



2011 Annual Report

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 21st 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 TRAINS SCIENCE CONSULTANTS

Community sites like libraries and afterschool programs are looking to partner with 4-H to present fun hands-on science programs. There are many more requests than can be filled. Extension Educators Linda Tripp, Kelly Radzik, and Beth Horton collaborated on a New York State 4-H Foundation Grant to provide training to under-employed teachers to meet this need.

These "4-H Science Consultants" extended our outreach this summer and fall, by travelling to summer recreation sites, libraries, and other community programs. Using 4-H curricula like "Magic Bubbles" and "Birds in Your Backyard," the consultants increased participants' skills in important areas like making predictions, interpreting data, and developing critical thinking skills.

A participant in a 4-H Science program at the Catskill Library made this scientific observation during the "Dancing Raisins" activity: "The raisins will sink to the bottom when you put them in the bubble (seltzer) water. When you blow on the raisins, more bubbles go on the raisins." These kind of hands-on experiences keep things real for youth as they learn basic scientific concepts.

Twelve consultants have been trained to work in both Columbia and Greene Counties. The program will continue through 2012 thanks to additional funding from the Stewart's Holiday Match program.

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 fuminpennis*, as a biosurveillance tool to monitor the Emerald Ash Borer. Emerald Ash Borer, an invasive beetle which kills Ash trees in as little as three years.

Building Strong and Vibrant New York Communities

Ash trees make up 7% of the trees across New York State.

At the completion of the project seven groups of youth and adults from six counties participated in the Wasp Watcher training program. As a result of the regional presentations four groups committed to Wasp Watchers this summer. And other trained participants have indicated intention to complete the project in the coming season.



Within Greene County youth from the Siuslaw Shooters 4-H Archery Club participated in searching for the wasp used in the project. Currently there are no known wasp colonies in the 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 extend this project to a regional basis was provided by Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership.

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.

In 2011 almost 100 local volunteers help to lead 4-H clubs located throughout Greene County. 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 adult volunteers and mentors inspires these young local leaders in 4-H to work collaboratively (especially as they participate as club

officers), take the lead on their own projects and set and achieve goals with confidence.

Virtually every 4-H member, in conjunction with their 4-H club, participates in service activities in their communities. They look to the needs of those in their local community – providing food to the food pantry, holiday boxes to families in need, compassion to

the elderly, help for homeless pets, activities for young children and more.

4-H members build their confidence and speaking skills by participating in the public presentation program and sharing their knowledge at the county fair. They explore career options as participants in programs such as Cornell Career Explorations and Cobleskill Agribusiness Career Trip.

Fueled by research-driven programming, 4-H'ers engage in hands-on learning activities in the areas of science, citizenship and healthy living. Their local 4-H club volunteers provide many hours of guidance as 4-H members explore, build, lead, create, share.

AGRICULTURE & HORTICULTURE

After a cool, wet spring, the crop plantings were delayed, and the hay gathering was sporadic. After a pretty fair middle to the growing season, Tropical Storms Irene and Lee dumped a major deluge on the region. Even the higher elevations of the county, as well as the lower lying areas took a major hit from the “gallons and gravity” combination, and many crops, livestock, equipment, facilities, roads, bridges, and a great deal of soil from farmland were lost. CCE helped bring the farmers and disaster relief organizations together in a meeting at the ARC in early September. The networking that was afforded by the meeting helped many farms gain access to the federal, state, and county supportive agencies’ relief efforts, and began the process of healing up and starting over. Disaster relief was a focus of our efforts at CCE for some time, and in additions to the meeting and networking, programs for water quality were held and water test kits were distributed.

The hops demonstration project was slow to materialize this spring, due to the cool, wet weather, the change in venue for growing areas, and late arrival of hops rhizomes