CCE-Steuben annual meeting honors county farmers

CCE-Steuben dedicated their 2016 annual meeting to the local agriculture industry by honoring Steuben County farmers. CCE-Steuben Executive Director Larkin Podsiedlik said, “Agriculture is the heart and soul of Steuben County, with almost 50 percent of the county’s acreage devoted to farming.”

New York Assemblyman Philip Palmesano of Corning told the attendees that farmers need the support of the local communities. “Our agriculture industry, which is not only the number one industry in our region but it’s the number one industry in our state,” he said. “It’s something we have to continue to be supportive of because at the end of the day these are the individuals that put food on our table.”

Locally Grown Food Fest encourages buying local

CCE-Steuben and Meatsuite.com partnered to host the 2017 Locally Grown Food Festival in Corning on February 24.

The event has become quite popular during the past five years, and over 350 people attended this year. They enjoyed local food samples, meeting farms, and making connections to purchase locally produced meat, cheese, produce, baked goods, and so much more! The 27 producers who set up displays and sold products were very pleased with the turnout and happy with both sales and connections. One producer even sold out of their CSA shares that evening.
Meet our Team!

Mark Hammond was hired as the agriculture program assistant in late February and was thrown immediately into a number of activities, including the Locally Grown Food Fest and Ag Lit Week. In his first weeks on the job, he set up a brainstorming session with the Northeast Center for Occupational Health and Safety (NCOHS) about PTO safety. The company had developed a universal PTO shield to protect farmers from entanglements and serious injuries. This discussion brought out numerous local producers who discussed ways to advertise and encourage farmers to buy these simple-to-install shields. NCOHS called this event their most successful turnout to date, and it even caught the attention of a local news station who aired it on the nightly news.

Pam Colomaio was recently elected the new President of the CCE-Steuben Board of Directors. She works for Chemung Canal Trust Company and began her career in banking in 1988. She likes to be a part of CCE Steuben because she believes that knowledge is power. Her children participated in 4-H and there are many CCE programs available to assist Steuben County residents in agriculture, finance, and nutrition.

Catherine von Hagn joined the Board of Directors this year. Growing up in Bath, she was an active member of the 4-H dog and horse programs. After graduating from Alfred University in 2011, she obtained her Law Degree from SUNY Buffalo Law School and began working at the Law Office of William Joint as an Associate Attorney, focusing on Real Estate and Estate Planning. She is excited to have come full circle with the opportunity to serve Cornell Cooperative Extension on the Board of Directors.

2017 Agriculture Literacy Week features grape industry

In celebration of New York agriculture, volunteers throughout the county read a book with an agricultural theme to second graders in March. Students and teachers benefited from hands-on lessons and follow-up activities. The book was donated to each school or classroom library with a bookplate recognizing the donor and NY Agricultural Literacy Week.

Over 1,200 elementary students across the Steuben County participated in CCE-Steuben’s Agricultural Literacy Week celebration. Each classroom participating was read the book The Grapes Grow Sweet during the week. With the advent of New York’s booming grape industries, we are proud to feature a book that so wonderfully captures this way of life for over 1,600 family-owned vineyards in our state. New York ranks third nationally in grape production, with 75% of grapes produced being made into grape juice and the other 25% processed.

Solarize Steuben begins

CCE-Steuben has partnered with CCE-Tompkins to educate Steuben County residents about the savings involved with solar energy. The Solarize Steuben campaign began with a kickoff meeting that introduced the public to local solar installers. This was followed by several educational meetings around the county to help residents decide if solar is the right decision for them. The meetings explain how solar works, introduces the installers and provides free assessments of their property for solar use. More meetings are scheduled for May.

Changing nutrition behaviors

The Finger Lakes Eat Smart New York team has been active educating the public this winter.

Attendees at the Local Foods Festival explored new recipes and foods offered by local farms including a Beet and Carrot Salad featuring fresh beets, carrots, garlic, and microgreens from local farms. Several children and mothers sampled Applesauce French Toast and enjoyed the new spin on the breakfast dish.

Participants of a Cooking Matters for Adults series class learned some new ways to cut down on the unhealthy fat content of standard dishes like fried chicken and potato fries. Changing to alternative cooking methods such as baking rather than frying can tremendously improve the nutritional quality of a meal. Other simple adjustments like removing chicken skin prior to cooking can dramatically reduce fat content. A hands-on Blubber Burger activity helped participants to visualize the fat they would be consuming when eating selected fast food menu items so they could think twice about their choices!

A total of 95 youth at the Tuscarora Elementary School in Addison received a colorful spread of yams, turnips, apples, oranges, onions, and pears from the Kids Farmers Market, all for free! They went home equipped with a recipe detailing how to make the roasted root vegetable dish.

Families from the Glen Curtiss Elementary School in Hammondsport learned about healthy drink choices, the amount of sugar in a range of common beverages, and a method for computing sugar content in teaspoons from the grams of sugar listed on the nutrition facts label. Kids also shared ways that they like to be physically active.
4-H mission is to prepare Steuben members for the future

One of missions of 4-H is learning life skills including learning to speak with ease to a group of people. One of the main projects in 4-H each year is to do a public presentation. This is done by choosing a topic of interest, then researching and organizing it to be interesting to the audience.

During the county public presentation days, 120 4-H members gave a presentation. There were a wide variety of topics including fire safety, archery, dogs, horses, fishing, gardening, wood cutting, the Constitution, benefits and uses of vinegar, electronics, robots, making maple syrup and many more. From these presentations, the judges chose 21 to represent Steuben County at the district event.

In April 17 Steuben County 4-Hers joined about 80 4-Hers from the nine-county Finger Lakes Region for District Public Presentations. The top 20 presenters by score received special recognition, which included from Steuben County: Gabrielle Orcutt, Kaitlyn Orcutt, Victoria Kelly, Peter Kelly, Michal Eckler, and Sarah Lawson. Each Judge could choose a presenter that they judged that stood out or that they wanted to recognize and those from Steuben County were: Victoria Kelly, Michal Eckler, Gabrielle Orcutt, Peter Kelly, Kaitlyn Orcutt, and Alicia Lawson.

4-H members learn about gardening

The 4-H Spring Garden Meeting drew 40 4-H members this year. CCE-Horticulture Educator Stephanie Mehlenbacher taught different techniques and reasons for composting, as well as the important role various insects play in the garden.

The kids received information about harvesting their vegetables, the importance of eating vegetables, home composting, indoor seed starting, and soil prep materials all compiled by a key volunteer/Master Gardener Joan Tichenor. Then they made their own “bug houses”!

Engaging the young members

The Steuben County 4-H Program’s bi-monthly Cloverbud Day Series is in full swing! This is a county-wide educational opportunity that provides programming geared specifically for our youngest 4-H members. In January, the kids learned about bio-degradable materials as they made bird feeders; and in March they made pin wheels for community service, and read this year’s Ag Lit book.

For complete 4-H event coverage, visit: http://putknowledgetowork.org/4-h-youth/2016-2017-4-h-year
CCE-Steuben is very excited to announce that Karr Dairy Farm in Hornell will host the public Farm-City Day in September 2017! After taking a year off from the event, we will be back this fall with plenty of hands-on activities. Come tour a working dairy farm, walk through the corn maze, jump in the corn pile, hand milk a cow and pick out a pumpkin, plus much more. Details: steubencountyfarmday.com

And speaking of fruits, be sure to enter our first annual Pie Contest. There are adult and junior categories. Entry is free and entitles the baker to a $5 discount off the event ticket. Come enjoy a BBQ dinner with CCE-Steuben and support our programs. Tickets are $20 for those 16 and older and $10 for ages 15 and under. Order your tickets today at http://bit.ly/steubengala17

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