

Erie County Ag News

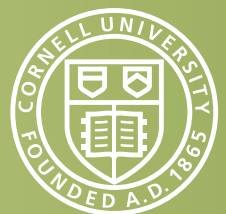
Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County

WINTER 2021



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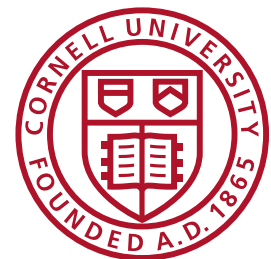
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Follow CCE Erie on social media to receive up to date news and announcements!



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UPCOMING AGRICULTURAL EVENTS

2022 Finger Lakes Produce Auction Growers Meeting

January 6, 2022

9:00am coffee and registration

10:00am - 2:30 meeting

Finger Lakes Produce Auction

Penn Yan, NY

This course will educate growers on disease and pest management, varieties and marketing issues in open field and high tunnel vegetables. The meeting will include grower and buyer panels and auction updates. 1.75 DEC credits will be offered in categories 10, 1a, 23, 24.

More details: <https://cvp.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=1607>



2022 Empire State Producers Expo

January 11 - January 13, 2022

The Oncenter

Syracuse, NY

The 2022 Empire State Producers Expo and trade will be in-person at The Oncenter in Syracuse.

More details: <https://cvp.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=1595>

2022 Annie's Project: Know Your Numbers, Know Your Options

January 25, 2022 1st Session

12:30pm - 2:30pm

Online via Zoom

This five-part series empowers farm women to prepare and analyze their own financial statements, enhance farm business decision making, and effectively communicate with their team.

More details: <https://swnydlfc.cce.cornell.edu>

2022 Corn Congress

January 5 - January 6, 2022

10am - noon

Zoom

Join us for Corn Congress January 5 & 6, 2022. Archived viewing of the congress will be offered for those who have paid attendance.

More details: <https://swnydlfc.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=1762>



Tax Management for Beginning and Small Farm Businesses

January 18, 2022

7pm - 9pm

Online via Zoom

A one-night virtual meeting for beginning and part-time farmers that provides useful tax information enabling participants to be make better tax decisions for their business.

More details: <https://swnydlfc.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=1684>

Onboarding Webinar Series for Farm Employers

January 21, February 4, February 18

11am - 12pm

Zoom

Cornell Agricultural Workforce Development is offering an Onboarding Webinar Series via Zoom that target farm employers and the educators and consultants who support them.

More details: <https://swnydlfc.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=1760>

WNY Greenhouse Growers School

February 9, 2022

Details on page 26

Register at: https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/GreenhouseGrowers2022-2_214



Marketing Musings: Thoughts on Marketing & Production Pivots

by John Whitney, Agriculture Educator, CCE Erie

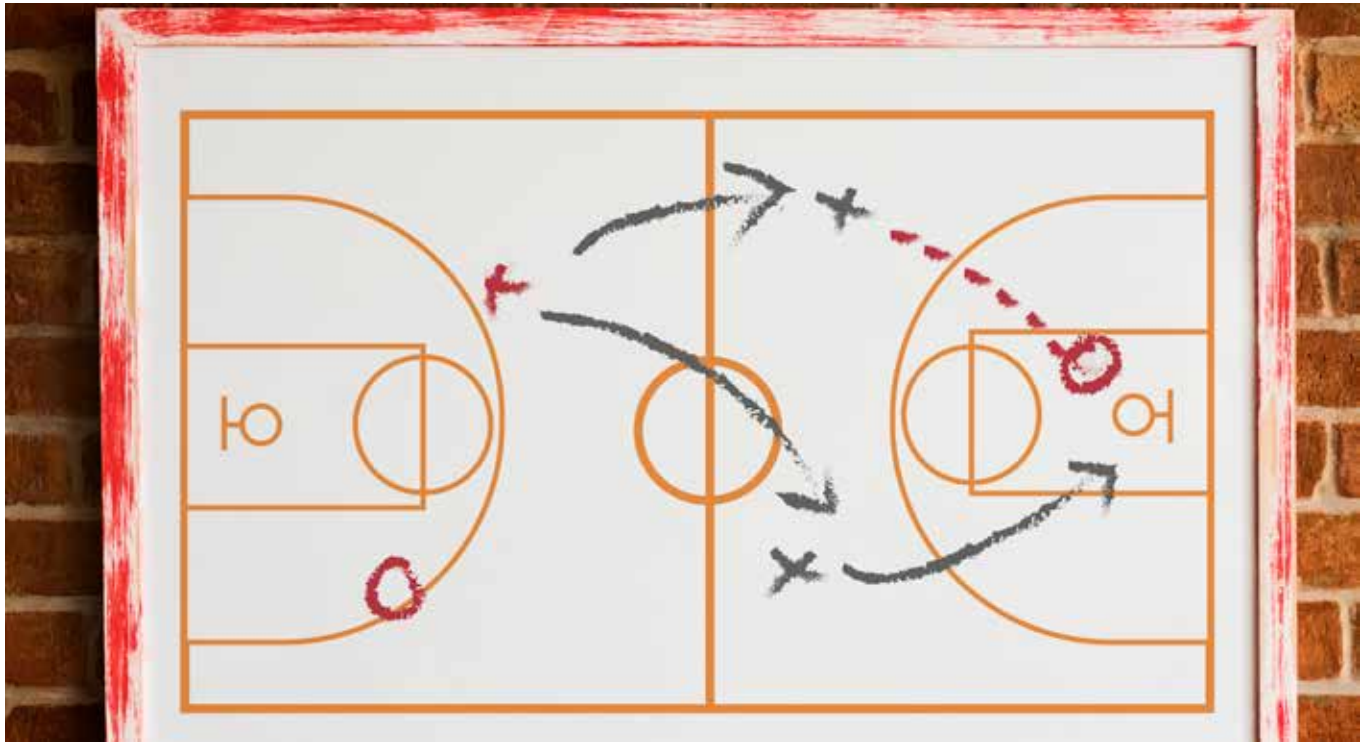


Photo Rawpixel

Is there anyone who hasn't heard the word "pivot" with respect to changes in production, marketing and business strategies resulting from the impacts of COVID-19?

My earliest recollection of the word pivot was its use in basketball. Your pivot foot could turn but needed to remain anchored to where it was originally placed. It was "traveling" if you lifted or slid your "pivot foot." "Traveling" in basketball is a bad thing. Your team loses possession of the ball. It's a turnover. Coaches, teammates, and fans take notice – and not in a good way! This basketball usage is still a helpful reference for me. A pivot isn't a jump, leap, or shuffle. A pivot is a turn in place, a swing, or a swivel. In the business sense, this has sometimes been expanded to suggest a complete change in the way things are done. But even that meaning implies an anchor to an original purpose, product, or foundational vision, mission, and goals.

The terms pivot and pivot point have been used in business and investment for a long time. Investors set or even calculate pivots: market prices or conditions that will trigger a possible shift in trading strategies. Computerized trading tools build these pivot points into their algorithms. Stock prices above the pivot point are "bullish." Levels are "bearish" when they are below the pivot point. The pivot point is an opportunity or trigger for a swing in position.

What pivots were part of your response to COVID-19? Did you revise your business or marketing plan or did the pivot points trigger planned shifts that were already built into your plans? Maybe you did more than pivot. Maybe you truly jumped into a completely new business or production strategy. But that's not how most people and businesses responded to the crisis. COVID-19 forced most businesses and farms to make many adjustments while remaining anchored to their

core business models and principles. For many, it was obvious that marketing and communication tactics that worked pre-COVID would no longer work as well or maybe not at all. Businesses shifted emphasis from wholesale to retail (or vice versa), from bricks and mortar shops or farm markets to online, from in-person to virtual, from phone to text and e-mail, from direct sales to distributors, from avoiding social media to perhaps reluctantly embracing it, from managing contacts through cards, notebooks or spreadsheets to use of contact management and communication software or services. These are just a few of the many pivots farms and small businesses have considered or implemented since the COVID-19 pandemic spread across the country and globe.

Mailchimp, one of the many contact management services and applications used by individuals, businesses and organizations, recently published an article by Jenna Tiffany, an official Mailchimp partner through her business, "Let's Talk Strategy." Ms Tiffany outlines and describes six important steps when considering market pivots and marketing strategy updates (phrases in italics are my comments):

1. Review your marketing goals and objectives (while not losing sight of your vision or core mission – *there's that "pivot" idea again*)
2. Update your marketing tactics (messaging tone, customer journey considerations – *we've nearly all pivoted on our "journeys"*)
3. Develop an agile marketing strategy (*successful pivoting in marketing or on the basketball court requires flexibility and agility*)
4. Maintain visibility (particularly when in-person visibility and interactions are reduced, public relations and careful messaging are critical – *pivoting to increased online visibility isn't necessarily an easy or universally desired marketing objective, but many businesses have found it essential for getting through the COVID crisis as well as something they'll likely stick with even as in-person options improve*)
5. Be honest and authentic (with compassion and open communications - *not that you weren't*

already but audiences are especially sensitive during crises – this may be a pivot to a different, perhaps less product-oriented and more customer-oriented focus)

6. Create valuable communications (sensitive tone consistent with branding and customer expectations for your business or products –*these communication pivots have helped many businesses succeed and, in some cases, even grow through the pandemic*).

For the full article, scan this QR code or follow the link.



Jenna Tiffany – *How to Pivot Your Marketing Strategy*
<https://mailchimp.com/resources/how-to-pivot-your-marketing-strategy/>

While you are thinking about marketing and pivots, how about pulling out that business or marketing plan? And if you don't have one or it's time for a major update, maybe you'd like to look to Cornell Cooperative Extension for some assistance. The Southwest New York Dairy, Livestock & Field Crops Program supports business management. Reach out to (716) 652-5400 ext 176 to get information on how to connect with the educators for help with the development of business and marketing plans.

Another possibility is enrollment in training provided through Cornell's Small Farms Program in-person and online trainings and workshops. The course catalog, descriptions and schedule are available at: <http://smallfarms.cornell.edu/online-courses/#browse> or you can scan this QR code with your phone's camera app:

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The Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) program offers a farm and agribusiness focused training program titled, "Marketing for Profit: Tools for Success." The workbook for this program can be downloaded at: https://projects.sare.org/wp-content/uploads/1519Marketing_Tools_For_Success_Handbook.pdf or you can scan this QR code. You will find it a valuable reference and set of planning tools:



Chemung County Cooperative Extension has compiled and posted an extensive set of references on marketing matters from a wide variety of sources. Scan the QR code or follow this link: <http://chemung.cce.cornell.edu/agriculture/marketing-resources>



Pivots are not a one-time thing, in basketball or in business. They can happen with some regularity, either planned or unplanned. They are also a skill that improves with practice – not that we want more pandemic practice! We also don't want to be pivoting to the point of becoming dizzy or disoriented. While pivots can be a reaction to circumstances, like suddenly being double-teamed on the basketball court, they can also be part of a plan, like a basketball play designed for the guard to quickly drive toward the free-throw line, stop abruptly, plant a pivot foot, and quickly turn to feed an open three-point shooter in either corner of the court. It's important to be able to pivot and even to plan for pivots when circumstances (those pivot points) require a change. Pivoting is part of the game of basketball, of business, and of life. ■

NYS Farmer Survey on Vision 2050

Cornell's Dyson School & Small Farms Program are working with CADE (Center for Agricultural Development and Entrepreneurship) on a [VISION 2050 project](#).

This farmer survey will help prioritize investments for the NYS food and farming system.

This will take about 10 – 15 minutes to complete and closes on 12/31/2021.

https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_9TPoLO-zan7xpbAa

Spotted Lanternfly Update

Information provided by Brian Eshenaur, NYS Integrated Pest Management (IPM)
Adapted by Sharon Bachman, CCE Erie Agriculture and Natural Resources Educator



Photos: Richard Gardener, Bugwood

Unfortunately, Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) has spread in NYS this year and it will likely have a wider distribution in the 2022 growing season. Although it appears Spotted Lanternfly will only pose a serious threat to grape vines and vineyards, there are lesser impacts to many agriculture and horticulture crops and tree species in addition to the landscape nuisance they pose when the SLF congregate in any area. The insects may be noticed on other horticultural, and field crops, especially juvenile SLFs, so we are asking for your help in reporting sightings. Visit the NYS IPM SLF webpages (<https://nysipm.cornell.edu/whats-bugging-you/spotted-lanternfly/>) to see pictures of life stages.

Early detection and reporting in new areas is still very important as eradication efforts by NYS Ag & Mkts in outlying locations can delay the spread. Please promptly report any SLF sightings to the Reporting Portal (link below) and contact your local CCE agriculture educator (Sharon Bachman – CCE Erie, sin2@cornell.edu), so they can share information with NYS IPM. As Extension Educators, we want to increase awareness as it appears that the 2021 infestation found in the Binghamton area was actually noticed by residents a year or two prior to it being reported. As growers and gardeners, you may be more likely to encounter SLF than the average citizen.

This is the time of year to keep an eye out for egg masses and at any time of year new detections are most likely along transportation corridors, parking lots and near stands of Ailanthus trees (Tree of Heaven). ■

Some Spotted Lanternfly Resources:

Current Distribution Map and the SLF Reporting Portal link can be found here:

<https://nysipm.cornell.edu/environment/invasive-species-exotic-pests/spotted-lanternfly/>

List of SLF Insecticides approved for use on Spotted Lanternfly in NYS: <https://nysipm.cornell.edu/environment/invasive-species-exotic-pests/spotted-lanternfly/insecticides-use-spotted-lanternfly/>

For Frequently Asked Questions see: <https://nysipm.cornell.edu/whats-bugging-you/spotted-lanternfly/>

PSU Resources-- Penn State has been at this since 2014 and have developed some excellent educational tools here: <https://extension.psu.edu/spotted-lanternfly>

Note: insecticidal management options are different for NYS.

Spotlight on Dark Forest Chocolate

John Whitney, Agriculture Educator, CCE Erie County

This article is the tenth in a series focusing on vendors who are selling their wares at the Western New York Welcome Center's Taste NY Market. Thank you to Dark Forest Chocolate Makers owner/operators, JoAnne & Dan Sundell, for meeting with me to share Dark Forest Chocolate's story along with some marketing tips and strategies.

In April of 2015, husband and wife team, Dan and JoAnne Sundell brought a West Coast confectionary trend, "bean-to-bar" chocolate making, to Western New York as they opened Dark Forest Chocolate Makers at 11 West Main Street in the Village of Lancaster in central Erie County. What started as a home kitchen hobby had become Dan's obsession. It has morphed into a first-of-its kind, artisanal chocolate making business in an area with a long history of regional chocolate and candy-making and with loyal consumers and fans of their favorite chocolatiers and styles from sponge candy, bonbons, orange chocolate, and truffles to fund-raising chocolate bars.

Dan and JoAnne had a different vision, though. They had no intention of trying to compete directly with either the large, "industrial" scale, international corporations, or even with the century old local favorites like Fowlers, Merckens and Parkside Candy. Rather than melting, remolding, and sometimes flavoring generic chocolate made by other manufacturers from commodity-sourced cacao beans, Dark Forest Chocolate was taking the path of using single-and known-origin, sustainably harvested and fairly-traded cacao beans purchased in small lots directly from specialty brokers and distributors who work closely with plantations in the premier cacao producing areas around the globe.

Dan explained that for their scale, they typically order one or two bags of cacao beans at a time. But they know "right where it comes from," he said. Their choice of cacao beans can also be influenced by samples sent by cacao farms and cooperatives. Dark Forest Chocolate Makers currently has direct relationships with two plantation cooperatives: Kokoakamili in Tanzania and Hacienda Azul located near Turrialba, Costa Rica.

Part of the reason for single and known sourcing is that Dark Forest Chocolate wants to be confident that fair-trade, environmentally sustainable, and fair labor practices are followed for the cacao beans used in their chocolates. Dark Forest Chocolate works directly through two distributors, Buena Nota Imports (www.buenanotaimports.com) and Uncommon Cacao (www.uncommoncacao.com). Dan said these wholesale distributors do an excellent job sourcing their cacao beans and maintaining records of where and how the beans are grown, harvested, processed, stored and transported.

This is more than a quality commitment. Dan and JoAnne briefly discuss on their web page their emphasis on helping to bring an end to the use of child and forced labor in the cacao production industry (<https://www.darkforestchocolate.com/bean-to-bar>).

Dark Forest Chocolate Makers' web page, www.darkforestchocolate.com, along with their Facebook and Instagram pages, include excellent descriptions of business, products, and ongoing marketing activities. Local media releases are highlighted under the "press" tab on the web page. Dark Forest Chocolate's many awards are listed under the "awards" tab, including the nationwide "Good Foods Awards."

Why the trademarked Dark Forest Chocolate name? In addition to the good practice of protecting the brand, Dark Forest refers to the fact that the best and most sustainably produced, organic cacao is generally grown in the shade of the native overstory trees in the equatorial regions of the world. JoAnne noted that "Makers" is part of the official business name but wasn't allowed to be part of the trademarked name. Trademarking the name took JoAnne a couple of tries



Photo Joanne and Dan Sundell, by John Whitney

but she was eventually successful. She said since the trademarking was approved she discovered another business had begun using the trademarked name. They stopped using it after receiving a polite but firm cease and desist letter.

The bean-to-bar chocolate making process takes the single source cacao beans and, following small batch, minimal ingredient, artisanal methods, teases out the unique flavors of beans in the final confections. Many test batches, and careful tracking of processing steps including the roasting time and temperature and the ratio of cacao to sugar and added cacao butter, all help ensure both consistency and maximum flavor qualities.

People often wonder, what's the difference between cacao and cocoa? While in many parts of the world, growers and processors make no distinction, in the English speaking world and in some culinary, natural food, and nutritional contexts, the difference is in the temperatures used to process the cacao beans. Some maintain that cocoa powder and derived products come from "raw cacao" that has been roasted at high temperatures. Some purists argue that cacao products only refer to those derived from cacao beans that have remained "raw," coming from cacao nibs, cacao butter, cacao paste, or cacao powder produced through drying and cold-pressing rather than through

heating or roasting. Dark Forest Chocolate Makers generally stick with the term cacao with respect to its chocolate products, although cocoa does occasionally appear.

Planning for starting up a business came naturally to Dan. With more than 30 years of experience as a landscape architect and planner, Dan was used to carefully thinking through the steps needed to achieve a vision. Dark Forest Chocolate is a woman-owned business enterprise owned by JoAnne. Dan is the head chocolate maker, and their two teenage sons are employees.

JoAnne, as an art history instructor at Erie County Community College, adds her love of researching history and design in addition to her natural curiosity and passion for understanding the background of subjects, now including the complexity of cacao flavors, varieties and cultivation. JoAnne is also an excellent photographer which helps with their in-house packaging design, including the printed foil accents, and with marketing and product promotion. Dan has years of experience using Photoshop, Adobe Illustrator and other graphic and design tools. These skills all help reduce the need for hiring outside graphic services and has allowed packing and even product names to evolve without a lot of extra cost to the business. Labels and packaging are printed locally

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Photo by John Whitney

at RMF Printing Technologies based in Lancaster. The company's webpage was originally developed by a skilled friend of Dan's. Dan and JoAnne now handle updates.

Dan said he and JoAnne joke all the time saying, "We use all our skills. It's everything from equipment, invention, fixing, wiring, plumbing, ...social media posts, communication, you have to be able to talk with people, writing skills, photography." JoAnne quickly added, "We do it all." She went on to say, having other careers was an advantage but having the opportunity to change, "if you're brave enough," came with maturity and experience. "Plus, we had a crystal ball.... If it worked in the Pacific Northwest, where they are 9 years ahead of us, and it's working in Cincinnati and Toronto, why not Buffalo?" Dan said other trends also contributed including people wanting to know where their food comes from, increasing interest in organics, and the reverse trend away from the malls and major chains in favor of small business.

Dark Forest Chocolate Makers was a catalyst for other businesses that moved into the evolving and reviving West Main business district in Lancaster. Dan said he

specifically told the neighboring "Purely Pets" pet grooming business and Lilly Belle Meads meadery about the available space shortly after Dark Forest signed its long-term lease. "You gotta come down to West Main and check it out." This all led to the soon to be completed West Main improvements.

Chocolate making is specifically excluded from home-based commercial production in New York State. This necessitated a move to a small commercial kitchen and resulted in one of the first new businesses in Lancaster's evolving and reinvigorated West Main Street business district. While it took a while to secure the space and complete the design, furnishing and decorating of the kitchen, scullery, packing and shipping space, small break room and office, and boutique/retail area, once the rental agreement was signed, the processing equipment was in place, and utilities were turned on, Dark Forest Chocolates was in business. The reasonable rent at the West Main Street location was an important part of the decision to locate in what was then a somewhat neglected part of the village. Dark Forest Chocolate Makers was one of the first businesses to come into the renewing area of the Village of Lancaster.

Much of the equipment in the Dark Forest Chocolate Makers' workshop is used or repurposed. The cacao bean roaster is a chicken rotisserie that Dan retrofitted with a drum to hold the beans as they gently turn and roast. The time and temperature of the roasting is carefully monitored and, as Dan explained, is really the only "secret" part of their operation since it so greatly influences the flavor profiles and consistency of their confections.

Dan said, "It can be done. Even though we are small. It doesn't have to be done the way the corporate giants have done it." Dark Forest Chocolate Makers is entirely self-financed. That's also unusual for many start-up and even ongoing businesses. "We did so much on the cheap," JoAnne said. Dan added that they been amazed how things fell into place once they made the decision to start the business. "Most of what was done was by the two of us with just a little help from



Photo by John Whitney

hired contractors. “A small New York State Workforce Development Institute Grant did provide a little startup business funding but the use of secondhand equipment, from stainless steel tables and counters to the mop sink, was all part of the frugal approach Dan and JoAnne followed as they prepared to launch the business. JoAnne even crafted the faux tin ceiling tiles using wallpaper to cover standard drop ceiling tiles. It’s all part of what has allowed Dark Forest Chocolate Makers to survive and grow through the early years and now through the pandemic and street renovations.

Dark Forest Chocolates products are different in scale, different in the ingredients, different in the ethics of the production and sourcing of raw materials, different in the intention for how they fit into people’s lives at all levels from the growers to the consumers, different in flavor, different in aging, and different in the nutritional components that are generally cooked out of industrial chocolates.

The unique flavor profiles of bean-to-bar chocolates are a result of a combination of where and how the beans are grown, fermented, dried, cleaned, stored

and handled, then the temperature and timing of roasting, winnowing, grinding of nibs, tempering, and blending of ingredients, aging, and remelting and molding into the desired forms (bars, coatings, etc.). As with wine grapes, the term “terroir,” can be applied to single source cacao beans. That’s something that is lost with multi-sourced, commodity cacao beans.

It starts with the raw ingredients: organic cacao beans, sugar, cacao butter, powdered milk, and minimal flavorings. Chocolate is obviously not locally sourced and with the quantities involved in their small batch production, local sourcing of other ingredients hasn’t been an option for Dark Forest Chocolates. Both cow and goat milk used in their chocolates starts in powdered forms. Dan said they are exploring local sources but so far that hasn’t been practical for the small quantities they use and with their strict organic requirements.

After roasting, the beans are quickly cooled and the thin, now brittle, shells are removed in a process called winnowing, leaving behind the bean meats or “nibs.” Some chocolate makers blend their nibs in mixes of a half dozen or more bean varieties. Bean-to-bar makers like Dark Forest Chocolate Makers tend to stick with single source or just a couple of sources in order to emphasize the terroir of the beans and the impact of roasting times and temperatures on those varieties rather than the more generic blending of flavors.

Nibs are then ground to make the cacao paste. Industrial scale grinders and mills can be traditional grinding stones or steel discs. Small batch producers typically use a grinding machine called a melanger. Dark Forest has three of them. The nibs, along with sugar and a bit of cacao butter, or milk powder in the case of milk chocolates, grind and mix in the melanger for forty-eight to seventy-two hours straight, day and night, until the mixture has achieved the proper blend and consistency.

Dark Forest Chocolate Makers adds a small amount of cacao butter and/or powdered milk to the cacao paste to further improve the consistency and composition

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and to create the characteristics that will eventually produce the desired surface sheen and the crisp snap when the chocolate bar is broken. The emulsifying process continues through a tempering phase with the still warm blend slowly cooled before it is molded into 10 pound blocks. The blocks are wrapped, dated and stored on racks for various lengths of time depending on the blend, from one to four months, to soften the flavor.

After the desired storage period, the blocks are remelted, tempered and remolded into bars (or other desired shapes), and packaged for eventual sale and consumption. JoAnne noted that they also do some specialty confections involving hand dipping but “that’s a lot of work” in their minimally automated workshop.

The original Dark Forest product line was just chocolate bars, with an emphasis on the origin of the cacao beans. Product names and packaging incorporated the sourcing with reference to the regions where then beans were grown. Experience and customer feedback have shown that Dark Forest Chocolate buyers seemed less concerned with the region of origin than with the flavor profiles. Product names and packaging have evolved to reflect those changes. Current products include:

- Dark 100%
- Salted Malted Milk 50%
- Cinnamon Pepper Milk 52%
- Goat Milk 55%
- Milk with Nibs 52%
- Dark Milk Chocolate 52
- Dark Blend 82%
- Dark Tanzanian 70%
- Dark Madagascar 65%
- Coffee and Dark Chocolate (a strategic alliance between Dark Forest and Ithaca-based gimme! coffee)
- Empire Dark 65%
- Excelsior Dark 75%
- Bourbon Cask-Aged Chocolate 70%

Additional confections include:

- Chocolate soft caramels
- Skipping stones
- Cacao Energy Bar
- Vanilla Rose White Chocolate
- Lemon-Poppy Seed White Chocolate

Chocolate bars are the main products from Dark Forest Chocolate Makers and remain the principle products sold outside the retail shop. Within the retail shop, the Dark Forest Chocolate line has expanded to include a number of additional products including:

- Cacao Nib Rubs
- French Hot Chocolate
- Brewing Cacao

The percentage references, for those unfamiliar with the application in chocolate making, indicates the cacao/cocoa percentage in the product. The higher the percentage, the lower the amount of added sugar, milk powder, or other additives like soy lecithin. As a soy-free facility, Dark Forest Chocolate Makers never includes soy lecithin, which many industrial chocolate makers use as an emulsifier and homogenizer instead of cacao products. And as a nut-free facility, none of the Dark Forest Chocolate confections use either peanuts or tree nuts for flavor or texture. Dan said, instead they are using cacao nibs or salt crystals for a bit of texture in some of their products.

JoAnne said the additional products are part of the goal of diversifying the product lines and expanding opportunities for consumers to use chocolate products in new and different ways beyond the tradition of candies and confections. Combined with products from other vendors, this diversity makes the boutique experience more interesting for Dark Forest Chocolate Makers’ customers. JoAnne explained these have been nice additions, especially as people have needed to hunker down in response to the COVID-19 pandemic with more in-home and backyard activities.

COVID-19 has, of course, had other impacts on the business. Dark Forest Chocolate Makers has lost some wholesale accounts but picked up a few others. Sales



Photo by John Whitney

through partnering businesses have declined with COVID-19 closures. Following protocols, the shop has been able to reopen with face coverings required and with changes in how product sampling can take place. For example, samples now need to be wrapped or packaged. The on-line sales part of the business has been booming, helped by the free shipping offer for orders of \$30 or more. The retail shop has remained open Tuesday through Friday from 11-6 pm and Saturday and Sunday from 12-4 pm. That is also in spite of the traffic and parking impacts of total reconstruction of West Main Street, along with updating of utilities and the eventual replacement of sidewalks. Dan said, "it's been a double whammy, but at least it will be all over at one time," (we all hope).

Additionally, the many craft shows that Dark Forest Chocolates has participated in to build brand recognition and give potential new customers the opportunity to sample and purchase confections have all been cancelled through the 2020 season and into the foreseeable future. That's been quite a lot for a young, small company to weather. Still, customers have continued to visit the shop, enjoying the ambience

and always present fragrance of chocolate making, watching the process through the large window into the kitchen, and purchasing chocolates and other products, some of which may even make it all the way home. JoAnne said once allowed they'll probably return to participating in some of the big regional arts and crafts shows. While not as important as they were originally for building name recognition, the larger shows especially move a lot of product and they enjoy doing them just to be able to interact with loyal customers and expand the customer base.

Dark Forest Chocolate Makers was one of more than 60 vendors registered to participate in the 2020 Adirondacks and Capital Region's "Virtual Taste NY Producer Showcase" sponsored by the Lake George Regional Chamber of Commerce and Cornell Cooperative Extension of Washington County and offered in partnership with Taste NY and NYS Grown & Certified. This two-hour session provided a unique opportunity for New York producers of food and beverage products to connect with area food buyers. It included a product slide show and was preceded by a vendor practice session to help vendors prepare. For more information see: www.taste.ny.gov/event/virtual-taste-ny-producer-showcase.

As part of the pandemic response, Dark Forest Chocolate Makers is partnering with companies that offer delivery directly to consumers. So far, this includes, Fresh Fix, Buffalo Food Artisans (Kissed by the Sun), Farmers and Artisans (for holiday gift boxes), and Flowers by Nature in East Aurora. JoAnne said, "More than ever, consumers want products delivered." Online sales options and shipping guidelines are available at: www.darkforestchocolate.com/shop. Visitors to the web page can also sign up for the monthly electronic newsletter featuring new products, recipes, and specials. Dark Forest Chocolate Makers' Facebook page has become an important marketing and communication tool. Instagram is another social media marketing tool.

Dark Forest Chocolate Makers remains committed to small batch crafting of bean-to-bar, soy and nut-free, and vegan chocolates products made directly from organic

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cacao beans and sugar. In addition to the West Main Street boutique, products are available in many area retail, gift and specialty shops. JoAnne is excited about having Dark Forest Chocolates placed in two Whole Foods Markets (so far). That includes the Whole Foods Market on Sheridan Drive in Amherst and in the West Manhattan store in New York City. JoAnne and Dan hope these and other wholesale market opportunities continue to expand for their unique, nut-free product line.

In the interest of full disclosure, I should mention that JoAnne worked briefly as an “Earth Team Volunteer” intern for the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service way back in the early 1990s. As the District Conservationist for the East Aurora Field Office, I was nominally her supervisor. Now, nearly 30 years later I am honored to be describing the business she and her husband have worked so hard to move from dream to entrepreneurial success.

Thank you to JoAnne & Dan Sundell for taking the time to discuss Dark Forest Chocolate Makers and their bean-to-bar chocolate making process along with their evolving product mix and marketing strategies. I hope you’ll have an opportunity to visit the boutique and workshop on West Main Street in Lancaster, New York. Free samples are always available along with a diverse selection of their many fine, award winning chocolate products. You can also find Dark Forest chocolates in many regional markets and specialty stores. That includes the Taste NY Market at the Western New York Welcome Center. ■



Photo by John Whitney



January 18, 2022

7pm - 9pm

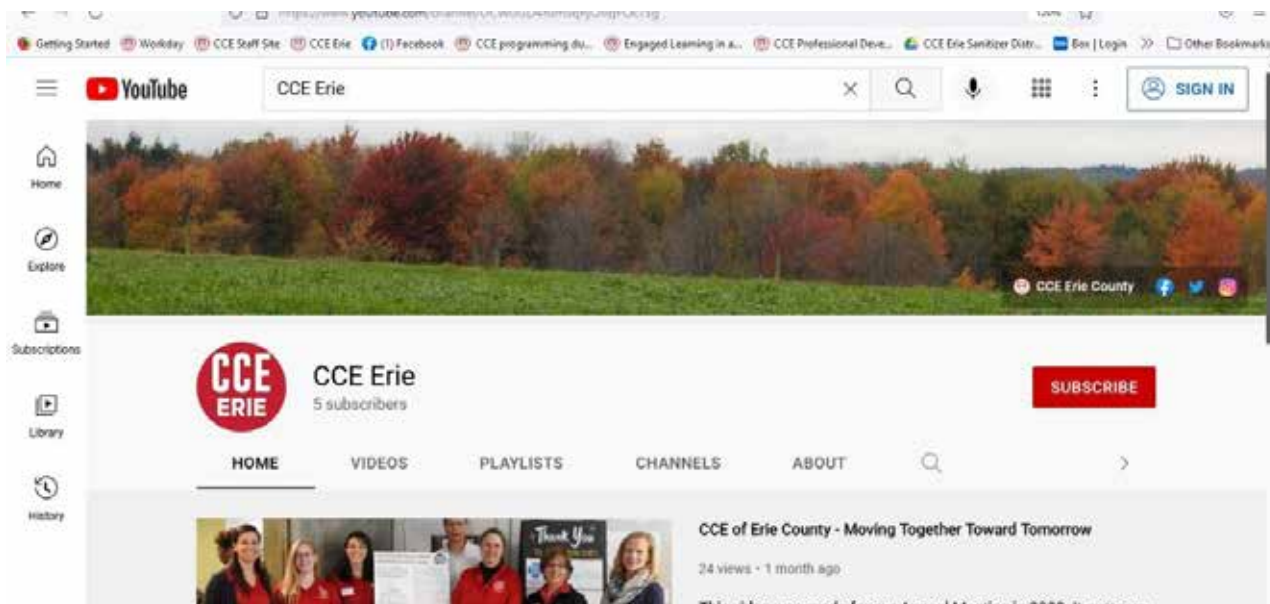
Online via Zoom

A one-night virtual meeting for beginning and part-time farmers that provides useful tax information enabling participants to be make better tax decisions for their business. Federal and state income taxes will be covered. Tax regulations specific to NYS will be covered as well.

More Details at <https://swnydlfc.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=1684>

CCE Erie YouTube

John Whitney, Agriculture Educator, CCE Erie County



The Cornell Cooperative Extension – Erie team has been using Facebook and Twitter as the main social media sites for educational, outreach, and advisory content distribution. While we’ll continue using these outlets for the foreseeable future, to reach a broader audience and to provide for archiving and easier sharing and cross-posting of content, we are expanding our use of YouTube for all the Erie program areas. In some cases, program areas will associate with the Erie YouTube channel through their existing pages. Most program areas will use “Playlists to organize their content.

One of the COVID-19 lessons has been that sharing information online can be an efficient and effective option or supplement to traditional, in person, face-to-face programs and meetings. While we’re all glad to be returning to in person options, we recognize that recorded content can greatly expand access to information. As our comfort levels and time permit, we’ll be adding content with increasing regularity. Please subscribe and feel free to let us know what kind of locally developed video content you’d most like to see on the CCE Erie YouTube channel. ■

To access the CCE Erie YouTube channel, go to YouTube and search for CCE Erie. Select it and the site will open. It’s that easy! From a mobile device, you can use the camera app to scan this QR Code. We encourage you to SUBSCRIBE to the channel once you are there for even easier access in the future and to be notified of content updates.



As the system builds out, we expect broader use for posting of recordings of training materials and education programs.

Empire State Producers Expo Returns with Expanded Class Offerings, Introduces Registration Scholarships

Conversation Corners, organic management sessions, and FFA Day also added to 2022 program

Elizabeth Buck, Cornell Extension Vegetable Specialist

Long time VegEdge readers know that our December issue heavily features our annual statewide grower meeting, the Empire State Producers Expo. Don't worry, your yearly dose of session highlights and an overview session schedule are on the following pages. First though, I'd like to explain Expo to our newer readers before introducing everyone to the many new features of Expo 2022. Full Expo details, including registration, are available online at nysvga.org/expo/information or paper copies can be requested by phone at 585-993-0775.

What is Expo?

Not just for veg growers, Expo also serves small fruit and bedding plant/cut flower audiences and gathers around 900 attendees over 3 days. People attend educational classes on a huge variety of production-oriented, business management, environmental stewardship, food safety, marketing, and soil health topics. The trade show boasts a full collection of ag support and supply businesses and all of the companies are uniquely tailored to serving the produce industry. This year Expo is an in-person show on January 11-13, 2022 at the Syracuse OnCenter and will follow all local health & safety guidance.

Why go?

- High caliber educational programming. The larger number of attendees allows us to attract speakers with more specialized knowledge and bring in growers & experts from out-of-state.
- Specialized topics that are difficult to organize locally

- Meet & network with growers from across the state, share techniques & management solutions
- One stop shopping at the tradeshow, with many companies offering special deals at the show
- Need DEC credits? You can earn up to 3.75 on Tuesday, 4.25 on Wednesday, and 4.75 on Thursday
- Easy to get to location with plenty of parking

Who is Expo for?

Expo offers something for all grower skill and experience levels, from the first year market gardener to the fourth generation farmer. Production classes will cover both organic/bioinformed and IPM/conventional management approaches. The range of topics provide something for everyone whether you're a greenhouse grower with a fall agritainment pumpkin patch or a mixed berry and maple farm, or a traditional produce farm, or an urban grower looking to build out your network.

What's New?

Registration Scholarships for Historically Underserved, Beginner & New-to-Expo Growers

The Expo organizers recognize that the produce industry best thrives when all stakeholders can readily access and participate in professional development and networking events. That's why we're offering up to fifty scholarships covering Thursday's registration costs to growers who identify as belonging to beginning farmer and historically marginalized grower

communities. Farmers who have never attended Expo may also apply.

The 1-page scholarship applications are available online. Applications can be returned by email to sr43@cornell.edu or by FAX to 315-787-2216, attention Steve Reiners. To request a paper copy or fill out an application by phone, call 585-993-0775. Priority will be given to applicants who submit applications by December 15. Applications received after December 15 will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Applicants will be notified of their selection status & follow-up registration steps on or before January 3rd.

Expanded Class Offerings & Delivery Formats

- Dedicated sessions for organic and ecologically-forward production techniques (Thur.)
- More sessions on business management & marketing (all 3 days)
- Primers on irrigation, energy savings and improving pesticide applications (Tue. & Wed.)
- Classes for niche crops like novel berries (Wed.), flowers (Wed & Thur.), nuts & ginseng (Thur.)
- Many Thursday sessions feature interactive, participatory, or peer-to-peer teaching styles

FFA Day at Expo

FFA Day at Expo is on January 12th, 2022 at the Syracuse OnCenter and will run from 8:45am to 1:30pm. This year's specially designed youth track includes a career exploration session, joint youth-adult educational classes, and an interactive trade show experience. We are excited to offer a hands-on raised bed building workshop exclusively for youth!

Chapters and other formal youth programs (ie 4-H) can bring groups of students for a flat rate fee of \$20. Individual youth may also attend the FFA Day programming and will enjoy free registration for Wednesday's programming. Individual youth remain

Empire State Producers



January 11-13, 2022

and Becker Forum, January 10, 2022

The Oncenter, 800 S State St, Syracuse, NY

Sessions appropriate for all levels of experience:

- Potato
- Snap Bean
- Industrial Hemp
- Sweet Corn
- Cabbage
- Berries
- Greenhouse/High Tunnel Production
- Tomato
- Organic Allium
- Organic Apple
- Cut Flower
- Agroforestry
- Weed Management
- Soil Health
- IPM/Biocontrol
- Enterprise Budget
- Energy Savings
- Produce Safety Alliance Grower Training
- Digital Marketing
- Agritainment

**PROGRAM DETAILS and
ONLINE REGISTRATION**

nysvga.org/expo

the responsibility of their parent/guardian and must be dropped off at the FFA room between 8:45 and 9 am and picked up at the FFA room between 12 and 12:15pm.

All youth registration for FFA Day is being handled separately from regular Expo registration, please contact Elizabeth Buck (585-406-3419) for more details. The registration deadline for participation in the youth programming is Dec 20th.

New programming styles

Thursday programming features several sessions that are leaving the traditional classroom style presentations behind. Attendees can work hands-on with weeds, view live beneficials, and develop their own customized IPM plan during the "Tomato IPM

Continued on page 17>>

>>Continued from page 16

School”. An entire “Organic Apple Production” session is following an unconference design where topics are entirely participant driven. Folks will get a chance to work in small groups to practice newly learned skills in “Talking to the Media”. Several other sessions on Thursday include other interactive approaches.

Conversation Corners and Poster Promenade

Responding to requests for more time and space for networking, this year we are introducing dedicated areas for grower-to-grower sharing, called “Conversation Corners”. These Conversation Corners will be available for a mix of spontaneous and reserved, pre-set discussion topics. Another new feature will be the Poster Promenade, where growers can peruse research posters at their leisure. ■



If you are a farmer, please take a few minutes to share your important perspective!

Western NY Regional Food System Assessment and Planning Initiative is part of a broader project that is working to improve the WNY food system. One of the most important parts of this planning stage is to actually find out from farmers what opportunities and challenges they are encountering. Here is a link to a survey for farmers that takes about 10-15 minutes to complete.

THANK YOU!

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FRQM2BH>

NEW Commercial Cut Flower ListServ

John Whitney, CCE Agriculture Educator

Shared from Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cortland County

Commercial Cut flower growers now have a way to connect with the larger cut flower community in New York State. Thanks to the efforts of Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) a new listserv has been developed. Cut flower growers can sign-up for the listserve by filling out form at the following link:

<https://tinyurl.com/cutflowerlistserv>.



QR Code to sign up for CCE Cut Flower ListServ

This listserv was developed by Dana Hava and Elizabeth Lamb to help fill a gap identified by members of the NYS commercial cut flower community and after learning about their lack of access to:

- Cornell CALS & CCE experts
- Community-based knowledge and networking opportunities
- Knowledge of new trends, research, workshops, events, etc., relevant to NYS commercial cut flower growers.

A blog/archive will also be part of this effort. Dana Hava, the CCE Cortland Agriculture Team Leader, feels that the listserv is a perfect response to this community's need. Hearing the needs of cut flower growers in NYS and appreciating how well the Cornell sheep and goat management listserv serves the small ruminant community she felt that a listserv would be a great response to fill in the gaps of the cut flower community. "So much knowledge is stored

in experience, this listserv will help NYS cut flower growers put that knowledge to use and at the same time strengthen the NYS cut flower community."

Listserv members include NYS commercial cut flower growers of all experience levels as well as Cornell faculty and CCE experts. Hava & Lamb identified specific Cornell faculty and experienced cut flower growers who have agreed to play a vital role in making the listserv valuable and successful by sharing their experiences and knowledge. Elizabeth Lamb, coordinator for ornamental integrated pest management for NYS IPM, is pleased to see the willingness of these experts to provide input for grower questions on the list-serv and blog/archive. "This project helps us create a community to foster two-way communication to make sure that cut flower growers are successful."

To learn more about the cut flower listserv contact Betsy Lamb at eml38@cornell.edu or Dana Hava at dmh353@cornell.edu ■



Sow Many Seeds

Caitlin Tucker, Regional Vegetable Technician, Cornell Vegetable Program

'Tis the Season! Seed catalog season, that is. Sitting down with a warm beverage next to the gentle crackle of the fireplace channel on Netflix and pouring over seed catalogs is my idea of a cozy December night. As you begin planning your garden for 2022, I want to share a few terms to be familiar with and things to consider as you dive into seed catalogs this winter.

KEY TERMS

Heirloom – definitions of heirloom vary slightly depending on who you ask. Some organizations and seed companies describe heirlooms as varieties that have been passed down for 50 years or more. I personally like this description from the Seed Saver's Exchange, "'heirloom' describes a seed's heritage, specifically a documented heritage of being passed down from generation to generation within a family or community. An heirloom variety of vegetable, fruit, or flower must be open-pollinated — or pollinated by insects, birds, wind, or other natural means — and "breed true," or retain its original traits from one generation to the next."

Determinate vs. Indeterminate - these terms are used to describe varieties of tomatoes. Determinate tomatoes are more compact, "bush"-type varieties. Their fruit ripens within a short period of time and they're typically better for container growing or small spaces. Indeterminate tomatoes are "vining" varieties that will produce fruit until the first frost. Both types will benefit from staking, but pruning requirements differ. Indeterminate tomatoes will absolutely benefit from regular pruning to keep the plants in check, whereas pruning determinate tomatoes should focus on removal of suckers below the first flower cluster.

Hybrid – hybrids, also referred to as F1s, are the first generation of seeds from two "parent" lines. They are the result of intentional breeding for different traits like higher yields, disease resistance,

shape, color, earlier maturity, etc. Note: although you can save seed from hybrid plants, you should not expect the seed to retain the traits from the parent plants.

Parthenocarpic – you might come across this term when browsing for cucumbers, squash, or watermelon. Parthenocarpic varieties will develop fruit without fertilization, but the fruit will either produce non-viable seeds or no seeds at all. These varieties are useful if these crops are grown under netting, in greenhouses or in high tunnels, where pollination by insects may not occur.

Nativar – an entire article could be devoted to the topic of nativars, or cultivars of native species that have been bred for bloom size, shape, color, variegation, etc. Nativars are becoming increasingly common in greenhouses and nurseries. If you aspire to support our native wildlife and ecosystems by planting native varieties, understand that we don't quite know how nativars will affect pollinators and wildlife. Why? Since these varieties have been bred for various aesthetic traits, they may not be as attractive to pollinators, provide similar nutrition from pollen or nectar, produce seeds, or their floral structures may not facilitate pollination.

VARIETY SELECTION

What catches your eye as you're browsing through seed catalogs? Variety names? Colors? Pictures? However you go about making your selections, I'll ask that you consider a few more things:

Disease Resistance – resistance is a spectrum, from susceptible to resistant. Complete resistance is a moving target for plant breeders and seed savers because 1) plant pathogens are constantly evolving and 2) they must also consider other important traits like flavor, yield, color. It's a balancing act. Disease resistance is shared in seed catalogs in a few ways. Some catalogs may use a

series of symbols for different diseases while others may simply summarize whether a variety has high resistance or intermediate resistance. In choosing disease resistant varieties it's important you know what to look for based on historical issues. Some plant diseases we experience regularly in WNY include Downy Mildew (cucumber), Late Blight (tomato, potato), Early Blight (tomato), Basil Downy Mildew (sweet basil), and Powdery Mildew (squash, cucumber, melons). Ultimately, familiarity with your own garden and issues of the past will help you to make these decisions.

Regionally Adapted Seeds – one of the reasons heirloom varieties have persisted through the years is that these seeds were saved from specific plants that thrived in their local environmental conditions. The majority of seeds in the U.S. are grown in California, Oregon, and Idaho, states that may have drastically different temperatures, rainfall, soil types, humidity, length of growing season compared to your climate. This is why regionally adapted seeds have become popular in recent years – they are better suited to thrive in our local environment, and they promote resiliency and sustainability of regional food systems. Visit the [Regional Seed Company Map](#) to find places you can source regionally adapted seeds for your garden.

SEED LIBRARIES IN ERIE COUNTY

You've heard of folks setting up "little free libraries" at the end of their driveway, but have you heard of seed libraries? Seed libraries have been popping up like sprouts across Erie County to reduce barriers to backyard gardening, give folks an easy way to try new varieties, and share the bounty of saved seeds with the community. Here's a list of some of our local Seed Libraries:

- **The Seed Library at the Launch Pad** - 1 Lafayette Square, Buffalo, NY 14203
- **Hamburg Public Library Seed Share** - 102 Buffalo St, Hamburg, NY 14075
- **WNY Seed Library** - 350 John James Audubon Pkwy, Buffalo, NY 14228
- **Massachusetts Avenue Project** - 38 Massachusetts Ave, Buffalo, NY 14213

If you'd like to dig into this topic further, consider visiting the [Erie County, NY YouTube Page](#). There you'll find a recording of Sow Many Seeds, my December 8th presentation for the University Express Program on this very topic. Happy Sowing! ■



Photo by Caitlin Tucker

Small-scale, Local Producers Get Improved Insurance Coverage Through New Micro Farm Policy

US Department of Agriculture (USDA)



Photo: "USDA is focused on supporting local and regional food systems, and Micro Farm is one more example of how we're helping agricultural producers with farms of all shapes and sizes to manage their unique operations and risk," said Marcia Bunger, Administrator for USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA). "The Risk Management Agency values collaboration and feedback from our customers, and Micro Farm is one way we're responding to producers' needs." (U.S. Department of Agriculture, Public Domain)

Agricultural producers with small-scale farms who sell locally can now get simplified insurance coverage through a new policy designed for their needs. The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) developed the new Micro Farm policy, which simplifies recordkeeping and covers post-production costs like washing and value-added products.

"USDA is focused on supporting local and regional food systems, and Micro Farm is one more example of how we're helping agricultural producers with farms of all

shapes and sizes to manage their unique operations and risk," said Marcia Bunger, Administrator for USDA's Risk Management Agency (RMA). "The Risk Management Agency values collaboration and feedback from our customers, and Micro Farm is one way we're responding to producers' needs."

Micro Farm is offered through Whole-Farm Revenue Protection (WFRP) and is geared to local producers. Details include:

Eligibility:

Micro Farm is available to producers who have a farm operation that earns an average allowable revenue of \$100,000 or less, or for carryover insureds, an average allowable revenue of \$125,000 or less. The increase in allowable revenue for a carry-over insured will allow for some farm growth in subsequent years before they become ineligible for the program. RMA's research showed that 85% of producers who sell locally reported they made less than \$75,000 in gross sales.

Coverage Levels:

All coverage levels will be available to producers using Micro Farm. This will enable producers to purchase the 80% and 85% coverage levels without providing additional paperwork.

Underwriting and Recordkeeping Requirements:

Micro Farm minimizes underwriting and recordkeeping requirements, and producers will not have to report expenses and individual commodities.

Post-production Revenue:

Producers can include post-production activities as revenue, such as washing and packaging commodities or value-added products like jam.

Micro Farm is available for the 2022 crop year. Sales closing dates are Jan. 31, 2022, Feb. 28, 2022, or March 15, 2022, depending on the producer's county.

Producers with crops insured under another crop insurance policy or a vertically integrated operation will not be eligible.

This new policy derived from research directed by the 2018 Farm Bill, and it includes feedback from producers who grow for their local communities. [See the full report.](#)

Specialty and Organic Crops

The Micro Farm policy builds on other RMA efforts to better serve specialty and organic crop growers. This includes WFRP, which provides coverage for producers with larger operations that may not be eligible for Micro Farm. RMA recently made improvements to WFRP as part of a broader set of new policies and expanded policies to assist specialty crop and organic producers.

More Information

Crop insurance is sold and delivered solely through private crop insurance agents. A list of crop insurance agents is available at all USDA Service Centers and online at the [RMA Agent Locator](#). If you have difficulty finding an agent, contact your [RMA Regional Office](#). Learn more about crop insurance and the modern farm safety net at [rma.usda.gov](#). ■



Photo by John Whitney

What to Know Before You Grow in High Tunnels

Cornell Small Farms Program

Adding weeks to your growing season can mean attaining a premium for having products available well before (or long after) other local growers. However, the structures that make this possible — unheated, plastic-covered "high tunnels" or "hoop houses" — can cost a lot of money, and they bring special management considerations that need to be understood in order to be profitable additions to your farm. Take our Season Extension with High Tunnels online course, and start growing your product availability.

Through this course you will be introduced to “high tunnels” and the various factors farmers should consider before the start growing. You will learn about soil testing, site assessment, key considerations in tunnel selection, growing practices for high tunnels, management techniques and more.

You will get the most from this course if you already have some experience successfully growing vegetables outdoors and are exploring high tunnels as a way to expand the season or improve plant quality. Information will be focused on using high tunnels in colder climates (US Climate Zones 4-6), but can be adapted to other growing regions. Farmers with no outdoor production experience are also welcome to join.

Through the 6-week course, students will be able to:

- Complete a basic site assessment and know when to bring in experts to discuss site limitations
- Make decisions to improve or maintain their soil health and fertility in the tunnel
- Select an appropriate high tunnel for their site, climate, and production needs
- Select and grow appropriate cold and/or warm season crops for the tunnel
- Employ pest control and trouble-shooting strategies for high tunnels
- Decide if high tunnels make economic, environmental, and social sense on the farm



The bulk of the course happens on your own time, with discussions, readings, and assignments in Teachable, our online course platform. To add to the experience, live webinars will be held during the live instruction period — from January 11 to February 15, 2022, on Tuesday evenings at 7 p.m. ET. These webinars allow you to meet on a weekly basis to learn from presenters and ask questions in real-time. If you miss one, they are always recorded and posted for later viewing.

Meet the Instructor:

Amy Ivy recently retired from her role as part of the Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program. She worked with gardeners and commercial vegetable and berry growers for Cornell Cooperative Extension for 31 years in the northeastern corner of NY, on the east side of the Adirondack Mountains. Her particular interests are season extension, protected culture including high tunnels, soil health and insects, both good and bad. ■

Free Energy Audits for Eligible Farms

John Whitney, Agricultural Educator, CCE Erie

Dairy farms, orchard and greenhouse operations, vegetable farms, vineyards, grain drying operations and poultry/egg farms are among those New York State farms eligible for free energy audits through a new NYSERDA Agriculture Energy Audit Program. NYSERDA, which stands for the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, has contracted with EnSave, Inc. based in Rutland, Vermont, to offer technical assistance to identify energy efficiency measures for eligible farms and on-farm producers.

Eric Jeremias is the Program Manager for the NYSERDA Agriculture Energy Audit Program. Eric said, “NYSERDA will assign Flexible Technical Assistance (FlexTech) Program Consultants to perform energy audits for eligible farms.” See Table 1. “After the audit is performed, we identify and assist customers with specific utility incentives relating to any recommended measures.”

According to Eric, “greenhouse facilities can also receive a free benchmarking report through the New York State Greenhouse database and

benchmarking tool. The report describes energy use intensity and benchmarks the facility against an anonymous aggregate of peer facilities.”

These audits will help to document current levels of energy use and current energy saving measures in addition to providing required assessments in support of applications for financial assistance for energy conservation measures through utilities and various local, state or federal agencies.

For more information and application procedures visit <https://www.nysERDA.ny.gov/All-Programs/agriculture-energy-audit> or scan this QR Code:



Table 1. Audit Levels, Activities and Reports

Audit Level	Audit Activities	Type of Report that the Farm Receives
Comprehensive	Detailed energy audit	Energy audit report with calculated evaluations of appropriate energy efficiency measures including simple payback; meets ANSI/ASABE S612 standards
Targeted	Energy audit focused on specific systems, energy efficiency measures, or renewable energy	System-specific energy analysis report

How you Administer Injections

Amy Barkley, Livestock Specialist

Southwest New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Program

Injections are necessary, and sometimes even life-saving, for many of our livestock species. Each liquid that we inject is formulated to be placed not only in different regions of the body (think the triangular mass of muscle of the neck for most cattle vaccines vs the buttocks for some equine injections), but also in different layers of tissue (muscle vs skin vs vein). The correct placement of a needle allows the vaccine, fluid, or antibiotic to fall in the proper place to be absorbed by the body in the most effective manner. Angles of the four most common injections are listed below from largest (perpendicular with the skin surface) to smallest (nearly parallel with the skin surface).

Intramuscular: This injection is made to go deep into the muscle. The needle will be placed at a 90-degree angle (perpendicular) to the skin to allow for penetration into that tissue. A large muscle works best for these injections, but care needs to be taken with placement, especially on meat animals, since many of these injections cause damage, and ultimately condemnation, of the muscle tissue they come in contact with.

Subcutaneous: A properly placed subcutaneous injection is going to result in a lump of fluid underneath the two layers of skin (epidermis and dermis). The depth of these two layers varies with species, breed, and age. Under the skin layers resides connective tissues, which lack blood vessels, resulting in a slow absorption of any liquid placed there. An area of loose skin is an ideal place for these injections since there is room for the fluid to accumulate. The needle will be placed at an angle of 45 degrees to the skin surface.

Intravenous: The needles used for either injections or removal of blood should be placed where a vein

is readily accessible. This is usually in the legs, neck, udder, or tailhead of our livestock species. Many times, the veins are readily visible, but sometimes moderate pressure needs to be applied below the area where blood is being removed to make the vein obvious. To access the vein, the needle should be inserted at an angle of 25 degrees to the skin. Drawing back on the plunger of a properly placed syringe should result in some blood in the syringe body, indicating the needle is in the vein.

Intradermal: This injection requires the needle to be placed just under the epidermis (outer layer of skin) and into the dermis (inner layer of skin). These injections take a very fine needle (larger gauge, shorter length). Correct placement of the needle is between 10 and 15 degrees with the skin surface. Correct placement is verified by the formation of a blister of fluid just under a thin layer of skin. ■

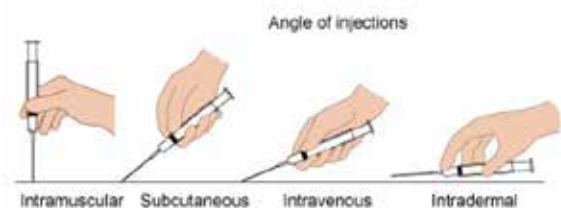
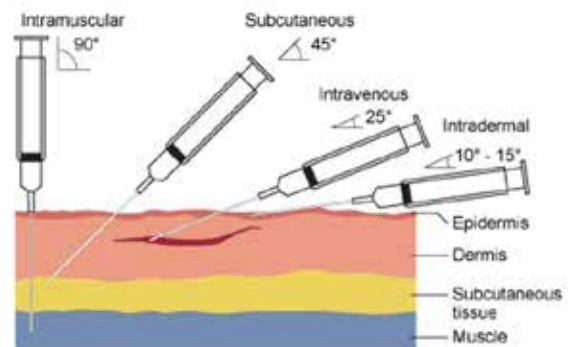


Photo from Wikipedia

Cornell Cooperative Extension | **Erie County**
presents

2022 WNY Greenhouse School

Save the Date!

February 9
via Zoom with
viewing option at

39 S. Grove St
East Aurora, NY



Cornell Cooperative Extension is an employer and educator recognized for valuing AA/EEO, Protected Veterans, and individuals with Disabilities; and provides equal program and employment opportunities.

February 9th, Virtual AM & Live PM



Register at:

[https://reg.cce.cornell.edu GreenhouseGrowers2022-2_214](https://reg.cce.cornell.edu/GreenhouseGrowers2022-2_214)

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| 9-9:45 | Rick Yates, Griffin - Hot Topics in Pest Control |
| 9:45-10:30 | Meg McGrath, Cornell University - The Lowdown on Basil Downy Mildew |
| 10:30-10:45 | Break |
| 10:45-10:50 | Sue Adams, NYS Flower Industries - Brief overview of NYSFI & membership |
| 10:50-11:25 | Rich Stup, Cornell University - Strategies for Retaining Your Valuable Employees |
| 11:25-11:45 | Ag and Markets – Update from NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets on crops for greenhouse growers |
| 11:45- 12:30 | Margery Daughtrey – Title: "Hindsight! The Best Teacher!" Showcasing some of the wildest and woolliest diseases of 2020-2021 |
| 12:30-1:15 | Lunch & Trade Show |

LIVE PRESENTATIONS/SITE SPECIFIC –

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| 1:15 – 1:25 pm | Welcome from NY FI – Barbara Henry |
| 1:25 -2:10 pm | Betsy Lamb, NYS Integrated Pest Management – Broad Mites |
| 2:10 -2:55 pm | Amara Dunn, NYS Integrated Pest Management – NYS IPM Biopesticides for greenhouse vegetables and ornamentals |
| 2:55 – 3:40 pm | Jamilyn Woodside, NYS DAM – Boxwood Moth what WNY Greenhouses need to know |
| 3:40 – 3:55 | Break, DEC credits |
| 3:55 – 5:15 | NYSERDA Greenhouse Presentation – tentative |
| 5:15 pm | Wrap-Up, Adjourn |

Is Your Appraiser the Real Deal?

10 Questions to Ask

Kathleen McCormick, Agriculture Educator, CCE Erie

Whether you're planning to start a farm or planning your transition out of farming there may come a time when you'll need to hire a real estate appraiser to obtain an unbiased opinion of a property's value. It may come as a surprise that appraisers are not required to be licensed or certified in New York State (Consolidated Laws of New York, Chapter 18, Article 6-E, §160-B). This loophole makes it imperative to take extra care when hiring to ensure that the appraiser is qualified to do the type of appraisal you need done.

An appraisal provides an opinion of a property's market value—the likely sales price the property would bring if offered in an open and competitive real estate market. It is more than a comparison of sales data from the multiple listing service (MLS) that realtors use to help clients determine asking and offering prices. Appraisers perform several types of analysis to arrive at an opinion of value. In addition to analyzing recent sales of comparable properties, an appraiser will consider the cost of replacement, and the property's earning power. The analyses and valuation are detailed in a written report that includes data that supports the analyses (e.g. property inspection; research into title, local land use regulations, current market conditions).

A realtor's MLS analysis may suffice for general planning purposes and simple buy-sell transactions, but an appraisal is the way to go if a valuation is needed for tax purposes, a conservation easement, a mortgage, settling an estate or appealing a property tax assessment. An appraisal is considered the most reliable and defensible opinion of a property's value. Unlike real estate agents who earn a commission based on the sale price, appraisers have no reason to inflate a valuation because appraisers charge a flat fee for their services.

Credentials

All appraisers credentialed by New York State have many hours of hands-on experience, have taken extensive formal coursework and have passed a state exam, but not all are qualified to appraise agricultural properties. New York State distinguishes between those qualified to appraise residential property and those qualified to appraise all types of properties. A certified general appraiser can appraise all types of real estate. They also have the greatest amount of formal education and the most hands-on experience.

Finding an Appraiser

Word of mouth is a good way to find an appraiser. Contact your bank, tax attorney, accountant, insurance agent, friends, neighbors and local land trust for suggestions. You can also search two on-line databases. New York State maintains a [database](#) of credentialed appraisers. Select "Real Estate Appraiser" in the pull-down menu and search by county to find someone familiar with the real estate market in Western New York. The Appraisal Institute, a professional association for real estate appraisers, also maintains a searchable [database](#) that can be searched by state and type of property. Select "MAI" in the designation pull-down menu and "Agriculture" in the property class pull-down menu for a list of appraisers who specialize in agricultural properties. If you need help searching either database, contact CCE Erie.

10 Questions to Ask

Once you've identified some potential appraisers, it's time to start asking questions. Different appraisers have different qualifications, memberships, and knowledge bases; it's not a one-size-fits-all role. These ten questions will help you hire an appraiser



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who well-qualified, knowledgeable and has experience with agricultural properties. Any reputable appraiser will be able and happy to answer all your questions.

Are you licensed or certified by New York State?

Certification requires more education and training than licensing. A New York State certified appraiser may appraise all types of properties and there are no limits on the value of the property being appraised. The appraiser should provide you with a certification or license number if asked. You can confirm the appraiser's license or certification in the New York State database:

https://appext20.dos.ny.gov/licns_public/lic_name_search_frm

Do you have any other credentials?

An appraiser can earn additional credentials from professional associations. The Appraisal Institute grants an MAI designation and the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers grants an ARA designation. Both these designations indicate a level of professionalism on the part of the appraiser. These designations also represent a commitment to comply with a professional code of ethics and practice guidelines. The practice guidelines, called

the the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP), lay out the minimum standards for all appraisals accepted by the IRS.

How long have you been appraising?

Time in the business does not necessarily equate to competency, but asking this question will provide you with a general understanding of the appraiser's level of experience. While all appraisers need time to gain experience, you should recognize that there is some inherent risk involved in hiring an appraiser with less experience.

How many agricultural property appraisals have you done?

It's important to make sure that the appraiser has the right kind of experience. Some appraisers specialize in certain types of properties. It doesn't make sense to hire an appraiser who specializes in condominiums when you own a farmhouse. Asking this common sense question will confirm that the appraiser has experience valuing agricultural properties.

Why were the agricultural properties being appraised?

This is another common sense question that will help

Continued on page 30



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you hire an appraiser who has experience doing what you need done, be it an appraisal for borrowing, estate planning, a conservation easement or tax purposes. Although appraisers are trained to take the same general approach, there are nuances to valuing property for these different purposes. Take special care if you need an appraisal for tax purposes. The appraiser you hire should be able to explain what a “qualified appraisal” and a “qualified appraiser” are. The ability to explain these terms indicates a working understanding of federal and state appraisal regulations.

Where were the agricultural properties located?

This question will help you ascertain how familiar the appraiser is with our local market. An accurate valuation depends on knowing how the specific location of a property (town, neighborhood), natural features (soils, aquifers), and the regulatory environment (building codes, zoning) influence property values in our area. You can follow up by

asking whether the appraiser has access to the MLS, the database where realtors list properties for sale. The MLS is not one nationwide database, but many databases, each one specific to a particular area. Having local sales data is critical to a solid valuation of your property.

Have any of your appraisals been challenged by the IRS?

Find out if the appraiser has ever had to defend an appraisal. Being required to defend an appraisal is not necessarily a negative thing, as the IRS routinely looks at appraisals for high value items. What you really want to know is the outcome of the defense. A successful defense is an indicator of deep experience and exceptional competency.

Do you have references that I can contact?

Reputable appraisers will be more than happy to provide you with the names and contact information for past clients. These clients might be realtors, attorneys, banks, or other producers. Call them.

How much will the appraisal cost?

The costs of an appraisal can vary from hundreds to thousands of dollars depending on the property and the purpose of the appraisal. A straightforward appraisal for a mortgage will be on the low end; a complex conservation easement involving multiple parcels will be on the high end. The appraiser should give you a flat fee, an hourly rate, or an itemized list of charges. The fee should never be based on a percentage of the appraisal value.

What information will you need from me?

Most appraisers will ask the owner to provide information about the property being appraised. The information requested may vary depending on the individual appraiser and on the purpose of the appraisal. Here is a list of documents typically required to complete an appraisal:

- Legal descriptions of the property
- Copies of deeds, closing documents (if recent enough to be meaningful), and related purchase agreements/contracts
- Recent title insurance policy or title insurance commitments
- Surveys, plat maps, property maps
- Copies of easements and right-of-way agreements
- List of improvements with dates and costs (with invoices if possible)



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A considerable amount of your time and money are on the line. Plan to talk with several appraisers, not only to find out about work experience, education, professional background, but also to get a sense of personality and work style. Choose someone you will be comfortable working with. ■

New York State Appraiser Credentials		
Licensed Real Estate Appraiser	Certified Residential Real Estate Appraiser	Certified General Real Estate Appraiser
\$ residential property and vacant land to be used for a residence valued at less than \$1 million \$ 150 hours coursework \$ 1000 hours experience	\$ residential property and vacant land to be used for a residence \$ 200 hours coursework \$ 1500 hours experience	\$ all types of real estate \$ 300 hours coursework \$ college degree \$ 3000 hours experience

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