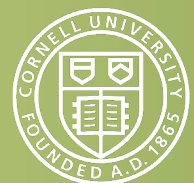


Erie County Ag News



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- NY State Winter Greenhouse Growers School Jan. 18, 2023
- Farm Safety Around Animals
- Keeping Your Flocks in Production Through the "Off Months"
- Spotlight on Seaway Trail Honey



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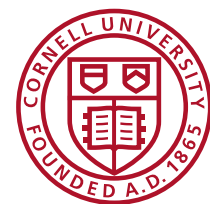
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Follow CCE Erie on social media to receive up to date news and announcements!



Cover photo Rawpixel



UPCOMING AGRICULTURAL EVENTS

Finger Lakes Produce Auction Winter Growers Meeting 2023

January 5, 2023

Penn Yan, NY



This course will present information on insect and disease management in fresh market vegetables in both field and greenhouse (high tunnel) vegetables, primarily for those growing for wholesale auction. Grafting, biological, and where appropriate, conventional spray options will be discussed. A portion of the meeting will include irrigation and soil nutrient management applicable to all farmers. One general session will include updates from the Food Safety Modernization Act.

More details: <https://cvp.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=1725>

Exploring the Small Farm Dream

January 5, 12, 19, 16, 2023

6:30 pm - 9:00 pm

Online via Zoom

Are you trying to decide if starting a farm business is right for you? This four-session course designed by the New England Small Farm Institute and taught by trained facilitators includes exploratory discussion, curated research tools, and self-assessment activities plus a workbook for hands-on application both during class and at home.

More details: <https://web.cvent.com/event/71083f73-dcf4-4526-8c24-f3aa59021e74/summaryevent.php?id=1726event>.

Program Sponsorship for Dairy “Technology Tuesdays” Webinar Series

January 10 - February 21 2023

Tuesday’s 12:30pm-1:30pm

Via Zoom

This seven-part webinar series offers cutting edge information about dairy technology from industry experts. Topics include health monitoring and reproduction, calf management, milking, feeding and nutrition, barn design and ventilation, and future technologies.

More details: <https://ncrat.cce.cornell.edu/event.php?id=2006>

NY State Greenhouse Growers School

January 18, 2023

Virtual: 9:00am - 12:15pm

In Person: 1:15pm - 4:30pm

East Aurora, NY

See page 7 in this issue for full agenda and registration details .



Genesee Valley Produce Auction Winter Meeting

January 18, 2023

Save the date! More information will be available soon!

Planning for Retirement? What's New in 2023

Kathleen McCormick, Agriculture Educator, CCE Erie County

This is a good time of year to take stock of how changes to tax law, Social Security, and Medicare may affect your retirement plans. From increased benefits to higher limits for savings, here are six changes to be aware of.

1. Individual Retirement Accounts

The amount you can contribute to an individual retirement account (IRA) is going up in 2023. The table below includes the 2022 limits because it's not too late to max out your traditional and Roth IRA contributions. Make your contribution by April 18, 2023.

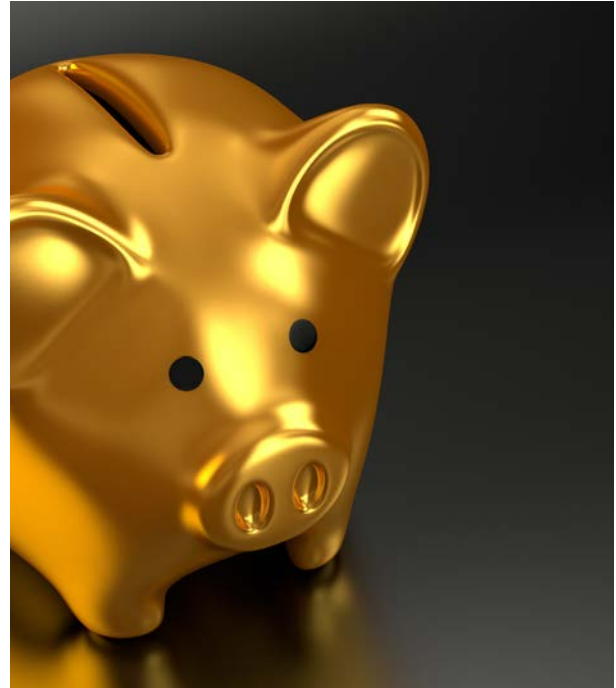
IRA Contribution Limits

Type of IRA	2022 Contribution Limit	2023 Contribution Limit
Traditional & Roth*	\$6,000 (\$7,000 if you're age 50 or older) or your taxable income, whichever is less	\$6,500 (\$7,500 if you're age 50 or older) or your taxable income, whichever is less
SEP	25% of compensation or \$61,000, whichever is less	25% of compensation or \$66,000, whichever is less
SIMPLE	\$14,000 (\$17,000 if you're age 50 or older)	\$15,500 (\$19,000 if you're age 50 or older)

Here are some reminders about traditional and Roth IRA

\$ The limits in the table apply to your total combined contributions. As a general rule, you can't contribute more than you earn. This means that if you are at least 50 years old, and you contribute to both a traditional and a Roth IRA, your total combined contribution can't exceed \$7,000 in 2022 and \$7,500 in 2023.

The IRS makes an exception for married couples filing a joint return. Each spouse can make the maximum IRA



wikimedia.org

contribution, even if one spouse doesn't have earned income. The combined contributions of both spouses can't be more than the taxable earned income the couple reports on their joint return.

\$ The amount you can contribute to a Roth IRA may be reduced if your income is high enough. Visit the IRS website to see if the Roth IRA income limits apply to you. <https://www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/amount-of-roth-ira-contributions-that-you-can-make-for-2023>

\$ Your income does not affect the amount you can contribute to a traditional IRA, but it does affect how much of the contribution is deductible if you or your spouse are also contributing to a workplace

retirement plan. The deduction may be reduced or phased out until it is eliminated. The income limits are increasing in 2023. Visit the IRS website for details.

<https://www.irs.gov/newsroom/401k-limit-increases-to-22500-for-2023-ira-limit-rises-to-6500>

2. Workplace Retirement Plans

The amount you can contribute to a workplace retirement plan such as a 401(k) in 2023 goes up to \$22,500 for those younger than age 50 and \$30,000 for those age 50 and older. If you want to max out your 2022 contribution (\$20,500 for younger than age 50; \$26,500 for age 50 and older), do it by December 31.

3. Saver's Credit

If you contribute to an IRA or a workplace retirement account you may be eligible for a saver's tax credit. Eligibility for the credit is determined by your adjusted gross income (AGI). The lower your income is, the larger the credit. Those with higher incomes are not eligible for the credit. The income limit is going up in 2023.

Filing Status	2023 Eligibility AGI up to:
Single, married filing separately	\$36,750
Married filing jointly	\$73,000
Head of household	\$54,750

Visit the IRS for instructions on how to claim the credit.

<https://www.irs.gov/retirement-plans/plan-participant-employee/retirement-savings-contributions-savers-credit>

4. Medicare Premium

The standard monthly premium for Medicare Part B will go down from \$170.10 to \$164.90 in 2023. It's not much, but it beats a price hike.

5. Social Security Benefits

Social Security payments are going up in a big way

in 2023. The 2023 cost of living adjustment (COLA) is 8.7%, the largest increase in more than 40 years.

As a reminder, you qualify for Social Security by earning work credits for the wages and self-employment income you report. Anyone born in 1929 or later needs 40 work credits to qualify for Social Security benefits. In 2023, you will receive one work credit for every quarter that your earned income is least \$1,640. It doesn't matter whether the income is earned in one quarter or over four quarters. But no earned income reported means no work credits earned.

If you have a bad year income-wise and still want to earn Social Security work credits, you may be able to use an "optional method" of reporting income. With this method you report more income than you have, potentially increasing your self-employment tax enough to earn a Social Security work credit. Find out more in A Guide for Farmers, Growers, and Crew Leaders (<https://www.ssa.gov/pubs/EN-05-10025.pdf>) and the Farmer's Tax Guide (<https://www.irs.gov/pub/irs-pdf/p225.pdf>).

Because you need at least 10 years of taxable income to be eligible for Social Security, it's smart to talk with a financial advisor in your 40s or 50s to decide whether you want to rely on Social Security income during retirement. It may make more sense for you to save money for retirement in ways that minimize your current income tax liability (i.e., IRAs and workplace retirement plans).

6. Gift Tax Exemption

The gift tax exemption is jumping up in 2023. You can gift up to \$17,000 (\$34,000 for couples filing jointly), to as many people as you wish in 2023 without worrying about paying a gift tax or using up your lifetime gift and estate tax exclusion. You also can pay unlimited amounts for someone's tuition or medical expenses without using up any of your your lifetime exemption. Just be sure to make the payments directly to the school or medical provider and save your receipts. ■

Ag CDL Training – Erie

John Whitney, Agriculture Educator, CCE Erie County



Photo by John Whitney

The inaugural session of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Erie County's Agricultural Commercial Driver License Training program was a great success with 9 participants and another dozen on the waiting list for 2023. Special thanks to the contracted instructor, Tom Blidy of the North Collins Driver License School, to Ted Burgess of the Erie County Fairgrounds, and Mike LaBerta, Regional Director of the Workforce Development Institute.

The information and registration link remains open for new applications (with no obligation). We anticipate new options for 2023:

- A Late Winter/Early Spring In-Person Group Session (date and location to be announced soon)

- A Fall Group Session at the Erie County Fairgrounds during the weeks of October 16-20 and 21-25
- An Open Enrollment with participants taking an online version of the required Entry Level Driver Training (www.eldt.com or equivalent) and coordinating in-vehicle driving practice directly with Tom Blidy on a flexible schedule that works both for Tom and the participants.

The application link for any of these options is: <https://erie.cce.edu/events/2022/10/18/ag-cdl-training-erie>

A couple of farms took advantage of the partial tuition reimbursement option through the Workforce Development Institute in the 2022 session. We expect this will be offered once again for training in 2023. If farms are paying on behalf of employees, the farms are eligible for a partial reimbursement. There's a simple application process that needs to be completed prior to the start of any enrolled training activities.

One of the important lessons from our 2022 pilot program is that participants need to secure their learner permits early. This program also assumes participants have experience driving big trucks. We are even considering making it a requirement that the farms either own or have regular access to tractor trailers as a condition of eligibility. The reduced tuition, well below market rates, is available because agricultural drivers are generally experienced and close to ready for their road tests. They should already know the basics of tractor trailer and large truck operations including clutching, backing up, and parallel parking. This isn't a session for beginner or inexperienced drivers or even drivers who only have experience with automatic transmissions. Enrollment may be possible but less experienced participants will want to get some extra practice in before starting one of the training options.

The North Collins Driver License School and other area

CDL training schools can provide full-service training options for beginning or less experienced operators. Some may also provide discounts for experienced agricultural drivers looking for Class A or Class B licenses but whose schedules don't align with options through CCE-Erie.

Not all farms really need Class A or Class B licensing to accommodate their local "covered farm vehicle" trucking needs. From the NYS Department of Motor web page:

1. A single or combination covered farm vehicle weighing over 26,000 pounds may only be operated in New York State and within 150 miles of your farm or ranch.
2. A covered farm vehicle weighing 26,000 pounds or less may be operated anywhere within New York State and any other state as long as the state honors the Covered Farm Vehicle designation.

See this NYS DMV link for additional details:

<https://dmv.ny.gov/commercial-drivers/covered-farm-vehicle>

The key to being able to use the 150 mile radius option for covered farm vehicles is keeping a current CFV-1 "Designation as a New York State Covered Farm Vehicle" form in each vehicle. DMV staff are available to help explain details and options, including the impact of various endorsements and testing requirements. Phone the DMV at (518) 402-2724 between the hours of 8 am and 4 pm. An online virtual agent is also available through the DMV website.

For their support (and patience) in getting this program off the ground, Tom Blidy, Ted Burgess, and Mike LaBerta were recipients of the 2022 CCE-Erie "Friends of Agriculture Program" award. We look forward to working with them on the 2023 program.

For more information, we encourage you to visit the CCE-Erie website or contact John Whitney at jrw44@cornell.edu or cell phone 716-796-3204. ■



Ted Burgess



Mike LaBerta



Tom Blidy

New York State Winter Greenhouse Growers School

January 18, 2023

9:00am - 12:15pm VIRTUAL

1:15pm - 4:30pm IN PERSON

erie.cce.cornell.edu/events



Cornell Cooperative Extension

Broome County
Erie County
Orange County
Steuben County
Suffolk County
Capital Area Agriculture & Horticulture Program



Organized in cooperation with



Thank you to our sponsor



Location:

VIRTUAL 9:00am - 12:15pm at your location or view
at The Roycroft Powerhouse, East Aurora

IN-PERSON 1:15pm - 4:30pm at The Roycroft
Powerhouse, 39 S. Grove Street, East Aurora, NY

Lunch provided with in-person registration.

***DEC credits in application.**

Cost:

VIRTUAL \$50 (\$45 CCE Erie Enrolled)

IN-PERSON \$35 (\$30 CCE Erie Enrolled)

Both Programs \$75 (\$70 CCE Erie Enrolled)

VIRTUAL PROGRAM

8:30- 9:00 am Registration

*9:00- 9:45 am, *Rick Yates, Griffin*

Biostimulants-Nothing but the Facts

Biostimulants are products that have the potential to optimize plant growth and performance through a variety of mechanisms. Benefits as diverse as improved fertilizer usage, reduced pest pressure and fighting off abiotic disorders are but a few. From silicon and mycorrhizae to a host of newer products, Rick will call them the way he sees them. "Show me the data"!

*9:45-10:30 am, *Joyce Latimar, retired VA Extension*

PGRs for Perennial Production

The growth habits of herbaceous perennials vary from gentle to rowdy. Joyce will provide a brief outline of plant growth regulators (PGRs) available for use on perennials. Then she will focus on dealing with the rowdy crowd with an emphasis on PGR application techniques designed to reduce worker contact and environmental impact.

10:30-10:45 am BREAK

10:45-10:50 am, *NYSFI Rep*

Brief overview of NYSFI & membership

10:50-11:25 am, *A. J. Both, Rutgers*

11:25-11:45 pm, *Margaret Kelly, Ag & Markets*

*11:45-12:30 pm, *Margery Daughtrey, Cornell*

Protect Your 2023 Crops Against 2022 Diseases!

This will include content about various *Xanthomonas* bacteria on geraniums and poinsettias and ornamental cabbages, *Calibrachoa* mild mottle virus, rust on monstera, *Stemphylium* on ornamental

peppers, Thielaviopsis on ilex, Phytophthora on Hedera, Fusarium on mums and some other happenings from this year. A broad review of recent troubles is good for a midwinter talk so people can resolve to avoid such things in the coming season.

12:30-1:25 Lunch & Trade Show

IN-PERSON PROGRAM

1:25 – 1:30 pm, *Barbara Henry*

Welcome from NYFI

*1:30 -1:45 pm, *Sharon Bachman, CCE Erie*

Box Tree Moth Update: What to Watch Out For
Box Tree Moth was found in the U.S. for the first time in 2021, right in Niagara County. A voracious predator of boxwood, this one is sure to make an impact on nursery and landscape industries. This presentation will cover the insect's history, biology, observations, and response from USDA, Cornell, and NYS Department of Agriculture & Markets.

*1:45 – 2:15 pm, *Jennifer Russo, Lake Erie Regional Grape Program*

Spotted Lanternfly in WNY: Update on Erie County Detection and What This Means for Horticulture Businesses

The Spotted Lanternfly arrived first in New York in 2020 and is now established in parts of the Binghamton area. This invasive planthopper can become a real nuisance in landscapes and is a threat to vineyards. In this session we'll review images of this insect so it can be recognized in its different life stages which range from tan egg masses to tiny crawling black nymphs to the adult with polka dotted outer wings and bright-orange underwings. We'll describe its life cycle and the favorite plants it feeds on. From there, you'll see the latest maps of where spotted lanternfly is located and learn of the regulatory work with this invasive insect.

*2:15 – 3:05 pm, *Jamilyn Woodside, NYS Department of Ag and Markets*

Review of 2022 Growing Season Pest Issues – Preparing for the 2023

A review of emerging and familiar horticulture pests that should be on our radar this coming year inside the greenhouse and beyond.

3:05 – 3:15 pm BREAK

3:15 – 3:40 pm, *Tim Terry, Agriculture Extension Specialist - Cornell University*

Greenhouses and Extreme Weather Events – Being Ready to Weather the Storm

*3:40 – 4:25 pm, *Nick Flax, Technical Services Specialist - Ball Seed Company*

Integrating Biologicals and Biorationals into Greenhouse IPM Programs

[Instructor Application to be submitted to NYS DEC]
Does it seem like your go-to products for greenhouse pest management are becoming less effective each year? Have supply chain issues left you in the lurch and unable to get pesticides that are a standard in your IPM toolbox? Tired of having to shut down your greenhouse for a 12 to 24-hour after spraying? All of these challenges (and more!) can be addressed if you can effectively integrate biological/biorational products into your IPM programs. This session will cover: 1) benefits of adding "bios" to your IPM toolbox, 2) several types of bios that can be easily integrated into conventional IPM programs, and 3) a "how-to" on maximizing efficacy for each type of product discussed.

4:25 – 4:30 pm

Wrap-Up, Evaluation, DEC certificates – Adjourn



Marketing Musings

PennState Extension Resources

John Whitney, Agriculture Educator, CCE Erie County

While we in Cornell Cooperative Extension customarily look to Cornell and other New York State institutions for educational resources, land grant colleges and universities and academic institutions in other states also generate a wealth of resources that can help with lifelong learning, business development, and marketing strategies. Penn State Extension is among those regional institutions that are making materials widely available (and generally for free!). I am highlighting a few in this article, with thanks to Sarah Cornelisse and others on the Penn State Extension team. If you are reading this in electronic form, click on the highlighted links to access the discussions and information. If you are reading a paper version, you can scan the QR Codes or type in the links using the list at the end of this article. Or contact me and I will send them to you by e-mail or text. – John (jrwh44@cornell.edu or 716-796-3204).

B2B Marketing

Kevin McElhone, Director & Account Lead, Daymon Worldwide

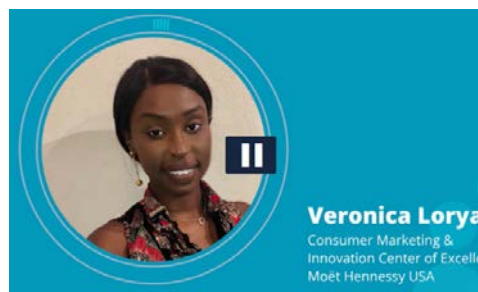
Kevin describes private label development and sales growth strategies and trends in this audio discussion.



Branding

Veronica Lorya, Consumer Market & Innovation Center of Excellence, Moët Hennessy, USA

Veronica visits about her career experience and use of consumer insights and analytics to inform and drive marketing decisions, strategic partnerships, and marketing decisions.



Scaling Up Your Food Business

Sarah Cornelisse, Senior Extension Associate at PennState Extension

Sarah leads a discussion of channel considerations when scaling up food businesses. While focused on consumer food businesses, the concepts apply broadly to any operation considering business expansion.

You might check Sarah's PennState profile page for more about her background and links to many of her recent education releases. Training the Next Generation: Scholarships



These days, information is often quite literally at our finger tips by typing in key search terms or visiting web portals through our computers and other devices. That doesn't mean a phone call (or text message) isn't welcome and sometimes an efficient alternative. Feel free to reach out to any of us on the CCE-Erie Agricultural Team or to staff on the Regional Teams. ■

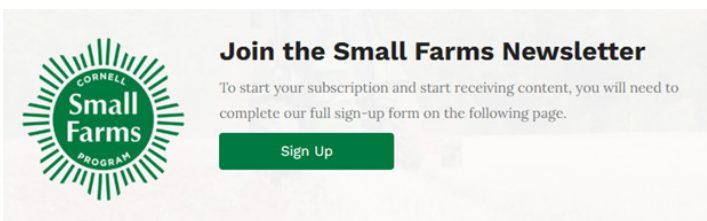
Moving more directly to production agricultural resources, PennState Extension provides a wealth of online materials. For example, "New and Beginning Farmer News" highlights timely articles and upcoming webinars and podcasts. You can subscribe to receive periodic messages at the bottom of the web page.

New and Beginning Farmer News



This isn't meant to minimize Cornell's vast resources. We regularly feature materials from the Cornell Small Farms Program, in particular. Among my favorites are the Guides series, which includes some great marketing references as well. If you are not already receiving it, you can sign up for the Small Farms Newsletter.

Cornell Small Farms Newsletter



Full Links (with careful typing):

B2B Marketing - https://psu.mediaspace.kaltura.com/media/Kevin+McElhoneA+B2B+Marketing/1_t0jxfhcw

Branding - https://psu.mediaspace.kaltura.com/media/Veronica+LoryaA+Branding/1_xeq82g4g

Scaling Up Your Food Business - <https://tinyurl.com/crsyk9mm>

Sarah Cornelisse PennState Profile Page - <https://extension.psu.edu/sarah-cornelisse>

PennState New and Beginning Farmer News - <https://extension.psu.edu/new-and-beginner-farm-team-team-sign-up>

Cornell Small Farms Program - <https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/>

Small Farms Program Guides - <https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/resources/guides/>

Small Farms Newsletter Sign-up - <https://smallfarms.cornell.edu/contact/email-sign-up/>

Weed Identification

Why ID pigweeds? Herbicide resistance, weed seedbank, competition and yield loss? All of the above! The new Weed Science website from Assistant Professor Lynn Sosnoskie of the Specialty Crop Weed Science Lab at Cornell Agri Tech will help identify and manage troublesome agricultural weeds. Check it out!

<https://cals.cornell.edu/weed-science/weed-identification/pigweed-identification>



Scholarships

Every year, the National Farmers Union Foundation provides scholarship opportunities for high school seniors, college students and non-traditional students through the Stanley Moore Scholarship, the Hubert K. and JoAnn Seymour Scholarship, and a scholarship offered in partnership with MANRRS (Minorities in Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Related Sciences).

If you or a student you know are interested in applying please visit the link below. The deadline for applications is April 1, 2023 and recipients will be notified and announced by July 31, 2023.

Find out more and apply: <https://nfu.org/education/scholarships/>



Keep an eye out for your Ag Supporter Form, coming to your mailbox soon!

New pricing, same benefits.

Supporting Farm Energy Efficiency in New York State: Ag Energy NY Resource Hub and Outreach Campaign

Robbie Coville (rc277@cornell.edu), Ag Energy NY Program Manager, Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Tompkins County

**Cornell Cooperative Extension
Tompkins County**



NYSERDA
Supported



Introduction

Ag Energy NY is a pilot program to support farm energy efficiency across New York State. This program offers free and informative outreach resources and pays CCE Educators to participate in an outreach campaign at their local level. We aim to support farm sectors that have historically received less energy efficiency support:

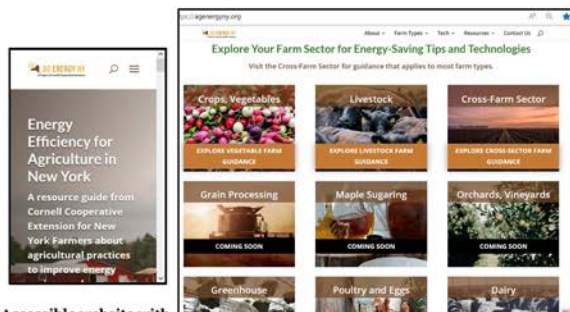
- Vegetable farms
- Livestock farms
- Poultry farms
- Maple farms
- Grain drying
- Orchards and vineyards
- General farm operations, large and small
- Dairies and greenhouses, supported by a program partner



Ag Energy NY provides guidance about farm energy use, connects farmers with service providers for farm-level expert advice, and helps farmers access incentives and rebates.

Website for Farmers and Ag Educators

AgEnergyNY.org is a mobile-friendly website, organized by farm sector and by technology type. Visitors learn recommendations, available incentives, and next steps to reduce energy use on farms.



Accessible website with farm sector-specific information on reducing energy use

Resource Hub

AgEnergyNY.org/outreach-kit

A free Outreach Kit is available for CCE Ag Educators and is available upon request for other farm service providers:

- Pamphlets for Ag Energy NY extension program
- Factsheets on sector-specific energy efficiency
- Flyers for no-cost, no-commitment Agriculture Energy Audits
- Infographics & photos for social media or PPTs
- Newsletter text (long, medium, and short)
- Slides and poster templates about the program
- Links to relevant info and resources (webinars, etc.)
- Print budget for Ag Energy NY participants

Incentives for Farm Energy Efficiency

AgEnergyNY.org/incentives-grants

- No-cost, no-commitment farm energy audits that enable appropriate upgrades and the latest incentives
- Utility rebate & direct install programs
- USDA Rural Energy for America Program (REAP)
- NRCS EQIP's On-Farm Energy Initiative
- FSA Farm Storage Facility loans
- Federal Tax Credits / Deductions

Outreach Campaign

Outreach on this topic is being integrated into the existing activities of CCE Associations, Regional Ag Teams, and other Farm Service Providers.

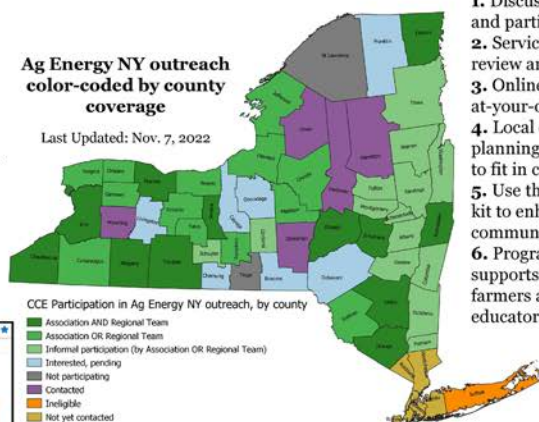
Ag Educators' experiences and relationships with farmers are key to effective outreach, enhanced by Ag Energy NY's statewide support, coordination, online training, free content, and pay for participation.

Local outreach plans can be flexible. Participation tends to follow 6 steps:

1. Discuss program and participation
2. Service Agreement review and signing
3. Online training at-your-own-pace
4. Local outreach planning, customized to fit in current work
5. Use the outreach kit to enhance your community outreach
6. Program staff supports interested farmers and assists educators

Ag Energy NY outreach color-coded by county coverage

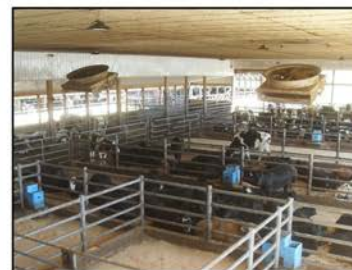
Last Updated: Nov. 7, 2022



Train-the-Trainer Online Course

AgEnergyNY.org/train-the-trainer

For this unique outreach campaign, we have an at-your-own-pace, online course on Cornell's Moodle online learning platform. This text and video-based training equips educators with core concepts and information to help you help farmers reduce energy use. Program staff provides support and facilitates next steps.



Technologies described in training: high-efficiency fans and energy-free waterers, which have potential energy savings of 20-80% and 40-100% respectively

'Why wouldn't I sign up? A farm energy audit at no cost wouldn't hurt, and I'd like to see what improvements and incentives might be right for my farm.'

- Livestock farmer and NY FarmNet Consultant, in response to an Ag Energy NY training

Get Involved!

- ✓ Visit our website and request access our outreach content; bookmark it, print flyers and factsheets, and add opportunities and incentives to your outreach
- ✓ Enroll in our training about how you can help farmers reduce energy use, learning at-your-pace online and returning to this resource as needed
- ✓ Contact us at AgEnergyNY@cornell.edu to participate in our outreach campaign, providing you with payments for trainings, referrals, and print costs.

Acknowledgements

Ag Energy NY is a program of Cornell Cooperative Extension Tompkins County, funded by the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority (NYSERDA) project *Energy Best Practices for Agriculture*. This program is developed collaboratively with NYSERDA, Daylight Savings Company, and other partners including Cornell Maple Program, Taitem Engineering, and EnSave. Extension and university staff from around the Mid-West and Northeast advise this program, helping shape and improve its approach and contents.

USDA to Measure Cost of Pollination

Jordan Smith, USDA



Photos: Pixabay



The U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Agricultural Statistics Service (NASS) will conduct its 2022 Cost of Pollination survey from November through December of 2022. The survey will be sent to nearly 16,000 producers nationwide.

"Honey bees are important pollinators of crops ranging from almonds to zucchinis," said King Whetstone, director of the NASS Northeastern Regional Field Office. "To help accurately depict the health of the pollination industry in the United States, NASS will ask crop producers about their use of honey bees, the fees they paid for honey bee pollination, and any other expenses related to pollinating their crops."

Survey recipients are asked to respond securely online through the Respondent Portal at agcounts.usda.gov, by mail, or fax. Those who do not respond by November 14 may be contacted by a NASS representative to arrange an interview to complete the survey.

All information reported by producers will be kept confidential, as required by federal law. NASS will publish the survey data January 11, 2023, on the NASS website at nass.usda.gov and in the NASS Quick Stats searchable database at quickstats.nass.usda.gov.

For more information about the Cost of Pollination survey and NASS's bee and honey program, visit nass.usda.gov/Surveys/Guide_to_NASS_Surveys/Bee_and_Honey. NASS's other honey bee reports include the Honey report published every March and the Honey Bee Colonies report published every August.

For assistance with the survey, producers are encouraged to call the NASS Northeastern Regional field office at (800) 498-1518. NASS is the federal statistical agency responsible for producing official data about U.S. agriculture and is committed to providing timely, accurate and useful statistics in service to U.S. agriculture. USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender. ■

DEC's Intent to Restrict Certain Neonicotinoid Pesticide Products

Department of Environmental Conservation

DEC announced plans to [reclassify certain neonicotinoid \(neonic\) pesticide products](#) as "Restricted Use" effective January 1, 2023.

Every pesticide product used, distributed, sold, or offered for sale in New York must be registered by DEC. Mainly, pesticides are classified as either general or restricted use pesticides. Restricted use pesticides can only be used by a private or commercial certified applicator possessing NYS issued certification.

What are Neonicotinoid Pesticides or "Neonics"?

- Neurotoxic insecticides. Neonics affect the nerve cells of insects often causing paralysis and death of the insect.
- Systemic insecticides. Neonics are transported by water and absorbed throughout all parts of the plant including roots, foliage and flowers.

Why are Neonics harmful to pollinators?

- Honeybees, butterflies, beetles, birds, and other pollinators are attracted to fruit and flowers. Pollen and nectar are major sources of food for these creatures. Plants and seeds treated with neonicotinoid pesticides have the ability to transport the insecticide to the fruiting and flowering parts of the plant. Insect species come in contact with neonics during foraging and feeding activities.

New York is committed to protecting pollinator populations.

Pollinators contribute to the sustainability of our environment and play an important role in the health of our economy in agricultural production. As such, DEC and NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets have collaborated to publish the 2020 [New York State Pollinator Protection Plan Update \(PDF\)](#) as an educational resource base for the public.

Restricting Neonicotinoid Pesticide Products

Pesticide products containing imidacloprid, acetamiprid, and thiamethoxam that are labeled for foliar, outdoor use, and/or seed treatment will be reclassified as "restricted use" pesticides in NYS. This reclassification will ensure proper use by trained, licensed applicators and also require sales and use data of neonics to be annually reported to the DEC.

For more information on the January 2023 reclassification of neonic pesticides, visit DEC's [Bureau of Pesticides Management webpage](#). ■



Are your MeatSuite profile, products and prices up to date?

On Jan. 1, 2023, MeatSuite will ONLY display farm products that have been updated in the past year. If a profile has not been updated in a year, it is not visible to potential customers. Here's how to access your account on the new site:

Step 1: Visit www.meatsuite.com and click on "for farmers" in the upper left-hand corner.

Step 2: Use your MeatSuite log-in information (use the email address you used when you set

up the account). If you forgot your password, you can use the "forgot password" function.

Step 3: Update your products and prices. Upload a logo or a picture. Take a look at your farm description, etc.. Please note: Only farms with products and prices will be listed on the new version, so make sure you have a bulk meat product and price set before you log-in.

A Real Life Reminder for Farm Safety Around Animals!

Katelyn Walley-Stoll, Business Management Specialist and Team Leader, SWNYDLFC

If you've tried to email or call me in the past month, you probably received an automatic "out of office" message and an extended wait for a reply! I have been using up all of my sick time to deal with a long concussion recovery - caused by, you guessed it, an unfortunate farm accident.

In a classic case of "do as I say, not as I do," I was ear tagging cows on our farm using less than ideal animal restraints. One cow decided to swing her head in just the right way to catch me on the forehead with her jaw! This resulted in a bad concussion and whiplash with symptoms like nausea, inability to focus, sensitivity to light and sound, issues with speech and vision, and general exhaustion. I was out of commission for a couple

of weeks and am still working through lasting symptoms more than a month later.

This incident was a stark reminder for myself and my family about just how important farm safety is and should be. Farming is an inherently risky business, and we've all heard about some of the truly shocking accidents that have hit our agricultural community in just the past few years.

When working with any type of livestock or equipment, it's key to consider safety to keep yourself, your farm family, employees, and animals safe. On average from year to year, one in every four farm accidents involve

animals. Below are some farm safety reminders for working with animals on the farm.

1. Animal Behavior is instinctive AND learned. For example, cows can learn to be calm around humans and wear a rope halter without too much fuss. However, natural instinct when experiencing something new (ear tagging) will be to react in "fight or flight" mode which will cause sudden movements. Be prepared for sudden movements and don't trust animals just because they're the kind ones in the herd.

2. Consider depth perception and color blindness. Many animals have different vision than we do. This results in big reactions to blind turns, color changes, gaps in flooring and pens, and quick movements (think - fans, children, equipment, etc.). Go through your housing and handling facilities looking out for areas that might cause hang ups when working with animals. Always operate in areas with adequate lighting.

3. Facilities need to be up to par. We can often prevent accidents by thoroughly preparing our animal handling facilities. In addition to the lighting mentioned above, there are other things to check on periodically. Look for any loose boards, gates, panels, or other handling areas that might need some new screws, bolt tightening, or replacement. Watch for any sharp projections (aka - that nail that never got pounded in all the way). Add traction to areas that get slippery and reduce blind spots.

4. Remember the Flight Zone. We've all heard about cow flight zones, and often use them to our advantage to calmly and safely move cattle when necessary. However, remembering that cows can't see directly behind them, have varying flight zones, and react suddenly to sounds and movements will keep everyone safe.

5. Ask for help. Oftentimes, we're put into situations where we have to handle animals alone. However, having an extra person around is always better! More help, and clear communication, will allow for extra time and safer handling.

6. Plan for Human Exits. When working animals, we tend to avoid working in the center of the group or facility to limit the chance for trampling, kicking, and headbutting. However, working in corners and against walls can also lead to getting pinned. Plan for space with animal handling

facilities and know how you can get out of a situation quickly if needed.

7. Be Patient, Kind, and Consistent. Animals (and humans, too) are creatures of habit. Keeping activities consistent and calm will help everyone involved. Allow animals space and time to get acclimated to new areas, new people, and new routines. Keep the barn a calm environment by reducing loud and sudden noises and avoiding overcrowding. Handle animals humanely regardless of their age or demeanor. Animals will remember poor animal handling situations for the rest of their lives and will continue to react strongly. At the herd level, calm and consistent handling will lead to calm and consistent animals.

One way you can offset the cost of farm safety improvements for your farm is through the John May Farm Safety Fund. This program, managed through the Bassett Healthcare Network's New York Center for Agricultural Medicine and Health, is available to all New York State farms with annual farm incomes of \$10,000 to \$350,000.

Farms are eligible to apply for matching funds up to \$5,000. Funds are awarded on a rolling basis and only require a simple application, a farm visit from program staff, and monthly project updates. Farms right here in SWNY have received funds from the John May Farm Safety Fund to install cattle squeeze chutes, purchase animal handling equipment, redesign farm working facilities to improve safety, and more.

Ironically enough, our farm was awarded funds from the John May Safety Fund to purchase and install a cattle handling system a few months ago. We just haven't "had the time" to get everything together, and this accident was a great reminder and motivator! ■

Resources that we used in preparing this article:

Penn State Extension Animal Handling Tips: <https://extension.psu.edu/anim...>

John May Safety Fund: <https://www.nycamh.org/program...>

Keeping Your Flocks In Production Through the “Off Months”

Amy Barkley, Livestock Specialist, SWNYDLFC Program

Commercial-type egg production facilities can produce eggs year-round without much trouble, resulting in a steady supply of eggs to grocery store shelves. Therefore many local egg customers, especially those who are new to purchasing eggs from small farms, anticipate that they will always be able to get their eggs locally throughout the year. This is not usually the case. This time of year, egg production from pastured laying flocks is down while demand increases going into the holiday season. The cyclical nature of hens' laying patterns can result in missed sales opportunities and the potential movement of customers to another farm that can meet their needs. However, there are some management tactics that can help maintain production through the winter months. These are based around the 4 inputs for optimal egg production: Daylength, hen age, hen breed, and feed and water availability.

Daylength is the most important factor to consider for optimizing production. Hens are seasonal creatures, maintaining their wild ancestor's reproductive strategy of hatching chicks when food is plentiful. While domestic chickens will outlay their wild cousins, they still hold much of their genetic code which tells them to slow down and eventually stop laying as daylength decreases. For most flocks, this begins in October until egg production becomes a trickle or stops entirely by the winter solstice.

One of the ways to overcome this is to provide a steady daylength to your hens artificially. The

optimum daylength for laying eggs is 14-16 hours. By early October, daylength has decreased to 12 hours. On December 21st, a day is a mere 10½ hours. However, keep in mind that daylight for chickens is slightly longer than from sunrise to sunset. Chickens can perceive the small amounts of light present during the shoulder times of sunrise and sunset, known as civil twilight. This adds an additional hour to the effective daylength. Even still, this is not enough daylength in the winter to promote egg production.

There are two ways to provide artificial light to poultry. The first is to keep them in a facility where a light is timed to keep 14-16 hours of daylight in the living quarters year-round. This can include a combination of natural and artificial light hours. The second option is to provide more light once the birds are moved indoors from pasture. At this time, daylength is extended in intervals of 30 - 60 minutes weekly from the current daylength until 14-16 hours a day is reached. Not much light is needed in an artificially lit system, since hens can see in light as low as 1 foot-candle, which is a term that describes there being enough light to read a newspaper 1 foot away from your face. Having the supplemental light come on in the morning hours and letting dark occur naturally is most comfortable for the birds. A word of caution with increasing light: if light is increased faster than 30-60 minutes a week, hens may be at increased risk for prolapses. It is also worth mentioning is if hens are producing under artificial light and that light isn't consistent, it may throw them out of lay.



Photo SWNY Dairy, Livestock, Field Crops Program

A Southern Sustainable Agriculture Research and Education (SARE) research project found that hens exposed to 14 hours of artificial and natural light a day during the winter months produced 1.125 eggs/week/hen as compared to 0.25 eggs/week/hen from hens exposed to 10 hours of natural light daily. If eggs are selling for \$6/dozen and all eggs coming from the hens are saleable, a flock of 50 hens would produce 44 more eggs, valued at \$21.88, per week with the supplemental light.

Hen Age strongly influences how well a chicken will produce in the winter months. Young hens have more “get up and go” than older hens, which tend to molt sooner and stay in molt longer. A typical production flock will lay well for two seasons, going through one molt. Keeping hens for 3 years of production isn’t unheard of, but following year 3, it’s important to consider if keeping lower producing hens is financially viable, especially if you want your flock to maintain higher egg production in the late fall and winter.

The time of year the chicks are hatched will also influence how well they will lay their first winter. A chick hatched in springtime will take anywhere from

18-26 weeks to come into lay. If she is hatched in mid-to-late summer, it’s likely that she will not begin lay until after the daylight patterns increase in January/February. When daylength decreases while the chick is growing, there are fewer hours per day for her to eat and grow her body and egg tract in preparation for lay. This in combination with a natural decrease in daylength-sensitive reproductive hormones creates a double-edged sword. Starting chicks no later than June will help ensure that they lay their first year and possibly through their first winter. That said, chickens that start to lay in late spring/early summer may end up going into molt in their first winter vs those that start to lay in later summer, but this is not always the case. Production breeds are more likely to lay through winter with a later start than heritage breeds... more on that later!

Hen breed influences not only how many eggs a hen will produce, but also her sensitivity to daylight patterns. Production breeds such as Red Sex Links (also known as Production Reds, ISA Browns, Bovan Browns, Cinnamon Queens, etc.) and White Leghorns (especially if they are from a production line) will tend to lay relatively persistently through their first winter. They have been bred to not be as sensitive

to daylight changes, thereby increasing the number of eggs they will produce per year. For example, a White Leghorn or Red Sex Link may lay up to 320 eggs per year whereas a Wyandotte or Ameraucana may only lay up to 280 eggs per year.

Another consideration is body size. Those birds that are heavier bodied like Plymouth Rocks or Orpingtons tend to lay more persistently through winter than lighter-bodied breeds like Legbars or Andalusians. That said, some of the heavy breeds may lay fewer eggs overall, even if they are more persistent winter layers.

Feed and water availability are important for optimized eggs production. Just one day without water can stop egg production for up to two weeks! Water management is especially important in climates where water tends to freeze during the day in the winter months. Heated waterers or waterers that have ice regularly removed are the best for any flocks, but especially important for production flocks. Remember that even heated waterers should be checked at least once daily to ensure functionality.

In winter, poultry tend to burn more calories to keep warm and take part in normal behaviors. Once they have enough energy to meet their needs, the rest of the energy can be directed to egg production. Therefore, a free choice, nutritionally complete diet should be the primary winter diet. The provision of snacks of any kind should continue to be limited to 10% of their total feed intake, which is about 1/3 pound/hen/day. Fat and protein deficient treats like vegetables and fruit can dilute nutrients and slow down egg production. Carbohydrate dense treats such as cracked corn can result in fatty hens and vent prolapse if not restricted. A further consideration is to limit the feeding of wetted feed if it freezes during the day, since chickens don't need to waste

extra calories pecking frozen blocks of feed to get their daily nutrition!

While these four components should be considered for optimal egg production in the late fall and winter, keep in mind that molting is a natural part of a chicken's lifecycle. Molts are how chickens reset their reproductive systems to provide larger, higher quality eggs when they come back into lay as well as provide them a with period to rest and recharge. Hens that produce more eggs for a longer period and don't go through a natural molt tend to "burn out" quicker, while hens that produce fewer eggs overall and/or are allowed to molt tend to produce quality eggs over more years with fewer health complications. ■



Photo Pixabay

The NYS Young Farmers Loan Forgiveness Incentive Program

New York State Higher Education Services

This program is offered to encourage recent college graduates to pursue careers in farming in NYS. It provides loan forgiveness awards to individuals who obtain an undergraduate degree from an approved NYS college or university and agree to operate a farm in NYS, on a full-time basis, for five years.

Eligibility

An applicant must:

- be a NYS resident and have resided in NYS for 12 continuous months prior to applying for this Program
- be a U.S. citizen or eligible non-citizen
- obtain an undergraduate degree from an approved NYS college or university
- have an outstanding balance on an eligible student loan debt(s) from obtaining such degree
- apply for this Program within two years after college graduation
- operate a farm in NYS on a full time basis
- execute a Service Contract agreeing to operate a farm in NYS on a full time basis for at least five years
- be in a non-default status on a student loan made under any NYS or federal education loan program or repayment of any NYS award
- be in compliance with the terms of any service condition imposed by a NYS award.

Award Amount

The maximum lifetime award under this Program is \$50,000, or the applicant's actual eligible student loan indebtedness at the time eligibility is established, whichever is less. Awards will be



paid in annual disbursements up to \$10,000, or the remaining loan indebtedness. Any additional payments made to reduce the outstanding balance may cause a reduction in the total amount of the award.

Duration

Payments are available for up to five years.

Recipient Selection

The number of awards paid under this Program is limited to available funding; however, no more than ten awards will be granted each year.

Priority is given to prior recipients seeking payment. Second priority is given to applicants who are economically disadvantaged with a priority given to those applicants completing the second, third, fourth or fifth year of full-time farm operation.

For more information visit <https://www.hesc.ny.gov/pay-for-college/financial-aid/types-of-financial-aid/nys-grants-scholarships-awards/new-york-state-young-farmers-loan-forgiveness-incentive-program.html>

Please contact the HESC Scholarship Unit at scholarships@hesc.ny.gov with questions regarding this Program. ■

Spotlight on Seaway Trail Honey

John Whitney, Agriculture Educator, CCE Erie County

This interview is the eighteenth in a series focusing on vendors who are selling their wares at the Western New York Welcome Center's Taste of New York Market. In this vendor spotlight, certified master beekeeper Pat Bono, owner operator of Seaway Trail Honey located on the historic Seaway Trail in Pultneyville, New York, discusses her award-winning, seasonal, single apiary, handcrafted, artisanal, Kosher-certified, raw honey and associated products along with some business and marketing experiences, tips, and strategies.

This is a transcript of a recorded interview.

[John] Pat, it's good to visit with you about your business and I thought maybe we'd start out with giving you a chance to talk a little bit about the history of Seaway Trail Honey.

[Pat] Well, I started beekeeping back in the 1970s, many, many years ago. And over the years, I've taken a lot of courses, attended seminars, just got a lot of experience in the in the beekeeping and beekeeping world. About fifteen years ago, I did buy some property up by Lake Ontario and with the antique barn and I decided to start a business. And have an apiary located on that property by the lake. It's on the historic Seaway Trail, of course, which runs along the southern shoreline of Lake Ontario. And it's also located by the historic hamlet of Pultneyville. So, over the years, I've renovated the antique barn. It was actually built in 1880. It has all the original hand-hewn post and beam structure. Also, in the barn [I] have modernized an area to have a processing kitchen for a 20C license with a three-bay sink. It has refrigeration, electricity, modern equipment in there along with all the honey extraction [equipment].

Everything is done on premises. The bees are located at the property. The honey extraction is done on the property. The bottling of the honey is done on the property. I also do tours on the property. So, I invite people to call me can make an appointment. I've just recently had a group come through and they see the

bees. They see the 20C kitchen. And they see all the beekeeping equipment. And I can explain to them what the bees are doing and also I can explain to people how the honey is processed. It is a very small scale operation but here again I'll stress that it's quality. Not quantity. And that's why I do produce honey that is seasonal honey. It is all seasonal wildflower honey.

Wildflowers change. So, you get wildflowers in the spring which are much different than wildflowers in the fall. So, what I do is I harvest the honey almost every week during the growing season. So, I can capture the nectars from all these different blossoms and that's what makes the honey. The earlier honeys are much lighter, sweeter, and wilder because most of the nectars are from tree blossoms. Early, of course, you get the apple-dandelion and then you get the black locust. One of the biggest one is the basswood or linden tree which is a native tree.... many of the woods in upstate New York have a lot of these basswood.

Of course, we're still in a big region that has a lot of clover. We have many wild clovers and this make a very light, sweet honey. Once you get to middle August, we have a big changeover and the flowers really start to change. We do have a dry period, generally in August, but once you we get to the end of August, the flowers really change and we have goldenrod, which is a fantastic native plant. It is not grown intentionally.

No one grows a crop of goldenrod. It's considered a weed but it is a wonderful native plant that produces a beautiful tasting honey, very robust, along with many of the asters.

And these are all native plants. And these are like the last plants for the bees and other pollinators to gather the nectar the pollen so that they can make it through winter.

[John] You mentioned your small scale? To the extent that you're comfortable saying, what does that mean in monetary terms [of your production and quantities and economic value]?

[Pat] Seaway Trail Honey is a very small-scale operation.... I produce the seasonal honey and I harvest the honey once a week. It is much more labor intensive. But here again it's an advantage not only to the person who's buying the honey, the consumer, it's an advantage for me because I get to break it down. I have different varieties of the honey. I can offer different varieties – the different seasons of the honey.

A lot of people do buy the honey because of their allergies. All the honey has the different pollens from the different plants. It also gives me an opportunity to market the honey in in different containers. I do a lot of specialty jars, you know, like for this violin. Not many people sell in these novelty jars such as this. And then I have the time. And, of course, it's more labor intensive to do things such as the infused honeys. And these are all certified Kosher. Also, everything else, all the spices, are Kosher. So, it is much more labor intensive. But I am able to provide a good quality product.

[John] Where are your products sold in addition to the Taste New York market system around the state?

[Pat] Yes, so I do sell in several of the Taste New York stores. I also do one farmers market locally



Photo Seaway Trail Honey

in Rochester: the Brighton Farmers Market. And that's Sunday mornings. And actually that's where I live. So, I'm also selling to a lot of my neighbors or people in the community. I sell online. I pretty much ship to people in New York State but sometimes I get orders from other states; for people that miss New York honey, the taste of the New York honey. Say they're in the south....they get homesick for New York honey. So, they figured they'll pick...the best which is Seaway Trail Honey. It's a nice quality. I also sell at local stores in in the Rochester area. There's Leo's Elite Bakery, which sells a lot of nice products. And that's in East Rochester. I also sell at Lori's Health Food Store [Lori Natural Food Center], which is in Henrietta.

People do request honey for weddings or special events, whether it be a conference or a charity event.

And they want the local honey which is... can be sold in smaller containers – two ounce containers, which are nice favors. Of course sometimes people want, sometimes brides want special containers.

[John] Honey is sometimes produced and marketed more as a commodity. So, what you're saying is, what's unique about your operation is that you're not producing it in that volume and you're not homogenizing your honey. You're taking advantage of the unique production throughout the growing season.

[Pat] That's correct. So, yes, the the honey is never blended. When I harvest the honey from the bees, sometimes I'll harvest the honey from the bees in the morning and extract the honey in the barn and bottle it in the afternoon. So....and then it gives people the opportunity, especially at the farmers market, to get very fresh honey. So, the opportunity for people to taste what really fresh honey is, is like.... Sometimes I'll harvest the honey, say the day before a farmers market, and people have the opportunity to taste honey that's been harvested maybe 24 hours before they bought it.

[John] Of course, honey lasts for a long time but you're still emphasizing the freshness and the raw honey aspect. You're not processing honey. Just extracting. Right?

[Pat] So, all the honey I produce is raw honey. I don't use any heat in the processing at all. I do not blend the honey. And, actually, the fresher the honey is, the more interesting. I tell a lot of people, yes, this is, could be gourmet honey. When you eat the honey that's been freshly extracted, it has a lot of the enzymes that the bees put into the honey. Honey is a very easily digested carbohydrate because it's composed of simple sugars because of the enzymes that the bees put into the nectar. So, the bees collect the nectar from the flowers and it's actually a high moisture. So, it's very watery, and the bees add the enzymes to break down any complex sugars in the nectars into simple sugars. And they reduce



Photo Seaway Trail Honey

the moisture. So, what happens is honey is actually considered a very safe food and very anti-bacterial because it is a low moisture, high sugar liquid.

Of course, it will crystallize over time. All-natural honey will crystallize over time. Some people prefer that but it's still honey and it's still good.

[John] You talked a little bit about marketing experiences but maybe you can tell us just a little bit more about some of your marketing experiences and tips and strategies that have benefited your business, and something you may be looking forward to in the future?

[Pat] Well, I started selling honey at a farm market. But I found that some of the best experience when selling honey is selling honey at festivals because you get to interact with people. You could do a

lot of tastings. People can taste the different types of honey. You learn how to talk to people, how to educate people about the bees how to educate people about the honey. And so you just go on from there. So I started with the farm markets and when you go to different markets, you get to interact with people, and you find out different areas. In different areas people prefer different type of products. Like for instance, the honeycomb here. A lot of people aren't used to honeycomb, but there are a lot of people that remember the having honeycomb when they were yet very young. And it's also considered almost like a nostalgia thing. So, people are starting to get more into honeycomb. So, I started marketing more honeycomb.

Some people prefer smaller jars. Some people at different areas prefer the bigger jars and that's what they want for whatever reason.

[John] Pat, about how many hives are you maintaining and how many bees per hive? How many total bees in your business right now?

[Pat] Well, I always keep a very small operation, because it is a one-person operation. And I do harvest from the bees every week. Right now, I keep about a couple of dozen hives and that's more than enough for me. And of course, each hive has anywhere from 40 thousand to 60 thousand bees at the height of summer. But every year is different. See, as far as beekeeping goes, it is part of agriculture. And like any agricultural enterprise we're very dependent on the weather. So, each year is different. So, the weather affects the plants. Now, without plants, without flowers, the bees could not survive. So, they're very dependent on flowers. So, if we get a really dry period, the flowers won't produce much or if we get too much rain, or if we had a really bad winter, and also whether the hot weather is stressful to the plants Weather, it affects the amount of nectar that the bees could collect from the plants. So, each year is just different. One year, you might get a lot of honey from the bees and the next year maybe not a lot at all. It might be a really bad year.

So, we're very dependent on the weather. Well, this year for instance, it's been a really big honey year but we have a lull right now which is great - gives me a break because it is a lot of work going through all the hives each week to gather the honey.

[John] In addition to your sales onsite and at various markets, you said you have online sales. So, what is the role of your online sales and your social media activities for your business?

[Pat] Well, I'm not really big on social media. I just don't have the time... so I'm just really pretty much on my website and maybe doing some advertising. Just so I can pretty much direct people to my online site. And so that some people may do a search for honey and they'll find my website and they'll order from that. There's two names my websites use. One is, of course, SeawayTrailHoney.com. And the other name is NYHoneyBuzz.com. Both take you to the website with all the great honey products that are produced by my bees.

[John] How's COVID impacted your business?

[Pat] Not much at all actually. I mean, you know, COVID has affected maybe events or festivals but as far as the farm market or online sales, not much at all. Of course, now that some of the restrictions are loosening up, although this may change in the near future, more people are having events so they're wanting more honey to have at events or weddings. But COVID really hasn't affected my operation at all.

[John] One of the benefits of being small and specialized in the way that you are? And being able to market online as well?

[Pat] Sure. Yes, and then for a while, I was, and I still do.... Actually.... If someone wants to pick up, I can arrange curbside pickup. If someone wants to pick up some honey, they can just pull up to the side of the road. I'll come out and with a mask, and hand

them the honey that they've purchased.

[John] What are your future plans for Seaway Trail Honey?

[Pat] My future plans for Seaway Trail Honey basically is agritourism. I am fixing up my antique barn, the post and beam barn, and I'm doing it in stages. Right now, I'm doing the lower part of the barn. It is an English bank barn. So it has the very thick stone walls and that's the lower part of the barn. So that is pretty much ready for people to come in and see the upper of the barn. We'll also be open hopefully next year and that will be more of a showcase or museum for beekeeping and honey. And again here it is. It's right on Lake Road on the historic Seaway Trail. So that is what I'm planning for...to have more tours for people to come and see not only how honey is produced but also....but just beekeeping and maybe the local agriculture in that area.

[John] That sounds lovely. Pat, you said you manage a non-profit organization?

[Pat] Yes, I'm the president of and founder of New York Be Wellness. It is a 501(C)(3) educational organization. It's a New York State charitable registered organization and we mainly do... it's educational. It's mainly for beekeepers. Small-scale beekeepers, beginning beekeepers. People are interested in beekeepers. We've also done presentations for school groups. You know, we have the microscopes. But we concentrate on people recognizing and diagnosing honeybee disease, and to help people just keep their bees alive. And this organization had actually has been in existence since about 2013. It does do two surveys a year for New York State beekeepers.

In the Spring, it's important. So, we get to know how people lost their hives during the winter. And in the Fall, we do another survey to see how people recouped any of the lost hives, how their

honey production was, that sort of thing. We do newsletters and we also have a YouTube channel. And we have some of the top beekeeping experts in North America do webinars with us. And we record those and put those on YouTube for free.

[John] Did COVID affect New York Bee Wellness?

[Pat] We used to do a lot of in-person workshops with a lot of the top experts, but we went mainly doing Zoom webinars with the experts. Actually, we found out it makes things a lot easier to do Zoom webinars.

[John] And that organization has its own web page and probably links on your own website as well?

[Pat] Yes, so the New York Bee Wellness website is NYBeeWellness.org. And we also have the YouTube channel. You could just "Google" NY Bee Wellness YouTube.

[John] Excellent. Well, thank you for doing that as well.

Thank you to Pat Bono, owner, operator of Seaway Trail Honey and founder and president of New York Bee Wellness for enthusiastically sharing the story of her artisanal honey business. Seaway Trail Honey's line of award-winning, Kosher-certified, single apiary honey products including pure raw honey, honeycomb, infused honeys, gift packs, beeswax candles, novelty jars, and bee and honey related accessories and books are available online at www.NYHoneyBuzz.com.

During the market season, Pat sells Seaway Trail Honey products in person most Sunday mornings at the Brighton Farmers Market. Seaway Trail products are available at several Taste New York markets including the Western New York Welcome Center on Grand Island. Local customers in Brighton, eastern Monroe, and western Wayne

Counties can purchase directly from Seaway Trail Honey, including with curbside pickup following COVID-19 protocols. Seaway Trail Honey products are popular favors for weddings, parties, and other events. Pat is available for honey tastings and educational presentations about bees. See her website for more information or send a message to seawaytrailhoney@gmail.com.

Seaway Trail Honey is another example of how small businesses in New York State are continually adjusting to changes in the economy and markets and is one of the many businesses working to make locally grown, manufactured, or processed and packaged beverages, goods, and services available to consumers throughout the state, region, and beyond.

Note: A video recording of this interview as well as a shorter clip are posted on Cornell Cooperative Extension – Erie’s YouTube Channel. Follow this link

or scan the QR Code if you’d like to watch the video version of this article. While you’re there, you can check out other Taste NY Vendor Spotlights and don’t forget to Subscribe to the CCE Erie channel. ■

QR Code for Seaway Trail Vendor Spotlight - <https://youtu.be/ECje7qsvoY0>



CENSUS OF AGRICULTURE

The Census of Agriculture is taking place this month! Every five years, the USDA takes a Census of Agriculture to update its complete count of America’s farms and the hardworking people who run them.

The census provides valuable information used at the local, state, and national levels to plan for the future and help ensure our country’s agricultural community receives the resources it needs. Participating helps inform decisions about policy, conservation programs, infrastructure, education, and more. It is also the only source of uniform, comprehensive, and impartial agricultural data for every county and state in the country.

Make every voice count in the future of agriculture by participating in the census!

For more information on the Census of Agriculture, visit <https://www.nass.usda.gov/AgCensus/>

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