

## Cornell University Cooperative Extension

### 2011 Annual Report

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Education Center

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#### FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Extension Supporters,

As it turns out 2011 will be my final year as the Executive Director for Cornell Cooperative Extension in Columbia and Greene Counties. I am preparing to begin a new career at Cornell University working at the statewide administrative level of the organization and will take my experiences here with me as we all work together to ensure that Cooperative Extension continues to be a vital organization working on behalf of New Yorker's from Long Island to Buffalo. I want to thank all of the board members, staff members and program participants who have helped us respond to the needs of our communities over these years. In particular I appreciate the spirit of collaboration and creativity that has developed in recent years as we have explored new ways of doing our work as circumstances and priorities have shifted around us.

2012 is an opportunity to carry all of these efforts to another level as we work together to plan new programs and prioritize our efforts, seek a new leader for the Columbia-Greene Association and embrace new approaches to our work that help address the 21<sup>st</sup> century challenges facing our families, businesses and communities.

I wish you all the best as you tackle this new world together!

*Andrew S. Turner, Executive Director*

*The following program descriptions provide a snapshot of the depth and breadth of CCE's educational programs.*

#### 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT



#### 4-H YOUTH GROW IN THE GARDEN

Youth achieve better nutritional impact when they are involved in growing their own food. Over the span of eight weeks, 193 youth in Columbia County participated in our *Let's Eat a Plant* program. This year our summer programs' focus was to introduce youth to expand their taste palate through interactive workshops in our demonstration gardens. The sessions were lead by our six trained Junior Master Gardeners and supervised by 4-H Program Educator, Beth L. Horton.

Participants in the program spent time in the gardens learning different growing techniques and tasting foods directly from the garden. For many it was their first time tasting a blueberry or beet. Youth learned how to tend to the garden, the importance of composting and how to plan a garden. In the afternoon they were taught how to cook with the foods they grew. Recipes incorporated in the program were easy enough for youth to utilize in their own homes with minimal supervision. Workshop sessions ended with physical play time using games from the 4-H *Choose Health* program.

At the time of program completion, all youth stated that they had been introduced to at least three new foods and 40% reported that they would try them again at home.

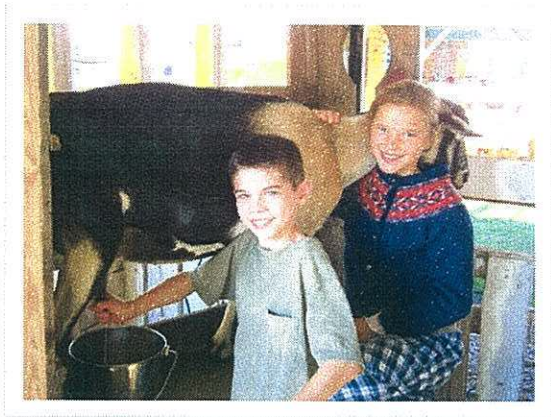
#### *Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities*

Cornell Cooperative Extension provides equal program and employment opportunities. NYS College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, NYS College of Human Ecology, and NYS<sup>1</sup> College of Veterinary Medicine at Cornell University, Cooperative Extension associations, county governing bodies, and U.S. Department of Agriculture, cooperating.



Participants learned that choosing to eat more vegetables in their diets can be fun and tasty.

#### 4-H CLUBS FOSTER SCIENCE LEARNING



As part of the 4-H Science Mission Mandate, 4-H project leaders were trained in new techniques to foster science learning as part of animal projects. Extension Educator, Kelly Ann Radzik led this effort by providing both training in new science-based lesson plans and leadership in redesigning standard activities to meet science goals.

The result was an increased number of youth reporting science learning on their end-of-year animal project records. Nearly half of our 4-H members in Columbia County completed animal science projects this year.

Some of the reported science outcomes were:

*"I really like the Vet Science project. I went to the vet's office and saw a C-section on a dog and got to help revive the puppies. It was cool. I help with our dogs when they have puppies. I think I might like to work with a vet for my career."*

*"My most enjoyable moment was when our first chick hatched and I got to watch. I also liked being able to put a flashlight behind the eggs and seeing the chick grow from a blood vessel to a whole breathing creature."*

*"I have witnessed artificial insemination of a cow, the treating of scours in a calf, the trimming of cow's hoofs, and so much more. With the help of my 4-H leader, I have gained knowledge that will help me if I were to pursue a dairy health career."*

In addition, a team of Dairy Cattle project leaders and teens worked to redesign Dairy Olympics. This knowledge contest was updated to focus on science skills like

observing and interpreting digital images and determining fat content in dairy products.

#### 4-H YOUTH PARTICIPATE IN CITIZEN SCIENCE

During the summer, 4-H Extension Educator, Crystil-Lee Skoda, provided regional training to youth on the citizen science project Wasp Watcher. This project uses a docile native wasp called The Smokey Winged Beetle Bandit, *Cerceris fumipennis*, as a biosurveillance tool to monitor the Emerald Ash Borer. Emerald Ash Borer is an invasive beetle which kills Ash trees in as little as three years. Ash trees make up 7% of the trees across New York State.

Local youth from both Columbia and Greene Counties were trained and participated in the project. In Columbia County members of the Wilderness Workers 4-H Club and Crellin Park summer recreational program helped search for the wasp used in the project. Currently there are no known wasp colonies in either county. A map of searched sites was created from these searches to aid citizen scientists with this project in the 2012 Wasp Watcher season.

Special funding to support this project was provided by a Smith-Lever grant from Cornell University.

#### 4-H CLUB MEMBERS ARE LOCAL LEADERS

As the youth development program of New York's land-grant university – Cornell University and the Cooperative Extension System, 4-H fosters an innovative, "learn by doing" approach with proven results. The [4-H Study of Positive Youth Development](#), a longitudinal study conducted by the Institute for Applied Research in Youth Development at Tufts University, shows youth engaged with 4-H are:

- Nearly two times more likely to get better grades in school;
- Nearly two times more likely to plan to go to college;
- 41 percent less likely to engage in risky behaviors; and
- 25 percent more likely to positively contribute to their families and communities.

2011 found almost 500 youth as members of 35 4-H clubs located throughout most of the towns in Columbia County. These clubs are led by over 350 local volunteers. These adults organize the clubs in their communities, provide project leadership, are guest speakers, evaluate 4-H exhibits at the fair, and more. The caring support of