on Jan. 2, 2019. Producers in eligible states will request audits and obtain audits by contacting their state or federal Specialty Crops Inspection Service office. Once the audit is finalized, USDA will generate a bill to the auditee which summarizes the cost breakdown of the audit, and then showing a credit for that same amount. A note will be added to the bill stating, "Cost of your 2019 USDA Harmonized GAP Audit covered by a bill credit made possible through a grant from the USDA Risk Management Agency Agricultural Management Assistance Program." Auditees in states where the state provides the audit would normally receive a bill from the state, but during the time this financial assistance is available, they will NOT receive a bill from the state, but only the one from USDA.

What will the funds cover?

The GAP Assistance Program will provide credits to producers for up to 100 percent of their audit fees for the Harmonized GAP or Harmonized GAP Plus+ audits, including auditor travel time and state or federal administrative expenses. The GAP Assistance Program fees may NOT be used to cover farm investments in time or equipment to meet the standard, nor for training and outreach or other activities not directly associated with conducting and completing the audit.

When will the assistance begin?

AMS will begin providing credits to producers in eligible states on their USDA Harmonized GAP and USDA Harmonized GAP Plus+ audit bills starting on Jan. 2, 2019.

How long will these funds be available?

The \$3.7 million is a one-time commitment of funds, available until funds are expended. Based on past usage, AMS is confident that we can offer 100 percent credits for producers receiving audits in 2019. Financial assistance for future years will be determined based on funds remaining and may involve a lower percentage of bill credits or changes in eligibility. Once the funds are expended, the program will no longer be available.

What if I already get a GAP cost-share from my state?

States eligible for AMA funding that use USDA Specialty Crop Block Grants to offer GAP cost share programs may submit a request to USDA Agricultural Marketing Service to use those funds for another eligible purpose. AMA-eligible states may not continue to offer a cost share option for Harmonized GAP and Harmonized GAP Plus+ during the period in which AMS and RMA are offering this financial assistance. For specific questions regarding GAP cost share from your state, contact your state department of agriculture contact.

How will the states that conduct the audits get paid?

For the states covered by this program for which the state department of agriculture conducts USDA GAP audits,

Continued on page 13





Continued from page 12

the state will NOT bill the producer for their Harmonized GAP or Harmonized GAP Plus+ audits. Instead, states will request reimbursement from USDA-AMS on a monthly basis using the AD-270 form. States that have not already done so will need to submit the "AMS Domestic EFT Vendor Enrollment Form" in order to set up an account allowing for electronic fund transfer reimbursement.

Why are RMA and AMS offering this program?

RMA-AMS Harmonized GAP Assistance is a joint effort by USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) and USDA Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS) to enhance market access for fruit and vegetable producers by defraying costs of undergoing voluntary USDA Harmonized Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) audits. A food safety audit is an important aspect of any farm marketing plan and will mitigate financial risk by expanding the number of market options available to the farm.

Why is the program focused on Harmonized GAP and Harmonized GAP Plus+ audits?

These are the two most comprehensive audits USDA offers. Both audits are aligned with the technical provisions in FDA's Food Safety Modernization Act (FSMA) Produce Safety Rule, meet the requirements for the Produce GAP Harmonization Initiative and demonstrate adherence to industry and FDA best practices. The USDA Harmonized GAP Plus+ audit additionally meets buyer requirements for Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) audits. One audit can meet a number of marketing needs for producers.

Why is the program focused on these 16 states?

Under the Agricultural Management Assistance Act (AMA), Congress authorized funds to provide financial assistance for conservation and financial risk mitigation to producers in the following states: Connecticut, Delaware, Hawaii, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Utah, Vermont, West Virginia and Wyoming. The AMA funding may be provided only for farms located in these states.

Can this program assist producers using GroupGAP?

These funds may be used in the eligible states for producers using the USDA GroupGAP Certification Program for Harmonized GAP and Harmonized GAP Plus+ audits to improve their marketing options. GroupGAP makes food safety certification accessible for small and middle-sized producers by allowing farmers, food hubs, and other marketing organizations to work together to undergo GAP certification as a group. This allows group members to pool resources to implement food safety training programs and share the costs associated with certification. ■



Friday, May 24 . 8:30am - 3:00pm
Saturday, May 25 . 8:30am - 2:00pm
First Presbyterian Church, One Symphony Circle

Great Plants, Great Prices -
 Huge Selection of Quality Plants Direct from
 the Gardens of Master Gardeners

*Perennials for sun and shade . Native Plants . Succulents .
 Hypertufa Pots . Vegetables, Herbs & Shrubs . Garden Art*

Bring your soil sample . pH testing available for \$2 per sample

For more information contact 716-652-5400 (x 177)

Changes Coming for Paraquat (Gramoxone) Use

Alice Wise & Andrew Senesac, CCE Suffolk

Edited by Elizabeth Buck, CVP

In 2016-17, the EPA issued (then amended) a decision concerning risk mitigation measures deemed necessary for continued use of paraquat herbicide. The changes involve the following:

1. Label changes to emphasize toxicity and supplemental warning materials.

2. An online training requirement for all users.

In-person training curriculum does not currently exist. Efforts to create one have begun. The EPA must approve the course before it can be taught. Therefore, it may be some time before we can offer trainings off-line.

- a. The training must be completed BEFORE purchasing and using any paraquat bearing a label with a training requirement.
- b. All manufacturers must have the new labels in place by Nov. 14, 2019.
- c. Training will be required every 3 years.

3. Closed system packaging will be required for all non-bulk (<120 gal) containers.

- a. This is a major safety upgrade for those who must transport and handle paraquat
- b. Label changes may include specific instructions for using the new, closed system packaging. Follow those directions carefully, they are there for your protection.
- c. Sale of containers without the closed packaging system will be discontinued in September 2020.

4. Only certified pesticide applicators will be allowed to apply paraquat.

5. Older product can be used up in accordance with its labeled directions, if those labels remain registered in NY.

**FOR MORE
INFORMATION**

www.epa.gov/pesticide-worker-safety/paraquat-dichloride-training-certified-applicators

www.epa.gov/ingredients-used-pesticide-products/paraquat-dichloride#action

Sources: US EPA Feb. 6, 2018 Memorandum Amendment to Paraquat Dichloride Human Health Mitigation Decision. March 8, 2019 Cornell Pesticide Program Update. Correspondence with Mike Helms, Cornell Pesticide Program.

American Farmland Trust Farmland for a New Generation Regional Navigators Project

Farmland for a New Generation New York, with support from Governor Cuomo and the State Legislature, is coordinated by American Farmland Trust (AFT) in partnership with the State of New York, Cornell Cooperative Extension, land trusts, agricultural organizations and others. Through its Regional Navigators efforts, AFT is partnering with organizations with staff dedicated to providing training and on the ground customized support for farmers and landowners in regions across NY to preserve farmland for future generations. A list of 2019 Regional Navigator Project partners is provided below. For assistance in Erie County, call our CCE office at 716-652-5400 x 150.

**Have farmland you would like to transfer to a new owner and keep in agriculture?
Or looking for land to launch your farm plans?**

**Create a profile at:
Nyfarmlandfinder.org**

AFT established this statewide web platform to facilitate transfer of farmland. Interested land owners or land seekers can create profiles with assistance from Regional Navigators and AFT staff and their informational will be available for viewing by others visiting the site.



Ready to Start the Farm Transfer Process?

- **Inventory Assets**
- **Identify Issues**
- **Choose Tools to help you succeed.**
- **Discuss Values and Set Goals**
- **Build a Resource Team**

Regional Navigators are here to help you get started. Examples of issues you might identify as you consider a farm transfer process: Development of management skills in the next generation, best structure for the operation to aid in transfer, how to value assets and finance their transfer to a new generation, is utilizing conservation easements an option for operation. Organization to consider for your resource team include NY FarmNet and NYS Agricultural Mediation Program.

There is no one size fits all approach. Remember, choosing to not make a decisions or start planning for a transfer is making a decision!

Statewide Regional Navigator Project Partners

Cornell Cooperative Extension (Broome, Cattaraugus, Dutchess, Erie, Essex, Madison, Tompkins, Capital District)	Glynwood
Agricultural Stewardship Association	Groundswell Center for Local Food & Farming
Columbia Land Conservancy	FARMroots, GrowNYC
Peconic Land Trust	Agriculture Stewardship Association
Pace University Food and Beverage Law Clinic	Seneca Trail Resource Conservation and Development Council
New York Agricultural Land Trust	Genesee Land Trust
	National Young Farmers Coalition

Chlorpyrifos (Lorsban) Update:

Dan Gilrein, CCE Suffolk Edited by Elizabeth Buck, CVP

NY State Bill A2477/S2156A banning all use of the organophosphate insecticide chlorpyrifos has passed through the State Senate and Assembly. As of April 8, 2019, it has not yet been signed into law. If signed into law, all uses of chlorpyrifos will be prohibited after one year.

Nationally, the court order to ban chlorpyrifos use across the country is set for re-examination by the Ninth Circuit Court. Given the activity surrounding the status chlorpyrifos, growers should use the 2019 field season to investigate which alternatives work best on their farms. ■

Cabbage Maggot

Cornell continues to work on alternative crop protection options, particularly trying to find an equally effective cabbage maggot control. Upstate, the restricted use pesticide Coragen (applied at 5 fl oz/A) provides suppression of cabbage maggots. Cultural practices, particularly rotation and avoiding planting into decaying cover crops, can reduce pressure.

Onion Maggot

Pest resistance to Lorsban has led many growers to switch to other products. Spinosad (Grp 5, FarMore) and cyromazine (Grp 17, Trigard) seed treatments offer control.

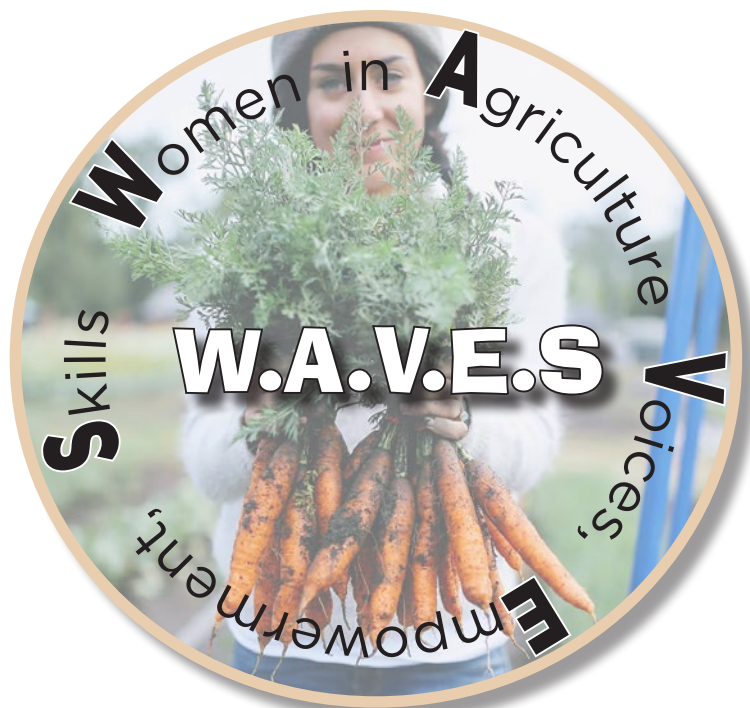
Swede Midge

Several products can be used in place of Lorsban, with little to no impact on your ability to rotate chemistry groups. Consider starting your treatment sequence with the acetamiprid (Grp 4A, Assail 30SG) as it performs best when used preventatively. Spirotetramat (Grp 23, Movento) is another non-restricted use option. Both imidicloprid (Grp 4A, Admire Pro) and lambda-cyhalothrin (Grp 3A, Warrior II w/Zeon Technology) have 2ee labels for swede midge and require a spray license.

Cutworms in Sweet Corn

Many management options exist, however there are none that replace Lorsban use prior to planting. At-planting and foliarly applied options are numerous.

CCE Erie and Cornell Vegetable Program are Partnering to Facilitate a Monthly Women's Discussion Group: W.A.V.E.S



Cornell Cooperative Extension
Cornell Vegetable Program

 **Farm Credit**
Northeast AgEnhancement

Cornell Cooperative Extension
Erie County

Each meeting will feature an established, innovative Farm-her leading the group on a tour of her operation and sharing her expertise on business management and production. Several guest speakers will be brought in to act as resource people for developing solutions to common production challenges.

The goals of the discussion group are to create a strong, professional resource network among farming women in western NY and to celebrate and recognize leading women growers.

Thanks to a grant from Farm Credit East's Northeast AgEnhancement program, participation is free and will include scouting materials and factsheets.

The selected crop themes are centered around horticultural production, with an emphasis on vegetables. Each meeting will include a snack break and time to explore topics of interest to the group. This group is open to anyone professionally farming, including employees, and FFA/4-H youth age 16 & up who plan a career in horticulture. ■

Date	Commodity	Business Specialty	Ag Skill	Farmer Host	Guest Experts, Affiliation
June 24 6 – 7:30 pm	Maple, Agroforestry	Event agritourism Marketing value-added products	Maple production Putting woodlots to work	Lynn Gabel Gabel's Maple Syrup <i>Lawtons, NY</i>	Sharon Bachman – CCE Erie
July 15 TBA	Small Fruit, Vegetables	Family farm transitions Diversified operation mgmt.	Fruit & vegetable production Insect control	Gayle & Naomi Thorpe Thorpe's Organic Family Farm <i>East Aurora, NY</i>	Abby Seaman – NYS IPM Center E. Buck – CVP
Aug 12 6:30 – 8 pm	Professional Ag Services	Avail. farm support services Crop loss - risk reduction	Building the farm support network	Picnic <i>East Aurora, NY</i>	NRCS, FarmNet, BASF, IPM Labs, Farm Bureau, Farm Credit East, CCE, Ag & Markets
Mid Sept.	Vegetables	Labor management	Crop protection Soil health	TBA	TBA E. Buck – CVP
Sept. 30 6-7:30 pm	Apples, Vegetables	Social media marketing Passive farm income	Season extension Managing CSAs Tarping	Bree Bacon McCollum Orchards <i>Lockport, NY</i>	Liz Tee – Lake Ontario Fruit Program E. Buck – CVP
Nov. 11 TBA	Christmas Trees, Wreaths	Building client relationships Off-season & auxiliary income streams	Tree mgmt. Wreath making	Megan Burley Burley's Berries & Blooms <i>Warsaw, NY</i>	CCE Erie staff

To register, call Cornell Coop. Extension of Erie County, 716-652-5400. Cost: FREE! thanks to Farm Credit's AgEnhancement Grant program.

Farm to School Program Development Support

Cheryl Thayer, Harvest NY



Farm to School (F2S) efforts are catalyzing across New York, with much of this recent interest being ignited through Governor Cuomo's No Student Goes Hungry Program, a key provision of which is the \$.25 per lunch served incentive to those schools that purchase at least 30% of their lunch ingredients from NY farms and food processors (who's product is comprised of 51% NY farm ingredients). Prior to this incentive (for 40+ years), school's received a stagnant \$.06 per lunch served, so this additional \$.19 is serving as a tremendous driver to localize cafeteria supply chains as much as possible.

This robust incentive, though certainly attainable, will take

some work to achieve. Thankfully, there's a plethora of support out there to assist growers, food processors, food distributors, and food service directors. Harvest NY has been leading F2S program development since we formed in 2012. We're happy to share our knowledge and experience across the state, so please feel empowered to reach out should you want to launch or expand F2S programming in your county. Services we can assist with include:

- ❖ F2S program development, from A-Z
- ❖ Assistance with finding and sourcing NY farm products and menu (re)development to incorporate them
- ❖ Assistance with developing and responding to food service bids that give preference to NY farm products
- ❖ Assistance, to growers, in learning how to efficiently and profitably get their products into school cafeterias
- ❖ Best practices to bridge the 3C's of F2S: the cafeteria, the community, the classroom

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Speaking of resources, did you know you could use all of the marketing materials generated through the Buffalo F2S program? Posters like the ones above, plus infographics and nutritional newsletters are available for 13 items. They can be found on Harvest NY's website.

OAK WILT: Don't Prune, Wound or Cut Down Oaks in Spring and Summer

Laura Bailey, Natural Resources Educator, Yates County Cornell Cooperative Extension & Regional Director of the Master Forest Owner Program, Northwest Region

The arrival of spring brings with it the reminder of oak wilt, as the disease becomes active during this season. Oak wilt was first detected in New York State in 2008, in Glenville, Schenectady County. In 2016, oak wilt was discovered in multiple locations on Long Island: Islip, Riverhead, and Southold in Suffolk County, and Brooklyn in Kings County. It was also detected in the Finger Lakes region, in Ontario County, during 2016. In 2018, there was another finding of oak wilt in Ontario County. Oak wilt was first discovered in the U.S. in Wisconsin in 1944, but where it originated is still unknown. It currently occurs in 24 states in the eastern U.S. and is not known to occur elsewhere.

WHAT IS OAK WILT?

Oak wilt is a disease that affects trees in the oak genus (*Quercus*) and is caused by a fungus (*Ceratocystis fagacearum*) that grows in the xylem, or water-carrying cells, of oak trees. The fungus prevents the flow of water and nutrients through infected trees, clogging the xylem cells and causing the leaves to wilt. Wilting usually starts at the outer portions of branches, located at the top of the tree crown, and progresses downward. Leaves begin to turn reddish-brown along the tip and edges, spreading toward the midrib and base of the leaf. This process occurs rapidly in trees in the red oak group, causing them to drop their leaves in the spring and summer months, which is not typical. Leaves may still be partly green when they drop. Substantial wilting and leaf loss can occur in as little as 4 weeks in red oaks.

WHAT TREES ARE MOST SUSCEPTIBLE?

The genus of oak trees is divided into two groups: red and white. Red oaks (including red, scarlet, pin, and black oak, etc.) are most severely affected by oak wilt, the disease being fatal to these trees, dying within a few weeks to six months. White oaks (including white, chestnut oak and bur oak, etc.) are less vulnerable, often able to survive years with the disease, and it is much less likely to spread to nearby trees in the white oak group.



Spore pads beneath bark of infected wood.



Graphic of Oak Wilt symptoms in A. White Oak and B. Red Oak from DEC. NY.COM

HOW DOES OAK WILT SPREAD?

Oak wilt is spread primarily through root-to-root connections between oak trees, which occurs more often among red oaks than white oaks. Oak roots that are in close proximity commonly graft together, which is beneficial for sharing nutrients, but unfortunately creates a pathway for spread of oak wilt disease. Spread of the disease is assisted by sap feeding beetles and bark beetles. Sap feeding beetles are attracted to freshly wounded trees, to feed on the sap. The oak wilt fungus creates fungal spore mats under the bark of infected oak trees, and in the last stages of disease, the bark splits open to reveal these mats. The mats emit a sweet odor that attracts sap beetles to feed, and as they feed, fungal spores attach to them. The beetles transport spores to uninfected areas (a fresh wound is required by the fungus in order to invade) and once infected, the disease can then spread underground through root grafts.

WHAT CAN I DO?

The best way to deal with oak wilt is prevention. Learn to recognize the symptoms of oak wilt and be on the

lookout. Avoiding pruning, wounding or cutting down oak trees in the spring and summer when spore mats are present and beetles are the most active. Prune only during November through March. Be careful with the lawnmower and weed-whacker. If possible, put off construction activities around oaks until late summer. If an oak becomes wounded, it should be sealed immediately with wound dressing. The beetles can potentially find fresh wounds in less than a half-hour. The disease can also be transported in logs and firewood. Adhere to the NYS firewood regulation which limits firewood movement to no more than fifty miles. If you suspect that an oak tree is infected with oak wilt, contact DEC Forest Health at (866) 640-0652. For more information about oak wilt, visit DEC online at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/46919.html> ■

Cornell
Cooperative
Extension

CONCORD VINEYARD IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM



Agriculture
and Markets

\$1.325 million to Concord Grape Growers for Vineyard Improvements – to remove unwanted Concord vineyards and replant grape varieties or other agricultural crops.

Concord vineyards of an acre or more of land. Active or abandoned. Live and/or dead vines.

Rolling application period. First come first served, until funds are expended. Priority will be given to abandoned vineyards close to vineyards in commercial production.

Applications accepted **Oct. 15, 2018 through Oct. 15, 2022.**

Each eligible project must not exceed \$50,000

Funding is up to **\$3,000 per vineyard acre** which includes:

- 50% of removal cost of Concord grape vines up to \$1,500

- 25% of replanting cost up to \$1,500 (trellis, plant material, labor) Seed costs are not eligible.

- Removal projects should be completed within 12 months of approval.

- Replant projects should be completed within 36 months of approval.

To be eligible a **business plan** must show an increase in production, enhanced farm profitability and/or increased environmental compatibility of the farm operation or IPM compatibility with neighboring vineyards.

To apply go to **lergp.com** and click on the **Vineyard Improvement Program** tab on the left, or enter **lergp.com/vineyard-improvement-program/**

Vineyard Improvement Region of New York State includes:

Allegany, Broome, Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, Chemung, Chenango, Delaware, Erie, Niagara, Steuben, Schuyler, Tompkins, and Tioga Counties

Funding provided by the Southern Tier Agricultural Industry Enhancement Program



We're certainly not the only ones in NY that can assist. To that end, we compiled a list of F2S contacts across the state. The list, which can be found on Harvest NY's website, includes people that serve in various geographic capacities, ranging from statewide support, to regional support, to county-specific support. Please feel free to reach out to any name on this list, as all have committed to being a public resource to those that need assistance. F2S takes a village, and thankfully ours in NY continues to grow.

A new statewide F2S Program Work Team (F2S PWT) launched in early 2019, being co-led by: Mo Tidball (*CCE Seneca County*), Cheryl Thayer (*CCE Harvest NY*), Violet Stone (*Cornell Small Farms Program*), Kacey Deamer (*Cornell Small Farms Program, LRFS*), Heidi Mouillesseaux-Kunzman (*Cornell LRFS, Community and Regional Development Institute*), Julie Raway (*Broome Tioga BOCES, New York School Nutrition Association, and the National Farm to School Network*), Stephanie Hsu (*Farm to Institution NYS, American Farmland Trust*), and Anu Rangarajan (*Cornell Small Farm Program, LRFS*). The F2S PWT was formed to connect and support those working to advance F2S in NY through research and education, shared learning, collaboration, and peer support. Exciting things to expect from the PWT in the coming year is a revamped statewide F2S website, quarterly educational webinars, and the first ever, statewide F2S conference. Another value the PWT affords is an active listserv, connecting members to one another across the state. To learn more about the PWT and become a part of it, as it's open to anyone, please contact Mo Tidball via email at mmt65@cornell.edu. ■



About the Buffalo Farm to School Program:

The Buffalo Farm to School initiative brings healthy, local, and fresh food to schools in Buffalo. The initiative connects schools, farms, and community partners to improve student nutrition through agriculture, health, and nutrition education, and to strengthen our economy by supporting local farmers and food producers. What began as a small scale pilot in 11 of the district's schools in 2014 has since expanded to all schools serviced by the Food Service Department. To date, the Farm to School program has intentionally sourced more than \$1.25M in fresh produce alone, with millions more per year going to support the New York dairy industry. Evolving every year, the program will now be sourcing local protein and is exploring options to support the local grain industry as well. The core Buffalo Farm to School team is comprised of individuals from the following organizations: Buffalo Public Schools Food Service Department & Wellness Teams, Cornell Cooperative Extension Harvest NY, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County, D'Youville College, and the Genesee Valley BOCES' Creating Healthy Schools and Communities initiative.

Erie County Contacts

- Cheryl Thayer
Harvest NY
cbt32@cornell.edu, (716) 652-5400 x 134
- Becky O'Connor
CCE Erie Farm to School Coordinator
rao84@cornell.edu, (716) 652-5400 x 179



Photo by Josh Baldo courtesy of American Farmland Trust

Local Beef, It's What's For Lunch in Buffalo

Cheryl Thayer, Harvest NY

Buffalo Public School students were treated to something a little special this Valentine's Day, in a promotional event that exemplified the core tenets of our Buffalo Farm to School (F2S) program: local procurement, food systems education and community engagement. The Valentine's Day event was an addendum to our annual F2S Chef Competition, which pairs students up with local Chef's and challenges them to create a school lunch that highlights the use of locally farmed ingredients, while adhering to the USDA nutritional guidelines. After going through a three-week culinary arts training program, the students are paired up with a local chef the day of. The 'basket' ingredients this year were locally raised beef and locally grown winter squash. Chef Andy Montesano and this team of students took 1st place at the challenge with their butternut squash infused meatloaf, topped with a honey ketchup glaze. This award winning dish made its cafeteria debut on Valentine's Day to 5,000 students, aged K-8. Prior to lunch service, 2nd graders were treated to a special learning journey, with beef as the star of the show. The morning began with a fun and engaging nutrition education lesson provided by Cindy Phillips, of the NY Beef Council, and followed with a cooking demo provided by Chef Andy.

The Buffalo F2S program, which catalyzed in 2014, has primarily been focused on the purchase of local produce, with local proteins always an end goal, but one that existed further down our timeline, namely due to infrastructure constraints and staff capacity, common barriers to F2S expansion in institutional kitchens. This event, which was intended to be promotional and educational in nature, ended up being the necessary baby step to instill in the food service staff, the knowledge and confidence that handling raw proteins safely and efficiently was in fact, an attainable next step in our F2S program. For more information on the Valentine's Day event, please check out local news coverage of it here and if you'd like to test Chef Andy's recipe, it can be found on Buffalo's F2S website. Fun fact, I prepared the recipe for my kids, ages 5 and 2, and never have I seen plates of butternut squash cleared so fast!

Buffalo's Board of Education Awards Food Bids to Local Farmers and Small Food Producers in the Amount of \$1,113,537

On April 17th, the Buffalo Board of Education accepted a



Pictured: Julia Van Loon of Slate Foods has been instrumental in helping schools source the center of the plate from NY farms. A resident of NYC, Julia journeyed to Buffalo to assist Chef Andy Montesano serve West Hertel Academy students his 1st place winning dish, butternut squash infused meatloaf, prepared with beef from Slate Foods. Another great example of how meaningful partnerships further advance the pillars of our F2S program; in this case, another critical link in effective F2S programming, that of the cafeteria and the community.

series of recommendations put forth by Bridget O'Brien Wood, Food Service Director with Buffalo Public Schools, awarding food-related bids to local farmers and small food producers in the amount of \$1,113,537.

The Farm to School program, now in its 5th year, took a giant leap forward this year in preparation for the 2019-20 school year. The Food Service Department not only increased its demand for locally grown produce to the tune of \$457,021 but also requested 130,000lbs of local beef, resulting in the award of \$656,516 to local farmers and food producers. Collectively, these awards account for 8% of Buffalo's total food budget, which coupled with their New York dairy purchases and other New York food purchases, positions the District to achieve Governor Cuomo's "30% initiative", as part of his No Student Goes Hungry Program. This, in turn, will qualify the District to receive approximately \$1,000,000 in reimbursement, to then be reinvested into the food service department.

The majority of the bids were awarded to five New York-based businesses:

- **Eden Valley Growers/Western NY Food Hub (Eden)**, a 60-year old vegetable cooperative that works with 25+ local farmers, who is partnering with Fruit Fresh Up





Continued on page 27 >>



Risk Management Programs FOR BEEKEEPERS 2019 Crop Year, NY



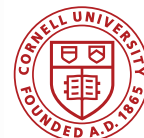
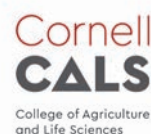
Beekeepers in New York state have several options for risk management programs:

You are covered for:	 Low Levels of Rainfall	 Reduced Revenue	 ColonyLoss	 Reduced Honey Yield
Program name:	Apiculture Crop Insurance (API)	Whole Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) Insurance	Emergency Assistance for Livestock, Honeybees, and Farm-raised Fish Program (ELAP)	Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP)
Approx. cost to protect 10 colonies:	\$59*	Depends on revenue	No cost	\$325**
What (min.) triggers a payment?***	10-30% lower rainfall than average	15-50% insured revenue losses	22% colony losses (due to colony collapse or natural disaster)	35-50% yield losses
How much is the payment for?	(% of insured lost rainfall) x 60-150% of \$120 per hive	(% of insured lost revenue) x total expected revenue	Pays up to \$140/colony, \$258/hive, and 60-90% of replacement feed costs	(% of insured lost yield) x 55% OR 100% of market price
Benefits for beginning farmers:	Reduced premiums, fees waived	Reduced premiums, fees waived	Increased payments for losses	Reduced premiums, fees waived
Deadline:	Enroll by November 15	Enroll by March 15	After a disaster, apply within 30 days and before Nov. 1	2019CY: Enroll in buy-up by May 24, 2019 2020CY: Enroll by Dec. 1, 2019
Coverage offered by:	Private crop insurance agent	Private crop insurance agent	Farm Service Agency (FSA)	Farm Service Agency (FSA)
Reporting:	Payments sent automatically (no reporting)	Report lost revenue within 72 hours	Report colony losses within 30 days	Report lost yield within 15 days

*In Livingston County **For 50% coverage level at 60% of price, buy-up coverage requires additional premium

***Based on selected coverage level

Cornell University delivers crop insurance education in New York State in partnership with the USDA Risk Management Agency. Diversity and Inclusion are a part of Cornell University's heritage. We are an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and Individuals with Disabilities.

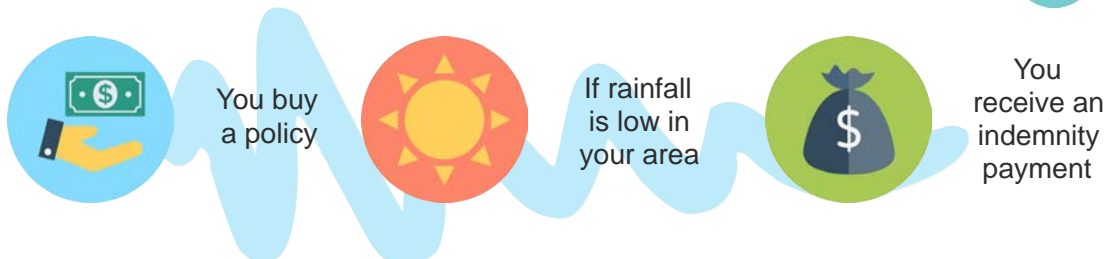


Apiculture Crop Insurance (API)

Dry weather conditions can limit your bees' forage intake and honey output. If rainfall** levels are low, you receive a payment to help you continue production.



How it works:



How Rainfall is Measured

When you enroll in API, you receive an automatic payment when rainfall levels drop below a given percent of average levels. The USDA Risk Management Agency (RMA) which implements the program uses a grid system of approximately 17 x 17 square mile sections to track rainfall levels. You receive a payment based on the average rainfall in your section of the grid, referred to as your "grid." Find your grid at <http://cli.re/6QxJdP>



What to Insure

Colonies: You do not need to insure all the colonies in your operation to benefit from API insurance. The industry standard is to insure at least 66% of colonies to ensure a minimum base of productive colonies.



Months: Producers may choose which months to insure with a minimum of two, two-month intervals. Most beekeepers insure enough intervals to cover the entire year.

Coverage levels: You can purchase coverage at levels from 70-90%. "Coverage level" refers to the percentage of average rainfall that triggers a payment. Most beekeepers choose 90%. At this level, if rainfall in your grid is below 90% of the average rainfall, you receive an automatic payment. The value of your payment depends on the productivity level you select, from 60-150% of base values. (NY base values for 2019 are \$120/colony.)



Reporting

No reporting is necessary. Payments are mailed automatically based on the rainfall in your grid.



Cost Sharing

To make crop insurance affordable for farmers, the federal government pays for a portion of your premium costs. This support covers up to 59% of your premium.



Enrollment

The deadline is November 15. To enroll, contact a crop insurance agent. Find an agent using the Agent Locator tool at <http://cli.re/gzPVWY>



Learn More

Find crop insurance information at agriskmanagement.cornell.edu

**The term "rainfall" includes all forms of precipitation.



Dairy Food Processing and Marketing

First Quarter Program Updates

from Harvest NY Quarterly Highlights

Grocery store shelves are stocked with foods from all over the world. Having a global economy includes food, and food produced in New York is traveling all across the country and beyond. These global opportunities come with food safety challenges. How do retailers across the world know that their imported foods meet proper food safety standards?

In 2000, food industry leaders collaborated to address this issue by creating a set of standards that are recognized worldwide as being the foundation for food safety. Collectively, these standards are referred to as the Global Food Safety Initiative (GFSI) standards. In the United States, many companies have employed a program called Safe Quality Foods (SQF) to help them meet these GFSI standards. SQF is a certifying body with its own set of standards that goes above and beyond regulatory requirements. SQF facilities are audited annually to ensure their food safety and quality programs adhere to the GFSI standards. It is imperative that our dairy processors score well on these audits to stay competitive because many of their customers are requiring SQF or GFSI certification. Facilities that receive an SQF score of 70-85% receive a “C – complies”, but are required to have a six-month surveillance audit to ensure that they are remaining compliant to the GFSI standards. Any plant receiving a score of 69% or less, fails their audit and has its certification withdrawn. Plants are required by their customers to provide a copy of their certificate as well as their score annually. The better the plant scores on their audit, the more likely they are to retain their customers. Grocery chains and wholesale

customers are placing more emphasis than ever before on food safety, and they are using this auditing tool to ensure their stores are stocked with GFSI compliant food. This has become so important, that many plants have full-time staff hired with the sole responsibility of managing GFSI programs.

The Harvest NY dairy processing specialists have worked with multiple plants across the state to help them prepare for their SQF audits. These preparations were comprised of various activities such as:

- Holding food safety and quality workshops
- Conducting On-site food safety and food quality plan reviews
- Performing on-site mock audits
- One-on-one consultation for plan development

The above activities target multiple levels of personnel in facilities. Management commitment to food safety and quality is critical. It is also crucial for plant staff to

fully understand the set of standards, or code, that the SQF auditors will be expecting the plant to meet or exceed. Our workshops are held to instruct dairy plant employees about the code and best practices for organizing materials to help audits run smoothly.

SQF has become such a large focus for maintaining business for dairy plants, that we held a workshop in January titled, “Improving Audit Outcomes”. This workshop covered how to best prepare for audits, what auditors are looking for, and common pitfalls plants can avoid. Dairy processing specialists trained in the SQF code are able to perform a mock audit, about 3 to 4 months prior to the actual audit to identify opportunities for improvement. The mock audits help

It is imperative that our dairy processors score well on these audits to stay competitive...

the staff prepare by running through an actual audit scenario. After some mock audits were completed, plants requested one-on-one consultation to address areas that were identified as critically important for their upcoming audit.

The one-on-one trainings were crucial in one facility to help develop staff that had recently been promoted to new roles. The work of the Harvest NY dairy processing specialists has helped many plants significantly improve their audit scores. One NY cheese plant saw a 6-point jump in their score from 2018– 87% to 93%. Meanwhile,

a NY yogurt plant saw their 2018 score of 86% jump to 96% in 2019. In fact, the staff from the yogurt plant stated that the on-campus training “set us off on the right foot”. The plant will be able to leverage their newly acquired “E-excellent” rating to obtain new customers in addition to retaining their current customers. This will help NY State maintain its status as the #1 producer of yogurt in the country.

Harvest NY dairy processing specialists will continue to assist our dairy plants looking to improve or maintain their SQF audit scores. ■

Cornell Cooperative Extension Harvest New York

Workshop

Participants Location

Preventive Controls for Qualified Individuals	14	Watertown, NY
Improving Audit Outcomes	15	Ithaca, NY
Dairy Science and Sanitation	32	Ithaca, NY
Food Defense	12	Ithaca, NY
Artisan Food Safety Planning	12	Plattsburgh, NY
Value Added Products	13	Watertown, NY
Dairy Basics	10	Pittsford Dairy Pittsford, NY
Hazard Analysis Critical Control Points	23	Yancey's Fancy Corfu, NY
Allergen Training	23	HP Hood Vernon, NY
Environmental Monitoring Programs	3	Keeseville, NY

10 Workshops—157 Participants representing New York State farms and businesses

(Depew) to minimally process and deliver to Buffalo's 80+ schools.

- **Wardynski's (Buffalo)**, a family-owned and operated business since 1919, who will be custom making gourmet hotdogs for the District, free of nitrates, artificial ingredients, and preservatives
- **Headwater Food Hub (Rochester)**, a certified B-Corp who works collaboratively with a network of regional farmers and food producers to coordinate a "Good Food System" that delivers top-quality, sustainable foods year-round.
- **Slate Foods (NYC)**, who partners with a consortium of farms and processors in various regions through the state to provide schools with New York Grown & Certified beef, free of growth-promoting antibiotics and hormones.
- **Empire State Farms (New York Mills)**, a new food processing venture between two 3rd generation farms in Central NY, who is providing wholesale and institutional markets with access to locally raised meat products.

Other awardees include Peterson Farms Fresh, located in Michigan, who is supplying the district with sliced New York apples, and Latina Boulevard Produce (Tonawanda), who has a long-standing relationship as the primary produce

distributor to the District. Local food offered on the lunch tray is hardly a new concept in Buffalo Public Schools; however, what has changed is that it's surpassed just being a featured item only, and is now a staple on the weekly menu. On any given day, locally grown, raised, and minimally processed items can be found on the meal tray, supporting the local economy and providing the 30K+ students with greater access to healthy, local food. ■



Pictured: Cindy Phillips of the New York Beef Council teaches 2nd graders about the nutritional value of beef. Did you know beef is high in protein, zinc and iron? These 2nd graders now do! Effective and sustainable F2S programs hinge on the strength of community partners. We're grateful to have agriculture associations, like the NY Beef Council, lend their resources and expertise, in this case, helping us to forge the critical link between the cafeteria and the classroom.

Blueberry Growers: Blueberry Maggot Monitoring Model Developed for NY

Julie Carroll with NYS IPM has developed a blueberry maggot model for NEWA that will alert growers when to hang traps to monitor for this insect. Monitoring is an excellent approach because this insect is spotty in its occurrence in NY and not finding it would eliminate the need to spray. Knowing it's arrived will greatly improve spray timing, as well.

To find this new tool, go to NEWA, <http://newa.cornell.edu/>, click on Pest Forecasts menu item and choose Blueberry Maggot from the drop down list. On the left or via the hamburger menu on a phone, choose the state, weather stations, and date of interest to get the model results. The model will default to today's date.

This model is a hybrid between the new website rebuild and the old website. Julie and her team are redesigning and rebuilding NEWA, so look for a brand new website in 2020!

[Also note: Sharon Bachman is again participating in the statewide spotted wing drosophila monitoring project. She will be putting out her traps in the West Falls area around May 15th.]

Grape to School

Becky O'Connor, Farm to School Coordinator CCE Erie

A Grape-to-School pilot project announced by Governor Cuomo in May aims to bolster the Concord grape industry in New York while introducing a new locally produced product to school meals. The impetus for Grape-to-School came during the April 2018 New York State Concord Grape Summit, where grape growers, researchers, and industry leaders came together with state officials to consider current challenges to industry growth and explore potential opportunities for Concord grape growers. At that time research initiatives, investments, and promotions were announced, including a plan for the State to invest in Market Development Grants. In December 2018, American Farmland Trust, GrowNYC, and NY Wine and Grape Foundation were named as the recipients of these Market Development Grants, which totaled \$114,000 and would be focused on promoting the use of NY Concord grapes in schools, restaurants, and the craft beverage industry.

Growing Grape (Juice)

Meanwhile, in spring 2018 Westfield Made Cooperative, a Concord grape marketing cooperative in the Lake Erie grape growing region, reached out to the NY State Department of Agriculture and Markets for assistance finding a manufacturing partner who would develop their supply chain to distribute grape juice made using their Concord grapes throughout the NY State school system. NYSDAM connected Westfield Made with Direct Refreshments LLC, a beverage manufacturer based in Long Island.

Throughout the summer, Direct Refreshments conducted basic market research to assess interest among school food service, and to project usage. Responses indicated that schools were interested in additional shelf-stable, single-serve NY grape juice products which would join the Welch's Grape Slush and Welch's 4oz grape juice cup, both made with NY grapes, on cafeteria shelves. They gathered input from partners at Cornell Cooperative Extension, NY State Department of Education, NYSDAM, and school districts to come up with a name for the product line (NY Juice Co.) and flavor (Growing Grape). They focused on designing the packaging specifically for schools which would include an insertable straw, a feature attractive in school settings where peel back lids can result in sticky spills (and dreaded grape juice stains). In January small groups at Buffalo Public Schools, Hamburg Central Schools, Beacon Central Schools, and Oneida-Herkimer BOCES received samples of 3 potential Growing Grape juice products, and selected a robust Concord

grape flavor as their favorite. The final product is NY Grown and Certified, and is distributed through Sysco.

Piloting Grape to School

NYSDAM and American Farmland Trust, who are supporters of Farm to Institution efforts state-wide, have provided funding to 10 school districts to pilot the NY Juice Co. Growing Grape juice. Districts are using the funding to help support taste tests and educational activities. On May 2nd, Hamburg Central School District hosted a special NY Thursday event at Armor Elementary which included representation from their School Board and administration, Assemblyman Ryan's office, Farm to Institution NYS, American Farmland Trust, Seeds of Living Education, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Harvest NY, and Slate Foods. The event featured a full NY lunch menu including NY Concord grape juice from NY Juice Co., NY 100% beef hot dogs from Slate Foods, NY Bandit Beans from Genesee Valley Bean Company, NY Chips from Marquart Farms, and NY milk from Upstate Farms. Students voted on the grape juice (they loved it), and chatted with the special guests about the NY products offered on the menu. Hamburg CSD is planning to use remaining funds on educational activities outside the cafeteria. The event was an excellent reflection of the enthusiasm around Farm to School, and the extensive support from school districts, local government, industry partners, and agricultural agencies. ■



Photo by Nancy J. Parisi, courtesy of American Farmland Trust.

The State of the Agricultural Workforce in New York

- Richard Stup, Agricultural Workforce Specialist, Cornell College of Agriculture and Life Sciences
- Jennifer Ifft, Assistant Professor and Mueller Family Sesquicentennial Faculty Fellow in Agribusiness and Farm Management, Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University
- Thomas Maloney, Senior Extension Associate, Charles H. Dyson School of Applied Economics and Management at Cornell University

We gratefully acknowledge research assistance from Chenyang Cao and Beril Yalcinkaya.

Introduction

The agricultural workforce is critically important to the current and future success of New York's agricultural industry and, by extension, rural communities across the state. The workforce is very diverse with people from many cultures, languages, experiential and educational backgrounds, and job types all contributing to the agricultural economy and to our local, regional, and international food networks. This publication summarizes the current state of New York's agricultural workforce based on available data, research reports, and the knowledge of the authors. It also provides a brief review of previous research into the effects of new overtime requirements.

Why is Agriculture Important?

Agriculture contributes over \$5.4 Billion dollars to the New York State economy (DiNapoli 2015). Most of that income is concentrated in rural areas of the state that may lack other sources of income. The money is circulated in small towns and communities where it supports other businesses and jobs. Farms directly create jobs in rural communities, and support other economic activities that create even more jobs. Of course, the farms of New York produce fresh, quality local food to support the health and well-being of all New Yorkers.

Why is the Agricultural Workforce Important?

Modern agriculture depends on people to make it run. From large dairy operations that help to grow our yogurt industry to local vegetable farms that depend on seasonal labor, the agricultural workforce is essential to farms of all kinds in our state. Farms differ dramatically in how much labor they use

depending on their type of production. Fruit and vegetable farms depend on more labor than dairy farms and much more than grain farming. Table 1 depicts how labor makes up a different share of total operating expenses for different types of farms. Nurseries, fruit, vegetable and dairy farming are all important in New York and highly dependent on labor, beef cattle ranching and grain farming are more typical of Midwestern states, more mechanized and less dependent on labor.

What Types of Farm Employers are in New York?

According to the 2012 USDA Census of Agriculture (www.nass.usda.gov), the most recent data available, New York had 35,537 farms, with 18,652 in crop production and 16,885 in animal production. Most farms in the state (34,356) were family-owned and family members worked in all types of positions. The state's farms were operated by 55,970 principal farm operators, and of that group 37,220 were men and 18,750 were women. Over 12,000 of them were younger than 44 years of age. Table 2 provides a summary of the 35,537 farm businesses in New York by farm type, quite small operations such as small hay farms are included in this data and account for the relatively large number of "other crop farms."

What is the Nature of Farm Jobs in New York?

Farms in New York vary in the types of jobs they offer. The size of the farm business and the kind of products grown or produced are major factors determining the nature of the workforce. Farms are small businesses and they typically offer jobs that fit into three general types: senior and middle-managers, and frontline employees. Senior managers are

Table 1. Labor's share of operating expenses for selected agricultural sectors in the U.S. (Zahniser, 2018).

Sector	Share of total operating expenses		
	Contract labor*	Hired labor	Total (contract plus hired)
Greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture production	2.8	37.6	40.4
Fruit and tree nut farming	14.7	24.0	38.7
Vegetable and melon farming	8.3	18.8	27.1
Dairy cattle and milk production	0.5	9.6	10.2
Beef cattle ranching and farming	1.0	4.9	5.9
Oilseed and grain farming	0.5	4.0	4.5

* Contract labor is defined as workers indirectly hired through farm labor contractors.

Table 2. Number of farms in New York by farm type. (2012 USDA Census of Agriculture)

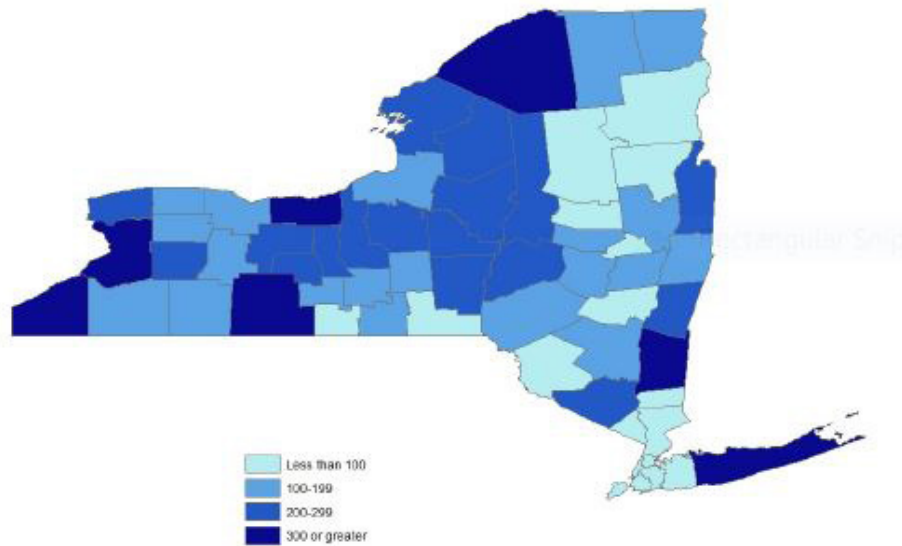
Farm type	Number of operations
Other crop farms (includes hay farms)	9,335
Dairy farms	4,694
Beef farms and feedlots	4,596
Horse farms	4,079
Oilseed and grain farms	2,686
Greenhouse, nursery, and floriculture operations	2,322
Fruit and tree nut farms (includes grapes)	2,278
Vegetable and melon farms	2,031
Sheep and goat farms	1,120
Poultry and egg farms	882
All other animal operations	846
Hog farms	422
Apiculture operations	187
Aquaculture farms	59

Not all types of farms depend on hired farm employees in the same way. As we learn from Table 1, greenhouses and nurseries, fruit, vegetable, and dairy farms all have relatively high expenditures for labor and these industries also have the largest numbers of hired farm employees. Farms that produce commodities such as hay and grains are more mechanized and less dependent on labor.

Figure 1 provides a visual display of how the number of farm operations with hired farm employees are distributed across the state. The darker shaded counties represent those with higher numbers of farm employers and roughly correspond with concentrations of dairy, fruit, vegetable, and nursery operations.

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Figure 1. Number of farms with hired farm employees. (2012 USDA Census of Agriculture)



>> Continued from page 30

often also owners and they are responsible for overall strategy and management of the business. Middle managers are skilled employees who use their specialized knowledge and make decisions in the production of crops and livestock, they often are responsible for supervising other employees. Senior- and middlemanagers are usually year-round jobs on all types of farms.

Frontline employees perform most of the physical and hand labor that farm work still requires. In dairy farms most frontline jobs are year-round but there are also some jobs in crop production that are more seasonal in nature. In fruit, vegetable, and crop farms many frontline jobs are seasonal. For example, an apple orchard may have a small group of workers who start production by pruning trees in February and March, then continue with fertilizing, spraying, and other general farm tasks in the spring and summer months.

Apples become ready for harvest and packing in the fall, but harvest is too much work for the small group of employees who started in late winter and worked through the summer. A large group of employees must be assembled in the fall to harvest apples and other tree fruits. Vegetable farms may need a relatively large group of employees starting in the spring for field preparation and planting, and that large group may be needed all summer and into fall for ongoing weeding, spraying, fertilizing, harvesting, processing and packing of the vegetables.

What are the Sources of Hired Farm Labor?

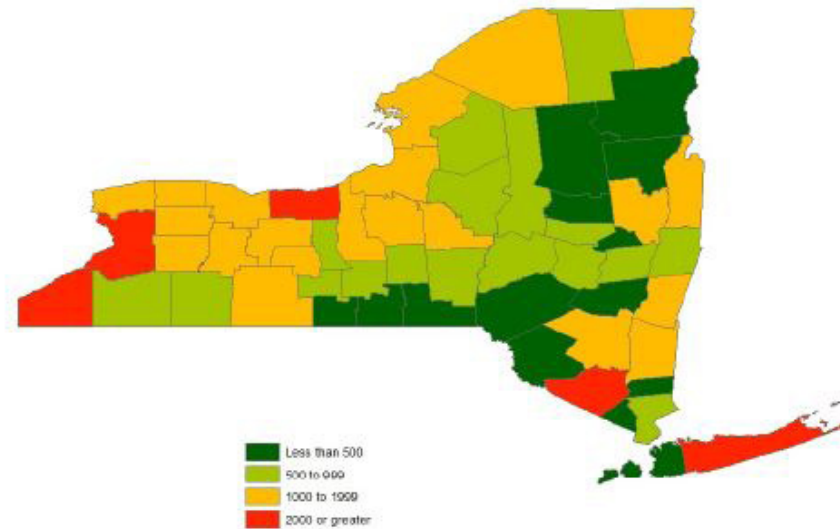
While most farms are family owned and operated in New York, the families do not provide all of the labor. Like other small businesses, farms grow over time to stay competitive and help meet the business goals of the family. This growth creates jobs and stimulates economic activity, a critical

Table 3. Hired farm labor in New York (2012 USDA Census of Agriculture).

Labor type	Number of farms	Number of workers
Hired farm labor	10,345	60,944
Hired workers employed 150 days or more	5,990	27,148
Hired workers employed less than 150 days	7,304	33,796
Migrant labor on farms with hired labor	807	Data not available
Migrant labor on farms reporting only contract labor	48	Data not available

Note: Migrant farm labor means that the employment required travel that prevented the worker from returning to his/her permanent residence on the same day.

Figure 2. Number of hired farm workers in New York by county. (2012 USDA Census of Agriculture)



process for rural communities that have a limited number of employment generators. The farm workforce is not measured by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics so we must rely on other sources to help describe it. Again, the best source is USDA's Census of Agriculture. Table 3 is a snapshot of hired farm labor in New York.

Local Labor

Local labor is a very important part of the agricultural workforce. Many farms hire local employees for frontline and middle manager jobs. In many cases farms and organizations engage with local communities and organizations such as FFA (National FFA Organization, formerly Future Farmers of America) to create interest among young people in agriculture and build local job pipelines of new employees. Various efforts are underway to strengthen public knowledge of agricultural career opportunities and increase the flow of prospective farm employees. Cornell University has programs in place for dairy apprenticeships and for training employees in controlled environment agriculture. Cornell's Small Farms program provides leadership skills training in English and Spanish for prospective supervisors and has led efforts to help refugees find employment in agriculture. Finger Lakes Community College is offering an associate's degree in viticulture and wine technology to help develop the wine industry workforce.

Unauthorized Labor

Unauthorized labor forms a significant part of the agricultural workforce, the National Agricultural Worker Survey (NAWS) found that 49% of the hired crop workforce

in the U.S. was not authorized to work (Hernandez & Gabbard, 2018). Farmers seek out any employees who are available in their local labor markets. There are many in the local labor markets who were born in other countries such as Mexico and Guatemala. Farmers, like all other employers, must comply with the federal government requirement to determine that prospective employees are authorized to work in the U.S. If applicants are from another country but have documentation that authorizes them to work and they are qualified, then many of them will be hired on farms. Employers cannot legally discriminate against job applicants who appear to be from another country. In reality, many foreign employees in the domestic labor market have improper documents but employers must accept documents that appear to be authentic and relate to the job applicant.

The Pew Research Center estimates that unauthorized immigrants make up about 24% of the overall agricultural workforce in the U.S. (Pew 2018). We have no specific data for New York but we also have no reason to believe this percentage is greatly different in New York versus the U.S. as a whole. Pew also reports that the overall unauthorized immigrant population in New York declined by over 25% from about 1,000,000 people in 2007 to 725,000 in 2016. These trends help to explain farm employers' frequent observation that the availability of immigrant workers is much lower than in previous years.

Temporary and Seasonal H-2A Labor

Some farms, orchards and vineyards require a temporary or seasonal workforce. Examples include vineyards that

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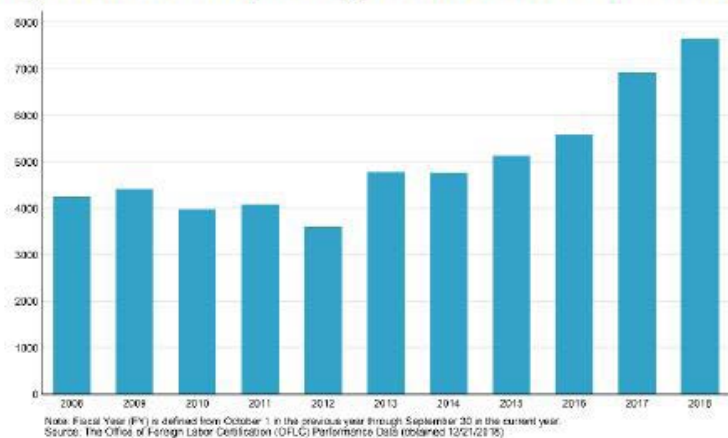
need pruning during the spring and summer, orchards that need a large amount of help for the fall harvest, and dairy farms that need skilled machine operators and truck drivers for crop operations. If a farm can demonstrate that they have a labor need and can't find enough help locally, then they may qualify for a federal program to bring in labor from another country to meet the temporary or seasonal need. This long-standing program is known as the H-2A Temporary Agricultural Visa program (<https://www.foreignlaborcert.doleta.gov/h-2a.cfm>). New York has a long and often successful history with H-2A, it is common for some H-2A employees to return to the same farm for 20 or more years.

Growth of the H-2A Program

Given increasing labor shortages, New York farms are continuously seeking new labor sources. The H-2A program provides the only lawful admission to the U.S. for temporary, nonimmigrant seasonal agriculture workers. H-2A is not a simple solution for farm employers, it involves significant regulatory and administrative barriers that discourage many employers from using the program. These barriers include the requirements to document a labor shortage, state inspections of employee housing, the cost of recruiting foreign workers, federally mandated minimum wage rates, provision of all housing and transportation for employees while in the country, and transportation both from and to the home country at the beginning and end of the work period. In spite of these barriers, many employers say that the reliability of the H-2A workforce is worth the additional effort and cost.

The past 12 years witnessed a quadrupling of H-2A employment nationally (USDA-ERS, 2018). To better understand the impact of the H-2A program in New York State, we analyzed H-2A applications using available data¹ from FY 2008 to FY 2018. The number of H-2A positions approved in New York State increased by 80% from FY 2008 to FY 2018, as shown in Figure 3. ■

Figure 3. Number of H-2A positions approved to work on New York farms from 2008 to 2018.



The length of working period approved and rate of application approvals didn't change significantly over this time. Generally, time certified per worker ranges from five to seven months, and almost all H-2A applications (99% of total applications) were approved in the past 12 years. H-2A workers were employed in all of the leading fruit and vegetable crops in New York. Figure 4 presents the distribution of New York's H-2A employees by the primary crop grown.

Wheat and Barley Growers:

Crop Weather- Related Risk Updates Available

Dr. Gary Bergstorm

As our wheat and barley crops begin to head out and flower in several weeks, it will be important for New York growers to understand the weather-related risk for development of Fusarium head blight (FHB) and contamination of grain with deoxynivalenol (DON) toxin. Dr. Bergstorm, Professor and Chair Plant Pathology and Plant-Microbe Biology Section, will be providing brief commentary on FHB risk for regions of New York especially in late May/early June for winter barley and wheat and in late June for spring barley. Growers can subscribe to updates via email and/or cell phone by registering on-line at https://scabusa.org/fhb_alerts. Be sure to check the regional subscription box for the Northern Soft Winter Wheat Region; you will then receive updates from him for New York and from his colleagues in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Vermont. A map-based FHB Risk Assessment Tool (<http://www.wheatcab.psu.edu/>) is up and running and is being utilized now by growers in the southeastern growing regions where cereal flowering has begun. Gary says, "Let's hope for nice and dry during the cereal flowering period in NY but adequate rainfall during the rest of the growing season in 2019. Stay tuned!"

USDA Launches New Farmers.gov Features to Help with H-2A Applications, Managing Loans

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) launched two new features on farmers.gov to help customers manage their farm loans and navigate the application process for H-2A visas.

“Customer service is our top priority at USDA and these new features will help our customers as they manage their farm loans and navigate the H-2A temporary agricultural visa program,” said Secretary Perdue. “In my travels across the country, I have consistently heard people express a desire for greater use of technology in the way we deliver programs at USDA. As we adopt new technology, we are introducing simple yet innovative approaches to support our farmers, ranchers, producers, and foresters as they support the nation every day. It’s my goal to make USDA the most effective, most efficient, most customer-focused department in the entire federal government, and farmers.gov is a big step in that direction.”

In 2018, Secretary Perdue unveiled farmers.gov, a dynamic, mobile-friendly public website combined with an authenticated portal where customers will be able to apply for programs, process transactions and manage accounts.

Navigating the H-2A Visa Process:

Focused on education and smaller owner-operators, this farmers.gov H-2A Phase I release includes an H-2A Visa Program page and interactive checklist tool, with application requirements, fees, forms, and a timeline built around a farmer’s hiring needs.

The H-2A Visa Program – also known as the temporary agricultural workers program – helps American farmers fill employment gaps by hiring workers from other countries. The U.S. Department of Labor, U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services, U.S. Department of State, and state workforce agencies each manage parts of the H-2A Visa Program independently, with separate websites and complex business applications.

Over the next several months, USDA will collaborate further with the U.S. Department of Labor on farmers.gov H-2A Phase II – a streamlined H-2A Visa Program application form, regulations, and digital application process that moves producers seamlessly from farmers.gov website to farmers.

gov portal to U.S. Department of Labor’s IT systems.

Managing Farm Loans Online:

The self-service website now enables agricultural producers to login to view loan information, history and payments.

Customers can access the “My Financial Information” feature by desktop computer, tablet or phone. They can now view:

- loan information
- interest payments for the current calendar year (including year-to-date interest paid for the past five years)
- loan advance and payment history
- paid-in-full and restructured loans
- account alerts giving borrowers important notifications regarding their loans.

To access their information, producers will need a USDA eAuth account to login into farmers.gov. After obtaining an eAuth account, producers should visit farmers.gov and sign into the site’s authenticated portal via the “Sign In / Sign Up” link at the top right of the website.

Currently, only producers doing business as individuals can view information. Entities, such as an LLC or Trust, or producers doing business on behalf of another customer cannot access the portal at this time, but access is being planned.

Google Chrome, Mozilla Firefox or Microsoft Edge are the recommended browsers to access the feature.

About farmers.gov:

USDA is building farmers.gov for farmers, by farmers. Future self-service features available through the farmers.gov portal will help producers find the right loan programs for their business and submit loan documents to their service center.

With feedback from customers and field employees who serve those customers, farmers.gov delivers farmer-focused features through an agile, iterative process to deliver the greatest immediate value to America’s agricultural producers – helping farmers and ranchers do right, and feed everyone.



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Erie County

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Send your high resolution jpeg files along with photo credit & description to jah663@cornell.edu.

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