

## FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

At our annual meeting in November 2013, we recognized and celebrated the 2<sup>nd</sup> year of existence for Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties. We thank you for all of your generous support and interest in our association over the past year.

The employees and board of our association have been involved in a variety of **activities and initiatives**, participation in CCE regional programs and management groups including:

- Capital Area Agriculture and Horticulture Program
- Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture Program
- Shared Business Network
- Eat Smart New York Nutrition Program
- Statewide Invasive Species Program
- The Hudson Estuary Watershed Resiliency Project

Increasing our involvement with:

- Greene County Legislature and County Resources Committee
- Columbia County Board of Supervisors and Economic Development Comm.
- Columbia Co. Chamber of Commerce
- Greene County Chamber of Commerce

Our board structure was reorganized by developing and implementing strong committees including four standing committees, five program advisory committees, two 4-H work groups, and the Siuslaw Model Forest Committee.

Continued to increase our involvement in the community with the-

- Columbia-Greene Interagency Awareness Day
- Greene County Youth Fair Board
- Columbia County Fair
- Greene County Emergency Services
- Columbia County Local Emergency Planning Committee
- FarmOn Foundation by supporting its goal of providing educational opportunities for local youth in agriculture
- Our CCE employees are involved in 56 local, statewide, and national organizations and groups.



Nathan Chittenden, President

- CCE's requirement for completing background checks for all CCE volunteers and staff, as well as DMV checks for any drivers of CCE vehicles, has been implemented.

Due to a generous bequest to our association in the will of Paul Morra of Tannersville, we have established **The Paul & Maria Morra Scholarship Fund** to be used to provide scholarships to area students interested in pursuing secondary academic work in the fields of horticulture, agriculture, forestry and natural resources. The scholarship funds are expected to be available for the 2015 academic year.

The implementation of a **marketing plan** has increased our presence in local media through public service announcements, news releases, newspaper feature articles, radio talk shows, and others. In the spring of 2013 we hosted an Open House and invited local residents to see our facilities, meet our staff, and learn about our programs and services.

**Outreach to our local, state, and federal government leaders** is ongoing to encourage their support of grants and programs that allow CCE to continue today and become more involved in the future. As a result, U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand and Congressman Chris Gibson held a press conference this past October at the Agroforestry Resource Center introducing their Lyme and Tick-Borne Disease Prevention, Education, and Research Act.



Chuck Brooks, Executive Director

Exciting changes began to take place in the **4-H Youth Development program** with the reorganization of our 4-H staff structure to strengthen and expand our 4-H Youth Development programs throughout our service area. In October 2013, our first association 4-H Achievement Day, with clubs from both counties, took place at Columbia-Greene Community College.

The **CCE Agriculture Roundtable Discussion Group** was also reorganized and expanded by identifying legislative, zoning, planning, and economic development personnel and agency representatives. These stakeholders will meet a minimum of two times per year to share common relevant information, projects, visions, and action steps for the future of agriculture in our service area.

And, of course, we can't forget our board's approval in September 2013 of the **Long Range Strategic Plan** for our association. The CCE Board of Directors and employees, with the help of individuals from the community, developed specific goals, objectives, and action steps that will direct the work of our association for the next five years.

As we begin 2014, please be assured that the board and staff of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia and Greene Counties will continue to provide programs and services of the highest quality that are of interest and meet the needs of our local residents. We pledge our good stewardship of the dollars you provide to our association to make a difference in the lives of all who live here.

# 4-H Youth Development



Cornell Cooperative Extension's 4-H Youth Development Program engages school-age youth throughout Columbia and Greene Counties. Our 4-H Club Program hosts 50 4-H clubs with almost 450 club members. More than 250 adults volunteer their time to work directly with these youth as they explore and participate in hands-on activities in project areas such as rabbits, the environment, foods and nutrition, photography, dairy cattle and gardening. As many as 200 additional volunteers provide support in the areas of fund raising, judging and chaperoning.

Educational programs, generally providing six hours of participation, have been taken to school classrooms, community libraries, summer recreation sites and afterschool programs. Over 2,700 youth participated in these programs that covered topics such as rural and farm safety, environmental science, healthy eating and active living, and GPS.

Following are just three examples of the many youth involvement programs that took place in 2013.

**Garden-Based Learning** – Seven school gardens are participating in the CCE Columbia-Greene Counties

led “school garden partners” program. Once a month during the school year, the group of individuals who take leadership for these gardens meets to share successes, disappointments and ideas. During the growing months they meet at a different school garden. CCE has been able to provide education each month and brought Liz Falk from the Cornell Department of Horticulture out for two training sessions. With this kind of support, the school gardens continue to grow and provide opportunities for students to learn about gardening, taste foods they grow in the garden and use the garden as an outdoor classroom – for science research, art and writing resource and cafeteria food source.

**Choose Health: Fun, Food and Fitness** – This Cornell University-created curriculum provides six sessions of hands-on experiences for youth in grades three through five. Youth at summer recreation sites, youth centers and after-school programs were able to participate in this program. They were able to play active games, prepare and taste healthy snacks, determine the amount of sugar in beverages, select whole grain products and evalu-

ate the amount of fat in common fast foods.

**Animal Science** – The 4-H Animal Science Program reaches youth primarily through 4-H clubs located in Columbia and Greene Counties. 4-H club members learn about and work with dairy cattle, goats, sheep, swine, beef, rabbits, cavies, and poultry. Most of the learning takes place at the local 4-H club level where volunteer 4-H club leaders use their own knowledge and 4-H curriculum and resources to teach the youth.

Many 4-H club members own their 4-H project animals but they can also “borrow” a project animal from a neighbor or friend if they do not own that species. 4-H club members show what they have learned by exhibiting their animals at local fairs. There they participate in “showmanship” where they answer related questions and show off their project animal to best fit the expectations of the species.

4-H club members compete in learning contests that include dairy bowl, horse bowl, hippology, and public presentations. This year, teams in novice, junior and senior competed locally and at the district and state level.



# Natural Resources & the Environment



Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia Greene's (CCE CG) Natural Resource and the Environment program continues to provide crucial information related to sustaining forests, protecting water resources and dealing with invasive species.

Elizabeth LoGiudice played a lead role in the development of the Hudson Estuary Watershed Resiliency Project (HEWRP). This flood-resiliency effort is a Valley-wide, regional collaboration between the NY Water Resources Institute (WRI), the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program and Cornell Cooperative Extension associations in Columbia, Greene, Dutchess, Orange and Putnam counties. Audiences for this program are municipal officials, highway personnel and streamside landowners. Components of the HEWRP included needs assessments with municipal officials and landowners, and educational outreach. Twelve seminars on flood-related topics were hosted at different locations in the Hudson Valley. CCE staff collaborated with a wide variety of partners to provide additional trainings and conferences. This comprehensive outreach effort reached nearly 1,900

people in a span of several months. This project, funded by WRI and the Estuary Program, will continue in 2014.

Ron Frisbee continued to strengthen the use of peer to peer learning as part of his work with woodland landowners. Ron facilitated 30 Master Forest Owner (MFO) visits, and provided MFO volunteers with intake forms and aerial photos for use with landowners. A Woods Forum in Lexington, organized by MFO volunteer Bonnie Blader and Lexington Town Supervisor Dixie Baldrey, brought together diverse woodland owners. This work is supported through the Watershed Agricultural Council's Forestry Program. Ron also worked with the Windham Community Tree Program to devise a "Windham Trees in Bloom Project" that will result in the planting of flowering trees at residences along Main Street in 2014. This project is supported through the Windham Chapter of the Catskill Mountain Foundation.

Audrey Kropp worked with Eric Rasmussen to install a weather station at the Siuslaw Model Forest (SMF). The station, funded by the Watershed Ag Coun-

cil, is solar powered and transmits data directly to the Agroforestry Resource Center. The station collects temperature, humidity, barometric pressure, wind speed, UV and solar radiation data. An additional sub-station that collects leaf and soil moisture and temperature data will be used to provide information on a range of parameters that play an important role in forest function. The weather station will be highlighted in several educational programs in 2014. The weather station compliments many other research and demonstration projects on the SMF.

Marilyn Wyman and Rick Burstell continued to work on invasive species issues in our region. Working with the Catskill Regional Invasive Species Partnership (CRISP) as well as Cornell Cooperative Extension's statewide Invasive Species Program, we provided over 30 programs relating to the biology and management of various regional invasive species reaching several hundred individuals. We partnered with several other CCE associations in the Catskill Mountains to support more effective early detection and rapid response efforts.



# Community Health & Wellness

## Nutrition Programming

Eat Smart New York! (ESNY) is the main nutrition program CCE offers. It is a program that offers free nutrition education classes to low-income families, individuals, seniors, and youth in Columbia and Greene Counties. During the 2013 program year, ESNY reached 3,348 people directly through lessons and 126 people indirectly through media outlets.

CCE also offers additional education to ESNY participants through the Hudson Fish Advisory Contract. Through this program, ESNY participants take a short survey about their fishing practices in the Hudson River and its estuaries. They also receive a brief lesson on safe fish to eat and the best ways to prepare fish that are caught for consumption.

Nutrition staff are also available to contract with other organizations to deliver nutrition lessons to their staff and clients. During 2013, we contracted with COARC to deliver nutrition training to 15 members of their staff.

## Parenting Program

Through a contract with the Greene County Department of Social Services, CCE Parenting Educators provide hands-on parenting education in Greene County through in-home visitation and parent skills classes offered at the Department of Social Services. During the 2013 program year we reached 143 people directly through lessons and 30,500 indirectly through media outlets.

Parenting staff are also available to contract with other organizations to deliver parenting education classes to their staff and clients. During 2013, we contracted with the Office of Family and Children Services to offer parenting skills classes at the Columbia Girls Youth Detention facility and the Brookwood Secure Youth Detention facility. When the contract ends in March of 2014, it is expected that we will have reached roughly 200 youth.



# Community & Economic Vitality

The CEV program area incorporates many Family & Consumer Sciences programs (healthy homes, consumer economics & resource management) and is currently engaged in exploring, evaluating and executing potential economic vitality initiatives that CCE could partner, facilitate or spearhead in the future, such as Aging in Place practices, home and small business development, and workforce preparation. A CEV program advisory committee comprised of board representatives and community volunteers was formed last August and will meet at least quarterly as we move forward.

A Columbia-Greene Interagency Awareness Day (IAD) was held March 21, 2013 at Columbia-Greene Community College. Designed to address the needs of frontline health and human services workers and professionals, it attracted nearly 55 exhibitors from both counties as well as the Greater Capital District area. Over 170 individuals, including several county officials and state legislature aides, attended the event. Eight local agencies and organizations, including CCE Columbia and Greene Counties (Theresa Mayhew co-chaired the event), and several community volunteers participated in the planning process. The over-

arching goal of IAD was to raise awareness, foster collaboration and improve health and human services program delivery within both counties. Another Interagency Awareness Day is tentatively scheduled for March 2015.

CCE continued to provide free energy conservation programming in 2013. Four "Save Energy, Save Dollars" workshops were attended by 60 consumers, including 38 eleventh and twelfth graders enrolled in Questar III's Construction Technologies curriculum. Another 400 individuals attended programs designed to help them prevent identity theft, use credit wisely, stretch their food dollars, establish household budgets, stay safe in their homes, and sharpen their consumer rights, just to name a few. These programs were either offered in the Acra or Hudson offices or at public libraries and schools or to businesses and organizations such as Berkshire Farm Center & Services for Youth, Senior Nutrition Sites, Child Care Council, Head Start, Mental Health Association, and Whittier Rehabilitation Center. Educational displays and exhibits at county fairs and other special events reached another 1,000 consumers.



# Agriculture & Horticulture



In addition to the year's weather, commodity and input prices, and high-stakes politics, the CCE Agriculture and Horticulture Department had another year for the books as well, with all kinds of change and growth, and it yielded some "new and record harvests" for us too.

Ties with the CAAHP and the newly formed ENYCHP, and both of these program's regional team specialists, are becoming closer and tighter-knit as more relevant program offerings and strengthened connections with the service area producers are being forged. There have been approximately 95 direct and indirect referrals of our producers to regional agricultural program team members in 2013.



The focus of the Community Horticulture Program has always been to provide and maintain excellent educational instruction to the service area constituency. Considerable time was directed at re-aligning our course to bring the program back to its status as a premier educational service on both sides of the River, and has been an ongoing team effort this year - yielding improving results, outcomes, and outlook for the future. As evidence of exemplary educational efforts by the 26 active Master Gardener Volunteers, over 1,700 hours of volunteer service were recorded, and approximately 1,400 service con-



nections were made with residents in 2013. The ongoing efforts to strive for excellence in service and to bring in new volunteers continues as a Master Gardener Volunteer Training Course will be conducted in early 2014.

Once again, we contracted with Hudson Mohawk Resource Conservation & Development Council to complete five grazing plans, and with Columbia County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) to create three additional plans for service-area producers. We made 32 follow-up consultation visits and helped many of the producers secure funding for the plan-recommended actions through collaboration with other supportive agencies.

Altogether in 2013, we have consulted with 351 beginning and established agricultural producers, 19 government officials, 38 supportive agency personnel, and 12 agri-business operations. Results indicate that we have assisted them in achieving many of their goals and objectives in agriculture and ag-business.

We reconvened the Agriculture Roundtable Discussion Group, made up of area ag-supportive organization representatives, strengthened our inter-agency connections, and initiated an expanded focus on full-service-area activities, events, and initiatives.

The Hudson Mohawk RC&D Council partnered with several Cornell Cooperative Extension Associations in our region to access a NY Farm Viability Institute grant to help up to 30 beef producers keep useful records and prepare Farm Business Summaries.

We helped with the regional NRCS Enviro-thon in Peekskill and formulated, coached, and judged a Range Management interactive test given to the 240 high-school contestants.

We presented at the Greenville FFA Annual Awards Banquet, and offered the young folks a little insight into formal and informal agricultural education, and exposed them to a little original "cowboy poetry."

Along with the Community Horticulture personnel and the Master Gardener Volunteers - we represented the Association and the regional programs at County Fairs and numerous events and activities in both counties throughout the year.

Just as we are looking forward to the 2012 Farm Bill becoming a reality in 2014, we are in progress and hoping to implement many of the goals and objectives set forth last year in the new five-year strategic plan for CCE of Columbia and Greene Counties. We're looking forward to another high-yield, banner year in 2014.

# Staff & Board of Directors

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Charles Brooks, Executive Director           | Administration                      |
| Evon Antonio, Finance Manager                | Administration                      |
| Amanda Benson, Community Educator            | 4-H Youth Development               |
| Mick Bessire, Resource Educator              | Agriculture/Horticulture            |
| Richard Burstell, Program Educator           | Horticulture                        |
| Ronald Frisbee, Resource Educator            | Natural Resources & the Environment |
| Donna Garafalo, Account Representative       | Administration                      |
| Peggy Henne, Parenting Program Educator      | Family & Community Wellness         |
| Audrey Kropp, Program Educator               | Natural Resources & the Environment |
| Elizabeth LoGiudice, Community Educator      | Natural Resources & the Environment |
| Theresa Mayhew, Resource Educator            | Community & Economic Vitality       |
| A.J. Melino, Facilities Coordinator          | Buildings and Grounds               |
| Jack McCulley, Community Educator            | 4-H Youth Development               |
| Christina Murell, Parenting Program Educator | Community Health & Wellness         |
| Jaime O'Donnell, Nutrition Program Educator  | Community Health & Wellness         |
| Donna Peterson, Program Educator             | Horticulture                        |
| Rebecca Polmateer, Team Coordinator          | Community Health & Wellness         |
| Eileen Simpson, Administrative Assistant     | Administration                      |
| Angela Tallarico, Senior Administrator       | Administration                      |
| Linda Tripp, Issue Leader                    | 4-H Youth Development               |
| Emily Warrington, Administrative Assistant   | Administration                      |
| Eileen West, Nutrition Program Educator      | Community Health & Wellness         |
| Marilyn Wyman, Issue Leader                  | Natural Resources & the Environment |

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Cornell Cooperative Extension of  
Columbia and Greene Counties

You can also find more information on our programs, classes and workshops by visiting our website:  
[www.ccecolumbiagreene.org](http://www.ccecolumbiagreene.org)

# Regional Programs

## **Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture Program (ENYCHP) staff:**

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Aaron Gabriel  
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Chuck Schmitt  
518.765.3513

## **Shared Business Network Leads**

Lisa Godlewski,  
Supervising  
Executive Director

Mike Long,  
Finance

James McNaughton,  
Human Resources

Erik Yager  
Michael Bartholomew  
Information Technology

## **Eastern New York Commercial Horticulture Program (ENYCHP)**

Since the beginning of January 2013, the ENYCHP has enrolled 95 growers from Columbia County and 25 growers from Greene County. These farms are growing a mix of vegetables, small fruit, tree fruit and grapes. The team has also been actively conducting research trials in the two counties. Growers from Columbia and Greene County also attended a Pruning Demo at Yonder Farms Hotaling Location; Thinning Twilight meetings at Fix Bros.; International Fruit Tree Association Post-Conference Tour; Capital District Small Fruit and Vegetable Growers Winter meeting; ENYCHP Summer Disease Twilight meetings, and a number of other programs and workshops. The team was also responsible for establishing, monitoring and reporting sweet corn pheromone trap catches weekly for four major sweet corn pests throughout the season and scouted many different crops on a weekly basis. Since January 1, 2013, team members have made approximately 280 visits and over 400 phone and email consultations to Columbia and Greene County growers.

## **Capital Area Agriculture and Horticulture Program (CAAHP)**

Crops and Livestock Services - In Columbia and Greene Counties, 27 people attended four Soybean Integrated Pest Management meetings. Six Winter Dairy Discussion Group meetings with 53 attendees and two summer dairy tours with 40 participants were held. This led to the request for a series of monthly pasture walks. Six local participants also attended a Basic Farm Business Management Planning meeting. Several local beef farms have started to ship beef through the Adk Grazers Cooperative to receive a better price than alternate markets. Twenty-two farm visits were completed.

New Farmer/Marketing Services - The team worked with over 21 landowners in Columbia County and five in Greene County to discuss the potential for land they own (or thinking of purchasing). They also worked with several young people interested in starting a dairy farm. The team also provided fertilizer recommendations and ways to improve crop yields, as well as consulting with people on pasture improvement, seeding mixes, application of herbicides, marketing ideas, and many others. The New Farmer/Marketing area had contact with at least 1,218 people in Columbia County and at least 23 people in Greene County.

Livestock Services - A meeting was held on grading and marketing lambs (20 people), in addition to speaking with several producers on lamb marketing alternatives. Lamb prices were recorded at the Lamb Sale Empire Livestock sale barn in Chatham. A meeting on beef genetics and choosing the right bull took place at the Empire Livestock barn in Chatham (35 people). A Beef Quality assurance meeting took place in Hillsdale (30 people). There was also a pasture walk on a meat goat farm in Athens and parasite control in goats was covered. Fifteen phone calls on various livestock topics from producers in Columbia and Greene Counties were answered.

Commercial Horticulture - A variety of participants from Columbia and Greene Counties attended several of the Commercial Horticulture training events including Christmas Tree visit, Landscape Architects training, 30-hour Pesticide Training, Certified Nursery Landscape Training, Pesticide Recertification Training, Rules of the Road DOT Training, Emerald Ash Borer Training and many others. The group completed at least eight site visits to various farms in Columbia and Greene Counties pertaining to Commercial Horticulture.

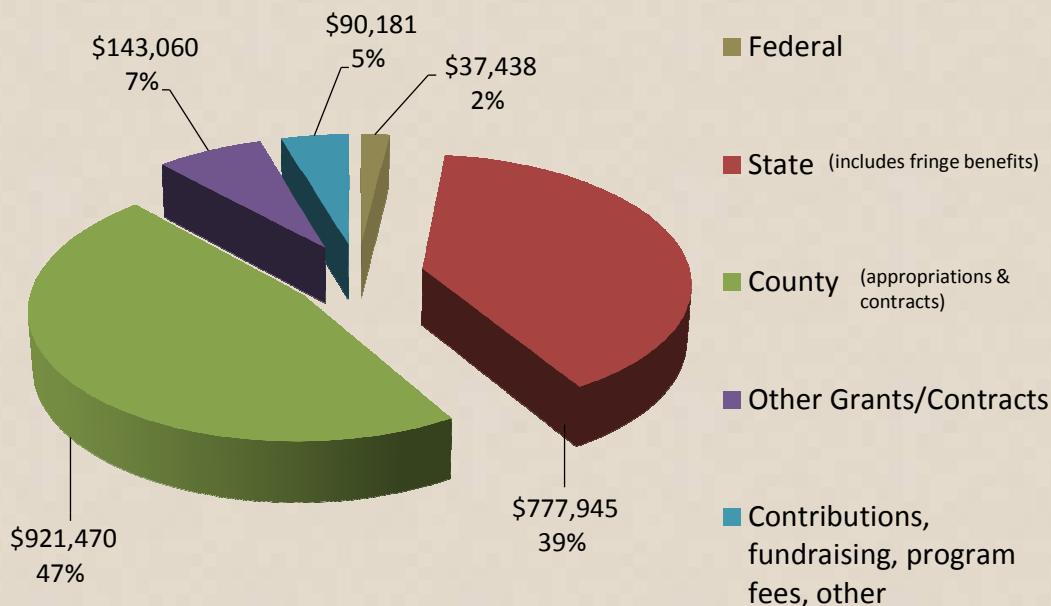
## **Local agriculture Extension Educator for Columbia and Greene Counties:**

Mick Bessire, 518.622.9820 x27

## **Shared Business Network (SBN)**

The SBN allows associations to have access to knowledgeable "leads" in the areas of Finance, Human Resources, and Information Technology. The SBN leads will have access to on-campus administrators. The leads will work directly with association staff to address local needs. This mechanism provides CCE administration with information from the field on topics such as which options will work best, how to deploy a change, how to fix a problem, etc. Our CCE mission continues to focus on business operations being conducted to support local programs and services. Our association is a member of the Capital District SBN including Albany, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Saratoga, Washington, Warren, and Fulton/Montgomery CCE Associations.

# 2013 Financial Support



## Remember Cornell Cooperative Extension of Columbia & Greene Counties!

### Memorial Gift

An especially thoughtful and meaningful way to honor the memory of a loved one providing a living remembrance for generations to come.

### Honorary Gift

A way to honor a friend or family member on a birthday, graduation, anniversary, retirement, or other event.

### Named Funds

The use of a "Named Fund," including its earnings, may be specified for a defined purpose – program, facility, or project – consistent with the mission of CCE of Columbia and Greene Counties. Gifts to these funds continue to perpetuate the memorial of the individuals, as well as help to secure the future of the Cornell Cooperative Extension in your community. These gifts are placed in an investment fund supervised and monitored by the CCE Board of Directors.

#### Paul and Maria Morra Memorial Scholarship Fund

Established in 2011 in memorial of long-time friends of the CCE. Dividend and interest from the fund will be used to provide scholarships to area students interested in pursuing post-high school academic work in the fields of horticulture, agriculture, forestry or natural resources.

#### Michael C. Greason CCE Memorial Fund

Established in 2013 in memory of Mike Greason, a long-time CCE supporter and local forester. Interest from this fund will be used to support forestry programs, projects and initiatives of CCE.

*To make a donation to any of the above gifts or funds, or to establish a fund in the name of an individual or family, contact **Executive Director Chuck Brooks (518) 622-9820 X35 or 828-3346 X108.***

Agroforestry Resource Center  
6055 Route 23, Acra, NY 12405  
518-622-9820

*CCE provides equal program and employment opportunities.*

Extension Education Center  
479 Route 66, Hudson, NY 12534  
518-828-3346