

**CONSTITUTION OF THE
CORNELL COOPERATIVE EXTENSION ASSOCIATION
OF RENSSELAER COUNTY
STATE OF NEW YORK**

Effective January 1, 2006

ARTICLE I - NAME

The name of this organization shall be the Cornell Cooperative Extension Association of Rensselaer County, hereafter called the Association.

ARTICLE II - OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this Association are:

- Section 1 To provide for a subordinate governmental agency consisting of an unincorporated organization of residents of Rensselaer County in cooperation with Cornell University and the United States Department of Agriculture; and in accordance with subdivision 8(b) of section 224 of the County Law as amended.
- Section 2 To extend the educational resources of Cornell University and the New York State Colleges of Agriculture and Life Sciences, Human Ecology and Veterinary Medicine, the Land Grant university system and other educational institutions, to the people of Rensselaer County to foster economic, social and environmental improvement of its individuals, families and communities.
- Section 3 To further objectives of Cornell Cooperative Extension of Rensselaer County and the State Extension system in the fields of agriculture, home economics, 4-H, and community betterment.

ARTICLE III - AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

All actions of this Association will be in compliance with the affirmative action plan of the Association and appropriate equal program opportunity, equal employment opportunity and Americans with Disabilities Act legislation.

ARTICLE IV – ENROLLMENT & VOTING RIGHTS

- Section 1 Enrollment: Enrollment is open to all persons interested in the work of the Association. Persons become enrollees by: (a) participation in programs or activities of the Association, evidenced by registration or lists generated with respect to such programs or activities, (b) requesting the Association to place their names on an Association list that will be maintained for one calendar year, or (c) serving the Association as a volunteer.
- Section 2 Voting Rights: All persons, who, as of the date of a voting event, are Rensselaer County residents, 18 years of age or older, and who qualify as an enrollee in accordance with Article IV, Section 1 are eligible to vote at such event.

Section 3 Participation Fees: No fees shall be established as a requirement to become a voting participant. Fees may be established for participating in specific programs or activities of the Association consistent with regulations established by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE V - BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section 1 Governing Body: The governing body of the Association shall be the Board of Directors. Each director shall have voting privileges except the ex-officio representative designated by the director of Cooperative Extension at Cornell.

Section 2 Policies: The Board of Directors of the Association shall, with Cornell Cooperative Extension at Cornell University outline the policies and procedures of the Association consistent with this constitution and the memoranda of agreement between the Association and Cornell Cooperative Extension at Cornell University and Rensselaer County.

Section 3 Composition:

- A. The Board of Directors of the Association shall consist of seven persons elected as directors-at-large; plus the appointed members listed in Article V, Section 3 B, below. Plus those Directors elected annually by their respective program/issue committees.
- B. Appointed members:
 - 1. The county governing body shall be requested annually to appoint one legislator to serve as a director on the Association Board of Directors.
 - 2. The county executive's/manager's office shall be requested annually to designate a staff member to serve as a member of the Association's Board of Directors.
 - 3. The Director of Extension shall designate representation from Cooperative Extension Administration to serve on the Association Board of Directors as ex-officio without voting privileges.
- C. A quorum of the Board of Directors shall consist of a simple majority of the elected members, excluding the appointee of the State Director of Extension.
- D. All directors shall serve until their successors are named or a vacancy declared as provided in Article V, Section 6.
- E. Directors-at-large shall be selected through an election open to all persons who are eligible voting enrollees of the Association.
- F. A director-at-large shall not serve concurrently in another elected position within the Association.

G. A person is not eligible to serve on the Board of Directors if:

1. The following relationships exist with a board member or any association staff: mother, father, son, daughter, brother, sister, husband, wife, or any person residing in the same household.
2. He/She is currently employed by the Association, or has been employed by the Association in the previous 18 months.
3. He/She is not a county resident with the exception of the representative appointed by the Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension.
4. He/She served one or more previous terms as an at-large Director or an elected member of a program/issue committee and the lapse since that service is less than two years with exception of appointed directors (See Article V, Section 3, B).

H. Each member of the Board of Directors shall abstain from voting on any issue in which he/she has a conflict of interest or an appearance of a conflict of interest.

I. The Executive Director shall serve as executive officer of the Board of Directors without voting privileges.

Section 4 Duties: The Board of Directors shall:

- A. Establish the organizational structure, consistent with this constitution, to conduct the work of the Association.
- B. Support and maintain the Cooperative Extension Association in cooperation with Cornell Cooperative Extension at Cornell University.
 1. Execute the memoranda of agreement and other legal instruments.
 2. Establish policies and procedures for maintaining an effective Cooperative Extension Association including program scope and priorities.
- C. Secure resources necessary to conduct, manage and administer the Association's program.
- D. Employ staff to conduct the work of the Association.

Section 5 Term of Office: The term of office for directors-at-large is three years. Directors-at-large serve no more than two consecutive elected terms plus the portion of the unexpired terms to which they may have been appointed. However, a director-at-large may continue to serve past the end of his/her elected or appointed term, until a successor is elected or appointed.

Any previous elected member of the board after a lapse of three years following service on the board, will be eligible for re-election or appointment to the Board of Directors.

Directors elected from program/issue committees shall serve for a one year term or until a successor is named. Directors from program/issue committees may succeed themselves on the board for a period not to exceed six years.

Section 6 Declaring a Vacancy: The president of the Association may declare a position vacant when the elected member has resigned or has an unexcused absence at three regular meetings of the Board of Directors.

Section 7 Filling Vacancies on the Board of Directors:

- A. The president shall, after consultation with the Board of Directors (and/or executive committee) make an appointment to fill the vacancy in a director-at-large position on the Board of Directors. That person so appointed will serve only until a replacement is chosen by the next regular election to fill the remaining portion of the unexpired term.
- B. Vacancies occurring on the Board of Directors from the program/issue committee shall be filled by appointment of the program/issue committee chairperson with approval of the committee.

Section 8 Meetings of the Board of Directors: The Board of Directors shall meet at least five times a year and more often as called by the president.

ARTICLE VI - OFFICERS OF THE ASSOCIATION

Section 1 Election: After the annual Association election and prior to February 1 the Board of Directors shall schedule a meeting to elect officers. A nominating committee appointed by the president shall prepare a slate of officers.

- A. The following shall be elected annually from among the members of the Board by a majority vote of the continuing and new members of the Board of Directors present at the organizational meeting of the Board scheduled to be held between the Annual Association meeting and February 1: president; vice-president; secretary; and treasurer.
- B. The president shall be an ex-officio member of all program and standing committees, excluding the nominating committee. (An ex-officio member is a member by virtue of his/her office and has all the privileges of membership).
- C. A recording secretary may be appointed annually from the association staff by the president with approval of the Board of Directors. The recording secretary shall not serve as an officer nor be eligible to vote.
- D. An assistant to the treasurer may be appointed annually from the association staff by the president with the approval of the Board of Directors. An assistant to the treasurer shall not serve as an officer nor be eligible to vote.
- E. The terms of office of the president, vice-president, secretary and the treasurer of the Association Board of Directors shall be for the calendar year or thereafter until their respective replacements are named. An officer shall not serve in the same office for more than three consecutive years.

Section 2 Duties:

- A. The president of the Association, in addition to the powers and duties conferred on the position by law, shall perform such duties as usually pertain to the office of president. The president may call meetings of the Association, the Board of Directors, or of any of the committees; or may call special meetings of the Association (See Article X, Section 2).
- B. The vice-president of the Association shall perform the duties of the president in case of the president's absence or disability.
- C. The secretary of the Association shall be responsible for keeping in permanent form complete and accurate records of all meetings of the Association, receive and present to the Board of Directors all communications relating specifically to the Association, and prepare correspondence on behalf of the Board of Directors.
- D. The treasurer of the Association in addition to the powers and duties conferred upon the position by law shall act as custodian of all funds and property, real and personal, of the Association. The treasurer shall be responsible for disbursements of all Association funds for expenses of the Association only upon written approval of the Executive Director or designee. The treasurer shall verify the financial situation of the Association, and shall testify that the balance is current by signature on financial reports as designated by the Board of Directors.
- E. The assistant to the treasurer of the Association may be responsible for disbursements of Association funds for the expenses of the Association only upon written approval of the Executive Director or designee.

Section 3. Filling Vacancies - Officers of the Association

- A. In the event a vacancy occurs in the position of the president; the vice- president will complete the unexpired term.
- B. In the event of a vacancy in the position of vice-president or other elected office, the Board of Directors shall select a director to fill the unexpired term. Selection will be made by a majority vote of all members of the Board of Directors present at the meeting.
- C. In the event of a vacancy in the position of an appointed office, the president shall appoint with the approval of the Board of Directors, a qualified replacement to fill the unexpired appointment.

ARTICLE VII - COMMITTEES OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Section 1 Standing and Special Committees: The Board of Directors shall establish each year at its organizational meeting those committees it deems necessary to carry out the work of the Association. The president shall appoint all members to the standing committees annually and designate a chairperson for each. The standing committees shall act as set forth in the Association's operating guidelines. (See Article XII)

Section 2 Executive Committee: An executive committee of the Board of Directors, composed of the president, vice-president, treasurer, and secretary will conduct the business of the Association in the interim between regularly scheduled board meetings. The Executive Director shall serve as executive officer of the Executive Committee without voting privileges.

ARTICLE VIII - PROGRAM/ISSUE AREAS AND PROGRAM/ISSUE ADVISORY COMMITTEES

Section 1 Establishment of Program/Issue Areas:

The Board of Directors shall establish annually up to four major program areas of the association each to be advised by a program/issue committee. The Board shall also establish the number of members that will serve on each committee, such number shall not be less than five or more than fifteen. The Board shall also establish the number of elected program committee representatives each program committee shall elect to represent the committee on the Board. (See Article V. section 3.A.) Committee members will be elected for terms of service by procedures and for tenure consistent with that provided for at-large directors. Duties and responsibilities and all operating procedures shall be described in the Association's operating guidelines. (See Article XII)

ARTICLE IX - ASSOCIATION NOMINATION AND ELECTIONS

Section 1. Nominating Committee: The nominating committee is a committee of the Association and its enrollees and not a standing committee of the Board of Directors. It is responsible to and acts in the interest of the Association, its enrollees and constituencies.

- A. Composition: The president of the Association shall annually appoint a nominating committee of at least five people, who represent the broad interests of the residents of the county and the work of the Association, a majority of whom are not current board members. The president shall designate the chairperson of the nominating committee.
- B. Duties:
 - 1. The nominating committee shall prepare a list of nominees for all vacant or eligible elected positions. Current members of the nominating committee are not eligible as nominees.
 - 2. In addition to nominations by the committee, nominations may be made by:
 - a. A petition, delivered to the Association in person or by certified mail no later than 45 days prior to the election. Thirty eligible voting enrollees of the Association must sign the petition.
 - b. Nominations from the floor where the nominating and election process occurs at the annual meeting of the Association.
 - c. By write-in on the election ballot where balloting is done by mail.
 - 3. The nominating committee will supervise the conduct of the election.

Section 2. Elections and Voting: Elections for directors-at-large shall be held annually. Such elections, and/or voting for any other matter as determined by the Board of Directors, shall be conducted in one of the following ways:

1. By ballot of all eligible voters present at the annual meeting of the Association; or
2. A mail ballot sent to all eligible voters, at least 21 days prior to the due date of return.

In all cases, the candidate receiving a plurality of vote for each seat shall be declared elected. In the event of a tie vote, the winner shall be decided by a majority of the Board of Directors at its next meeting.

ARTICLE X - ASSOCIATION MEETINGS

Section 1. Annual Meeting: An annual meeting of the Association shall be held during the last quarter of the calendar year for which public notice is given at least 21 days in advance of the meeting. The agenda shall include the following items, plus other business as appropriate:

- A. Annual financial and program report.
- B. Either the announcement of the results of the election conducted by mail or the conduct of the election by the voting of eligible voters present at the annual meeting.

Section 2. Special Meetings: A special meeting of the Association may be called by the Board of Directors, and shall be called by the president upon written petition by 25 eligible voters, provided the objectives of such meetings are set forth in the petition. Only such business may be conducted as is set forth in the call of the special meeting. Public notice of special meetings shall be made at least 21 days prior to the meeting date.

Section 3. Quorum: A quorum for any annual or special meetings of the Association shall consist of 25 eligible voters of the Association.

ARTICLE XI - PARLIAMENTARY AUTHORITY

Section 1. Roberts Rules of Order: The rules contained in the most current "Roberts Rules of Order" shall govern the Association in all cases to which they are applicable and where they are consistent with the Constitution or the regulations (including operating guidelines) of the Association as adopted by the Board of Directors. In the event that Roberts Rules of Order, the Constitution, and/or the regulations of the Association are not consistent, then the Constitution shall take priority, followed by the regulations of the Association.

ARTICLE XII – OPERATING GUIDELINES (Option: By Laws)

Section 1. Operating guidelines of the Association, that identify operating details of the board and advisory committees not contained in this Constitution shall be established and reviewed annually by the Board of Directors.

ARTICLE XIII - AMENDMENTS

Section 1. The Constitution of this Association shall be reviewed every three years by the Board of Directors.

Section 2. The Constitution of this Association may be amended, with prior approval by the Board of Directors of this Association and the Director of Extension, by an affirmative vote of at least two-thirds of the eligible voters present at any annual or special Association meeting or by an affirmative vote of two-thirds of the eligible voters responding in a mail ballot.

ARTICLE XIV - REPEAL OF PREVIOUS DOCUMENTS

This Constitution shall take effect when approved by the eligible voters and all previous documents of the Association entitled "Constitution" and "By-laws" are hereby repealed.

Approved by:


Director of Cornell Cooperative Extension

Date

3-9-06

Adopted by:


President of the Association

Date

1/30/06

At the regular meeting of the Board of Directors

Sept 16, 2009 - The Constitution was reviewed by the Board and no changes were recommended, motion carried unanimously.